

THE CITY of *Altoona*

AGENDA FOR A JOINT WORKSHOP OF THE CITY COUNCIL AND PLAN COMMISSION

THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2022

6:00 P.M. FISH HOUSE, 418 9TH STREET WEST, ALTOONA, WI

- I. Call Meeting to Order.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. Roll Call
 - A. Council Persons
 - B. Plan Commissioners
 - C. Department Heads.
- IV. WORKSHOP
 - A. Presentation by the City's Consultant, Vandewalle & Associates, of the draft Comprehensive Plan and East Neighborhood Concept Plan. Officials may provide guidance and direction in the development of the plan. No actions shall be taken.
- V. ADJOURNMENT



Cindy Bauer
City Clerk

Requests from persons with disabilities who need assistance to participate in this meeting/hearing should be made to the City Clerk's Office at 715-839-6092 with as much advance notice as possible.

Speak Your Peace: The Civility Project

The Common Council of the City of Altoona, Wisconsin, recognizes and has adopted by Resolution 3B-15 that the nine tools of civility, drafted by Speak Your Peace: The Civility Project will provide increased opportunities for civil discourse in order to find positive resolutions to the issues that face our city. These tools include the following:

*Pay Attention / Listen / Be Inclusive / Don't Gossip / Show Respect / Be Agreeable
Apologize / Give Constructive Criticism / Take Responsibility*

###

JOIN THE DISCUSSION



CITY OF ALTOONA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

**YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW AND COMMENT ON THE 2022
DRAFT CITY OF ALTOONA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEN: WEDNESDAY MAY 18, 2022 *from 6:00 to 8:00 PM*

WHERE: FISH HOUSE AT ALTOONA CITY PARK
418 9TH STREET W. ALTOONA, WI

Come take part in reviewing and providing feedback on the 2022 Draft Comprehensive Plan. This drop-in style event will be hosted by the City of Altoona and their planning consultant, Vandewalle & Associates. Participants are welcome to arrive anytime between 6-8 PM to view documents and maps, ask questions, and provide feedback.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Over the past year, the City of Altoona has been working on its 10-year update of the Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the plan is to provide a roadmap for the City's next twenty years, touching on ten different topic areas that include economic development, land use, transportation, housing, environmental resources, and more. In addition, the document contains topic-specific goals, objectives, policies, and strategies, as well as a community-wide vision and an action plan to help prioritize future projects.

2022 Draft Comprehensive Plan

The Draft Plan is available to view and download from the City's website here:
www.altoonacompplan.com

Questions?

For additional information on the event or any part of the planning process, please contact Josh Clements, City Planner, via email: joshuac@ci.altoona.wi.us or phone: (534) 444-5430.

For more information, please visit the City's website: <https://www.altoonacompplan.com/>






2022

CITY OF ALTOONA, WISCONSIN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

DRAFT: 4.27.22



Prepared by:

**VANDEWALLE &
ASSOCIATES INC.**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This City of Altoona's Comprehensive Plan is the vision for Altoona and its residents. It serves as a guiding document for City leaders, institutions, and community members to shape Altoona into the community it hopes to be for the next 20 years and beyond. The following executive summary provides the Plan's key strategies. Each strategy is described in greater detail within each chapter and directly aligns with the action items listed in Chapter 10. Chapter 1 and 2 outline the City's vision statement, overarching goals, and key issues and opportunities, which provide the framework for the strategies listed below. Appendix A and B detail existing conditions, data analysis, and public input received throughout the planning process.

KEY STRATEGIES

The following is a brief summary of the key strategies in the Plan, organized by chapter. The City invites you to read the full City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan to explore each in greater detail and the context in which they were prepared.



Chapter 3: Livability, Sustainability, and Health

- Advance the City's role in sustainability and climate resiliency.
- Expand equitable and inclusive community engagement opportunities.
- Increase public health awareness and collaboration.
- Encourage the use of local and healthy foods in Altoona.



Chapter 4: Land Use and Community Character

- Rewrite the City's Zoning Ordinance to increase user-friendliness, conform to changes in state and federal law, ensure predictable and high-quality neighborhood and site design, improve mobility options, and provide increased opportunities for compact development and mixing of land uses.
- Promote infill development and the redevelopment of key sites and along key corridors.
- Ensure new development is high-quality and matches the established aesthetic design preferences of the community.
- Integrate Traditional Neighborhood Design and mixed use development in both new development and redevelopment.
- Ensure land uses support the community facility, transportation, economic development, and other objectives of this Plan.
- Develop a growth phasing plan.



Chapter 5: Housing and Neighborhoods

- Foster new diverse housing to accommodate the needs, desires, and lifestyles of existing and future residents of all incomes and life stages by implementing the recommendations of the Altoona Housing Action Plan.
- Apply Traditional Neighborhood Design techniques when approving or planning for new neighborhoods.
- Establish high-quality design standards for new multi-family housing developments.



Chapter 6: Economic Development

- Develop and implement a Downtown Revitalization Plan and pursue the redevelopment of underutilized properties along key community corridors.
- Build on the Altoona's arts and culture to grow the creative economy and spark new economic development.

- Focus on economic opportunities that are aligned with the community’s environmental stewardship and social equity values. Pursue opportunities to facilitate new business investment in sustainable/green technologies and services, as well as opportunities for existing businesses to integrate environmentally and socially preferable practices, such as renewable energy, efficiency, high-performance construction, and mobility choices.
- Attract and retain diverse new businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Assist in preparing the local workforce to be prepared for and adapt to economic changes.
- Utilize TIF and grants to foster the implementation of this Plan and drive future redevelopment, new development, and reinvestment throughout the community.
- Collaborate with regional and state economic agencies on growth initiatives.

Chapter 7: Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities

- Incorporate climate resilience and adoption into infrastructure planning.
- Proactively plan for and implement new utilities and community facilities that promote sustainability, climate resiliency, equity, fiscal responsibility, and public health.
- Improve multi-modal transportation accessibility, safety, and connectivity.
- Prepare for transportation technology changes through adapting policies, information sharing, and infrastructure improvements.
- Continue to work with the Altoona School District on future land use planning decisions and establishing neighborhood-scale schools.
- Develop, adopt, and enforce a city-wide official map to align transportation and land use strategies.
- Implement the Altoona Place Plan and complete an update in 2025.
- Utilize tactical urbanism to test infrastructure enhancement and investment opportunities.

Chapter 8: Agricultural and Natural Resources

- Advance the City’s role in climate resilience and sustainability through the implementation of stormwater best management practices and the preservation of natural and agricultural resources.
- Limit development within the City’s Extraterritorial Jurisdiction and foster a compact development pattern within the City’s boundaries.
- Connect natural resources with recreational opportunities and tourism.
- Support long-term farmland preservation efforts outside of the City’s future growth areas.
- Improve and preserve urban biodiversity through well-integrated and connected greenways, forests, vegetation, native plantings, and gardens.

Chapter 9: Intergovernmental Opportunities

- Collaborate on regional initiatives.
- Engage in proactive and regular coordination with adjacent and overlapping governments and entities.
- Develop, implement, and enforce long-term intergovernmental agreements with neighboring municipalities.
- Participate in state-wide groups on topic-specific initiatives and in general government coordination and effectiveness.





Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION





CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

PLAN PURPOSE

This City of Altoona’s Comprehensive Plan is intended to help the City guide, promote, and foster public health, safety, and welfare, with particular attention to equity, inclusion, ecological sustainability, and fiscal responsibility. The plan does this through guiding community change, growth, and development to ensure continued and enhanced community prosperity in the future.

The Comprehensive Plan is distinct in that it confronts the City’s important issues in a high-level, big-picture way. While other adopted plans deal with specialized topics such as parks, transportation, natural resources, or specific neighborhoods or areas, only the Comprehensive Plan lays out a 20-year vision for the community as a whole and truly acknowledges how Altoona’s people, places, values, and aspirations are interconnected and interdependent. The Comprehensive Plan steps away from fine-grained details and overly specific issues, and serves as a guiding document for City leaders and residents.

In developing this plan, the City has identified the core issues that will be central to Altoona’s future success. As a community known for its high quality of life balanced with small-town familiarity, Altoona has become the fastest-growing city in the state. This elevated profile within the Chippewa Valley has increased growth pressures and accelerated the potential for change within the community – both positively and negatively. This raises important questions: As the City grows and evolves, how can the City amplify or create the qualities that residents value? How can the City face the most difficult issues, improve quality of life for all residents, and proactively face the challenges that lie ahead? This Comprehensive Plan attempts to answer these questions and more.

Additionally, it should be recognized that the City is not the only agent influencing change within the community and region; its efforts and powers alone are not sufficient to achieve this Plan’s vision. A collaborative effort will be required between the City, its neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions, community partners, and its residents to advance the Plan’s goals and recommendations.

Specifically, this Plan will:

- Identify areas recommended for development over the next 20 years.
- Recommend types of land use for specific areas in and around the City.
- Preserve and enhance natural and agricultural resources in and around the City.
- Identify and prioritize needed transportation, community facilities, and other infrastructure to serve future land uses.
- Present forward-thinking and adaptable housing and economic strategies.
- Directly connect city policies and development choices to social equity, ecological sustainability, and related goals and values.
- Provide detailed action items to implement plan recommendations.

PLANNING LENSES

Prior to beginning this Comprehensive Plan, the City identified three overarching planning lenses. The lenses were identified because they relate to some of the City’s top challenges that it faces now and in the future. These challenges have been difficult to address in the past, as they relate to cross-cutting issues entrenched within our current systems. They will require action from multiple sectors of society in order to address them. The three planning lenses include:

- **Climate Action:** Proactive and urgent action to mitigate climate change and improve the community’s resiliency to the impacts of an ever-changing climate.
- **Social Equity:** Striving to achieve social equity through creating equitable access and quality of services and opportunities, addressing disparities in health, wealth, and safety outcomes, and the engagement and inclusion of all residents.
- **Economic Vitality:** Maintaining fiscal sustainability through efficient, responsible, and informed public investments, service improvements, and enhancement of quality of life amenities.



The comprehensive planning process was developed and viewed through these lenses in order to ensure these themes were elevated throughout the process and plan document. Additionally, all Plan recommendations, policies, and strategies were repeatedly examined through the lenses to examine how each advanced or hindered the City’s goals and objectives related to climate action, social equity, and economic vitality. Accordingly, each lens is emphasized and integrated into the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations throughout this Plan.

VISION STATEMENT

Based on the planning lenses, extensive public input, and contributions from city staff and officials, the City developed a vision statement that describes the type of community that Altoona intends to be in 20 years.

Altoona’s Vision for 2040

The City of Altoona will be an inclusive, diverse, sustainable, progressive, innovative, and equitable community that features a high quality of life, a family-friendly and welcoming atmosphere, excellent natural resources and recreational opportunities, local and regional destinations and attractions, and a mix of housing, shopping, and employment opportunities for its residents and visitors alike. Building on its regional location and proximity to the greater Chippewa Valley, Altoona will continue to balance growth and natural resource protection to increase climate resiliency, deliver sustainable public infrastructure, provide high-quality educational opportunities, offer affordable, diverse, and inclusive housing options, and work collaboratively with regional partners to advance shared goals.

The City of Altoona’s vision statement is a bold one that expresses high ambitions. Achieving this vision will require the City and community as a whole to question past practices that have led to today’s challenges, and, in many cases, it will require the community to have challenging conversations and deviate from “the way that things have always been done.” Achieving this vision will require the City to blaze a new but necessary path in order to confront and make progress on the many pernicious issues described throughout this Plan, including the housing crisis, racial disparities, unsustainable patterns of growth, and more.

OVERARCHING GOALS OF THE 2022 CITY OF ALTOONA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

There are numerous interrelated ideas and values embedded within the City's vision statement. The City has identified several overarching goals that are crucial to implementing the vision. These overarching goals describe the primary approaches that the City will pursue in order to achieve its vision, and they complement the many other goals, objectives, policies, and specific strategies described in this Plan. The overarching goals are illustrated in the graphic on the following page.

Many of the goals and themes within this Plan are deeply intertwined. Tackling one challenge at a time is not likely to be successful due to the interrelated nature of many of these topics. For example, focusing on a singular objective (such as quality urban design) could unintentionally impact another (such as affordable housing). For this reason, it is critical for the City and its partners to think about all components of the vision comprehensively. When taken in consideration together, the individual objectives can be mutually reinforcing rather than working at cross purposes. Therefore, this Comprehensive Plan attempts to leverage these co-dependencies and achieve multiple objectives at the same time. Throughout the Plan document, these connections will be highlighted as much as possible.

2022 City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan

Planning Lenses



Vision Statement

The City of Altoona will be an inclusive, diverse, sustainable, progressive, innovative, and equitable community that features a high quality of life, a family-friendly and welcoming atmosphere, excellent natural resources and recreational opportunities, local and regional destinations and attractions, and a mix of housing, shopping, and employment opportunities for its residents and visitors alike.

Building on its regional location and proximity to the greater Chippewa Valley, Altoona will continue to balance growth and natural resource protection to increase climate resiliency, deliver sustainable public infrastructure, provide high-quality educational opportunities, offer affordable, diverse, and inclusive housing options, and work collaboratively with regional partners to advance shared goals.



Plan Goals & Strategies

- Promote Compact Growth
- Prepare Workforce
- Pursue Mixed Densities & Land Uses
- Advance Inclusivity & Social Justice
- Improve Public Health
- Connect Public Open Space
- Conserve Natural Resources
- Improve Neighborhood & Building Design
- Prioritize Multi-Modal Transportation
- Provide Diverse & Affordable Housing Options
- Preserve Community Character & Unique Features
- Improve Livability & Quality of Life
- Support Fiscal Sustainability
- Advance Climate Resiliency & Mitigation
- Foster Sense of Place
- Make Strategic Public Investments
- Regional Collaboration & Leadership
- Foster Infill & Redevelopment
- Grow Local Economy & Diversify Tax Base

PLAN ORGANIZATION

Each chapter of this Plan is focused on a specific topic and presents the City's goals, objectives, and policies for that element. These policies are the basis for the recommendations that are presented at the beginning of each chapter. Chapter 10: Action Plan summarizes the proposed strategies, projects, and timelines needed to help make this Plan become a reality. The recommendations of this Plan are supported by current data and background information, which are organized by Chapter and are found in Appendix A.

This Comprehensive Plan was prepared in accordance with the State of Wisconsin's comprehensive planning legislation contained in §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes. This legislation describes how a comprehensive plan must be developed and adopted. Additionally, it mandates that only comprehensive plans that contain the nine required elements described in §66.1001, Wis. Stats. and were adopted under the prescribed procedures will have legal standing. Further, any program or action of a local governmental unit that affects land use must be consistent with that local governmental unit's comprehensive plan. This means that any annexation, zoning, land division, boundary agreements, official mapping decisions, or actions undertaken by the City after the adoption of this Plan must be *consistent* with this Plan.

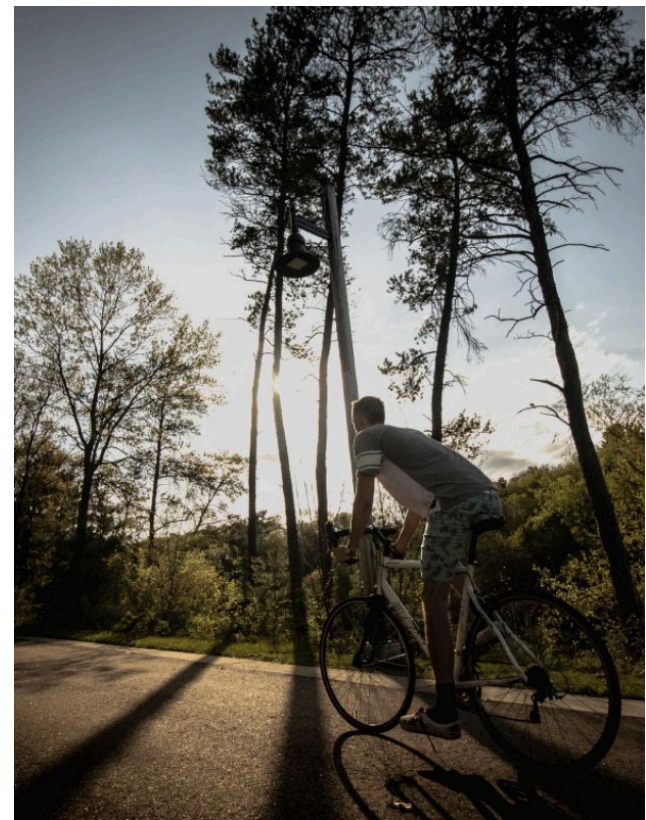
ABOUT ALTOONA

Altoona was originally platted around the railroad yards as East Eau Claire. Upon incorporation in 1887, Altoona became named after the famous Altoona Pennsylvania railroad yards. The City began to grow quickly, as the presence of the railroad attracted businesses and housing construction. By 1929, the City had its first community well and sewage system. While Altoona remained relatively small for many decades, during the 1970s, the City doubled in size. Since the time, Altoona has continued to grow into a full-service community of over 8,000 residents.

Located in west-central Wisconsin, Altoona is bordered by the City of Eau Claire to the west and south, Lake Altoona, Eau Claire River, and the Town of Seymour to the north, and by the Town of Washington to the east and southeast. Regionally, the City is within the greater Chippewa Valley straddling Eau Claire County and Chippewa County, which includes the City of Eau Claire, City of Chippewa Falls, Village of Lake Hallie, and surrounding towns. As of 2021, the City of Altoona had 8,651 residents and encompassed approximately 3,200 acres or 5 square miles.

Altoona's location near Interstate 94 provides direct, efficient access between the greater Minneapolis and Madison areas. The community also has relatively direct access to Chippewa Falls and northern Wisconsin via USH 53, Wausau and eastern Wisconsin via STH 29, and greater Eau Claire County via USH 12. Freight rail service continues to this day, connecting the City with Eau Claire, Minneapolis, central Wisconsin, and points beyond. The rail yard remains the primary rail switching facility for the region. Combined, this provides the City with access to regional employment, shopping, cultural, and entertainment destinations.

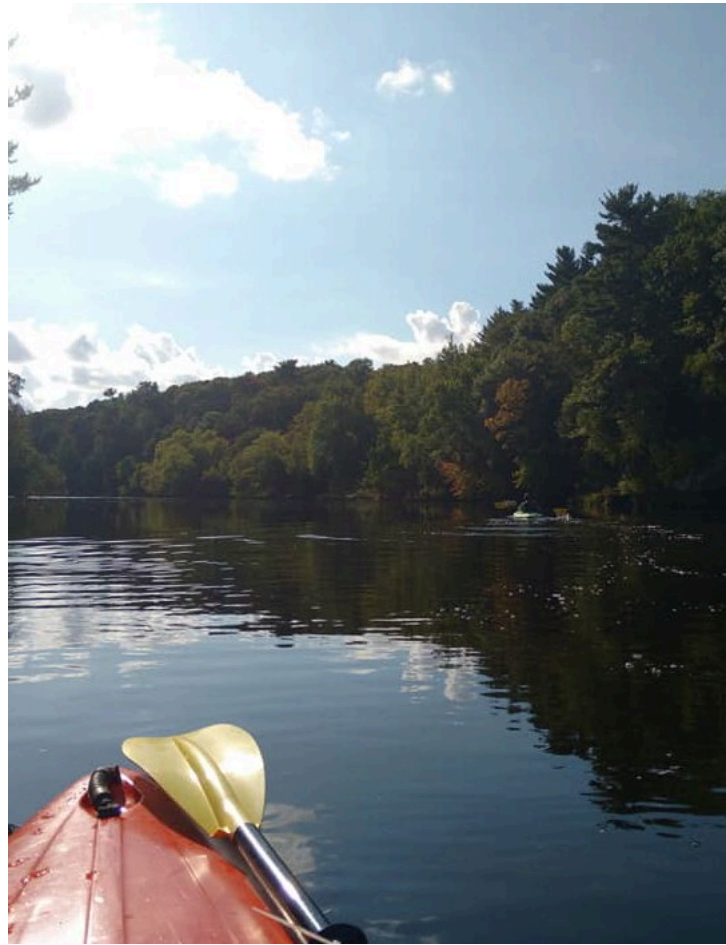
The City is also surrounded by high-quality natural resources including lakes, rivers, streams, woodlands, wetlands, and agricultural lands. Some of the most notable are Lake Altoona, Otter Creek, Eau Claire River, Chippewa River, and Lake Wissota. The Chippewa Valley exists along the edge of the Driftless region, with its hills, valleys, and river systems, the Northwoods of the upper Midwest with its large forests and thousands of lakes, and the prime agricultural areas of the west-central area of the state. Each of these landscapes influence the history, culture, economic and recreational opportunities of the region's inhabitants.

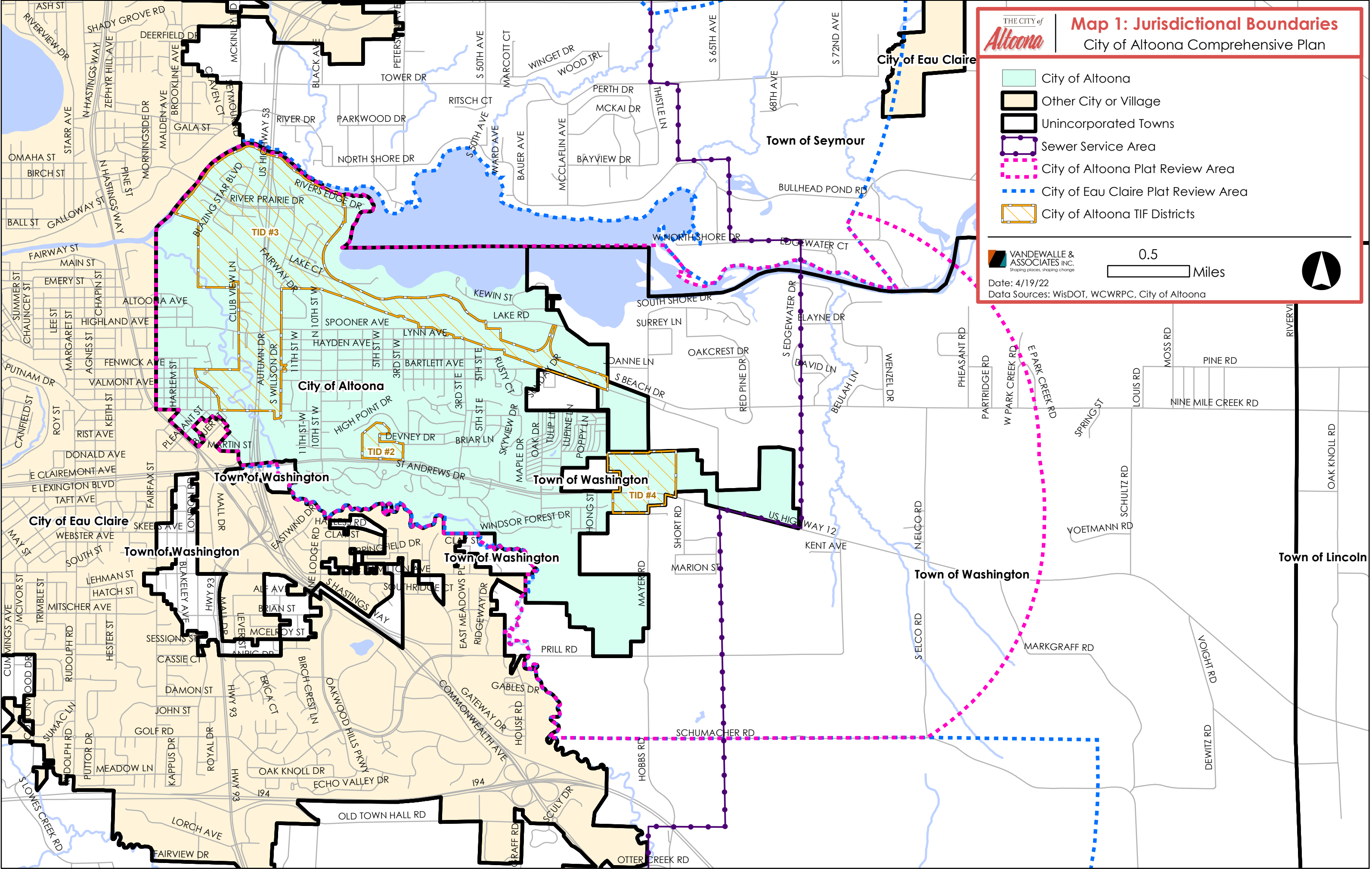


PLANNING AREA

The planning area includes the City and its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), which generally extends 1.5 miles from the City's municipal boundaries. The planning area is shown on Map 1. The City's ETJ extends less than 1.5 miles where it interacts with the ETJ boundary of the City of Eau Claire. Within the ETJ, state statutes enable the City to plan for those areas that bear relation to the City's development, review and approve or deny land divisions, enact extraterritorial zoning, and establish and implement an Official Map.

Within its ETJ, the City has an interest in identifying areas of possible future growth, areas for preservation, and anticipate areas in which conflicts over land use decisions within and between communities may occur. The City also has an interest in ensuring that the types of development allowed in its ETJ areas prior to annexation are compatible with the City's long-term goals and anticipated pattern of development. The City's ETJ radius automatically expands as the City annexes land, except for the ETJ boundaries that has been fixed by intergovernmental agreements. Therefore, this Plan considers the future of and makes recommendations for the area within and slightly beyond the City's current 1.5-mile ETJ.





Map 1: Jurisdictional Boundaries

City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan

City of Altoona

Other City or Village

Unincorporated Towns

Sewer Service Area

City of Altoona Plat Review Area

City of Eau Claire Plat Review Area

City of Altoona TIF Districts

VANDERWALLE & ASSOCIATES INC.

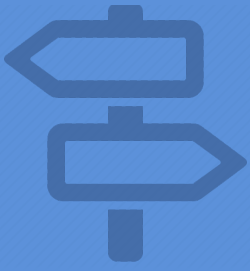
Shaping places, shaping change

Date: 4/19/22

Data Sources: WisDOT, WCWRPC, City of Altoona

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Miles

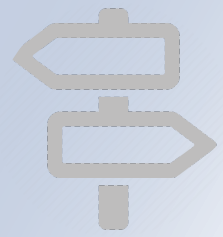


Chapter 2

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES



CHAPTER 2: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES



KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Key issues and opportunities function as the foundation of the Comprehensive Plan. Based on public input, data analysis, and other local trends, the Altoona has identified several key issues to be addressed and opportunities to be leveraged over the coming decade and beyond. Each issue and opportunity is overarching and is addressed throughout this Plan.

Leveraging the City's Existing Assets

- The City is fortunate to have many community assets, including an accessible and diverse park and open space network; several local festivals, events, and community organizations; direct access to USH 53 and 12 and proximity to the greater Chippewa Valley area; the River Prairie mixed use center; and high-quality public school system. In recognition of these assets and the benefits they provide, it is vital to continue to improve and build on them to retain and attract new residents and businesses by offering a high-quality of life.

Population Growth and Demographic Shifts

- Between 1970-2000, the City experienced strong population growth (14% - 55% per decade). Between 2000 and 2010, very little population growth occurred. However, in the last decade, the City has become one of the fastest growing communities in the state, with 29% growth between 2010 and 2021. Accounting for past variability in population growth, this Plan projects that the City of Altoona could grow between 20% - 64% over the next 20 years (adding 1,700-5,500 residents).
- National, regional, and local level large-scale demographic shifts and personal preferences are changing. Some of the most impactful local demographic shifts being: a growing population of persons with Asian heritage and decreasing median age.
- Some of the most impactful personal preference and societal shifts across the United States include: more people choosing to live alone and/or wait longer to start a family, people having fewer children than previous generations, increasing student debt making it harder for young homebuyers and ability to undertake other financial obligations, rapidly rising medical costs and debts, rising cost of childcare constraining labor force participation, largely stagnant wages, easier accessibility to working remotely with technology, and a growing demand for housing and employment mobility.

Housing Shifts

- Altoona experienced recovery of housing construction more quickly than most other Wisconsin communities from the Great Recession of 2008-09. As of 2021, it is the fastest growing city in Wisconsin in percentage terms. The City has also diversified its housing stock over the past two decades with the addition of over 600 new multi-family units (2000-2021).
- Additional housing diversity will be needed over the planning period to accommodate empty nesters, young professionals, and new families, to account for the costs of housing rising much faster than household income and relate to public service and environmental costs associated with housing. These needs can be fulfilled by small-lot single family, two-family, townhouses, and multi-family options such as those described as "missing middle" formats.

Redevelopment, Infill, and New Development

- Over the past decade, the success of the River Prairie redevelopment has been a catalyst for diversifying the City's tax base, increasing local employment, providing additional housing options, and expanding new recreational opportunities. While it is unlikely that this will be replicated in an identical fashion in other locations of the City, it serves as a model for how redevelopment, infill, and new development can successfully be implemented in other parts of the community, including downtown, Spooner Avenue, Hastings Way, and along USH 12.

Addressing Climate Adaptability and Sustainability

- Altoona is surrounded by high-quality lakes, rivers, and creeks, wildlife habitat, agricultural land, and wooded areas. These natural resources affect the City's growth and development potential, but also present opportunities in the form of maintaining and improving these assets to increase the community's high quality of life and proactively adapting to climate changes.
- There are also opportunities to increase the City's role in environmental sustainability and climate resiliency. Altoona has advanced some of these efforts in recent years, however other communities such as the City of Eau Claire have established themselves as leaders in the region on these efforts. Future opportunities for Altoona include assessing and reducing the community's carbon footprint, increasing utility efficiency and alternative energy production, and continuing to proactively address stormwater runoff and water quality.

Cost of Services and Infrastructure

- The cost of municipal services increases each year and exacerbates challenges in maintaining and expanding local services. With the sustained rapid growth experienced over the past decade in Altoona, these issues have manifested themselves in the form of additional public infrastructure capacity needed. Understanding the infrastructure and maintenance costs associated with new development will be important as the City considers new infrastructure investments moving forward. Fiscally responsible planning and investment will be a critical component of alleviating existing constraints to provide opportunities for sustainable long-term growth potential.

Unknown Global Pandemic Outcomes

- The long-term social and economic impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic are not yet known, and subsequently the data and trends described in this Plan may be significantly altered in coming years. Leveraging federal and state resources strategically, including stimulus recovery money, will be vital to overcome the implications of this ongoing event. These resources may also be utilized to progress toward other community goals, such as economic development, racial equity, environmental resiliency, and related quality of life opportunities as described in this Plan.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES

The issues and opportunities described above are reflected in the goals, objectives, policies, and strategies found in subsequent chapters of this Plan. Generally, goals, objectives, policies, and strategies are defined below:

- **Goals** are broad, advisory statements that express general public priorities about how the City should approach development issues. Goals are based on key issues and opportunities that are affecting the City.
- **Objectives** more specifically identify future direction. By accomplishing an objective, the City moves closer to achieving its goals.
- **Policies** are rules or courses of action implemented to achieve specific objectives. City staff and officials should use policies on a day-to-day basis when making decisions.
- **Strategies** provide detailed information regarding how to implement objectives, policies, and programs.

ALTOONA'S COMMUNITY PROFILE

Examining key demographic, housing, development, and economic indicators provides a baseline understanding of the City's existing situation and its opportunities for the future. A detailed and complete set of all data for the City of Altoona in comparison to neighboring communities, Eau Claire County, and the state, as required by Wis. Stats. §66.1001, is available in Appendix A: Data Inventory and Analysis. The following is a summary of Appendix A which highlights several key trends.

- Altoona experienced minimal population growth between 2000-2010, but that trend has shifted greatly over the past decade as the City grew by nearly 30% between 2010-2020. This Plan's growth projections factor in both periods of minimal and substantial growth, resulting in a projected population of 11,557 residents and 1,231 new households by the year 2042.
- Counter to the national trend, Altoona's population is younger than it was 20 years ago, and average household size has increased. This is a result of the rapid growth experienced over the past decade and the addition of many new young families in the community.
- Altoona's housing stock has also diversified over the past decade with an increase in two-family, multi-family, and senior housing units constructed, creating a much greater balance in total housing units in 2021 than previous decades. Overall, the City added over 1,400 new housing units between 2010-2021.
- The City's commercial and employment base has also grown and diversified over the past decade, in particular with the addition of approximately 900,000 square feet of new commercial and industrial space centered around the build-out of River Prairie, including several new large employers.
- Altoona's local economy is highly interconnected with the greater Eau Claire metropolitan area, which is reflected in the number of commuters who leave Altoona to work outside of the City, the number of small complimentary businesses and employers in the City, and the difference between the community's top occupational groups and local industries.
- Coupled with the sustained growth and development that have occurred over the past decade, the City's expenses for services, infrastructure, and staffing have also increased, in particular for public works, utilities, and public safety.

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT

To provide sound public policy guidance, a comprehensive planning process should incorporate inclusive public participation procedures to ensure that recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan reflect a broadly supported vision. Near the outset of this planning process, the City Council and Plan Commission adopted the City's Public Participation Plan by resolution. The following public involvement opportunities were conducted as part of this planning process. For more information on the public feedback gathered, see Appendix B.



Figure 2.1. Summary of Public Input Opportunities

Event	Date	Summary
Joint Plan Commission and City Council Kickoff Meeting	July 8, 2021	To kick off the planning process, a joint Plan Commission and City Council meeting was held to provide an overview of the process and gather insight on key issues and opportunities facing the City.
Stakeholder Focus Group Interviews	July 15 and 16, 2021	A total of eight Focus Group interviews with over 40 local stakeholders were held, centered around key topic areas that included: economic vitality, economic development, housing, transportation, environment and sustainability, community and neighborhood design, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.
Online Map Survey	July 15 – August 9, 2021	The City hosted an online map-based survey to gather input from residents on existing and future assets, growth areas, preservation areas, and transportation issues. The survey closed with 143 unique features added to the map and over 5,000 feature interactions.
Summer Concert Series Booth	Summer 2021	As part of the City's effort to market the public participation events held over the summer of 2021, promotional materials were provided to residents and visitors at River Prairie Center during the weekly summer concert series.
Visioning and Prioritization Public Workshop and Post-Workshop Online Survey	Workshop: August 5, 2021 Survey: August 5 – August 30, 2021	The first public workshop as part of the planning process aimed at gathering feedback from residents on their vision and priorities for the future. Approximately 30 people participated in the live event. A follow up online survey was also provided that featured the same questions posed during the live workshop. Just over 200 total people responded to the survey.
Scenario Planning Public Workshop (2) and Post-Workshop Online Survey	Workshop: September 28 and 29, 2021 Survey: October 15 – November 5, 2021	The second public workshop focused on different growth scenario options that the City could potentially see over the planning period. This featured both residential and commercial/industrial growth scenarios. Two nights of workshops were held. Approximately 50 people participated in the first live event for the public, while 15 local officials attended the second live event. A follow up online survey was also provided that featured the same questions posed during the live workshop. Just over 200 people responded to the survey.
Plan Commission Draft Review Meetings	January 25 and February 8, 2022	Two different Plan Commission meetings were held to review the draft plan, discuss key strategies, and gather feedback from commission members on policy decisions. Both meetings were interactive, featuring opportunities for discussion and questions throughout. The guidance provided by the Plan Commission was incorporated into the subsequent draft that was reviewed at the Public Open House and joint Plan Commission and City Council review meeting.
East Neighborhood Concept Plan	Workshop: February 17, 2022	Although focused on the specific development area east of the City, the workshop provided a hands-on and practical discussion regarding growth management and neighborhood design.
Public Open House Draft Review	May 18, 2022	
Joint Plan Commission and City Council Draft Review Meeting	May 19, 2022	
Public Hearing and Adoption	TBD	

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Chapter 3

LIVABILITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND HEALTH



CHAPTER 3: LIVABILITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND HEALTH



INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses several broad and interrelated elements that are critical to the long-term viability and success of the City of Altoona: Livability, Sustainability, and Health. Many Altoona residents enjoy a high quality of life thanks to first-rate public amenities, strong civic organizations and institutions, and popular community events. Additionally, the City plays an active role in promoting environmental sustainability best practices, social equity goals, and advancing public health initiatives at the local and regional levels. (A summary of the City's livability components and sustainability initiatives are found in Appendix A.) This chapter is intended to build on this strong foundation and advance current and new initiatives through setting ambitious goals, objectives, and policies related to livability, sustainability, and health. It also details a set of key recommendations aimed at achieving those goals.

While this chapter focuses specifically on Livability, Sustainability, and Health, these three topics are overarching in nature and influence nearly every other element of the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, references to these concepts and related themes are found throughout this Plan. This is by design, as they are inseparable from other Comprehensive Plan elements such as land use, natural resources, transportation, etc.

What is Livability?

Livability refers to the suitability of a place (town, city, or neighborhood) to support a high quality of life that contributes to holistic health and happiness of its residents. While livability is defined by each individual community, it often encompasses topics such as the built environment, housing options, physical and mental wellbeing, parks and open space, economic vitality, social infrastructure, cultural resources, safe transportation options, and more. Many of these are strongly related to concepts of sustainability, although livability tends to focus on the present, while sustainability also looks to the future.

What is Sustainability?

The term sustainability refers to a community's capacity to support the long-term health and welfare of its natural and human-made environment, as well as all forms of life. A sustainable community is focused not only on protecting natural resources and ecological systems, but also on ensuring a high quality of life for all residents, now and in the future. To move in the direction of sustainability, a community must recognize the interconnectedness of all things, as well as the impact their actions have on the greater region and the world.

A community can advance sustainability through a variety of strategies such as promoting comprehensive transportation networks and services; ensuring a variety of housing options throughout the community; investing in a strong economy that provides a diversity of local jobs, goods, and services; supporting well-designed development that preserves high-quality farmland and complements the natural environment; seeking out opportunities to reduce non-renewable energy consumption and waste; and generally by developing comprehensive solutions to resolving complex issues.



What is Public Health?

Like livability and sustainability, public health is a function of many interrelated topics. It is comprised of a large and complex network of social and physical influences such as land use, the environment, social norms, education, transportation, and health care. Collectively, the physical environment, built environment, and social construct of the community contribute to the overall public health of residents.

There are two common ways of measuring public health: physical health and mental health. Physical health is typically measured in life expectancy, obesity rates, chronic diseases, and other similar attributes. Mental health is harder to quantify, but typically consists of addiction/substance abuse, depression, dependency, etc. Further, another component that must be considered in the evaluation of a community's public health is access to services and equitable distribution of services. Health services can be cost prohibitive, inaccessible, and often not widely known by the people who may need them the most. Taking into consideration all of the factors listed above will provide the community with an ability to gain a full understanding of the existing public health situation.

Nearly every component of this Plan either directly or indirectly affects public health. Assessing and addressing existing conditions, needs, and evolving trends of the community public health are vital components to planning for the future of Altoona.

What is an Environmental Determinant of Health?

Collectively, the environmental factors (socioeconomic, built environment, natural environment, health behaviors and healthcare) that influence human health, including physical, chemical, and biological, and related behaviors make up the conditions that are referred to as environmental determinants of health. Anything that has an adverse effect on these determinants can impact the health and well-being of the entire population. Examples include limited access to clean water and sanitation, poor housing conditions, polluted air quality, frequent exposure to extreme weather, limited access to services, etc.

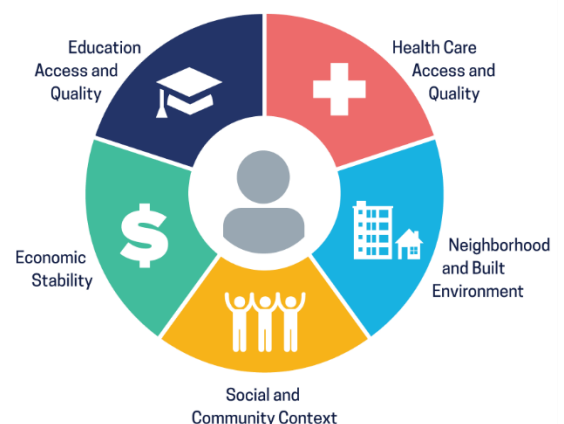
Negative impacts to environmental determinants can lead to increased risk for disease and higher mortality rates, which often manifest themselves in inequitable ways, adversely impacting vulnerable populations most. Overall, environmental determinants of health show the impacts that the surrounding environment has on public health outcomes of a population. Many components of this Plan and its recommendations aim to positively influence the community's environmental determinants of health.

What is Resilience?

In many planning efforts, the focus of resiliency is how to recover from disruptions such as extreme weather events. However, resiliency is not only responding and preparing for a singular crisis, but it should also focus on addressing the entire complex system in adapting to changing circumstances. Building resiliency is adapting and transforming to preserve some elements of the system, while allowing others to fade away, while still retaining the identity of the community. There are six foundations to building resilience:

- People: the power to envision and build a future of resilience resides with community members.
- System Thinking: developing an understanding of the complex, interconnected crises unfolding and how it has been addressed by other similar communities.

Figure 3.1. Environmental and Social Determinants of Health



Social Determinants of Health
Copyright-free

Healthy People 2030

Source: Healthy People 2030, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Retrieved April 19, 2022 from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health>

- Adaptability: an ongoing process, a community always has to adapt to changes striving to become resilient.
- Transformability: many challenges are so significant that it's not possible to simply adapt, instead transformative change may be needed.
- Sustainability: resilience needs to work for all community members, future generations, and ecosystems in order to be sustainable.
- Courage: it takes courage to confront challenging issues and take responsibility for a better collective future.

Resiliency is a fundamental issue and opportunity. As such, it is addressed throughout this Plan. Many components of system resilience are beyond the scope of just the City to correct or solve, however, Altoona can advance resilience at the local level, work with stakeholders at the regional level, and strive to create models that can be replicated at the state level and beyond. *(Source: The Community Resilience Reader, 2016)*

What Is Climate Resiliency?

Altoona is not immune to the extreme weather events and natural disasters that are intensifying worldwide. According to the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change Report (2020), Wisconsin has warmed 2.1°F and its annual precipitation has increased by 15% (4.5 inches) since the 1950s. In recent years, the state has also experienced increased frequency of extreme weather events, including tornadoes, flooding, and a polar vortex in 2019 that resulted one of the state's longest periods of sub-zero temperatures, with temperatures as low as -60°F in some parts of the state. Changes in both the "baseline" climate as well as increased frequency and intensity of extreme events cause critical stress on human and natural systems. Because of events like these, it has become a necessity for governments, emergency management operations, and the population at large to proactively prepare for these situations.

Climate resiliency is the capacity for a system to maintain functions in the face of these types of situations and to adapt, reorganize, learn, and evolve from them to be better prepared in the future. This can be done through creating inventories, assessing vulnerabilities and risks, evaluating options, prioritizing strategies, long-term planning, and implementation. All over the world, communities have invested in climate resiliency plans, simulations, tools, technical expertise, and infrastructure. The Altoona City Council has established "climate action" as a one of three planning lenses of the City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan, and improving resiliency is required for existing changes as well as those that are anticipated.

STRATEGIES SUMMARY

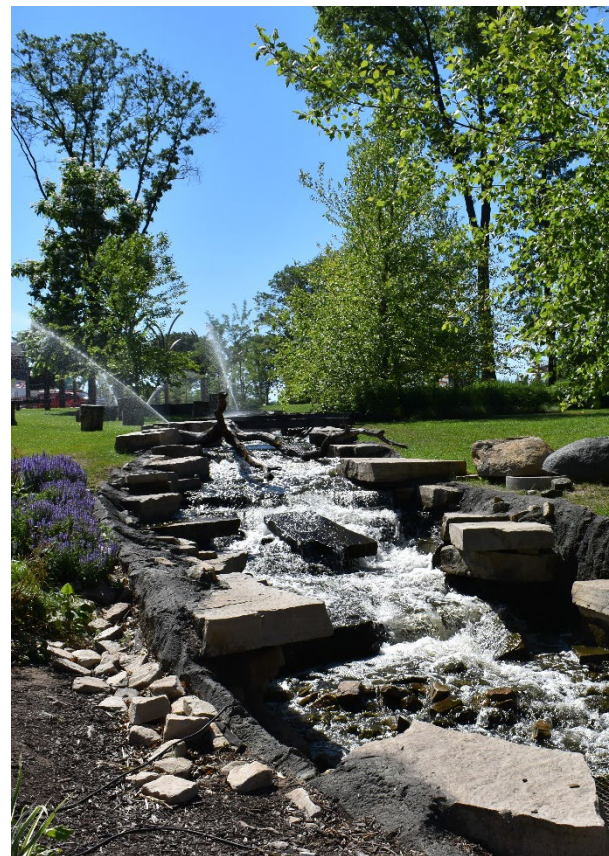
- Advance the City's role in sustainability and climate resiliency.
- Expand equitable and inclusive community engagement opportunities.
- Increase public health awareness and collaboration.
- Encourage the use of local and healthy foods in Altoona.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICES

Definitions of goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations are found in the Issues and Opportunities Chapter of this Plan.

Goals

1. Continue to build on and improve the quality of life in Altoona.
2. Proactively advance sustainability and expand climate resiliency through immediate action, planning, regional collaboration, targeted policies, and initiatives.
3. Proactively advance public health through planning, regional collaboration, targeted policies, and initiatives.



Objectives

1. Account for and adapt to changing climate conditions, including the impacts of these changes on the design and construction of new development and community facilities.
2. Recognizing the link between the built environment and public health outcomes, continue to work with public health organizations to improve housing, equity, education, food access, clean air, literacy, and other social determinants of health.
3. Recognize the co-dependency of environmental sustainability, public health, social equity, and resilience with characteristics of the built environment.
4. Develop and implement sustainable best practices and strategies in all future policies and public investments.
5. Promote multi-modal transportation opportunities and connections throughout the community to minimize the reliance on automobiles.
6. Ensure that the City's utility system has adequate capacity to accommodate projected future growth and avoid overbuilding that would require existing residents to carry the costs of unutilized capacity.
7. Strive for increased equitable civic engagement, community events, and provision of services.

Policies

1. Enable Altoona residents to have healthy and active lifestyles providing a compact development pattern, proximity to amenities and services, robust parks, recreation, and recreational trails, and by continuing to improve walkability and bikeability throughout Altoona, as recommended by the Altoona Place Plan.
2. Establish municipal and City-wide climate emissions and renewable energy goals as part of a Climate Action Plan.
3. Preserve environmental and open space corridors by prohibiting new development in these areas and integrating these natural features within and surrounding development.
4. Encourage a compact growth pattern, mixed use development, infill, and redevelopment to foster multi-modal transportation options, protection of natural resources, enable healthy lifestyles, and fiscal sustainability. Refer to Chapter 4 for more on this topic.
5. Develop sustainable infrastructure standards and preferred strategies so that developers understand what are acceptable for meeting transportation, landscape, water quality and quantity control objectives and related expectations.
6. Establish and pursue local climate adaption and resiliency mitigation strategies, and actively contribute to establishing and implementing regional plans.
7. Consider enhancing sustainability or climate resiliency training for in-house staff or consider hiring a new sustainability/climate resiliency coordinator to guide these activities.
8. Reduce runoff through the use of Best Management Practices such as rain barrels, infiltration swales, pervious pavement, rain gardens, and green roofs.
9. Reduce pavement/impervious surface area and utilize porous pavements wherever possible (streets, walkways, drives, parking lots, patios, etc.).
10. Expand the City's community engagement opportunities and foster long-term inclusive representation by residents.
11. Continue to integrate public art and cultural components in public spaces and work collaboratively with local groups to showcase regional efforts and consider a percentage for art in public projects.
12. Support the production and consumption of local and healthy foods.



13. Require the cleanup of brownfields, contaminated sites that threaten the public health, safety, and welfare.
14. Pursue becoming a designated Wisconsin Healthy Community through encouraging local efforts to improve community health and well-being in a cooperative, multi-sector approach.
15. Consider developing a “Health in All Policies” approach that aims to integrate public health in all decision-making processes.
16. Participate in Eau Claire County’s update of the Community Health Assessment and Eau Claire County Community Health Improvement Plan.
17. Adopt and enforce “dark sky” lighting requirements that defines maximum light outputs.

STRATEGIES

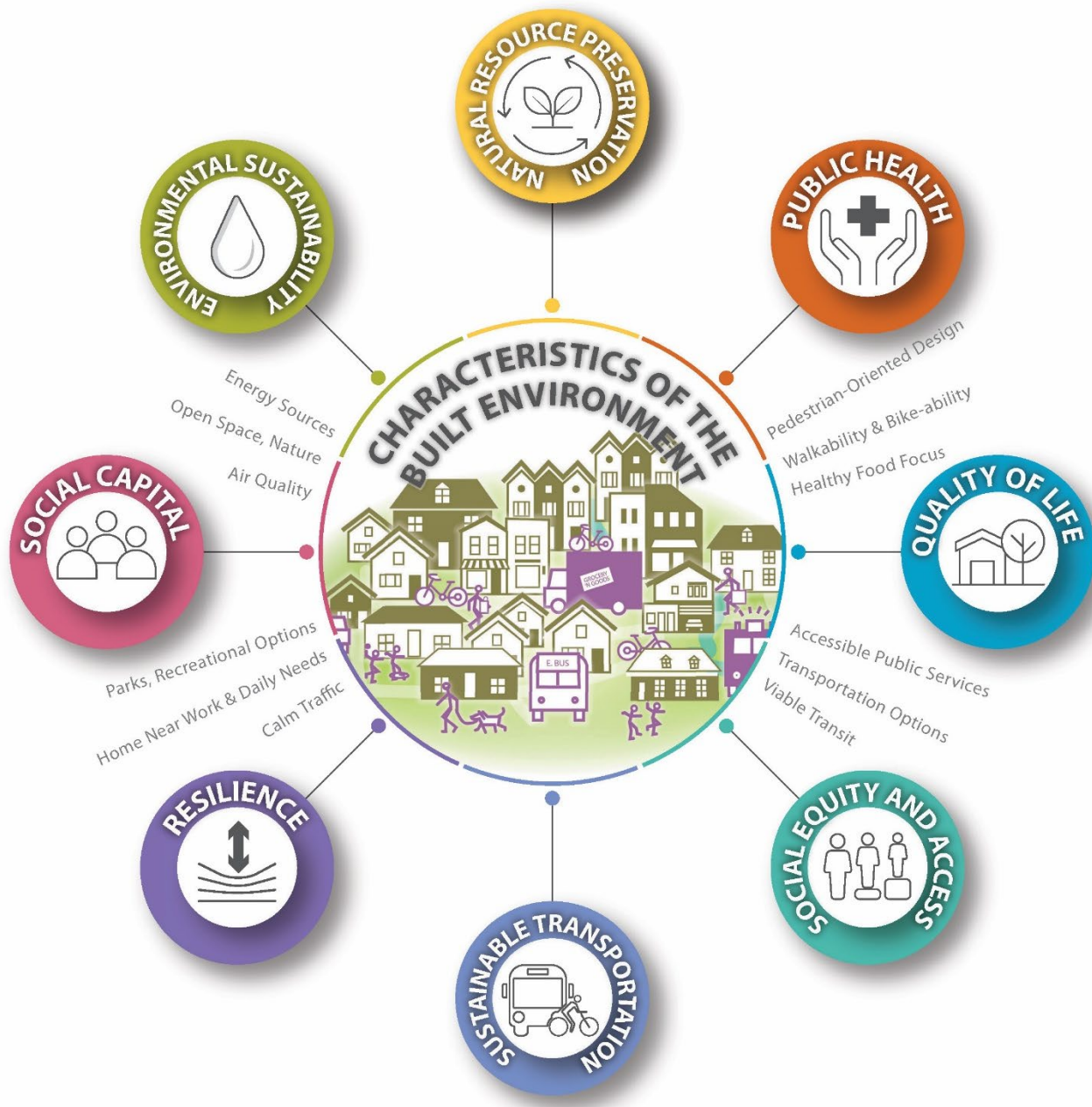


Figure 3.2. Characteristics of the Built Environment

Interrelationship Between the Built Environment and Altoona's Goals

The City recognizes the co-dependency of characteristics of the built environment with its goals related to environmental sustainability, public health, social equity, and resilience. The “built environment” means the manmade environment built for human activity; it includes neighborhoods, buildings, streets, sidewalks, parks, open spaces, trails, and more.

The Comprehensive Plan has many overarching goals ranging from increased housing types to natural resource preservation to promoting public health. Although the relationships between these goals may not be immediately apparent, many of these goals are directly related to the City's built environment. For example, creating a neighborhood that is highly walkable can advance many of the City's goals at the same time: a walkable neighborhood can promote environmental sustainability by reducing the overall use of cars, it can support public health by making it easy for people to incorporate walking into their daily routines, it can promote equity by making local destinations accessible for people who do not drive or have reliable access to a vehicle, and it can support resilience by providing transportation alternatives as conditions change. A neighborhood that is not walkable could actively work against many of these same goals. Consider the design of a shopping center as another example. A shopping center can be a great economic benefit to a city, but if it includes a massive surface parking lot in front, it can work against the City's goals, as it might create significant stormwater runoff, discourage walking, encourage driving, discourage human interaction, limit greenspace, and consume a lot of land that is only used for parking. A mixed use, pedestrian-oriented shopping area that encourages walking, interaction, and stormwater management (such as River Prairie) can instead advance the City's objectives, while still achieving similar or better economic benefits.

Therefore, in order to achieve this Plan's vision and goals, it will be essential to lead with the built environment. As private and public investments occur, the City must consider how the buildings, streets, neighborhoods, and developments it approves may advance or hinder the City's objectives, particularly as they relate to environmental sustainability, public health, social equity, and resilience.

Advance the City's Role in Sustainability and Climate Resiliency

In 2008, the City of Altoona adopted a goal of replacing 25% of the City's municipal operations with renewable resources by 2025. However, the City and its partners have fallen behind in data tracking and pursuit of this goal. With data showing that Wisconsin will become wetter and hotter over the next 30 years, it is recommended that the City take ambitious steps to do its part to counteract climate change and respond to a changing climate in the short term and over the next decade and beyond.

Altoona has a key role to play in advancing sustainability and climate resiliency in the community, however the most successful progress in these areas generally involves multiple parties including elected officials, municipal staff, school districts, neighboring and overlapping governments, other local groups and organizations, the development and building community, and residents. The City is fortunate to have many opportunities for local and regional partnerships on these topics, including the City of Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, and the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. Overall, the City doesn't need to reinvent this process. There are many examples from around the state that can serve as models for Altoona including the Dane County Climate Action Plan, Eau Claire Energy Action Plan, La Crosse Climate Action Plan, and others.

The following outlines recommended steps for advancing the City's role and continuing to collaborate with regional partners to advance these topics in the region:

Collect, evaluate, and monitor data. This should occur as part of a collaborative effort with local utility providers and other regional entities to gather important benchmark data, analyzing how different policies could impact this data, and establish processes for long-term tracking and updating of the data sets. For example, these data sets could include county or regional data on emission outputs, utility provider data on local energy consumption, and municipal data from energy audits of City-owned facilities.

Determine priorities and set ambitious goals. Altoona must determine its own priorities and goals related to sustainability and climate resiliency. These priorities should focus around committing to social and environmental equity, adaptability to a changing climate, providing economic benefits, improving health, and enhancing the environment. Ambitious goals the City can strive to achieve could include increasing renewable energy production and capacity, striving to become carbon-neutral, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving energy efficiency and consumption, enhancing surface or ground water quality, etc.

Develop an action plan. It is recommended that Altoona use the performance measures, priorities, and goals to create concrete steps that help achieve goals and advance priorities. These steps will provide the framework for future decision making and planning efforts undertaken by the City and its partners.

Implementation. Advancing each action step will require resources, collaboration, information sharing, and community buy-in. Altoona can lead this effort locally through its own budgeting process, capital planning, grant applications, and public engagement and education efforts, however it will take regional partnerships, advocacy groups, and the private sector to bridge gaps in what the City alone can do.

There are several specific ways that Altoona can advance the steps outlined above these include:

- Developing a City of Altoona Climate Action Plan and assisting the City of Eau Claire in the implementation of its Renewable Energy Action Plan. (See text box.)
- Working with regional entities to create a Chippewa Valley Climate Action Plan, which would define the specific steps local governments will take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the region.
- Creating local programs and policies that incentivize and minimize hurdles in the private sector implementing best practices.

Climate Action Plan

The purpose of a Climate Action Plan is to set ambitious carbon reduction and renewable energy goals for the community and develop an action plan for how to accomplish them. This process helps chart a course for how the City, its residents, public sector partners, and the private sector can work together to make these goals a reality. Key components of a Renewable Energy Action Plan include:

- Setting carbon reduction and renewable energy goals for the next 10 years.
- Developing strategies on how the community can advance and meet these goals.
- Establish partnerships with overlapping jurisdictions, local businesses and community organizations, utility providers, and others.
- Identifying funding sources for implementation.
- Creating the framework for future programs, policies, and decision making.



Examples could include density or height bonuses for LEED certified buildings or minimum parking reductions for inclusion of electric vehicle charging stations.

- Fostering local champions, community understanding, and advocacy groups that can help lead efforts the City cannot.
- Increasing in-house staff knowledge, training, and understanding on these topics.
- Leveraging county, state, and federal resources to bridge financial gaps.
- Becoming a member of a third-party environmental community program, such as U.S. Green Building Council LEED for Cities and Communities, or at a minimum, pursue the efforts outlined to advance community-wide initiatives. This includes developing, establishing, and executing a proven sustainability framework at the community level.
- Assisting Eau Claire County in the implementation of the Eau Claire County Hazard Mitigation Plan and other related plans.
- Partnering with UW-Extension, Eau Claire County, neighboring communities and school districts, and local groups to organize opportunities to educate the public on sustainability and climate resiliency.
- Creating an annual sustainability award that promotes businesses, organizations, and individuals to advance sustainable objectives.
- Integrating waste management reduction and recycling education programs in the community.



Development Policy is Integral to Future Climate Stability

The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its 6th Assessment in March 2022, underscoring the urgency of systemic action on climate impact mitigation and resiliency measures. Like those that came before, the 6th Report thoroughly examines current research on the climate and sources of climate-affecting emissions and conditions. This report also summarizes various strategies and actions to reduce climate-altering emissions and improve resilience to expected changes to the climate, and it identifies those actions likely to result in the most positive desired effects.

The Report functions as the latest summary of the relationship between city planning choices and climate impacts, including land use, transportation, and housing. Among the 60 identified actions that could change individual climate impacts, individual mobility/transportation choices have the largest potential to reduce carbon footprints. This is accomplished through prioritizing car-free mobility by walking and cycling and adopting electric mobility.

Strategies that can deliver significant public health benefits and lower greenhouse gas emissions include compact cities – with shortened distances between housing and jobs – and interventions that support a modal shift away from private automobiles towards walking, cycling, and low-emissions public (or shared) transportation. Many residents have little choice but to drive to reach everyday destinations, due to the distance between destinations and the character of the infrastructure between. But this inefficient city layout is not the inevitable result of market forces. Exclusionary planning rules and exclusive automobile infrastructure policies have led to both car dependence and residential segregation.

Low-carbon cities are (1) co-located with medium-to-high densities of housing, jobs, and commerce; (2) have high mix of land uses; (3) have high connectivity of streets; and (4) offer high levels of accessibility, distinguished by relatively low travel distances and travel times enabled by multiple modes. These characteristics are referred collectively as “compact and walkable urban form.” This form of urban development has many co-benefits, including improved mental and physical health, lower resource demand, and reserves land for natural areas, agriculture, forestry, and other rural land uses.

A dispersed and auto-centric urban form is strongly correlated with high greenhouse gas emissions, and it is characterized by separated land uses (especially housing and jobs), low street density, large block sizes, and low urban densities. Separated and low densities of employment, retail, and housing increase average travel distances for both work and leisure, and make active transport a challenge. Since **cities are systems**, urban form has interrelated implications across energy, building, transportation, land use, and individual behavior. Compact and walkable urban form enables effective mitigation and encourages more sustainable and healthy behavior, while auto-centric urban form locks in high levels of energy use and resource consumption, low levels of physical activity, and social isolation.

Established cities that are dispersed and auto-centric must focus on creating a modal shift from personal automobiles to active transportation modes and public transportation to reduce emissions, as well as focus on infilling and densifying development. The use of green infrastructure will be essential to offset residual emissions that cannot be reduced because their urban form is already established and difficult to change.

In order to be most effective, the Report urges cities to employ multiple climate strategies at once, stating, “Urban scale interventions that implement multiple strategies concurrently through policy packages are more effective and have greater emissions savings than when single interventions are implemented separately. This is because a citywide strategy can have cascading effects across sectors, that have multiplicative effects on greenhouse gas emissions reduction within and outside a city’s administrative boundaries. Therefore, city-scale strategies can reduce more emissions than the net sum of individual interventions, particularly if multiple scales of governance are included.”

Select summaries from the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 6th Assessment Report, 2022.
www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/

Expand Community Engagement Opportunities

The City of Altoona plays an active role in utilizing a variety of methods and tools to keep residents involved, including social media channels, websites, newspaper articles, flyers, and newsletters. Additionally, there are numerous events throughout the year that provide opportunities for the community to get together for recreation and educational purposes. It is recommended that Altoona continue to diversify its public engagement opportunities, especially related to engagement of younger residents (i.e., under 25 years old) and underrepresented populations. This can be done through partnerships with the leaders of local organizations, churches, clubs, the School District, and other groups. The City should work with all of these groups to continue to increase diverse community events and celebrations, and establish new educational opportunities related to sustainability, equity, ethnic and racial diversity, and more. Through this engagement, the City can help foster local champions and advocacy groups to advance community goals and play a pivotal role in implementing action steps of this Plan.

Increase Public Health Awareness and Collaboration

The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute will designate a municipality as a “Wisconsin Healthy Community” to recognize and encourage local efforts that improve the overall community’s health and wellbeing. The designation also aims to promote collaboration centered around health improvement.



This Plan recommends that Altoona consider pursuing its own Wisconsin Healthy Community designation by highlighting its work and partnerships related to advancing public health in the community. As described earlier in this chapter, the land use pattern, transportation infrastructure, local and regional park and trail system, and community facilities all play a large component in the promotion and sustainability of improving public health. This step can also provide the City with a greater understanding of health outcomes, determinants, and equity. The overarching goals of the Wisconsin Healthy Community Designation program are reflective of the community’s overarching goals in this Plan.

Additionally, the City can continue to build on the successes of Eau Claire County, which has been designated as a Gold-level Wisconsin Health Community. It is recommended that the City work collaboratively to address and advance public health initiatives in the region through the implementation of the Eau Claire County Community Health Improvement Plan. In working with Eau Claire County and other regional stakeholders, Altoona can directly assist in implementing the many different strategies of this plan through education and programming, data collection and sharing, developing policies, and strengthening partnerships. This could include fostering youth leadership programs that can assist in leading health initiatives, building awareness of mental health programming, increasing local access to services like mobile clinics or medicine disposal locations, and others.

Finally, Altoona can utilize policies to advance public health through the development and adoption of a “Health in All Policies” approach that integrates public health in all decision-making processes. A model for this practice is the established partnership between the City of Watertown Department of Health and Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation which fosters an understanding of the local public health situation, utilizes metrics to track progress, and informs new policies using this understanding. This Comprehensive Plan embraces the “Health in All Policies” approach and recognizes the interrelationship between public health, city planning, and the built environment, and it acknowledges the ability of communities to influence public health through policy decisions. Moving forward, all City

planning processes and policies should embrace this concept in order to foster improved and equitable public health outcomes in the future.

Encourage the Use of Local and Healthy Foods

Most of the food consumed in the United States today is transported many miles before it reaches our tables. Various opportunities to promote locally grown foods can help reverse this unsustainable system. Some of the ways in which the City can contribute to these efforts include the following:

Farmers Market: Local farmers markets provide a direct means for farmers to sell their products to the consumer, contribute to the local economy, and encourage a sense of community. Altoona hosts its own Farmers Market in River Prairie each summer. The weekly event may become a success in providing local farmers with direct access to customers in the area and attracting people to River Prairie. The City of Eau Claire also hosts a Farmers Market, which attracts vendors and patrons from around the region. It is recommended that the City continue to establish, promote, and expand its local Farmers Market, in addition to leveraging the proximity of the Eau Claire Farmers Market to connect local food producers with local customers.

Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs: A CSA program allows farmers to sell shares of their products directly to consumers in advance of the growing season. Such programs encourage healthful food choices, support local farmers, and relieve some of the burdens and uncertainties associated with conventional marketing approaches. There are several CSA programs operating throughout the region. It is recommended that CSA programs be expanded within the City to help advance the local economy through direct connections to local markets. A few key strategies to fostering new CSAs is through establishing connections with surrounding farmers or existing CSA operations, connecting with organizations like FairShare CSA Coalition that specializes in connecting farmers with customers, and providing educational materials to residents.

Restaurants and Food Stores: Numerous restaurants, cafes, and bakeries throughout Wisconsin practice purchasing, serving, and promoting locally grown foods. There are several existing restaurants in Altoona and throughout Eau Claire County that currently use and promote locally sourced products. Increasing restaurants' use of locally sourced foods in Altoona can be leveraged to market the community and the region. It is recommended that this be done through encouraging local restaurants and grocery stores to purchase and sell local and organic foods, partnering in marketing or recruitment efforts such as promoting and facilitating the development of a smaller organic/local food cooperative in the City, or through the creation of a supportive planning and zoning environment for further restaurant and food store development.

Promote and Incorporate Community Gardens: Over the past decade, several community gardens have started to emerge within Eau Claire County and Altoona. Overall, establishing these gardens is helping to promote consumption of local foods, which helps increase biodiversity, protect wildlife habitat, provide more stormwater infiltration, reduce energy consumption from commercial food production, and help foster local sustainability efforts. Community gardens also provide neighborhood gathering places, promote community interaction, enhance health, and promote environmental education.





Chapter 4

LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER



CHAPTER 4: LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER



INTRODUCTION

This chapter is intended to outline the goals, objectives, and policies related to land use and community character in a community that has experienced rapid and sustained growth over the past decade. Recommendations serve to guide the future preservation and development of public and private lands in and around Altoona. Background information, data, and existing plans related to land use and community character can be found in Appendix A.

Compact Growth

This chapter advocates for reserving land for compact, City growth and preserving open space and retaining rural characteristics in the areas outside of the City's growth area. Pursuing "compact growth" means employing growth patterns and policies that use land more efficiently and thoughtfully, thus reducing the City's need to grow outward. Outward growth consumes farmland, open space, and sensitive environmental areas, and compact development patterns can make the most of substantial public investments in water and sewer lines, roads, emergency services, and more. Furthermore, compact growth reinforces many of the City's other goals. For example, compact growth:

- Supports walkable neighborhoods by placing everyday destinations closer together.
- Makes public transportation and other forms of non-car transportation more viable.
- Reduces the total and per-person costs of infrastructure by providing services in a smaller geographic area.
- Preserves open space, farmland, and natural resources by moderating the pace of urban expansion.
- Bring vitality to neighborhoods and districts by enabling mixed use development.
- Supports housing affordability and choice by supporting a wider range of housing formats.



In addition, directing development to the City (and not to rural areas) is essential for providing an environmentally sustainable development pattern and for preserving open space and agricultural lands. Cities and villages such as Altoona are designed to efficiently provide essential public services, including sanitary sewer, public water, storm sewer, sidewalks and bike facilities, high levels of emergency services, street maintenance, parks and recreation, and viable public transit options. Unincorporated areas (i.e., towns), which are typically characterized by large residential lots and unsewered development, cannot provide services as efficiently and consume *significantly more* land and infrastructure as compared to carefully planned urban development within the City. Furthermore, town development, when located adjacent to the City, can often create physical barriers to logical City expansion. In order to preserve its urban growth area, this Plan recommends that the City establish a minimum lot size of 40 acres within in the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction. Areas planned for urban growth area depicted on the Future Land Use Map (Map 3).

Controlled, well-planned, diverse, and compact growth are all key components to the health, viability, and sustainability of the future of Altoona. Compact growth can be achieved by forwarding a combination of mutually reinforcing policies, including those that encourage development to grow up (rather than out), promote infill and redevelopment within



older parts of the City, support increased residential densities, and advance upfront neighborhood planning. These policies are integrated throughout this chapter and the Comprehensive Plan.

Mixed Use Development

Additionally, this chapter advocates for mixed use development in the City's growth, infill, and redevelopment areas. Mixing land uses means locating homes, stores, restaurants, offices, schools, parks, and other types of development near one another— within the same building or on the same block. This is in contrast to separating uses, which results in large geographic areas where only one type of use is present. Mixed use neighborhoods support the City's vision and supporting goals in many ways. Mixed use neighborhoods:

- Enable residents to live closer to their jobs or shopping or other destinations, meaning they can take other forms of transportation or drive their car a shorter distance
- Support economic vitality by supporting support strong tax base and higher assessed value per acre, which is important given the finite land area available for development.
- Promote a higher level of activity at more times of day, providing more foot traffic and a stronger customer base for local businesses.

STRATEGIES SUMMARY

- Rewrite the City's Zoning Ordinance to increase user-friendliness, conform to changes in state and federal law, ensure predictable and high-quality neighborhood and site design, improve mobility options, and provide increased opportunities for compact development and mixing of land uses.
- Promote infill development and the redevelopment of key sites and along key corridors.
- Ensure new development is high-quality and matches the established aesthetic design preferences of the community.
- Integrate Traditional Neighborhood Design and mixed use development in both new development and redevelopment.
- Ensure land uses support the community facility, transportation, economic development, and other objectives of this Plan.
- Develop a growth phasing plan.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICES

Definitions of goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations are found in the Issues and Opportunities Chapter of this Plan.

Goals

1. Promote a future land use pattern that accommodates a compact mix of uses, densities, land use types, and affordability levels, while preserving and enhancing natural resources, community character, and high quality of life.
2. Preserve and enhance Altoona's unique features that contribute to its small-town community character.

Objectives

1. Support efficient land use patterns that limit non-municipal served development patterns, preserve open space, facilitate human interaction, advance economic growth, and foster increased sustainability, climate resiliency, and equity.
2. Thoroughly integrate infrastructure, utility, and public facility capacity and resources in the development review process.
3. Foster new economic and housing opportunities through a balanced approach to redevelopment, infill development, and new development.
4. Protect the City's long-term growth interests beyond its existing municipal boundaries and within its Extraterritorial Jurisdiction by limiting new development until land is annexed into the City.
5. Preserve the resources that contribute to Altoona's character, including waterfront areas, parks and open spaces, environmental corridors, trail systems, and community entryways.
6. Foster a sense of place within the built environment and create memorable places designed for people and interactions.

Policies

1. Follow the future land use recommendations that are mapped on the Future Land Use Map (Map 3) and described in this Plan when reviewing new rezoning requests and making detailed land use decisions.
2. Continue to require that all new development in the City connect to sanitary sewer and public water systems and discourage development outside of the current City limits until sewer and water services are available.
3. Practice fiscal sustainability by encouraging infill and redevelopment to utilize existing infrastructure, and by controlling new development to areas adjacent to existing development and where logical extensions to streets, sewer lines, and water lines may occur.
4. Require compact, Traditional Neighborhood Design (see the Housing Chapter for more information) to better manage the rate of community expansion, preserve farmland, and protect natural resources.
5. Require detailed development plans, neighborhood plans, or corridor plans prior to the platting and development of land (See an example process for this in the text box below).
6. New neighborhoods should contain a wide mix of housing formats, costs, and tenancy in order to create well-balanced and varied neighborhoods. Each neighborhood should accommodate individuals and households of all sizes, ages, income levels, and lifestyle.
7. New residential developments should be planned within cohesive and thoughtfully-planned neighborhoods, not as standalone developments.
8. Disperse higher-density residential development throughout the community, rather than creating large concentrations only in a few locations.
9. Require all proposed residential developments to dedicate land, or pay a fee in lieu thereof, for public park, recreation, and open space acquisition and development.
10. Conduct a full rewrite of the City's Zoning Ordinance to be consistent with recent changes to state and federal law, evolving market trends, and the goals and objectives of this Plan. Examples include enabling smaller single family lot sizes, increasing both small-scale and higher-density multi-family opportunities, integrating design and landscaping standards, and promoting mixed use in all commercial districts.



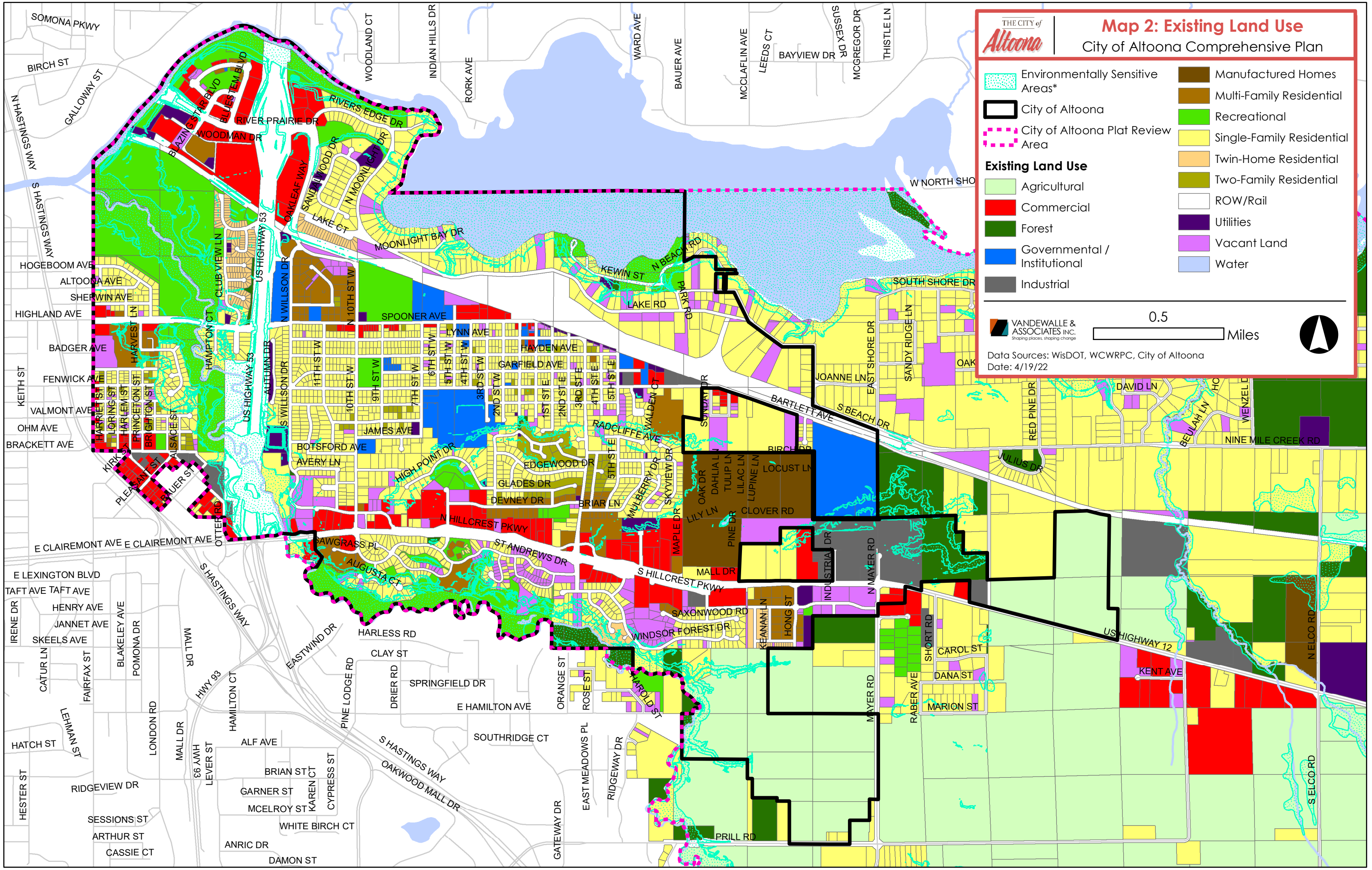
11. Work with Eau Claire County, the City of Eau Claire, and the Town of Washington on future land use planning within the City's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction to promote intergovernmental cooperation and a unified future planning of development and services. Seek intergovernmental agreements with all surrounding municipalities.
12. Coordinate with the School District on development projects and future planning of needed facilities.
13. Integrate health outcomes and determinants into all future land use planning efforts by including health impact studies as part of small area, corridor, and master planning. Partner with Eau Claire County to integrate health impact best practices in these plans.
14. Require and provide incentives for sustainable building and site design techniques, particularly progressive stormwater management using best management practices. Require grading and stormwater management plans for all new development.

EXISTING LAND USE

An accurate depiction of Altoona's existing land use pattern is the first step in planning for a desired future land use pattern. Map 2 depicts the existing land uses within the City's boundaries and Extraterritorial Jurisdiction as of 2022.

Existing Land Use Map Categories

Existing Land Use Category	Existing Land Use Description
Agricultural	Agricultural uses, farmsteads, open lands and, single family residential development with densities at 1 dwelling unit per 40 or more acres.
Single family Residential	Single family residential development served by public water and sewer utilities in the city and single family residential development on private well and septic systems in the Town of Washington.
Two-Family Residential and Twin-Home Residential	Two-family residential development (2 dwelling units) typically developed as a two-flat, or duplex, twin-home.
Multi-Family Residential	Mostly multi-family residential buildings of three or more dwelling units.
Manufactured Home Residential	Single family mobile home dwellings, and the associated sanitary, washing, recreational, and office facilities to service mobile home dwellings.
Commercial	Indoor commercial, office, and retail land uses.
Industrial	Indoor industrial, assembly, manufacturing, and warehousing land uses.
Government and Institutional	Small and large-scale public facilities such as City Hall, Library, Public Works, and other government buildings.
Utilities	Small and large-scale public, quasi-public, and private utilities and stormwater management facilities.
Recreational	Public parks, recreational areas, open space, trails, greenways, and conservancy lands, or private recreational-based businesses with significant open space, such as a golf course.
Environmental Corridor	Per the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, these areas include slopes greater than 20%, identified WisDNR wetlands, FEMA 100-year floodplain, and surface water.
Forest	Lands of predominantly mature tree canopies. Some of these areas are protected within existing Environmentally Sensitive Areas.
Vacant Subdivided Land	Mostly open spaces that have been subdivided or platted and are ready to be developed, including residential, business/office, or industrial land uses.
Surface Water	Lakes, rivers, and perennial streams per Eau Claire County mapping.
Rights-of-Way	Areas reserved for public infrastructure and uses such as transportation facilities, utilities, and green infrastructure.



THE CITY of

Altoona

Map 2: Existing Land Use

City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan

Environmentally Sensitive Areas*

City of Altoona

City of Altoona Plat Review Area

Existing Land Use

Agricultural

Commercial

Forest

Governmental / Institutional

Industrial

Manufactured Homes

Multi-Family Residential

Recreational

Single-Family Residential

Twin-Home Residential

Two-Family Residential

ROW/Rail

Utilities

Vacant Land

Water

VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES INC.

Shaping places, shaping change

0.5

Miles

Data Sources: WisDOT, WCWRPC, City of Altoona

Date: 4/19/22

ALTERNATIVE GROWTH SCENARIO PLANNING

In part due to the City's rapid growth experienced over the past decade and the City's desire to grow most efficiently moving forward, an alternative growth scenario planning exercise was completed as a component to this Plan. The objective of this exercise was to analyze the impacts of various long-term growth policies to help make informed decisions today and in the future, in addition to communicating and educating the community on the impacts of these decisions. This process included multiple phases:

- Inventory of existing land uses, growth patterns, and analysis of potential infill and redevelopment opportunities.
- Future population, housing, and employment projections to the year 2042.
- Review of the City's fiscal cost and revenue patterns.
- Calculation of the land needed to accommodate each growth scenario.
- Mapping of each alternative and the estimating the amount of land needed to accommodate each.
- Development of alternative growth scenario graphics for both residential and commercial/industrial.

Each alternative growth scenario map provided a tool utilized during various public input components of the planning process to gather community feedback on future growth policies and scenarios. The alternative growth scenarios developed included the following:

Residential Alternative Growth Scenarios

- Scenario 1: Low Density
- Scenario 2: Altoona Baseline Density
- Scenario 3: Mixed Density

Commercial/Industrial Alternative Growth Scenarios

- Scenario 1: Minimal Growth
- Scenario 2: Moderate Growth
- Scenario 3: Significant Growth

To develop each residential alternative, it was projected that the City of Altoona would grow by 2,906 new residents and 1,231 new housing units over the next 20 years. It was also estimated that potentially 448 new dwelling units could be accommodated through infill and redevelopment taking place. This left an estimated 803 new dwelling units needed in growth areas beyond the City's existing boundary (i.e. greenfield development). The dwelling units per acre and development makeup assumptions were created for study purposes only to estimate land use demand. Below is a summary of each residential growth scenario.

Figure 4.1. Residential Alternative Growth Scenarios

	Residential Low Density	Altoona Baseline Density	Mixed Density
Dwelling Units Per Acre	1.5	3.0	6.0
Development Makeup	100% Single family	70% Single family 18% Two-Family 12% Multi-Family	70% Single family* 18% Two-Family* 12% Multi-Family*
Acres Required to Meet Projected Demand (800 new dwelling units)	535	268	135

**Assumed higher density development for all residential unit types than the baseline alternative.*

A slightly different approach was used to develop the commercial and industrial alternative growth scenarios. Altoona has experienced a substantial amount of this type of new development over the past decade, with most of it occurring within River Prairie. It is unlikely that the City would be able to replicate this scale of development in the future, so each scenario incorporates different levels of anticipated development to analyze land consumption and prioritize future economic, fiscal, and land use priorities. One consistent metric was used in each scenario, the amount of infill and redevelopment square footage that could potentially be accommodated within the City’s existing boundary (300,000 square feet). Below is a summary of each commercial/industrial alternative growth scenario.

Figure 4.2. Commercial/Industrial Alternative Growth Scenarios

	Minimal	Moderate	Significant
Total Square Footage Demand	350,00	844,000	1,341,000
New Square Feet Needed	50,000-100,000	500,000	1,000,000
Estimated New Jobs Created	250-400	650-1,000	1,000-1,600
Acres Required to Accommodate Each Alternative	36	135	282

Two public workshops and a follow-up online survey were conducted as part of this process. Each input opportunity aimed to educate the public and elected officials on the implications of future growth decisions, explore different potential outcomes, and provide feedback on each. Through these events, the residential scenario most preferred was Mixed Density and the commercial/industrial scenario most preferred was Minimal Growth. These results helped inform the development of the Future Land Use Map, policies within the Plan, and the East Neighborhood Plan. For all results from these events, see Appendix B.

Figure 4.3. Alternative Residential Planning Scenarios

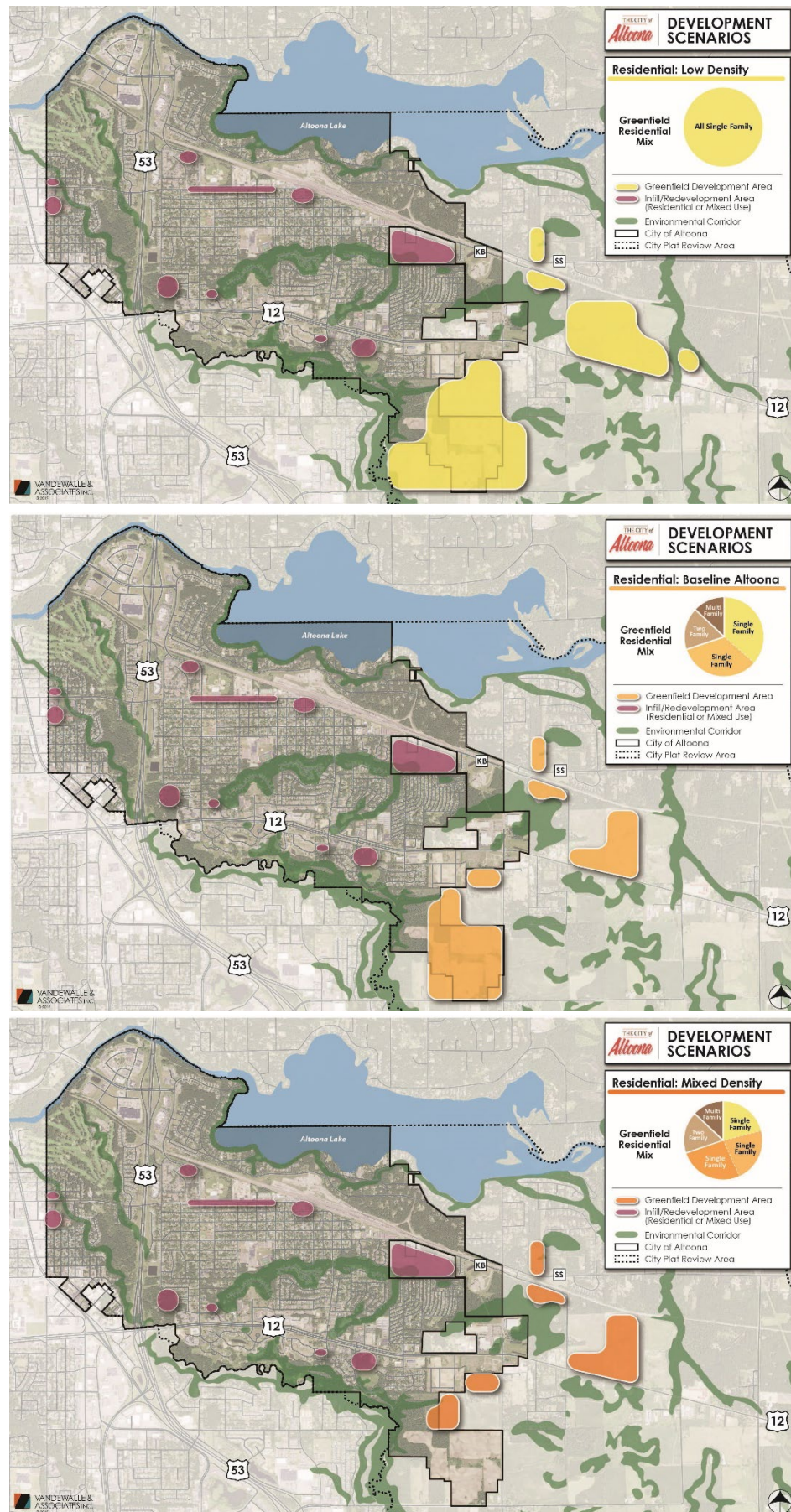
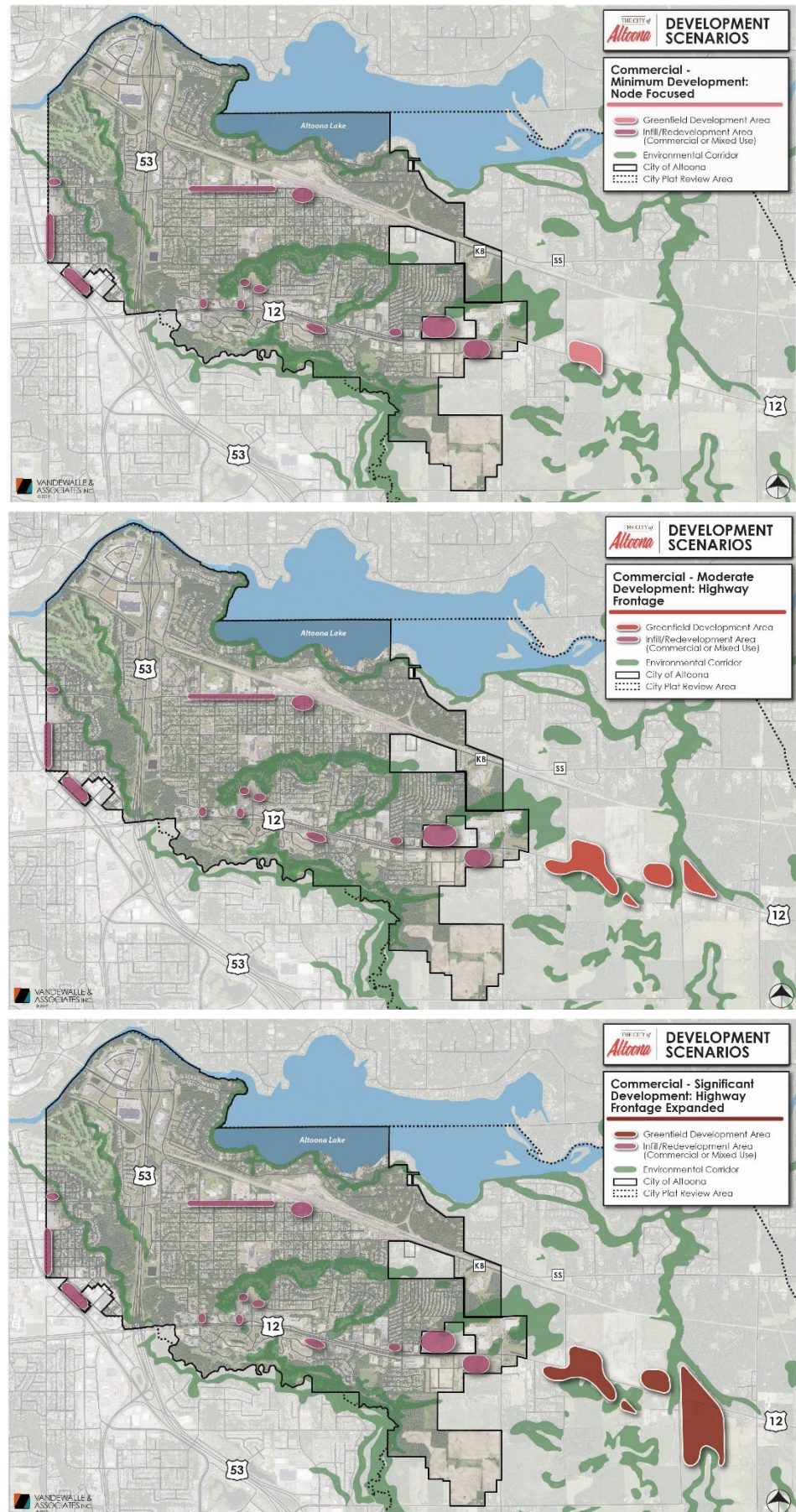


Figure 4.4. Alternative Commercial/Industrial Planning Scenarios



FUTURE LAND USE

Growth Considerations and Challenges

When developing Altoona's Future Land Use Map, an important first step was to analyze the various factors that influence where the community can or should grow. Topography, drainage basins, natural features, public lands, utility capacity and availability, transportation connections, and neighboring jurisdictions all pose opportunities and constraints to Altoona's future growth.

Natural Resources and Topography

Much of the City is bounded by surface water – specifically Lake Altoona, Otter Creek, and the Eau Claire River. These present the logical extent of future City growth to the north, west, and southwest. Additionally, Lake Altoona, Otter Creek, and the Eau Claire River each have environmental protection areas surrounding and contributing to them and present topographic challenges in some areas. There are also a few environmental protection areas running through the City and along the eastern edge of the growth area. Both protection of natural resources and topographic constraints must be considered as the City grows.

Municipal Service Potential

Maps 1 show the City's 2021 Sewer Service Area (SSA) Boundary. This boundary, which includes the City and portions of the Town of Washington, depicts the area planned for urban development with a full range of services including public sanitary sewer, public water supply and distribution systems, higher levels of fire and police protection, solid waste collection, urban drainage facilities and streets with curbs and gutters, streetlights, neighborhood facilities such as parks and schools, and urban transportation systems. The SSA focuses on sewer and water utilities and is a process designed to anticipate the region's future needs for water infrastructure for cost-effective and environmentally sound planning. It is generally understood that areas within the SSAs that are not currently located in the City of Altoona will be annexed into the City prior to development in order to access urban services.

Water capacity and public services also need to be considered in planning for future growth. As of 2022, the City was actively permitting additional sites for new well locations to help serve the growth experienced over the last decade and future growth anticipated over the planning period. Despite improvements in system efficiency, per capita water consumption has been increasing due primarily to the use of lawn irrigation systems.

The City completed a space-needs study in 2021 to analyze the City's future public service needs in terms of facilities and employees. The City identified that additional staff and several new or expanded key public facilities are needed over planning period (See the Community Facilities section in Appendix A). Balancing future growth with the needs and constraints of public facilities, infrastructure, and resources will be vital to maintaining long-term fiscal sustainability for the City.

Transportation Connections

Altoona has historically grown outward from the railroad yard near the center of the City. The railroad presents challenges, as roads that cross the tracks are limited. Additionally, as development has continued to the south and east, traffic and access points on USH 12 have increased. Future north-south and east-west collector road connections will be needed within growth areas to help increase community connectivity (See the Transportation Chapter for more information).



Neighboring Jurisdictions

Any future growth of the City beyond its existing municipal boundary will require annexation. The policies and growth patterns of neighboring jurisdictions shape how and where the City can grow. For example, if new Town subdivisions are developed within Altoona's future growth area, this could cause impediments to future City growth and orderly development. Both the Town of Washington and City of Eau Claire border Altoona, and their respective Comprehensive Plans and existing land use patterns were reviewed in the development of the City of Altoona's Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map. Utilizing intergovernmental agreements to plan for these key growth areas will help provide direction and coordination in these efforts.

Future Land Use Categories

Map 3 provides recommended future land uses in the City of Altoona into the categories listed below. These future land use categories and the designation of property on the Future Land Use Map represent the desired future pattern of development in the City. It is important to note that these future land use categories do not directly reflect zoning; however, they are intended to be compatible with the City's zoning districts.

Not all land shown for development on the Future Land Use maps will be immediately appropriate for annexations, rezoning, and other land use approvals following adoption of this Plan. Given service demands and other factors, careful consideration to the amount, mix, and timing of development is essential. Altoona advocates the phased development of land that focuses growth in areas that can be efficiently served with transportation, utilities, public services, and community facilities.

What is a Future Land Use Map?

The Future Land Use map and related policies described below should be used as a basis to update the City's regulatory land use tools, particularly the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map. They should also be used as a basis for all public and private sector development decisions, including annexations, zoning map amendments, conditional use permits, subdivision approvals, extension of municipal utilities, arrangement of transportation facilities, and other public or private investments. Changes in land use to implement the recommendations of this Plan will generally be initiated by property owners and private developers. In other words, this Plan does not automatically compel property owners to change the use of their land or grant the entitlements required for development to occur.

Wisconsin Statutes allow communities to plan for lands within their extraterritorial jurisdictions (ETJ). Altoona's ETJ encompasses all land in the Town of Washington that is located within 1.5 miles of Altoona's current municipal limits. To effectively manage growth, this Plan identifies desirable land use patterns within the existing City limits and within unincorporated Town areas within the City's ETJ. This approach recognizes that Altoona (and regional) growth, public health, economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and other dynamics described in this Plan are directly facilitated or impeded by the patterns of growth and land uses in adjacent unincorporated areas. For example, if lands adjacent to the City's boundary develop within the Town, there are limited opportunities for the City to potentially grow beyond that development due to impediments and constraints in providing future utility and infrastructure connections and contiguous annexation boundaries. Implementing many of the recommendations of this Plan will be greatly aided by intergovernmental cooperation, which is the focus of Intergovernmental Chapter of this Plan.

Although this Plan has been designed to accommodate a larger population than what is projected in the next 20 years, it does not assume that all areas depicted on the Future Land Use Map will develop during this period. Instead, the Future Land Use Map shows those areas in and around the City that are the most logical development areas, regardless of the absolute timing of development. The City advocates the development of a land use pattern that focuses growth in areas that can most efficiently be served by transportation and infrastructure facilities. The City must consider land uses beyond the immediate study period of 20 years to ensure cohesive and strategic long-term pursuit of the community's vision and values, and efficient outlook for infrastructure and services.

DETAILED FUTURE LAND USE STRATEGIES

Each of the future land use categories listed and shown on the Future Land Use Map (Map 3) are described below. The text under each listed land use category includes a description of that category, an outline of where that type of land use should be promoted, and the policies related to future development in areas designated under that category.

Compatible zoning districts are suggested; however, existing zoning districts and standards may not be adequate to achieve the characteristics described in each area. As indicated elsewhere in this Plan, the zoning ordinance is recommended to be amended to reflect the City's values and goals.

The development intensities suggested in each category are provided as a range for the uses in the category, e.g., 3 to 8 dwellings per acre, and do not reflect the *average* intensity of the category. Thus, one part of the designated area may be 3 dwellings per acre while an adjacent or nearby area may be independently calculated as 8 dwellings per acre. This range is reflective of the recognition that land use and intensity are only two of the factors considered in planning future land use areas, and must also include design and performance characteristics.

Agricultural
Description: Agricultural uses, farmsteads, and other open lands at or below a residential density of 1 dwelling unit per 40 gross acres.
Compatible Zoning Districts: A-1
<p>Policies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fully exercise the City's authority to review proposed land divisions within the City's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction to help ensure the implementation of this desired future land use category. 2. Support land developments in this area only when they are clearly consistent with the category description and when proposed housing density is not greater than one residence (or other non-farm use) per 40 acres. 3. Do not extend sanitary sewer service or public water service into Agricultural areas until and unless the City changes the future land use category for such areas through a Comprehensive Plan amendment to the Future Land Use Map. 4. Work with Eau Claire County, the City of Eau Claire, and Town of Washington to implement the above policies and programs in a cooperative manner, where possible.

Long-Term Growth Area
Description: Land where the City may grow beyond the 20-year planning period, for which it is premature for the City to designate any particular type of future land use. Prior to the development within any part of the Long-Term Growth Area, the City will amend this Comprehensive Plan to recommend specific future land uses (beyond agriculture) and identify how the specific land use pattern would be served by transportation, utility, and other public services.
Compatible Zoning Districts: A-1
<p>Policies:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Policies and recommendations on permissible uses for the Long-Term Growth Areas shall be the same as those listed for the Agricultural future land use category unless and until the City's Comprehensive Plan is amended. 2. The City will use its extraterritorial land division review authority to ensure that any development proposed in these areas aligns with the long-term extension of the City's growth pattern. 3. Prior to allowing more intensive forms of development within the Long-Term Growth Area, the City will, through the Comprehensive Plan amendment process, identify specific future land uses (other than agriculture) and how the specific land use pattern would be served by transportation, utility, and other public services.

Low-Scale Neighborhood
Description: Already developed, predominately residential areas recommended to generally maintain existing scale and character while providing a variety of housing options for new development to meet the needs of a diverse and growing population; building types could include single family dwellings, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), two-family homes, and, where appropriate, single family attached types such as twin homes or townhouses, and small multi-dwelling buildings by special permit.
Compatible Zoning Districts: R-1, R-2, TH, and R-3
<p>Polices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage residential development at densities of 3 to 8 homes per acre, including alley-loaded lots. 2. Leverage infill and redevelopment opportunities in these areas to promote a mix of low-scale residential densities that reflect the character of the neighborhood. Encourage twin homes, townhouses, and small multi-dwelling buildings in appropriate locations and require such buildings to be compatible in design with surrounding residences. 3. Update the City's Zoning Ordinance to accommodate smaller lot sizes for single family, single family attached (twin and townhouse), and increased options for small-scale multi-family. 4. Promote rehabilitation and maintenance efforts of older neighborhoods. 5. Encourage housing designs which are attractive and emphasize the house in relation to the street (front porches, stoops, etc.), rather than the garage. 6. Promote architectural design of new development that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, including building and facade materials, building height, building bulk, setbacks, window and door styles and placements, roof designs, and colors.

Mid-Scale Neighborhood
Description: Already developed areas that are predominately multiple-dwelling structures, with future housing formats to include attached single family, and multi-dwelling structures up to 4 stories in height.
Compatible Zoning Districts: R-2, TH, and R-3
<p>Polices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage residential development at densities of 8 to 50 homes per acre. 2. Leverage infill and redevelopment opportunities in these areas to promote a mix of mid-scale residential formats. 3. Update the City's Zoning Ordinance to establish options for small-scale multi-family, tiered multi-family districts by density, and high-density multi-family options. 4. Promote rehabilitation and maintenance efforts of older neighborhoods and buildings. 5. Encourage housing designs which are attractive and emphasize the house/building in relation to the street (front porches, stoops, etc.), rather than the garage. 6. Promote architectural design of new development that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, including building and facade materials, building height, building bulk, setbacks, window and door styles and placements, roof designs, and colors. 7. Require that all proposed projects submit a detailed site plan, building elevations, landscape plan, lighting plan, grading/stormwater management plan, and signage plan prior to development approval. 8. Require housing developments to provide on-site open space areas that serve the needs of the project's residents, in addition to public park land requirements applicable to all residential development.

Planned Neighborhood Type A
Description: A carefully planned mix of single dwelling unit detached or attached, two-dwelling, multi-dwelling, small scale business, community facilities, and parks, recreation, and conservancy uses consistent with Traditional Neighborhood Design principles and forms of development at a minimum of 3 dwelling units per gross acre.
Compatible Zoning Districts: R-1, R-2, TH, R-3, and some C and C-1 uses
<p>Polices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Require minimum residential density of 3 dwelling units per gross acre, as site conditions allow. 2. Require Traditional Neighborhood Design principles for new neighborhood development. See detailed descriptions of this concept in the Housing Chapter. 3. Follow the policies listed above for Low-Scale Neighborhood land use categories for residential development within Planned Neighborhoods. For commercial and office development in Planned Neighborhoods, follow the policies for the Neighborhood Mixed Use land use category below. 4. Require compact growth, provide efficient services, and minimize farmland conversion by preventing Planned Neighborhoods outside the City limits and establishing Planned Neighborhood areas following annexation. 5. Utilize natural features to act as buffers between different land uses, when necessary. 6. Plan for interconnected road, trail, and open space networks within and between new, existing, and future neighborhoods. 7. Require a Detailed Neighborhood Plan in advance of development proposals. 8. Prohibit the use of cul-de-sacs except where topography or similar barrier dictates the need. 9. Encourage the construction of narrower local streets and alley-loaded lots in new neighborhoods, where possible, and require sidewalks along all streets. This increases the safety of neighborhoods for pedestrians and children.

Planned Neighborhood Type B
Description: A carefully planned mix of single dwelling unit detached or attached, two-dwelling, multi-dwelling, small scale business, community facilities, and parks, recreation, and conservancy uses consistent with Traditional Neighborhood Design principles and forms of development at a minimum of 6 dwelling units per gross acre.
Compatible Zoning Districts: R-2, TH, R-3, and some C and C-1 uses
<p>Polices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Require minimum residential density of 6 dwelling units per gross acre, as site conditions allow. 2. Encourage Traditional Neighborhood Design principles for new neighborhood development. See detailed descriptions of this concept in the Housing Chapter. 3. Follow the policies listed above for Low-Scale Neighborhood and Mid-Scale Neighborhood land use categories for residential development within Planned Neighborhoods. For nonresidential development within Planned Neighborhoods, follow the policies for the Neighborhood Mixed Use land use category below. 4. Require compact growth, provide efficient services, and minimize farmland conversion by preventing Planned Neighborhoods outside the City limits and establishing Planned Neighborhood areas following annexation. 5. Utilize natural features to act as buffers between different land uses, when necessary. 6. Plan for interconnected road, trail, and open space networks within and between new, existing, and future neighborhoods. 7. Require a Detailed Neighborhood Plan in advance of development proposals. 8. Prohibit the use of cul-de-sacs except where topography or other barriers dictates the need. 9. Encourage the construction of narrower local streets and alley-loaded lots in new neighborhoods, where possible, and require sidewalks along all streets. This increases the safety of neighborhoods for pedestrians and children.

Manufactured Home Residential
Description: Professionally managed arrangements of manufactured homes and associated amenities.
Compatible Zoning Districts: R-1
<p>Polices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leverage infill and redevelopment opportunities in these areas to promote a mix of residential densities that reflect the character of the neighborhood. 2. Promote rehabilitation and maintenance efforts of the neighborhood. 3. Encourage housing designs which are attractive and emphasize the house in relation to the internal road (front porches, stoops, etc.). 4. Require Manufactured Home Residential developments to be professionally managed and provide adequate recreational open space within the neighborhood.

Single Family Unsewered
Description: Existing single family detached residential development served by individual on-site well and wastewater treatment (septic) systems and typically located outside of City limits.
Compatible Zoning Districts: None
<p>Polices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exercise the City's extraterritorial land division review authority to ensure that new Single Family Residential Unsewered development is not permitted within the City's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction. It is recommended that an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Town of Washington be pursued to assist in this effort (See the Intergovernmental Opportunities Chapter for more information).

Neighborhood Mixed Use
Description: Small-scale office, service, institutional, or retail commercial uses and mixed residential uses in a pedestrian-oriented arrangement in structures compatible with the scale of the neighborhood context through building form, site design, and landscaping; typically 2 to 3 stories.
Compatible Zoning Districts: C and C-1
<p>Polices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage neighborhood-oriented retail, office, and service businesses in areas that will conveniently serve residential neighborhoods. 2. Require that all proposed commercial and office projects submit a detailed site plan, building elevations, lighting plan, grading/stormwater management plan, utility plan, and signage plan prior to development approval. 3. Require the use of high-quality building materials and designs that are compatible with residential areas, including: residential roof materials, such as shingles; generous window placements; and exterior materials, such as wood, cement board, vinyl siding, brick, decorative block, stone, and other approved materials. 4. Design street and driveway access to minimize traffic congestion and improve safety by limiting the number of and ensuring adequate spacing between access points. 5. Encourage minimum front setbacks, design buildings to pedestrians and not automobiles with building entrances facing the street, and locate parking in the rear of the building or on streets. 6. Consider updating the City Zoning Ordinance to establish a neighborhood-oriented zoning district that permits mixed use residential and commercial development by right with associated design requirements.

Downtown Mixed Use
Description: Pedestrian-oriented mix of retail, service, office, mixed use, and residential uses and pattern of development typical of a traditional downtown as it relates to placement, scale, and form of buildings, with building heights from 2 to 6 stories.
Compatible Zoning Districts: C and C-1
<p>Polices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider developing a Downtown Revitalization Plan to identify key opportunities and provide a detailed guide for implementation action steps to revitalize this area. 2. Explore property acquisition by the City to reserve key sites for revitalization or redevelopment. 3. Promote downtown as a unique commercial, civic, and social center. 4. Work with property owners and businesses to preserve, renovate, and modernize existing structures and sites. 5. Support the expansion, retention, and upgrading of specialty retail, restaurants, financial services, offices, neighborhood retail and services, multi-family, and community uses. 6. Require that all projects submit and have approved detailed building elevations and site plans, showing the proposed locations of the building(s), parking, storage, loading, signage, landscaping, and lighting prior to development approval. 7. Promote truly mixed use development with residential above the first floor and design oriented to pedestrian and not automobiles. 8. Require the use of high-quality building materials and designs that are compatible with the area: engaging façade design, generous windows, defined customer entryways, and exterior building materials such as brick, decorative block, stone, or other related materials. 9. Consider updating the City's Zoning Ordinance to establish a Downtown Zoning District that would provide increased flexibilities for redevelopment in these areas through form-based standards, increased maximum heights, reduced setbacks, and mixed-use commercial and residential allowed by right.

Corridor Mixed Use
Description: Medium-scale retail, service, and residential uses in a pedestrian-oriented arrangement and generally located along corridors that serve the City as well as neighboring communities, with building heights from 2 to 5 stories.
Compatible Zoning Districts: C and C-1
<p>Polices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Control collector and arterial street access by limiting the number of and ensuring adequate spacing between vehicle access points. Promote cross-access between individual developments, as this will help avoid future congestion and traffic safety problems. 2. Promote the use of high-quality landscaping treatment of bufferyards, street frontages, paved areas, and building foundations, and require parking lots to be heavily landscaped. 3. Require high quality signage that is not excessive in height or total square footage. 4. Incorporate amenities such as benches, fountains, canopy shade trees, and public art wherever possible. 5. Design buildings and sites oriented toward pedestrians and not automobiles, locate parking in the rear or side of the building where possible. 6. Require the use of high-quality building materials and designs that are compatible with the area: façade articulation, generous windows, defined customer entryways, screened outdoor storage, and exterior building materials such as vinyl siding, brick, decorative block, stone, or other related materials. 7. Include facilities for bicyclists (bike storage racks, bike paths, etc.) in all development designs. 8. Consider updating the City's Zoning Ordinance to establish a redevelopment-oriented Zoning District that would provide increased flexibilities for redevelopment in these areas through design standards, increased maximum heights, reduced setbacks, and mixed use commercial and residential allowed by-right.

Planned Mixed Use
Description: High-quality and highly planned developments that include a wide range of indoor and outdoor retail, service, office, health care facilities, mixed use commercial and residential, multi-family residential, and institutional uses near USH 53 and 12.
Compatible Zoning Districts: C, C-1, and RP
<p>Polices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote active live-work environments through inclusion of identifiable centers of activity that can be compatible, mutually beneficial, and can be conveniently reached by a variety of transportation modes including walking and bicycling. 2. Require the use of high-quality building materials and designs that are compatible with the area: pitched or flat roofs, façade articulation, generous windows, defined customer entryways, screened outdoor storage, and exterior building materials such as vinyl siding, brick, decorative block, stone, or other related materials. 3. Include facilities for bicyclists (bike storage racks, bike paths, etc.) in all development designs. 4. Control collector and arterial street access by limiting the number of and ensuring adequate spacing between vehicle access points. Promote cross-access between individual developments, as this will help avoid future congestion and traffic safety problems. 5. Promote the use of high-quality landscaping treatment of bufferyards, street frontages, paved areas, and building foundations, and require parking lots to be heavily landscaped. 6. Require high quality signage that is not excessive in height or total square footage.
Small-Scale/Light Industrial
Description: Small scale indoor manufacturing, assembly, contractor shops, and related office and accessory uses, with minimal outdoor activities or outdoor storage.
Compatible Zoning Districts: BP and I
<p>Polices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proactively market these areas for light, indoor manufacturing and assembly, warehousing, and office-related development. 2. Encourage screened outdoor storage areas, parking lots, loading areas, and mechanical equipment from public view, including roof-top and ground equipment. Additionally, promote modest lighting, limited signage, and the creation of landscaped (or tree preservation) buffers where future industrial use areas abut existing or future residential areas. 3. Update the Zoning Ordinance to provide redevelopment flexibility to promote appropriate scale, setbacks, and varying land use opportunities by right in these areas.
General Industrial
Description: Indoor manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution activities including accessory uses such as offices and outdoor storage. Uses in this category include large scale and/or intensive manufacturing, possibly with significant outdoor processing or storage, warehousing, distribution, office, and associated accessory uses.
Compatible Zoning Districts: I
<p>Polices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Require that all proposed industrial projects submit a detailed site plan, building elevations, landscape plan, lighting plan, grading/stormwater management plan, and signage plan prior to development approval. 2. Screen parking lots, loading areas, outdoor storage areas, and mechanical equipment (i.e. air conditioners, ventilation equipment, etc.) from public view, including roof-top and ground equipment. 3. Separate pedestrian walkways vehicular traffic and loading areas. 4. Market these areas for employment generating manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution uses with compatible office uses. 5. Update the Zoning Ordinance to increase the clarity and requirements for outdoor storage screening, building materials, and site design.

Heavy Industrial and Extraction
Description: Most intensive industrial, outdoor storage, disposal, quarries, gravel pits, clay extraction, peat extraction, and related uses.
Compatible Zoning Districts: None
<p>Polices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the establishment of new Zoning Districts to accommodate and provide zoning regulations for heavy industrial, extraction, or similar high-intensity land uses to give the City the needed regulatory power outside of the Conditional Use Permit process.

Institutional
Description: Public or public-related land uses and buildings such as schools, cemeteries, places of worship, public buildings, and public utilities. These uses may be conducive to transition from less intense uses to other, more intense land uses.
Compatible Zoning Districts: All Districts
<p>Polices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrate institutional facilities into new neighborhoods and residential areas and provide an adequate distribution of institutional facilities throughout the City. Require site plan review and high-quality site design, building design, landscaping, lighting, and signage for all institutional uses. 2. Ensure that land use decisions and future growth are consistent with the community facility recommendations of this Plan in Chapter 7. 3. Consider reserving future sites for public facilities by identifying these areas on an Official Map. 4. Amend this Plan as necessary to accommodate future utility and community facility locations. 5. Update the Zoning Ordinance to establish an Institutional Zoning District for larger-scale institutional uses to address traffic peaks, outdoor lighting and activities, buffering from other land uses, and multi-modal transportation connections.

Park and Open Space
Description: Existing or planned park and open space facilities devoted to active or passive recreational uses such as playgrounds, play fields, play courts, park shelters, picnic areas, open space, golf courses, and recreation trails.
Compatible Zoning Districts: P
<p>Polices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure all residents are within adequate walking distances of a park or recreational amenity, as described in the City's Place Plan. 2. Design future neighborhoods around and with prioritized pedestrian access to environmental corridors and parks without negatively affecting the environmental health of these areas. 3. Improve continuity and quality of bicycle and pedestrian connections between neighborhoods, parks, and schools. 4. Continue to implement the recommendations of the City's Place Plan. Update the plan every 5-years to remain eligible for WisDNR grants. 5. Consider creating a Parks and Recreation Zoning District to address outdoor lighting and activities, in addition to buffering and multi-modal transportation connections.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas
Description: Per the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, Environmentally Sensitive Areas include slopes greater than 20%, identified WI DNR wetlands, the FEMA 100-year floodplain, and surface water. Environmentally sensitive areas are intended to be permanently preserved whether in private or public ownership through various restrictions on use and site alterations.
Compatible Zoning Districts: P
<p>Polices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In general, prohibit new development in mapped environmental corridor areas. 2. If development is proposed in areas where environmental corridors have been mapped, require developers or landowners to determine the exact boundaries of the environmental corridor based on the shoreland, wetland, floodplain, steep slope, or other natural feature(s) that comprise the corridor. 3. Continue to allow existing agricultural uses (cropping, grazing, or other preexisting agricultural uses) and passive recreation within environmental corridors, subject to the ongoing use of water quality and stormwater best practices. 4. Consider undertaking projects and management activities to restore native landscapes and protect watersheds.
Conservation
Description: Areas of environmental sensitivity, stormwater management, habitat preservation, natural open space, and surface water to be preserved from most human disturbance. These areas may include passive recreation amenities such as paved or unpaved trails.
Compatible Zoning Districts: P
<p>Polices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prohibit new development in environmentally sensitive or flood protection and stormwater management areas. Continue to allow existing agricultural uses (cropping, grazing, or other preexisting agricultural uses) or passive recreational within these areas. 2. Promote public acquisition or conservation easements where the land is not presently publicly owned.
Right-of-Way
Description: Areas reserved for public infrastructure and uses such as transportation facilities, utilities, and green infrastructure.
Compatible Zoning Districts: None
<p>Polices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider reserving future sites for public facilities by identifying these areas on an Official Map. 2. Continue to adapt the City's Subdivision Ordinance to promote smaller street widths where practical, off-street trails, bicycle facilities, and sidewalks.

SMART GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Infill and Redevelopment

Redevelopment and infill development reinforce several other goals of this Plan such as compact development, maximizing use of existing infrastructure, and providing mixed use and housing development opportunities.

The City has recently completed the very successful development of River Prairie as a mixed use center that has established itself as regional destination for employment, housing, entertainment, recreation, and tourism. This area is an example of what a city can accomplish by exercising its agency to strategically owning and planning for development, thoughtful utilization of its resources, and partnering with development professionals for implementation. Building on this success, Altoona aims to continue its revitalization efforts in other areas of the City, including in the downtown and along Spooner Avenue, along USH 12, and on the west side of the City near Hastings Way and Fairfax Street. Each of these areas offers different opportunities for increasing densities, providing diverse housing and employment opportunities, integrating a mix of uses, generating new tax base, and promoting municipal fiscal sustainability through efficient service and infrastructure provision. It is recommended that corridor, small area, or master plans be completed in each of the areas to help the City identify opportunities and develop detailed action steps toward revitalization.

Downtown Altoona

Centered on Lynn Avenue between 1st Street W and 1st Street E, downtown Altoona is currently home to a wide mix of uses, including community facilities such as City Hall and the Library, U.S. Post Office, retail/commercial uses in traditional “downtown” style buildings, residential, and smaller-scale industrial uses. Though the development of this Comprehensive Plan, downtown Altoona was identified a priority revitalization area that has the potential to be a walkable and vibrant downtown area where residents come to gather, shop, and visit.



In order to transform the downtown, creative and coordinated planning is needed. This Plan recommends the preparation of a downtown master plan. A downtown master plan will assure the desired character is maintained, appropriate uses and strategies for redevelopment of key sites are identified, historically and architecturally significant buildings are preserved, and tools to promote redevelopment (e.g., TIF districts, zoning district amendment, brownfield cleanup procedures) are explored and implemented. This Plan recommends the following rehabilitation and redevelopment principles be considered in the downtown master planning effort:

- Facilitate and support infill and redevelopment within the downtown, particularly of multi-family, mixed use commercial and residential, public spaces, community-serving retail, restaurants, and destinations.
- Renovate and restore historic buildings. Encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings.
- Continue to retain community facilities in the downtown area, including City Hall, library, and post office, while supporting public gathering spaces and special events. Explore expansions or upgrades of public facilities.
- Enhance public space and encourage walkability through streetscaping features such as benches, attractive lighting, landscaping, public art, and more.
- Encourage landscaping (trees, plants, berms) in private parking lots and other paved areas.
- Pursue environmental assessment and cleanup as needed, particularly in areas near the railroad tracks.
- Strategically acquire property to facilitate redevelopment consistent with the plan.

Downtown Altoona will be a focal point of revitalization efforts by the City over the planning period.

Old Altoona Neighborhoods

Altoona's original neighborhoods are found south of the railroad tracks and generally west and southwest of downtown. This area is characterized by small homes on a traditional street grid. "Old Altoona" presents a considerable infill development opportunity over the planning period. Additional housing could be accommodated in this area, especially nearby the downtown, by adding new medium density housing on vacant or underutilized sites or by combing lots to facilitate a small-scale multi-family redevelopment. This area is generally recommended for Mid-Scale Neighborhood on the Future Land Use Map.

Spooner Avenue

A major east-west corridor that connects Altoona to Eau Claire, Spooner Avenue is characterized by a mix of residential uses, older highway-oriented businesses, and public facilities. The south side of Spooner Avenue is primed for redevelopment in the form of multi-family, mixed use formats (commercial and residential), community-serving retail, and restaurants. In the future, the corridor should become highly walkable and bikeable and should enable new development formats and businesses not currently offered in the City. This area is generally recommended for Corridor Mixed Use on the Future Land Use Map. Spooner Avenue will be a priority for proactive revitalization efforts by the City over the planning period. As such, it is recommended for additional small area planning, which should be done in conjunction with planning efforts for downtown, described above.

USH 12

Serving as the main east-west arterial roadway through Altoona, USH 12 has evolved over time to include a variety of land uses, including large and small industrial and highway commercial with residential neighborhoods behind. There are a few remaining infill sites and redevelopment opportunities along the corridor, in addition to new development opportunities beyond the City's existing boundary. As the community has grown, traffic has increased along USH 12, creating a barrier for pedestrians and bicyclists. An in-depth corridor plan is needed along USH 12, especially as the City continues to grow to the east and desire to cross the highway increases. This plan should include infill and redevelopment sites, new development opportunities, bicycle and pedestrian connections, and transportation planning in coordination with WisDOT.

Hastings Way and Fairfax Street

Defining the western boundary of Altoona, Hastings Way and Fairfax Street directly abut the City of Eau Claire. Older highway commercial and industrial uses are present along these roadway frontages. This area presents several prime redevelopment opportunities for increased densities and mixing of uses. It is recommended that a revitalization plan for this area be conducted to spark and facilitate redevelopment. This effort should be undertaken in coordination with the City of Eau Claire.



Windsor Forest Neighborhood

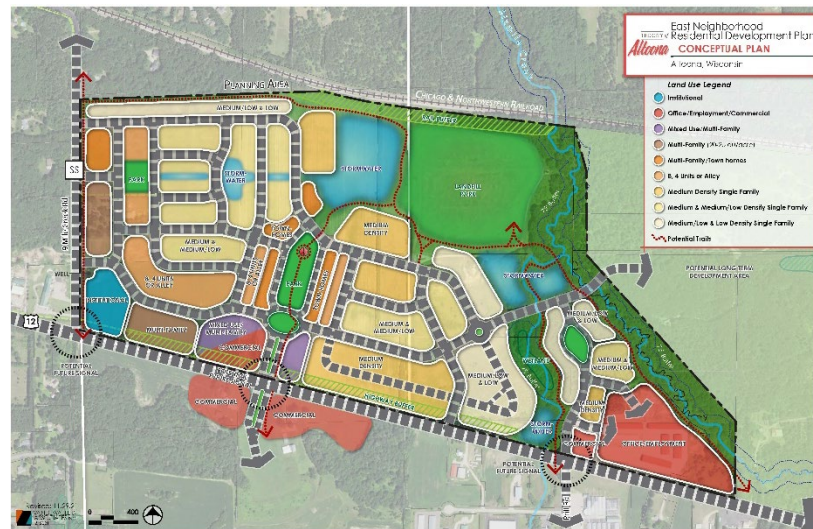
A former landfill site is centrally located within the nearly built-out Windsor Forest Neighborhood, south of USH 12. It is surrounded by a mix of residential densities. The City is the owner and, together with the Town of Washington, steward of the former landfill site and the City has acquired several other lands adjacent. Following the preparation of a detailed neighborhood plan, this area could facilitate new mixed density residential development and potentially some smaller-scale commercial development, in addition to significant park and open space facilities.

East Neighborhood Plan

The City owns an 83-acre greenfield site that was annexed into the City in 2022. Concurrently with the development of this Plan, the East Neighborhood Plan was also developed, mirroring many this Plan’s vision, goals, and strategies. The Neighborhood Plan is intended to provide a conceptual development plan for the build out of the City-owned property and several other privately-owned properties in the vicinity. The plan features the integration of traditional neighborhood design principals with a goal of providing Altoona with new diverse housing options, mixing of land uses, park and open spaces, a multi-modal transportation network, stormwater management best practices, and alternative energy opportunities. The East Neighborhood Plan was adopted in 2022 and is anticipated to begin implementation in 2023.

Growth Areas Beyond the City's Boundary

Balanced with fostering new infill and redevelopment within its existing boundaries, the City will also need to consider growth beyond its boundaries to accommodate anticipated demand. Key future growth areas include areas to the south and east of the City along Nine Mile Creek Road, along Mayer Road, and either side of USH 12. Altoona can grow in the most efficient, cost-effective, and sustainable way by utilizing the Planned Neighborhood



Type B and Planned Mixed Use land use categories described above. As the City has done with the East Neighborhood Plan, each of these areas will also require detailed planning efforts and work with developers to promote mixed density formats, provide neighborhood-serving commercial development, integrate multi-modal transportation components, incorporate park and open space features, and deliver public services and utilities. Refer to the text box below for a recommended process for neighborhood planning. Additionally, due the growth pressures in Town, intergovernmental coordination will be helpful to ensure compact and sustainable urban growth. It is recommended that the City continue to work with Eau Claire County, the Town of Washington, WisDOT, and the School District in these planning and development efforts. To note, the City of Altoona and Eau Claire have an established Extraterritorial Plat Review agreement in areas where their ETJ authorities overlap, granting Altoona jurisdiction for lands east of Otter Creek and North of Schumacher Road.

Detailed Neighborhood Plans—A Recommended Process:

The following planning process has a proven track record of success:

Analysis: A wide variety of site-specific information must be collected about both existing and emerging conditions:

- A. Establish and confirm the full neighborhood design process, including the creation of an ad-hoc or blended oversight committee including and/or reporting to City staff, the Plan Commission, and City Council.
- B. Collect existing map and plan data for the area and its surroundings related to parcels, topography, soils, land cover and uses, utilities, transportation, recreation, public services, plan recommendations, zoning, and property ownership.
- C. Evaluate the existing and emerging real estate market.
- D. Employ meaningful public participation to help identify opportunities and constraints, and to help create a vision for the area.
- E. Conduct property owner, agency, and stakeholder interviews.

Plan: Based on the results of the Analysis phase, and under the guidance of the committee, adopt a Detailed Neighborhood Plan as derived from the consideration of a Preliminary Concept Plan, Alternative Neighborhood Plans, and a Refined Draft Neighborhood Plan:

- A. Refine and confirm the neighborhood vision.
- B. Draft and confirm a Preliminary Concept Plan depicting the general arrangement of land uses, development character, main roads and stormwater management facilities, pedestrian and bicycle networks, and the open space system.
- C. Produce and confirm one or more Alternative Neighborhood Plans for presentation and review by the public, stakeholders, agencies, and the committee.
- D. Produce and confirm a Draft Detailed Neighborhood Plan based on the responses to the Alternative Neighborhood Plans.
- E. Refine and adopt the Detailed Neighborhood Plan, and ultimately integrate it into the Comprehensive Plan as an amendment.

Implementation: Following Plan adoption, establish and apply the appropriate regulatory and procedural foundation to ensure full implementation:

- A. Facilitate developments consistent with the Plan.
- B. Require compliance with the Plan as a condition of annexation.
- C. Establish zoning districts and boundaries in compliance with the Plan.
- D. Review proposed land divisions, conditional use permits, and planned developments based on conformance with the Plan, including consideration of land use pattern, density/intensity, community character, and infrastructure recommendations.

Develop a Growth Phasing Plan

Due to the rapid growth experienced over the past decade and new growth projected over the next two decades, it is recommended that the City phase growth over time to ensure logical and cost-efficient expansions to community utilities and services. The growth phasing plan should include:

- An understanding of community growth and market trends as they continuously evolve over time. In between major updates to the City's Comprehensive Plan, Altoona should develop a regular tracking system of data, best practices, and evolving trends. This would include monitoring regional housing and economic data from WCWRPC, Eau Claire County, and the City of Eau Claire, regular City staff attendance of state and national housing and land use planning conferences, reviewing and archiving local and regional public and private sector housing market studies, and providing an annual update of this information to the Plan Commission and City Council.
- Inform future decision-making on urban expansion through an understanding of the City's capacity to provide public facilities, services, and utilities, in addition to the School District's capacity to meet added educational demands.

Consistent communication and information-sharing between City departments internally and externally with the School District will provide the ability to have the greatest understanding of needs, demands, and constraints.

- Provide flexibility in terms of private landowner interest in bringing new properties into the City and/or development of those lands, while accomplishing the central goals of this Plan. For example, a particular later-phase growth area may be ready for development sooner than would otherwise be allowed if the developer can successfully incorporate key City objectives related to housing affordability, mix of uses and densities, Traditional Neighborhood Design, multi-modal transportation connections, and integration of sustainable best practices.
- Reflect intergovernmental planning with the Town of Washington and City of Eau Claire. This can be accomplished through intergovernmental agreements. An inability to reach boundary agreements can adversely impact the City's ability to make logical expansions of its boundaries in a phased urban growth approach.

While the City's Future Land Use Map and this Plan overall aim to accomplish many of the recommendations stated above, the City can take further proactive steps to phasing growth beyond what this Plan can do and between major updates to it. This can be most successfully accomplished through continuous data tracking, information sharing, policy evaluation, and intergovernmental planning.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

"Community Character" is a term often used to describe the way a community looks, feels, and functions. A community's character is related to much more than where land uses are located. Rather, it is a function of the relationship between the built environment, natural environment, and people who live, work, and visit the community. Cities are usually comprised of different, but ideally compatible, components (downtown, residential neighborhoods, employment or shopping districts, etc.) that make up their overall character.

A wide variety of elements contribute to the creation of community character. They include geographic context, urban form, density and intensity, the built environments size and scale, architecture, signage, public furnishings and art, community spaces, accessibility, landscaping, views, and community entryways.

As Altoona continues to redevelop, revitalize, and grow, the community will be challenged to maintain and enhance its "small-community atmosphere." Specifically, it will be important for the City to establish and enforce standards that help ensure that new development and redevelopment projects have a positive impact on the way the community looks and feels to residents and visitors. Such standards should specifically address:

- Aesthetic components of development such as architecture and building materials
- Thoughtful integration of parks, natural areas, and gathering spaces
- Preservation of attractive community entryways and historic and culturally significant features

In recognition of these more complicated challenges, progressive planning practice has evolved into the realm of truly planning, protecting, enhancing, and creating the desired character of community development. Implementing these recommendations requires ongoing integration of this document in daily procedures, strategic planning, and policy decisions.



Characteristics of a Development Compatible with Community Character

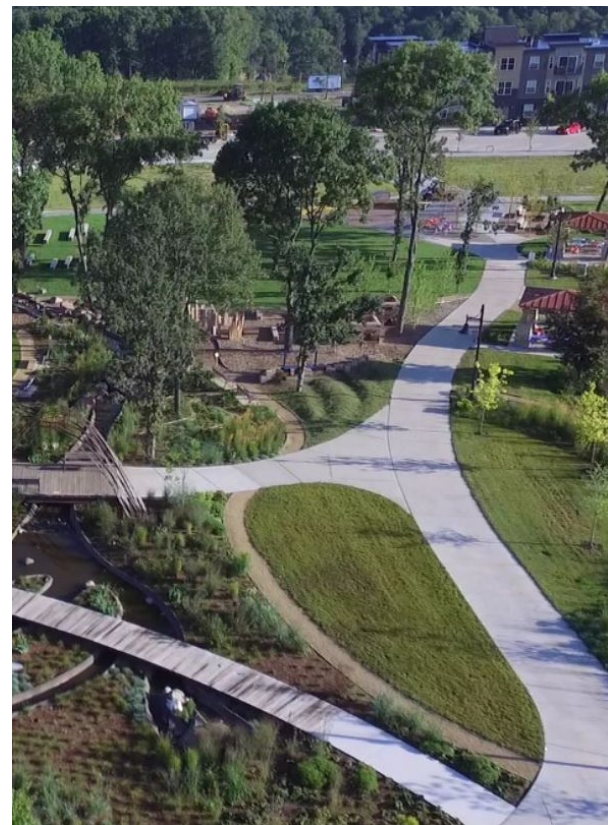
For a characteristic of a development to be “compatible” with community character, this means it reflects the City’s vision and values as described in this Plan and is relatable its physical context and surroundings. This does not require the proposed thing to be the same use, density, height, etc. as its neighbors. As communities grow, it is expected that new development will be of increased intensity and that existing neighborhoods and developed areas increase in scale and investment, and that these processes is not incompatible with the City’s vision or values. The role of the City is to ensure that this growth process does not result in unmanageable or objective nuisances or hardships, or conditions that are not consistent with the City’s overall vision and values.

For example, excluding or unreasonably restraining new development in existing neighborhoods due primarily to aesthetic preferences is inconsistent with the City’s charge to advance public health, safety, and general welfare, as well as the fiscal, social, and environmental goals articulated in this Plan.

Building Design. The thoughtful planning of building design can ensure that new development, infill development, and redevelopment all work to create a sense of place and strengthen community identity through context sensitive design. This can be done through historic preservation in key locations, design guidelines through overlay zoning districts for corridors or redevelopment areas (i.e. River Prairie design guidelines) that illustrate the scale, materials, and densities desired, providing incentives for the inclusion of sustainable best practices in new building design, and continuously reevaluating community ordinances and policies to ensure they reflect best practices, technology innovations, and the context of areas as they evolve overtime.

Site Design. The arrangement and features of a property or collection of properties closely affects how the property functions as a whole and contributes to the overall vitality of the community. Well-designed and maintained sites include pedestrian orientation, generous landscaping with native species, quality building materials, sight lines, lighting, historical or cultural elements, and public art. These features accentuate the building and its use, create visual interest, and contribute to a positive sense of place. This contributes to the City’s goals and objectives in many ways, such as by creating attractive neighborhoods and corridors, encouraging active transportation, managing water, and providing plant and animal habitats. Site design may also contribute to mitigating or managing less desirable aspects of a use, such as by screening or buffering characteristics of low appeal, reducing noise, or shielding outdoor lighting.

Neighborhood Design. Altoona’s older neighborhoods reflect many of the principles of Traditional Neighborhood Design, characterized by a grid street network, diversity of housing types and formats, inherent walkability and bikeability, accessibility to parks and open space, and blending of compatible land uses including residential, community facilities, and commercial. Given the many advantages of Traditional Neighborhood Design, including a high degree of livability and reduced land consumption and preservation of open space, the City should continue to foster this development pattern within new neighborhoods, ensuring these principles are integrated into the design of Neighborhood Plans. (Refer to the Housing Chapter for more information about Traditional Neighborhoods Design).



Community Gateways. The primary entryways into Altoona are its visual “front doors.” Enhancing community gateways can be done through requiring high-quality landscaping, building design, signage, lighting, and public furnishings for new development. Additionally, the installation of high-quality public entry signs and/or public art can also be used to signify entry into the community.

Key Corridors. There are several heavily traveled key corridors that run through Altoona. Like community gateways, requiring high-quality new development and redevelopment with overlay zoning districts can help carefully control their appearance. Additionally, the integration of streetscaping enhancements can significantly improve the look, feel, and function of all multi-modal transportation users.

Signage. One of the most effective ways to begin integrating new signs into the community is through the update of the Sign Ordinance. Specifically, the ordinance should allow for more pedestrian-oriented sign types, separate public art from signage, create custom signage design standards for key corridors, and adapt to become content neutral per the 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision.

Public Art. Thoughtful integration of public art and furnishings into new developments and infrastructure projects (murals, sculptures, seating areas, interactive components, etc.) and proactively promoting the addition of public art on existing buildings (murals, temporary art installations, etc.) can help activate underutilized areas, promote community gathering, and increase tourism. An Arts and Culture Plan is one way to identify different opportunities, strengthen local partnerships, and establish an action plan for implementation of these elements throughout the community.

What is a Form-Based Code?

A Form-Based Code is an approach to local development regulation that addresses the relationship between building façades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. The regulations and standards in Form-Based Codes, presented in both diagrams and words, are keyed to a regulating plan that designates the appropriate form and scale of development rather than only distinctions in land use types. Unlike conventional zoning, which emphasizes regulation of land uses (and separating land uses), form-based zoning regulations emphasize the physical character of development (development “form”). Form-based standards do address land uses, but they focus on how development relates to the context of surrounding development. In particular, a zoning code with form-based standards considers the relationships between buildings and the street, pedestrians and vehicles, and public and private spaces.

Form-based standards are developed following a public design process, which creates consensus and a clear vision as it relates to which aspects of the community should remain, change, and be a model for future development, and big picture wishes. The updated code is the implementation of that vision. Form-Based Codes are drafted to achieve a community vision based on time-tested forms of urbanism. Ultimately, a Form-Based Code is a tool; the quality of development outcomes is dependent on the quality and objectives of the community plan that the code implements, the management of the code by local government, and the execution of the code by property developers.

Altoona has experience with administering form-based development standards. The River Prairie Design Guidelines and Standards, although not strictly codified as zoning, is comprised of form-based standards to guide the implementation of the River Prairie Mixed Use District. In practice, many communities utilize a hybrid approach such as this, which retains some degree of land use control with the addition of specific, form-based standards.

For further reading on form-based codes, refer to [Form-Based Codes: A Step-by-Step Guide for Communities](#), a handbook developed by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning for use by communities in the Chicago metro area.



Chapter 5

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS



CHAPTER 5: HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS



INTRODUCTION

The United States has a housing shortage, which has caused home prices and rents to climb sharply at the national, state, regional, and local levels. This has manifested itself differently throughout Wisconsin, with metropolitan areas experiencing growth in new housing units but struggling with housing affordability, while more rural communities are experiencing little or no housing growth whatsoever. The existing housing situation is a result of both a lack of supply and changing demands since the housing market collapse in 2008. The current housing climate has made it increasingly difficult for families to buy their first homes or to afford rent, and it has intensified the need for additional housing – particularly for quality housing options that families can afford.

The City of Altoona, unlike most other small Wisconsin communities, has experienced rapid population and housing growth over the past decade. The City has taken the lead in shaping this growth by fostering the development of new, unique neighborhoods with a distinct sense of place and by proactively working to diversify the community's housing stock in terms of structure type and orientation, affordability, and occupancy status. Overall, housing and neighborhoods are key determinants in the community's identity, sense of place, and quality of life.

What is Affordable Housing?

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines affordable housing as housing in which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of gross income for housing costs, including utilities.

What is Low-Income Housing?

Per HUD, low-income housing is determined by the percentage of a household's annual income related to the median household income for that area. Low-income is defined as 80% of median family income for the area and very low-income is defined as 50% of median family income for the area. If the household's annual income falls within these definitions, they are eligible for federally subsidized housing programs which are often administered at the county level.

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Glossary of Terms

As of 2021, Very-Low Income (50% of Eau Claire County AMI) for a family of one person was \$28,000 and for a family of four was \$40,000. Moderate Income (80% of Eau Claire County AMI) for a family of one person was \$44,800 and for a family of four was \$64,000.

Source: Eau Claire County Housing Authority, 2021

What is Workforce Housing?

Workforce housing is homeownership, as well as rental housing, that can be reasonably afforded by households experiencing moderate to middle income and located in acceptable proximity to centers of employment. The most common definition of workforce housing comes from the Urban Land Institute, which defines workforce housing as: "housing that is affordable to households earning 60% to 120% of the area median income." This term may be used by some to place housing in economic development terms and in an attempt to avoid misplaced stigmas of identifying something as "affordable" housing.

This chapter is intended to outline the goals, objectives, and policies related to the future of housing and neighborhoods in Altoona as the community continues to evolve. Recommendations serve to guide the future of housing policy, decision making, and programming. Background information, data, and existing plans related to housing and neighborhoods can be found in Appendix A.

STRATEGIES SUMMARY

- Foster new diverse housing to accommodate the needs, desires, and lifestyles of existing and future residents of all incomes and life stages by implementing the recommendations of the Altoona Housing Action Plan.
- Apply Traditional Neighborhood Design techniques when approving or planning for new neighborhoods.
- Establish high-quality design standards for new multi-family housing developments.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICES

Definitions of goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations are found in the Issues and Opportunities Chapter of this Plan.

Goals

1. Provide an equitable and sustainable diversity of housing types, densities, arrangements, and affordability levels to accommodate the needs, desires, and lifestyles of existing and future residents of all incomes and life stages.
2. Increase the amount, type, and availability of affordable and workforce housing options in the community.
3. Develop new neighborhoods that promote long-term fiscal sustainability in terms of utilities, infrastructure, and service provision.
4. Foster a sense of place within neighborhoods and create memorable places designed for people and interaction.

Objectives

1. Phase new residential development in a manner that is consistent with public utility and facility service capacity to create attractive and safe neighborhoods that are well-served by essential municipal services and facilities (sanitary sewer, municipal water, stormwater management facilities, police, fire, etc.).
2. Carefully plan new neighborhood development to provide a range of housing types, densities, and costs that promotes a high quality of life and healthy lifestyles for existing and future residents.
3. Support programs that assist in the rehabilitation and maintenance of the City's existing housing stock.
4. Promote infill and redevelopment practices to help diversify the community's housing supply.
5. Locate housing in areas that are served by full urban services, including sanitary sewers and public water, with convenient access to community facilities, employment centers, and multi-modal transportation infrastructure (see Chapter 7 for more information).
6. Work with housing advocates, regional entities, and developers to ensure land is available for the development or redevelopment of housing accessible to families experiencing low- to moderate- income.
7. Design neighborhoods that are oriented towards pedestrians and well-served by sidewalks, bicycle routes, and trails.



Policies

1. Design new neighborhoods in accordance with Traditional Neighborhood Design principles, as described later in this chapter. New neighborhoods should contain a wide mix of housing formats, costs, and tenancy in order to create well-balanced and varied neighborhoods with strong community ties. Each neighborhood should accommodate individuals and households of all sizes, ages, income levels, heritage, and lifestyles.
2. Plan and design new multi-family residential development to complement surrounding land uses and be an integral part of a cohesive neighborhood. Require high-quality design for all development.
3. Prevent monotonous “tract” housing by ensuring variations in architectural details and colors, preventing garages from dominating front or street side facades, and enforcing design standards recommended in this Plan.
4. Require Neighborhood Plans guided by the principles of Traditional Neighborhood Design in advance of all new neighborhood development. Use detailed neighborhood development plans to tie the opening of new areas for development with continuity in infrastructure and the capacity of utilities and public facilities to accommodate such development.
5. Continue to require all residential developments to dedicate land, or pay a fee in lieu thereof, for public park, recreation, and open space acquisition and development.
6. Encourage initiatives that strengthen existing neighborhoods through maintenance of existing housing, creative reuse of vacant or underutilized buildings, infill development, mixing of uses, and maintenance and improvement of parks and right-of-way areas.
7. Encourage residential uses within the upper stories of buildings as part of infill, redevelopment, and new commercial/office development to increase the viability and vitality of the community.
8. Promote the use of water saving technology, renewable energy production, electric vehicle charging, onsite composting, and other sustainability best practices in existing and new neighborhoods.
9. Update the Zoning Ordinance to include small lot single-family development, a variety of multi-family densities by-right, and increased mixed-use options.
10. Implement the recommendations of the Altoona Housing Action Plan and update the plan by 2025.
11. Partner with regional entities to continuously evaluate regional housing needs, collaborate on programming efforts, and leverage alternative funding sources in order to meet unmet housing needs.
12. Provide training and educational sessions for local elected officials, committee members, municipal staff, and the public on local and regional housing data, evolving trends, and gaps and needs.
13. Utilize the Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) provision to keep districts open an additional year at the end of their statutory life to create an Affordable Housing Fund, as enabled by state law.



STRATEGIES

Implement the Altoona Housing Action Plan

In 2018, the Chippewa Valley Housing Task Force was created to increase the collective understanding, identify constraints, investigate potential solutions, generate recommendations, and increase collaboration to address housing issues in the region. The City of Altoona played a role in the creation and coordination of the task force and the development of the 2019 Housing Report.

Based on the work of the Chippewa Valley Housing Task Force, the City established its own Housing Action Plan in 2019. This plan customized the recommendations of the Task Force to best fit the City of Altoona related to development regulations, policies, funding, partnerships, and civic opportunities. Each topic includes short, mid, intermediate, and long-range strategies for the City to addressing existing housing issues.

Key Implementation Strategies:

- Encourage housing choice and affordability that support overall community vitality through incorporating best practices in development regulations.
- Guide development decisions that expand housing affordability, quality, and choice through adapting public policies.
- Leverage resources to assist in the generation of affordable housing units and expansion of housing choice both directly and indirectly.
- Continue to expand regional collaboration around housing and related topics.
- Foster effective and sustainable civic engagement that achieves a healthy housing market that provides quality, affordable options.

It is recommended that Altoona continue to prioritize the strategies and action items of this plan through investment, regional collaboration, and policy revisions. The Housing Action Plan sets the stage for further work over the planning period. Monitoring progress and completing an update of the plan will be key components of successful implementation over the next decade and beyond.

Altoona's Plans in Action: Solis Circle

In 2019, the City purchased a former assisted living facility that had been vacant for several years, using funds generated from the successful McCann Drive Business Park Tax Incremental Financing District (TID 2), and converted the building into an affordable 25-unit apartment complex. Rents start at \$390 (including utilities) for efficiency, one, and two-bedroom units.

This project, called Solis Circle, was completed without the need for tax credits, federally subsidized rents, or formal screening criteria. The size of the building either did not qualify for these programs, or the fixed costs were not feasible to overcome. Instead, it leveraged the help of donors, sponsors, and advocacy groups.

This successful project is an example of how Altoona has taken a leadership role in addressing housing issues in the community and region using creative, unique, and non-traditional models. Building on this and other housing initiatives, the City can continue to implement the ambitious strategies outlined in its Housing Action Plan.



Promote Traditional Neighborhood Design Principles

In all future neighborhoods, the City intends to promote Traditional Neighborhood Design. The implementation of Traditional Neighborhood Design aims to:

- Integrate a diversity of high-quality housing types to accommodate a variety of lifestyles, age groups, and financial capability.
- Ensure the long-term preservation of community character and high quality of life.
- Provide housing, parks, and schools with direct and efficient connections and within walking distance of shops, services, and jobs.
- Blend multi-modal transportation options into neighborhood design.
- Preserve environmental systems that define, sustain, and connect neighborhoods and communities.
- Reduce demand for fiscal resources needed for transportation, public infrastructure, services, and housing.

In the design and approval of new neighborhoods (subdivisions), the City and developers should ensure the adherence to the following Traditional Neighborhood Design principles:

- Establish Community Gathering Places: Design neighborhoods around community gathering places such as parks, public squares, outdoor dining establishments, schools, churches, and other community facilities.
- Provide Housing Variety: Ensure that a variety of housing types are included and arranged in a compact and interconnected form. Particular attention should be paid to the scale of buildings, walking distances, direct and efficient connections to amenities, and the design of other neighborhood features such as streetlights and signage.
- Advance Equity and Inclusion: Through creation of neighborhoods with a variety of housing formats, sizes, and price points, people from a diversity of age, family size, and wealth can live in proximity to improve social cohesion. Multi-family and renter-oriented housing formats are integrated into diverse neighborhoods rather than marginalized. Diverse neighborhoods are shown to improve community resilience and equity through shared investment, familiarity, and access to opportunity.
- Blend Land Uses: Integrate well-designed and cohesively incorporated commercial and office uses and other community facilities in appropriate locations, generally along busier streets and intersections to draw on a broader market.
- Promote Walkability: Design the neighborhood to facilitate pedestrian movement and enhance mobility within the neighborhood and between the neighborhood and other nearby destinations, such as parks, schools, and business and job districts. Provide sidewalks or paths along all streets, and multi-use trails in the environmental corridor and park network. Require street trees to be planted along all new streets with native species selected for canopy and climate resilience.
- Promote Connectivity: Interconnect streets, trails, drainageways, parkways, and similar facilities both within the neighborhood and to existing and future adjoining neighborhoods and development areas. Prohibit cul-de-sacs and dead ends, except in places where environmental features or topography requires them. The City should be a cohesive and contiguous grid of streets where each neighborhood completely and seamlessly connects to those around it.



- Calm Traffic: Design and manage neighborhoods as collections of places where people live, rather than areas to move through. Integrate design elements that slow vehicle movements to improve safety and livability, with features selected for the context. These may include accommodating on-street parking and permitting narrower streets to calm traffic and increase pedestrian safety, traffic circles, medians, and curb extensions. Integrate well landscaped medians and boulevards into neighborhood entryways and collector streets, using the City’s mature neighborhoods as a model. These new boulevards may also serve stormwater management functions. See Chapter 7 for more details.
- Create Attractive and Active Streetscapes: Incorporate site and building design strategies such as decreased setbacks, front porches, balconies, and other interesting architectural features that help create a safe, pleasant walking environment. Set back garages from the main body of the house wherever possible and incorporate alley-loaded garage options where practical. Locate vehicle access to prioritize pedestrian safety.
- Highlight Natural Areas: Integrate environmental features into the neighborhood as common open spaces for active or passive recreation, public gathering spots, or flood protection and stormwater management. Provide adequate vegetated buffers between development and natural features. Locate, design, and maintain storm water features as neighborhood assets.
- Incorporate Public Health and Sustainability: Use sustainability and public health as lenses in which all new neighborhoods are designed. This can be done through the thoughtful integration of sustainability best practices such as onsite stormwater management, renewable energy production, waste reduction, and energy efficient fixtures and building materials. Additionally, both the short-term and long-term public health impacts should be carefully considered through multi-modal transportation opportunities, mixing of compatible land uses, and prevention of isolated, standalone neighborhoods that are not fully integrated into the larger community.



Traditional Neighborhood Design Principles are intended to be inclusive of other similar terms and concepts that typically include and describe similar outcomes, such as creating well-designed “complete” neighborhoods where there are a diversity of housing types and cost, with a well-connected mobility system that focuses on ease of walking and bicycling, and that integrate public amenities such as schools and parks, employment, and services. Related concepts include “15-Minute City”, “complete city”, and “urban village”.

Implementing the design recommendations above will require Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance amendments or rewrites, coordination and collaboration with developers and landowners, and the development of detailed neighborhood plans for all new neighborhoods.



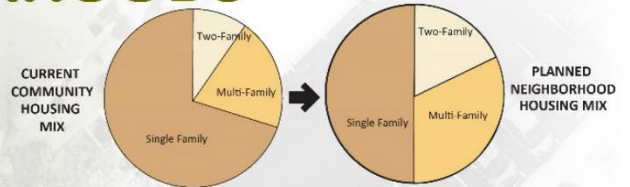
PLANNED NEIGHBORHOODS

Planned Neighborhoods provide attractive places to live, play and take care of day-to-day service needs.

Planned Neighborhoods support predominately single-family housing mixed with two-family homes, multi-family housing, institutional uses, parks, and neighborhood office and retail uses.

Characteristics of Planned Neighborhoods include:

- Mix of housing types and densities
- Mix of lot sizes: small lot (6,000 sf), mid-size (8,000 sf, and large lot (10,000 sf)
- Diverse ages & incomes
- Homes within a comfortable walk of parks and services
- Opportunity to center around plazas, parks, public spaces
- Streets connected internally and to larger community
- Neighborhood-wide multi-use path system with interconnected sidewalks, bike lanes, and routes
- Natural areas protected and made central to development
- Integration of neighborhood focal points such as schools, churches or shopping



A Single Family Homes



B Townhomes



C Two-Family



D Multi-Family – Apartments & Condos



E Neighborhood Mixed-Use



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Figure 5.1. Planning Neighborhoods



TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

Traditional Neighborhood design aims to enhance quality of life and community character through integrated multi-modal transportation options, diverse housing types, parks, schools, services, and jobs within walking distance of one another, preserving environmental systems, and reducing long-term demand for fiscal resources.

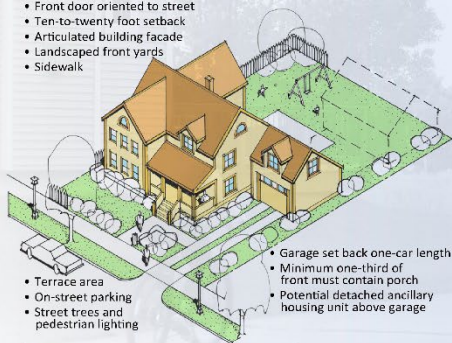
This can be accomplished by implementing the following guiding:

- Establishing community gathering places
- Providing housing variety
- Advancing equity and inclusion
- Blending land uses
- Promoting walkability
- Promoting connectivity
- Calming traffic
- Creating attractive and active streetscapes
- Highlighting natural areas
- Incorporating public health and sustainability

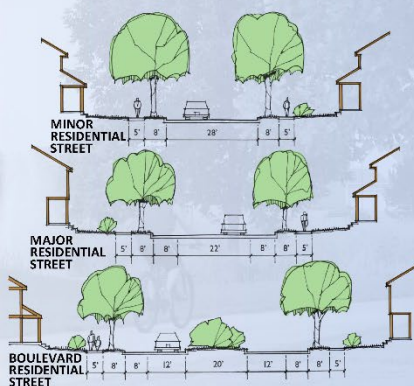


Streetscape

- Front door oriented to street
- Ten-to-twenty foot setback
- Articulated building facade
- Landscaped front yards
- Sidewalk



Single Family Parcel



Street Cross-Sections

- Porches, bays, balconies
- Ten-to-twenty foot setback
- Articulated building
- Landscaped front yards
- Rear parking
- Play area



Multi-Family Parcel

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Figure 5.2. Traditional Neighborhoods

High-Quality Design Standards

To pursue the goals and objectives described in this Plan, design standards are recommended for all development. These standards may be achieved through Subdivision and Zoning Ordinance changes, the adoption of manuals such as the River Prairie Design Guidelines and Standards, or a combination of both. These design standards must complement, be integrated with, and align with Traditional Neighborhood Development Principles resulting in a coherent and complete approach to creating and curating highly functional, livable, sustainable, and attractive neighborhoods and places.

Multi-family housing is an important component of the community to provide a diversity of housing options, for both owner-occupied and renter-occupied situations. These formats are often chosen by senior citizens, younger residents, employees for local businesses, and individuals and families seeking this lifestyle option. Such housing can also be part of an overall economic development strategy. The design and scale of these formats should fit within the fabric of the community and surrounding neighborhoods. The City intends to review proposals for multi-family residential developments against the guidelines listed below.

- Incorporate architectural design and building scale that relates to the context of the surrounding neighborhood and community character. Encourage diverse building layouts (individual unit walk-ups and interior hallway design), high-quality exterior materials, architectural features, and varying densities and formats.

- Use brick and other natural materials on building facades. Avoid monotonous facades and box-like buildings. Incorporate balconies, porches, garden walls, varied building and facade setbacks, varied roof designs, and bay windows.
- Orient buildings to the street with modest front yard setbacks, bringing street-oriented entries close to public sidewalks to increase pedestrian activity. Include private sidewalk connections.
- Locate parking, dumpsters, and other unattractive uses behind buildings.
- For parking lots and garages:
 - Locate garage doors and parking lots so they are not the dominant visual element.
 - Screen parking areas from public view.
 - Break up large parking lots with landscaped islands and similar features.
 - Provide direct links to building entrances by pedestrian walkways physically separated from vehicular movement areas.
 - Large parking garages are undesirable, but where necessary, break up facades with foundation landscaping, varied facade setbacks, and recessed garage doors.
 - Utilize alleys and side-accessed garages wherever possible.
- Provide generous landscaping along:
 - All public and private street frontages and around all building foundations.
 - The perimeter of all paved areas and in islands within larger parking lots.
 - Yards separating land uses which differ significantly in intensity or character.
 - Around all outdoor storage areas such as trash receptacles and recycling bins (also include screening walls in these areas) and around all utility structures or mechanical structures visible from public streets or less intensive land uses.
- Provide onsite recreational and open space areas to serve the needs of residents. Whenever possible, develop contiguous rear yards as a unit to encourage use by building residents and guests.

Provide a Wider Mix of Housing Types, Sizes, and Costs Throughout the City

An overarching goal of this plan is to provide a greater variety of housing format and building quality housing for families in all life stages and income levels. Housing formats can include duplexes, townhomes, apartments, condos, single family residences, and more. Introducing a variety of building types – such as rowhouses, 2-, 3-, and 4-unit buildings, tiny homes, bungalow courts, courtyard apartment buildings, accessory dwelling units, live-work buildings, and multifamily dwellings above shops – greatly increases the housing options within a neighborhood. This approach supports the City’s vision and overarching goals in several ways. First, inclusion of a broad range of housing types and price levels within neighborhoods also fosters daily interaction among people of diverse ages, races, and incomes, thereby building a sense of community across various social groups and fostering more equitable access to employment and amenities. Diversifying housing options can give everyone more choices about where to live. It helps residents find appropriate housing within Altoona as their housing needs change, it increases diversity of residents and families who are attracted to Altoona, and it provides housing choices that are affordable to current and future residents. Finally, providing a mix of housing types is an essential component of mixed use neighborhoods and compact growth, other key goals of this Plan.



Site and neighborhood design is critical to ensure that these housing types interact well within neighborhoods with varied housing formats and scale. Most people interact with the urban environment based on what buildings look like and how large they appear. Dwelling unit density alone can be very misleading: two buildings of a similar size could have very different densities based on the lot area, dwelling unit size, or bedroom count of the building. Two buildings may be the same density or size and be received differently due to design characteristics such as porches, windows, materials, stepbacks, and other visual interest. Regardless of its residential density, a new building should fit well within the fabric of nearby buildings. Height, form, placement of entrances, location of parking, and the distance between buildings of different scales often best prescribe how new development will fit into the surrounding context. As described in the previous strategy, replacement of residential density measures in plans and ordinances with form-based standards such as building height, mass, and site arrangement could lead to more predictable outcomes for new development and in integrating within existing neighborhoods. Form-based standards place the focus of development regulation on the characteristics most directly related to achieving community goals and controlling aspects that may create concern or nuisances.

Life Cycle Housing. Although Altoona is growing with new residents, Wisconsin’s population is aging, with persons over 65 comprising the fastest growing segment. Housing must be provided to accommodate all stages of life and all abilities. Integrating life-cycle and accessible housing options within neighborhoods allows residents to upsize or downsize along with life milestones and changing situations without leaving the established social network of a neighborhood. The inclusion of more accessible housing across Altoona supports not only the residents themselves, but also visitors who may benefit from accessible features. This can include both accessible new construction, which already occurs, and retrofitting existing buildings. Older adults can stay in the neighborhoods of their choice if housing more appropriate to their changing needs is available throughout the city, especially in amenity-rich areas with good walkability and proximity to healthcare, basic needs, and programing and resources for seniors.

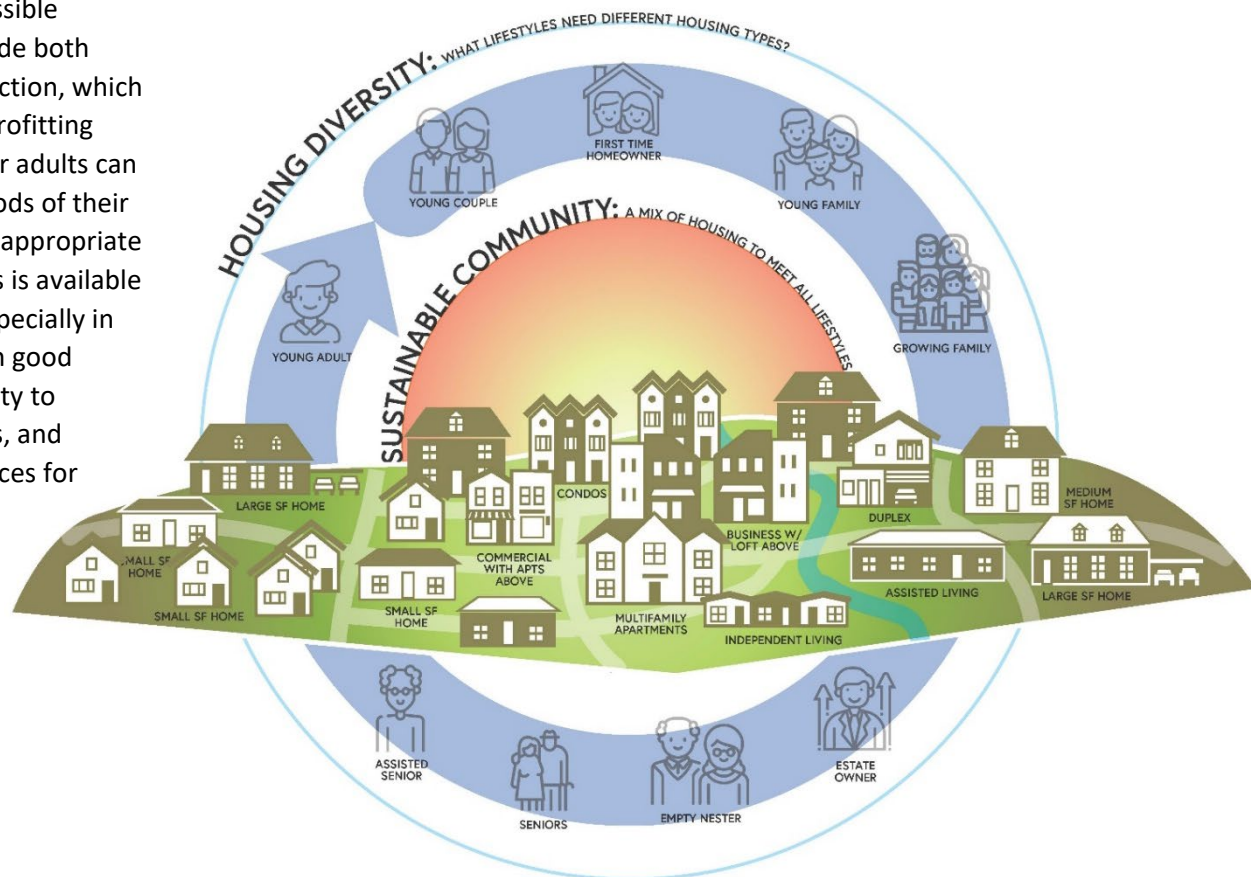


Figure 5.3. Housing Life Cycle

Affordable Options. Affordable housing was a consistently identified priority throughout the public engagement process, highlighting issues related to homelessness, housing cost burden, housing families experiencing low-income, housing attainable for older adults, and workforce housing close to employment. Affordable housing must go beyond simply options that are financially attainable. It must be clean, safe, well-designed, and fit the needs of the household. All housing, regardless of price, should meet standards of quality and provide a safe, healthy environment for those living there. True affordability must also consider proximity: lower-cost housing far from jobs and services may actually cost a household more than higher-cost housing that is close to jobs and transit due to transportation costs, and access to services, schools, parks, and other amenities that impact health and other quality of life outcomes.

Affordable housing should be distributed throughout the city and within areas that have access to transit, public services, and amenities for daily living. Integrating affordable housing into neighborhoods makes it more likely that the housing and residents contribute to a stable neighborhood and may result in better outcomes for residents, whereas concentrations of low-income housing tend to isolate residents and result in greater demands for services. New lower cost and subsidized housing should be located in areas that already have a high level of resources and amenities available at a range of income levels. Correspondingly, resources and amenities must also be equitably located throughout Altoona.

Ownership and Occupancy Types. Physical building type is only one aspect of housing variety. Different occupancy and ownership structures, including fee simple ownership, renting, owner-occupied two- and three- unit rentals, condominiums, co-housing, and housing cooperatives, are ways to provide residents with choices. While certain building formats lend to particular ownership and occupancy types, and this dynamic should not be overlooked, formats such as single-family detached homes that are often associated with ownership are also frequently renter occupied.

Throughout the planning process, some community members expressed concern about the increase in the development of housing types that are intended for rental. This is a common anxiety shared by residents who are may be skeptical of community change and recognize how our economic system is currently arranged such that home ownership is the primary method that families accumulate wealth and stability. The dramatic rise in rental housing types is the result of a confluence of factors experienced by most growing communities due to a generation of stagnant wages and rapidly rising housing costs. However, there are housing types that enable ownership while also creating scale that can improve affordability. If well-designed, these scaling opportunities also contribute to other community goals such as Traditional Neighborhood Design, walkability, and others.

These housing types include many of those formats as noted above, such as twin-homes, two-flats, townhouses, and small-lot single family. Unfortunately, these types are called “missing middle” because regions like Altoona and the Chippewa Valley have had very few of these housing formats constructed over the past several generations, although these types were common prior to mid-century suburban development trends and associated development regulations.



What is Missing Middle Housing?

“Missing middle housing” is a range of multi-unit or clustered housing types scaled between single-family detached houses and larger apartment buildings. Missing middle housing is compatible in scale with most single-family residential areas, and can help meet the growing demand for urban living. Missing middle housing types contribute to a walkable neighborhood, require simpler construction types than larger buildings, and contribute to higher residential densities than single-family homes.

Despite the higher density, they have lower perceived density than other building types because the units are small and well designed. Housing types that should be considered as part of the missing middle include:

- Tiny homes
- Traditional small-lot single-family detached homes
- Side-by-side duplexes (two-family twin)
- Two-flat (over-under two-unit)
- Three-flat (three stacked units)
- Four-flat (2-up, 2-down)
- Townhouse / Rowhouse (single-family attached)
- Live-Work buildings (similar to rowhouses, but with small ground floor commercial spaces used by residents in the building)
- Accessory dwelling units
- Small apartment buildings

Source: Missing Middle Housing: Thinking Big and Building Small to Respond to Today’s Housing Crisis. Daniel Parolek.



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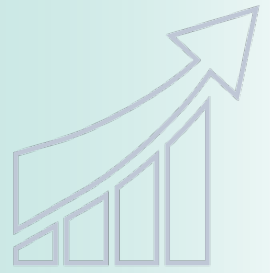


Chapter 6

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



CHAPTER 6: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, the City has successfully diversified the community's tax base and increased the number of employment opportunities through new commercial, office, medical, mixed-use, and industrial development. Much of this growth has occurred in the development of River Prairie, due in part to its distinct locational and market advantages such as highway and river access, matched with a thoughtful mixed-use plan focusing on public space and applying design best practices.

Altoona's approach to economic development has primarily been to focus on creating a desirable place to live by providing excellent quality of life amenities, including parks, trails, library, and recreation programming, quality infrastructure, coordination with the Altoona School District and other community organizations, cooperation throughout the region, and to be accessible and nimble in responding to the business community. Active economic development programs undertaken by the City have focused on development and redevelopment of property, active facilitation of arts and culture programming, and leadership in regional efforts by Visit Eau Claire and Eau Claire Economic Development. Given larger market trends, including tremendous regionally growth, rising construction costs, and an increasingly mobile and competitive workforce, a key component of the City's economic viability will be its ability to facilitate diverse, afford, and quality housing opportunities in walkable neighborhoods.

Additionally, the City must also cultivate other economic development opportunities like the redevelopment of key sites, revitalization of built-out corridors, and providing mixed-use development opportunities within its growth areas. This chapter is intended to provide the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations that aim to promote the retention, stabilization, and expansion of the City's economic base. See Appendix A for an assessment of the City's economic base, strengths and weaknesses, and an inventory of environmentally contaminated sites within Altoona.



STRATEGIES SUMMARY

- Develop and implement a Downtown Revitalization Plan and pursue the redevelopment of underutilized properties along key community corridors.
- Build on Altoona's arts and culture to grow the creative economy and spark new economic development.
- Focus on economic opportunities that are aligned with the community's environmental stewardship and social equity values. Pursue opportunities to facilitate new business investment in sustainable/green technologies and services, as well as opportunities for existing businesses to integrate environmentally and socially preferable practices, such as renewable energy, efficiency, high-performance construction, and mobility choices.
- Attract and retain diverse new businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Assist in preparing the local workforce to be prepared for and adapt to economic changes.
- Utilize TIF and grants to foster the implementation of this Plan and drive future redevelopment, new development, and reinvestment throughout the community.
- Collaborate with regional and state economic agencies on growth initiatives.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

The City of Altoona has many existing assets it can leverage to foster new economic development, grow and diversify its tax base, and provide new employment opportunities for area residents aligned with the community's environmental and social values. The graphic on the following page illustrates Altoona's existing destinations, employment centers, redevelopment and new development opportunities, and regional location components.

City and Regional Economic Data Trends in 2020

	Altoona	Chippewa Valley Region
Top Occupations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation and Material Moving • Office and Administration • Healthcare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office and Administration • Sales • Transportation and Material Moving • Production • Food Production and Services
Fastest-Growing Occupations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation and Material Moving • Finance • Construction • Healthcare • Information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business and Finance • Transportation and Material Moving • Healthcare • Construction
Largest Industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare • Transportation and Warehousing • Government • Professional and Technical Services • Finance and Insurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare • Government • Manufacturing • Retail

Source: EMSI, 2021

Other Key Economic Data and Assets:

- Only 8% of the employed people who live in Altoona also work in the City; conversely, 49% of the employed people who live in Eau Claire County also work in Eau Claire County (2019).
- City of Altoona residents have a median 21-minute commute, which reflects the fact that many residents work somewhere else in the greater Chippewa Valley Region (2019).
- Of Altoona residents over the age of 25 years old, 90% have a high school diploma and 30% have a bachelor's degree or higher (2019).
- While regional job growth has only increased by 0.7% between 2015 and 2020, the number of private sector jobs in Altoona has increased substantially with the completion of Woodman's, Prevea Health, Staybridge Suites, expansion at Curt Manufacturing, and other development in River Prairie. Additionally, coupled with local population growth, the School District has also increased the number of public sector jobs in the City.
- Altoona School District enrollment increased by 18% over the past decade.
- Most businesses in Altoona are small (80%), with 19 or fewer employees. Within the region, there is a similar rate, with 83% of businesses having 19 or fewer employees (2020).
- The largest employers in Altoona include medical, communications, wholesalers, information, and finance businesses (2020).
- Employment projections developed by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development for Eau Claire, Barron, Chippewa, Clark, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, and St. Croix Counties combined between 2018 and 2028 indicate the projected fastest growing occupations include construction (18%), leisure and hospitality (9%), education and health services (8%), and professional and business services (7%).
- Altoona's median household income was \$55,571 in 2019, and the median household income in Eau Claire County was \$59,476. Both have increased by nearly 30% over the past decade.

- The region is home to several employment concentrations including manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, medical service providers, and higher education institutions.
- There are several regional assets that help drive tourism and play a part in the area's high quality of life, including:
 - Parks and trails (state, county, and local),
 - Music and culture (Pablo Center, UW-Eau Claire, many venues and festivals),
 - Water recreation (Altoona Lake, Eau Claire River, Chippewa River, etc.),
 - Higher education (UW-Eau Claire, Chippewa Valley Technical College, etc.), and
 - Historic and vibrant downtown destinations in the City of Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls.
- A few of Altoona's highest-projected retail demand sectors over the next five years include apparel, vehicles, electronics, entertainment (restaurants, bars, recreation, etc.), and services (financial, health, insurance, etc.). While some of these sectors may already be served by the greater region or by new development in the City, future opportunities in these areas may present themselves as Altoona continues to grow.

Source: EMSI, 2021, U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, and Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, 2021.

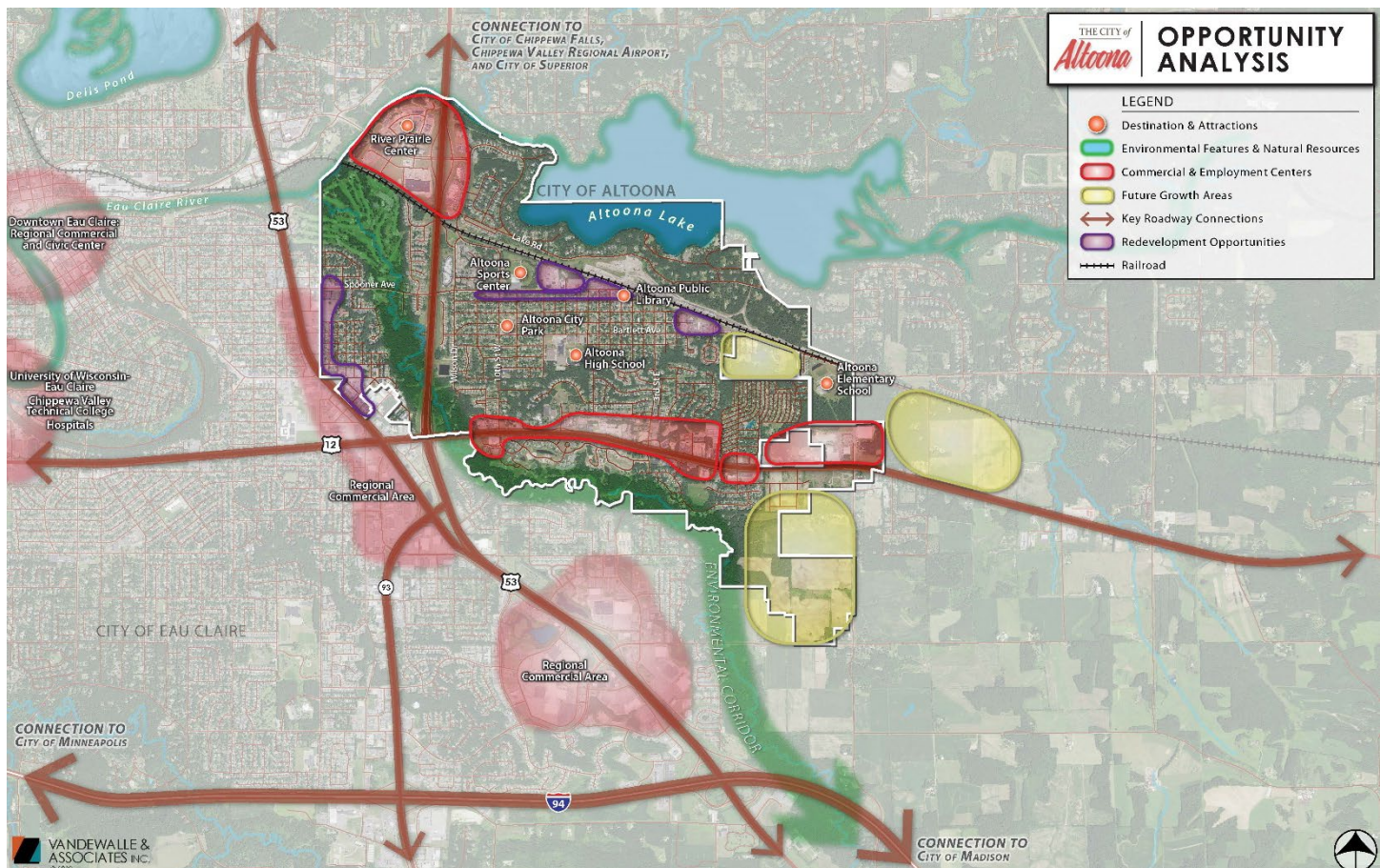


Figure 6.1. Opportunity Analysis

Economic Opportunity Analysis Takeaways

Altoona's economy is highly interconnected with the City Eau Claire and the greater Chippewa Valley region.

One of Altoona's greatest assets is its access to the region via key transportation corridors, which in turn provides City residents with the ability to work throughout the region.

With key investments and new development occurring over the past decade, the City's employment base has grown and diversified.

Within River Prairie and along the USH 12 corridor, a few large-scale employers have developed. However, most of Altoona's businesses remain small (fewer than 19 employees).

The community has great assets (lake, river, creek, parks, schools, recreational facilities) that are generally well distributed throughout the City. These assets provide residents with the opportunity for a high quality of life, attract tourists and visitors, and have been successfully leveraged to spark economic development and investment in the community over the past decade. There is an opportunity to replicate this in the future within key growth areas.

The City has both redevelopment (Downtown, Spooner Avenue, and Hastings Way) and new development (Mayer Road, STH 12, and 9 Mile Creek Road) opportunities that provide the ability to grow the community's tax base and increase local employers.

There are several existing large regional concentrations of retail and employment within the greater Chippewa Valley and developing between the City of Eau Claire and Minneapolis. This presents an opportunity for Altoona to continue to focus on attraction of small-scale manufacturing and community-focused retail and office that compliment those regional concentrations without being in direct competition with them.

ALTOONA'S DESIRED ECONOMIC FOCUS

Expanding on the local goals, objectives, and policies stated below, Altoona strives to offer affordability, high quality of life, and local employment and shopping opportunities. The City's desired economic focus moving forward is centered on:

- Increasing the quality of life for residents and attracting new residents by building on Altoona's locational, recreational, educational, cultural, and tourism assets.
- Promoting high-quality, compact, mixed-use, and enduring economic development projects in recognition of the limited supply of marketable lands for these purposes in the community.
- Prioritizing infill and redevelopment opportunities in areas where existing utilities and infrastructure are available.
- Facilitating new commercial, mixed-use, and employment opportunities in urban expansion areas to the south and to the east along USH 12.
- Fostering entrepreneurship and small business expansion that complement the community's existing businesses and character to avoid duplication of large-scale commercial and industrial development that is offered in other existing regional concentrations.
- Focusing on "triple bottom line" opportunities for economic development that aligns with environmental and social priorities.
- Improving racial and economic equity through removing barriers, integrating equitable development best practices, and focused coordination with corresponding agencies and advocacy organizations.
- Collaborating with local institutions to adapt and educate the local workforce to be prepared for new roles in manufacturing, technology, information, trades, and medical occupations.
- Increasing local artist spaces and showcasing their work at local events and through new public art features throughout the community.
- Increasing connections and involvement of diverse groups in local initiatives, events, and leadership roles.
- Revitalizing downtown to become a new community focal point and destination, in addition to growing opportunities for residents to both to live and work in the downtown.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICES

Definitions of goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations are found in the Issues and Opportunities Chapter of this Plan.

Goals

1. Grow the local economy through high-quality, compact, sustainable, and mixed-use development.
2. Attract and retain local businesses, entrepreneurs, and skilled workforce.
3. Strengthen and diversify the City's non-residential tax base to serve the day-to-day needs of residents and grow local employment opportunities.

Objectives

1. Focus economic development efforts on infill and redevelopment opportunities in areas where existing utilities and infrastructure are available, particularly along key corridors and downtown.
2. Discourage unplanned, incremental strip commercial development along major community corridors such as USH 12.
3. Promote high-quality design for new development throughout the City.
4. Take the lead on revitalizing and reinvigorating downtown through redevelopment projects that foster an increased sense of community and establish new destinations in the area.

Policies

1. Implement the Future Land Use Map to provide sufficient areas for future commercial and industrial growth over the planning period.
2. Prohibit premature or rural development in areas that can't be efficiently served by infrastructure; reserve these areas for future urban commercial and industrial growth.
3. Support mixed-use and higher density development projects that integrate non-residential and residential uses into high-quality, unified places.
4. Require access plans as new development occurs along key corridors to maximize shared parking and driveways, improve traffic flow, provide and prioritize multi-modal transportation, and protect public safety.
5. Continue the strategic use of Tax Incremental Financing to promote infill and redevelopment, the expansion of existing businesses, new business development, and pursuit of environmental and social objectives.
6. Leverage regional collaboration and public-private partnerships to help promote investment, redevelopment, equitable development, and revitalization throughout the community.
7. Develop a Downtown Revitalization Plan, corridor plans, or small area plans for key investment and redevelopment areas in the City.
8. Identify opportunities for property acquisition where the City can utilize infill and redevelopment projects to advance its economic development, land use, housing, growth management, and related priorities.
9. Foster workforce development programs in partnership with local institutions such as the School District, Chippewa Valley Technical College, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, and others to focus on educating the current and future labor force to be prepared for and adaptable to future technological skills required.
10. Accentuate the city and region's outdoor recreation assets for quality of life and workforce attraction.
11. Seek opportunities to leverage the region's agricultural assets for agritourism, small business, restaurants and culture, and supply chain investments within and nearby Altoona.



12. Continue to frame the imperative on proactively creating diverse, affordable, and quality housing opportunities in walkable, healthy neighborhoods as an economic asset for workforce attraction and retention.
13. Address barriers in mobility and proximity by coordinating transit services with housing and economic opportunities to improve workforce availability to employment and services.
14. Seek opportunities to assist business start-up and expansion businesses owned by populations historically underrepresented, including women and persons of color to reduce disparities and improve economic equity.
15. Develop City standards for use of sustainability best practices in new economic development projects related to stormwater, energy efficiency, renewable energy production, transportation, and waste reduction.
16. Prioritize the incorporation of public art, community gathering spaces, landscaping, and high-quality signage downtown and along other key community corridors to foster a sense of place.
17. Leverage federal and state grants and COVID-19 response stimulus money for key economic and infrastructure projects. Use regional partnerships and collaboration to assist in this effort.
18. Continue to foster local entrepreneurs and promote the community as a regional destination for entrepreneurs and start-ups.
19. Partner with the regional stakeholders and local art-focused groups to increase artist spaces, education, events, and integration of art in public spaces.

STRATEGIES

Foster Revitalization and Redevelopment In Strategic Locations

This Plan recommends the revitalization and redevelopment of underutilized properties and areas to improve the tax base, foster diverse employment and housing opportunities, enhance community appearance, and boost sustainability efforts. Revitalization efforts should be considered where there is an opportunity to redevelop lands to a greater intensity and to provide a broader mix of uses that takes advantage of locational amenities, location efficiency, and access. Redevelopment is inherently more environmentally sustainable and fiscally responsible, as it utilizes existing utilities, infrastructure, and services.

In Altoona, there are several areas with significant redevelopment potential including downtown and along Spooner Avenue, Hastings Way/Fairfax Street corridor, and the USH 12 corridor. This recommendation focused on the methods and strategies that can be leveraged to plan for and begin fostering redevelopment in these areas. For specific land use recommendations and desired community character components see the Smart Growth Section within Chapter 4.

Overall, revitalization typically does not occur by itself. Instead, careful planning, site assessment, public-private partnerships, property acquisition, redevelopment incentives, and persistence over many years is required. The process often begins with conducting a detailed planning process to develop specific implementation action items. Typical components of a Revitalization or Redevelopment Plan include:

- A public participation process that involves stakeholders, property and business owners, and the public through small group meetings, workshops, surveys, and other interactive participation formats.
- Establishment of a future vision for the site, area, or corridor that guides what it looks and feels like, its role in the community, and amenities desired.



- Evaluating the planning area’s condition including size, visibility, viewsheds, access, building quality, existing use viability, adjacent land uses, topographic or environmental constraints, brownfield site assessment, and existing infrastructure and amenities.
- Conducting a regional and local economic opportunities analysis to focus on the City’s location, amenities, and business mix, as well as the assessment of the regional factors such as economics, transportation patterns, and intergovernmental relationships. These economic opportunities are further described in the Economic Opportunity Analysis section above.
 - This analysis should include possible assets and potential opportunities for development, redevelopment, revitalization, and economic development—looking not only at the boundaries of the area, but also linking it to the greater fabric and context of the area’s surroundings.
- Identifying goals and objectives for the area through cooperative efforts with residents, property owners and other key stakeholders. This step also typically identifies and prioritizes redevelopment sites within the planning area.
- Conducting a market assessment for key sites to determine the role of the site within the marketplace, provide demographic trade area information to assist in the solicitation of potential developers or site users, and identify the range of specific issues and challenges to site redevelopment.
- Identification of constraints to future revitalization in the area and methods for addressing and overcoming those hurdles moving forward.
- Preparing a redevelopment strategy and district concept plan map that identifies the highest and best land uses, site characteristics, design approaches, and implementation strategies for the planning area, with particular attention to priority sites.
- Research and documenting of potential funding sources for revitalization projects at the local, county, regional, state, and federal levels, in addition to the private sector, community organizations, and regional groups.
- Aggressively pursuing implementation through techniques such as adoption of a statutory redevelopment plan; establishment of a redevelopment tax increment financing district; possible brownfield remediation; possible site acquisition, consolidation, and demolition; and developer recruitment.

The City’s goals include utilizing this approach downtown and along Spooner Avenue, Hastings Way/Fairfax Street, and the USH 12 corridor to determine the specific action steps needed spark catalytic change in the area. The City has utilized a similar approach in the past through the planning and development of River Prairie. Using the steps listed above and the experience of the City in developing River Prairie, Altoona can realize the potential of new activity, investment, and amenities in these areas.

Strategic property acquisition. Another way the City can proactively implement the goals and objectives of this Plan is through direct property acquisition. Altoona has been active and successful in acquiring property for development, most notably River Prairie. Aside from the unique circumstances and characteristics of that once-in-a-generation enterprise, the city also acquired 1.6 acres from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation that is now 53 dwellings, identified 4 acres of surplus property that has been sold and entitled for 24 for-sale townhouses, and acquired two blighted properties comprising about 0.5 acres in the downtown and it is currently completing environmental testing and site preparation.



Additionally, the city purchased 83 acres of property outside of the city along Nine Mile Creek Road and US Highway 12 to control the land use and timing of development. The City has worked with nearby property owners to create the East Neighborhood Concept Plan to envision land uses in the area and has budgeted for extending sewer and water utilities in 2022. For more details on the East Neighborhood Plan, see the Land Use and Community Character Chapter.

Further, the city owns about 4 acres of developable property adjacent to the closed Windsor Forest Landfill (which is also under city ownership), and worked with a UW-Madison student to complete a concept plan for the area envisioning a “pocket neighborhood” of diverse housing types and parkland on and around the landfill. The City is currently working on potential public-private partnerships to further plan and develop the property.

In terms of future opportunities, the city should also continue to actively scan for and consider property acquisition as a core practice in guiding the development of the city and pursuit of the goals in this Plan. Benefits and intended outcomes of this approach may include:

- Instigate and catalyze development activities in priority areas, such as Downtown, Spooner Avenue, and Hastings/Fairfax corridors.
- Allow the city to control land uses to instigate higher intensity development, and development with specific desired characteristics such as sustainability and affordability.
- Facilitate development of housing types and mixed-use buildings that are not present or uncommon in the market.
- Prepare for public-private partnerships.
- Address known, potential, or perceived barriers to development, such as obsolete buildings or brownfield conditions.
- Reduce developer risk by creating sites prepared for development.
- Depending upon the condition of the property and intended use, grant and state program funds may be available to offset certain costs.

Layer tools and incentives. The City has a variety of tools and incentives to facilitate development. As the City completed with River Prairie and is now pursuing in the Windsor Forest Neighborhood and future East Neighborhood, the City can combine land acquisition with creating a detailed plan, remove development barriers, and create opportunities and partnerships for development that exceed what is likely to otherwise occur. By layering tools and incentive programs in one specific area, the City was able to attract high quality development projects that are consistent with this Plan.

Altoona has an unusually strong position for a small city in property acquisition and development, due to its success and experience in River Prairie and other examples noted above. This has resulted in high-performing TIF districts where resources may be leveraged for acquisition in the short term, the planned created of an Affordable Housing Fund when districts close, and use of land acquisition and redevelopment reserve funds to recycle resources in an ongoing strategy. Due to the current success in the City’s TIDs, no new district can be created until existing districts are closed, but the City can plan ahead for how future districts may be designed and prepare years-ahead for land acquisition and infrastructure investments.



Develop and Utilize an Equitable Development Framework

Practices of city development, including housing, transportation, and economic programs, have resulted in historic wealth and health disparities between people of different heritage and social status. While only a few of the myriad of factors contributing to inequities in our society are strongly within the ability of local governments to eliminate or correct, Altoona is committed to pursuing city development, and economic opportunities specifically, with a lens directly focused on addressing these challenges to create a community where the benefits of society are broadly and equitably shared.

This strategy, perhaps more than any other in this Chapter, will require the City to coordinate and partner with other organizations and levels of government to identify barriers and direct resources to intentionally and deliberately pursue more equitable outcomes in how development and business activity occurs and how the costs and benefits of these choices managed. The City recognizes that the conditions and opportunities to realize the benefits from economic growth vary across the City geographically, due to proximity and access to opportunities and amenities, as well as vary by the resources available to people to recognize and utilize opportunities. Throughout this Plan, the City recognizes that a place-based approach must be matched with a people-approach to create a high quality of life that is accessible and attainable for all residents. The goals and policies in this Plan reflect the City's core values of pursuing and achieving equity not only of opportunity, but of outcomes.

Equitable development strategies that show evidence of success include small business expansion, accessible jobs and skills development, strengthening family financial health, and fostering quality neighborhoods. These strategies target resources to those with the greatest need and collectively address the interacting barriers to opportunities that often occur in disadvantaged communities. Understanding these conditions, removing or overcoming barriers, and aligning resources will require diligent and committed work by the City with its partnering organizations in the region. When implemented, the strategies would be designed to remove barriers and facilitate access to opportunities, such as pursuing and investing in industries and businesses that provide entry-level living-wage jobs, providing support in matching workforce development programs with employers, and prioritizing transit improvement to connect mobility-limited populations with centers of employment and services.

Equality vs. Equity

Equality means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities. Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome. While the terms equity and equality may sound similar, the implementation of one versus the other can lead to dramatically different outcomes for marginalized people.

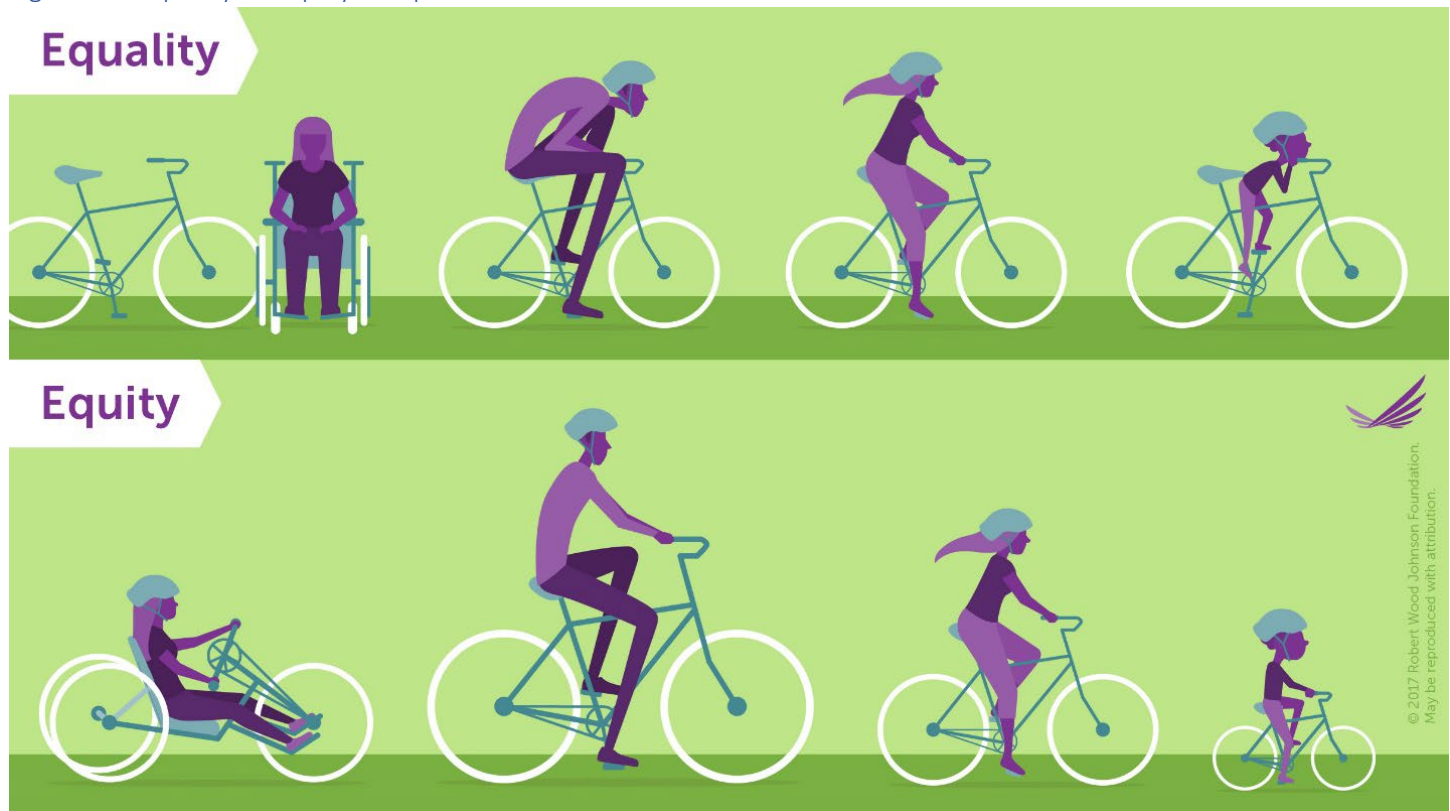
In order to create progress toward a more equitable community, the City must intentionally remove barriers and create systems that are restorative, that support historically marginalized people meet their needs and make progress toward shared prosperity.

Equitable economic development unlocks the full potential of the local economy by dismantling barriers and expanding opportunities for low-income people and communities of color, populations that have historically been marginalized and have not equitably realized the benefits of growth and development. Through accountable public action and investment, equitable development strategies grow quality jobs and increases entrepreneurship, ownership, and wealth. The result is a stronger, more competitive city and region.

The City should work with its partners to develop an Equitable Development Framework to guide decision-making. An Equitable Development Framework is way of thinking about and creating a type of economic development system that results in inclusive, equitable growth. The Framework would include specific strategies that create opportunities for

disadvantaged communities. Some strategies that have been employed in other places include investment in affordable housing and support for small business development. The Framework would also include defined and measurable outcomes such as livable wages and higher retention of locally-owned business. These strategies and outcome are simply examples, as Altoona’s Equitable Development Framework would be tailored to conditions specific to Altoona and the region. It would also be guided by community assets, local and regional business clusters, needs of the local population, and an understanding of where inequities have been greatest. While some equitable development practices are known, Altoona’s framework and selection of strategies will be created inclusively with historically marginalized populations and implemented collaboratively.

Figure 6.2. Equality vs. Equity Comparison



Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, *Visualizing Health Equity*, 2017.

Integrate and Advance Sustainability and Climate Objectives

Studies conducted by the World Resources Institute, United Nations, U.S. Chamber of Commerce among many others describe adapting to a changing climate as a tremendous economic opportunity for growth in addition to improving quality of life. Business and government response to climate change mitigation and adaptation are generational shifts that are expected to create unique economic development opportunities for new businesses, new markets, and increased efficiency, waste reduction, and risk management. Communities, regions, and firms that are able to adapt to the changing climate and successfully capture opportunities in rapidly expanding markets for new products and services will be better positioned for overall community vitality. As urgent and systemic as the challenge of climate change is, successfully addressing these challenges must be viewed as an opportunity.

The City should recognize that every business and sector is already impacted by climate and corresponding changes in the market. The City can position its economic development priorities, focus, and tools to target known and emerging solutions. In addition, the City and its collaborators should stay current on emerging opportunities and threats in order to adapt its strategies.

Triple Bottom Line Finance Tools

An example of a tool that the City can leverage and utilize to advance these objectives is through Property Assessed Clean Energy Programs (PACE). This is an innovative program that enables property owners to obtain low-cost, long-term loans for energy efficiency, renewable energy, and water conservation improvements. Projects financed using PACE can generate positive cash flow upon completion with no up-front, out-of-pocket cost to property owners—eliminating the financial barriers that typically prevent investment in revitalizing aging properties. The term of a PACE Financing may extend up to the useful life of the improvement, which may be 20 years or more, and can result in cost savings that exceed the amount of the PACE Financing. The result is improved business profitability, an increase in property value, and enhanced sustainability. *Source: PACE Wisconsin*

In Wisconsin, PACE is utilized to contribute financing to affordable housing projects, commercial renovations, and new business development. Facilitating the use of PACE in Altoona can improve business expansion, reduce costs for residents and businesses, and improve environmental performance.

To facilitate and enhance the use of PACE, the City can promote the use of this program and also provide access to companion and local programs. The City water utility and storm water utility may be leveraged to create incentives in making efficiency and resilience improvements. TIF programs could also be utilized to encourage the use of PACE as an additional financing tool and/or attaching performance requirements to access TIF resources that PACE may be utilized to achieve.

Spark Economic Development by Building on Altoona's Arts and Culture

The City has worked hard over the past decade to increase, highlight, and integrate arts and cultural components within existing neighborhoods, redevelopment projects, and new developments. Economic development activities should continue to build on these initiatives while creatively seeking new opportunities.

The creative economy is a dynamic component of the region's overall economy that leverages human creativity and ideas to create and develop intellectual property, knowledge, and technology. Industries often associated with the creative economy include artists, musicians, makers, and designers, which are an important source of commercial and cultural value in a community. This community is often comprised of entrepreneurs and small businesses that generate local investment and contribute to community identity. However, utilizing creativity and new information to improve or create new products and services are possible in any industry.

One way for Altoona to support and coordinate a successful environment that helps to grow specific aspects of the creative economy is through the development of an Arts and Culture Plan. This place-based plan can help develop a vision and action plan focused towards strengthening and growing the local arts and cultural assets and their impact on the greater community. Key strategies that could be further explored through this process include:

- Partnering with regional stakeholders and local art-focused groups to increase artist spaces, education, events, and integration of art in public spaces.
- Establish and support existing advocacy groups that could help lead these efforts in conjunction with public and private partners.
- Inventory community assets and identify opportunities for new public art, cultural events, and education activities.
- Gather baseline data to determine benchmarks and inform goal setting.
- Strengthen the connections between existing School District and City programming.
- Prioritize the integration of placemaking components into new development and redevelopment projects.

The City can leverage its experience with the River Prairie development and programming of its public spaces as a model for how to successfully support economic development through the thoughtful incorporation of arts and culture. The City can also lean on other communities that have successfully taken this approach with adopted Arts and Culture Plans such as the City of Waupaca, City of Madison, and others to learn from proven examples. Conditions are favorable for Altoona to continue to improve its arts and cultural environment and support the local creative economy to drive overall community vitality and economic opportunity in the City.

Strategically Utilize Tax Incremental Financing (TIF)

To help implement the recommendations in this Plan, the appropriate and thoughtful use of TIF will place Altoona in a much stronger position when working to create new community amenities, infrastructure, and with developers and business owners. TIF may also allow the City to vie for the types of projects that might not otherwise be possible without it, projects of a scale and quality that can change the local market and generate other quality projects.

TIF is one of the few economic development tools in Wisconsin where a local government can leverage financial resources to contribute to an economic development strategy or project, such as infrastructure investment, removing barriers, and contributing to characteristics that produce specific public benefit. This may include preparing sites for development, investing in affordable housing opportunities, integrating sustainability features, and creating public amenities that attract investment and contribute to placemaking. The City may consider creating a TIF policy or guide that encourages, requires, or provides additional support for integrating sustainability and equity benchmarks into projects as a condition for city financial participation.

The City should utilize the following strategies within existing and potential new TIF districts that could be created over the planning period. Below are six strategies and best practices the City can continue to employ in managing TIF districts for maximum impact:

- 1) Regularly Reviewing TIF Plans and Individual TID Parcels: On an annual basis, this includes reviewing adopted TIF Plans with the City's Comprehensive Plan as conditions change to ensure continuity between the documents. It also includes ongoing parcel-by-parcel management. Every spring, when new preliminary assessments are released, each parcel in every district should be reviewed to be sure the assessment includes the correct properties and has accurately captured the values. Valuation tasks include:
 - Review each parcel assessment to be sure it includes correct properties and accurate values.
 - Compare year-over-year changes in values by parcel.
 - Be sure to complete checks before the tax roll is certified in August.
- 2) Update Cashflow Projections: For a complete picture of each district's true financial state:
 - Update the TID's long-term cashflow projections annually.
 - Continually determine:
 - ✓ Where and when new increment will come from
 - ✓ How much it will be
 - ✓ What costs will need to be incurred to support projected development
 - ✓ How to structure any associated borrowing most efficiently
- 3) Communicate with Property Owners, Partners and Prospective Developers/Businesses: The best ways to keep communication open include:
 - Annual outreach to owners of prime sites to reconfirm interest and expectations of sale prices.
 - Assisting owners with listing their property on Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's LocateInWisconsin list of available sites.
 - Offering to provide some development contacts and/or to solicit developers/buyers.
 - Maintaining up-to-date communications with partner economic development organizations.
 - Providing partners with current information and marketing materials on available sites.

- Providing a map and information on available sites on the City website that is easy to locate from the homepage.
 - Update stakeholders as TID and community-wide conditions change related planned infrastructure projects, other proposed public investments, or available grant opportunities as they become known.
- 4) Have a Well-Defined Process for Getting Deals Done: To create a well-defined process:
- Clearly define roles for the staff, Plan Commission, and City Council.
 - Describe the process in writing, distribute it to all involved, and review it every few years making changes as needed.
 - Provide guidance and answers to prospective developers/businesses early in the process to clarify what is and is not appropriate within a district.
 - Offer direction to developers about how (and whether) to move forward.
- 5) Engage the JRB as a Full Partner: Best practices for communication with members of the Joint Review Board including adding the following to the required JRB annual meeting:
- Providing an up-to-date accounting of each district's current and projected finances in an easily understood format.
 - Sharing the City's strategies for the promoting growth in the District and what is anticipated over the next year.
 - Discussing any potential needs for district amendments or creating new districts.
 - Encouraging members to ask questions and state preferences on what they would prefer to see.
- 6) Continuously Monitor Other Opportunities: Overtime, the City must monitor changes to property ownership, tax delinquency, or new properties coming on the market in key locations. This due diligence provides an understanding of changing conditions and where potential opportunities may arise for public-private partnerships, property acquisition, or the potential creation of a new TID. Working with Eau Claire County and other regional economic development organizations provides the most efficiency in these monitoring efforts.

Collaborate on Regional and State Economic Growth Initiatives

Altoona's future economic health depends not only on what can be done solely through local efforts, but how well the City collaborates, communicates, and connects with county, regional, state, and federal partners, initiatives, and programs.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and future economic recovery, existing state and federal grant programs have been infused with new funds, and it is anticipated that new programs may also be created, as part of the federal government's massive economic recovery stimulus packages. One of these was the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which was signed in the spring of 2021. ARPA provided money directly to local governments to help with revenue loss, pandemic response, employment disruption, economic development efforts, infrastructure upgrades, and more. The City should remain apprised of all possible programs during this rapidly-evolving program, and work toward identifying and seeking resources from the programs that are most applicable to implementing the economic development and other recommendations of this Plan.

There are several ways the City can proactively prepare for future funding opportunities as they present themselves. This includes identifying projects that are ready to implement but are waiting for resource availability, identified in adopted plans or reports, incorporated into policies, and have quantitative analysis to support their need. A few such projects could include:

- Continue planning, analyzing, and assessing future utility, infrastructure, service, and community facility needs.
- Development of a Downtown Revitalization Plan, corridor redevelopment plans, or neighborhood plans.
- Continuing to complete regular Park and Open Space Plans and other such plans that require updating to maintain grant eligibility.
- Creating new sustainably, climate action, equity, or public health plans or partnerships, such as a Climate Action Plan or Environmental Determinants of Health framework.

- Revising policies or establishing new policy initiatives that support potential grant funding applications like a Complete Streets policy, Health In All Policies approach, or becoming a certified Bicycle Friendly Community or Wisconsin Healthy Community.

Another trend in both funding and economic development is the movement towards regional approaches for economic growth and coordination, as opposed to having different communities in the same county or region competing for the same businesses and industries. Several regional entities are designed to do just that. These include the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, Eau Claire Area Economic Development Cooperation, Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce, and Visit Eau Claire. Working with these regional groups will help advance local initiatives in the most effective and efficient manner by leveraging regional resources, partnerships, and coordination.

Regional coordination is an area where the Chippewa Valley has established activities and is a strength. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, communication and coordination across many activities, especially economic development, was very active. The advent of the pandemic emergency response and recovery efforts focused, deepened, and in some ways broadened coordination efforts to include many other segments of the community. Altoona should continue to build these relationships between local and regional stakeholders to advance regional economic development initiatives and generate new implementation resources locally.

Attract Diverse New Businesses and Prepare the Local Workforce for Changes

Business attraction and workforce preparedness are additional economic strategies, along with growing new businesses and retaining/expanding existing businesses. Attracting new businesses, entrepreneurs, and skilled workers will help expand the local economy and provide a sustainable economic future. Techniques for attracting new businesses, entrepreneurs, and skilled workers are often similar to those used to retain existing businesses and workers. The City has a range of these and other tools at its disposal that it will utilize. Strategies include:

- Build on the community's support of existing local businesses and those that cater to local customers to attract new locally-oriented businesses.
- Implement the City's economic strategy to attract technology, innovation, small retail/restaurants, and information businesses and entrepreneurs, in addition to educating and preparing the local workforce to fill the roles of the future.
- Develop an inventory of a broad range (e.g. size and location) of sites which are already improved with streets, sanitary sewer, and water services and are ready for construction.
- Continue to utilize a predictable and streamlined approach to development approvals.
- Identify and market specifically to target clusters (as described in the Economic Opportunity Analysis above) that relate to the City's existing businesses or capitalize on the community's place-based assets.
- Continue to work with Eau Claire County Economic Development and other similar entities in the formation of groups organized around particular business/industry clusters to guide schools in providing appropriate workforce training and help policy makers understand industry requirements for success.
- Define and identify the workforce skillsets available within the community, and market the City's quality labor force, highlighting skills, dedication, and availability as workforce assets.



- Grow the local entrepreneurial base through regional collaboration with educational institutions and other economic development-focused groups or organizations.
- Continue to be an active member of Eau Claire County Economic Development Corporation, Momentum West, and other economic growth focused coordination agencies.
- Continue to collaborate with Visit Eau Claire to increase tourism by leveraging the cultural and recreational assets of the region to attract new and support existing restaurant, entertainment, and lodging options.
- Adapt to economic, technology, and workforce shifts as they continue to evolve and change through regional collaboration, infrastructure investment, local planning initiatives, and understanding the needs of local employers.

Workforce Shifts

Over the next decade, it is anticipated that technology will continue to dramatically change the national, regional, and local economy. By 2030, it is projected that up to 24% of jobs in Eau Claire County could be displaced by automation and other technological advancements; however, it is projected that the County's overall net job growth will be 5-10%. As a national trend, displacement is projected to be much lower in large metro areas with more robust and diverse economies, high-growth industries, and better-educated populations.

The occupations that are projected to be most impacted by automation include jobs in office support, food service, production work, and customer service and retail. Conversely, health professionals, legal professionals, and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) occupations are projected to increase the most by 2030. Based on the City's occupational data in Appendix A, 15% of Altoona's labor force was in a production-based occupation in 2019, and therefore, job losses in these areas could have a considerable negative impact on the local and regional workforce.

As automation and the ability for machines to take on a wider range of tasks increases, more and more people may need to move into new roles, companies, or industries. Additionally, almost all jobs will continue to evolve over the next decade with a different mix of tasks and greater reliance on technology. Some of the most important ways to prepare for these changes will be to create more rewarding jobs, build better learning systems, and develop new career pathways.

Source: McKinsey Report: The Future of Work in America (2019)

Provide Quality and Accessible Youth Development Opportunities

Workforce development has long been part of a traditional economic development strategy to prepare people for the employment opportunities of the future. This focus has traditionally been on creating employer-sponsored training programs, and in tailoring college and technical programs to respond to the needs of local employers and connecting people who have experienced barriers to employment to those programs, as mentioned above. While Altoona's economic development focus has been on facilitating overall quality of life amenities, the City contributes to regional organizations that specialize in workforce development programs.

The Covid-19 pandemic has revealed stark preexisting challenges in the cost of and access to quality childcare and youth development programs and services. When children are sick and unable to attend childcare programs, or the care providers themselves are sick, closed, or otherwise unable to look after children on short notice, working parents may be unable to work or experience reduced productivity as they worry after their children's wellbeing. Childcare is a hands-on, close-contact activity, and the impacts of Covid-19 have resulted in deepening shortages of childcare workers and interruption in their ability to be available. Disruptions in childcare arrangements can thus lead to staffing challenges and harm businesses' bottom line.

Insufficient childcare options can prevent parents who wish to work from doing so, with mothers and low-income families often bearing the brunt of this challenge. Among parents who wish to work, child-rearing tends to interfere more with women's labor supply and employment outcomes. This leaves potential economic growth unrealized, as women's labor force participation is significantly associated with economic growth. To the extent women, persons of color, and low-income households are most impacted by lack of affordable and quality childcare, expanding childcare opportunities is also a direct economic and racial equity strategy.

Stable childcare supports businesses with a more reliable and productive workforce. Childcare decisions are hugely consequential, whether it's how families purchase care and what type of care to how these decisions affect the family breadwinners' employers and then, the broader economy.

High-quality early care and education provides critical socialization and learning opportunities when the brain is developing rapidly and is particularly responsive to the outside environment. Young children in pre-Kindergarten programs experience positive developmental outcomes and are better prepared for school, scoring higher than their peers on standardized measures of reading, spelling, math, and problem-solving skills. Economically, supporting early childhood education increases workforce availability of parents short-term, and long-term helps children develop their human capital and prepares them for more productive lives.

The City can utilize both traditional as well as creative economic development tools and strategies to assist in the support of childcare services. The City can also identify and remove barriers to locating childcare facilities and encourage these critical uses in residential areas. This is both a short-term and long-term strategy to improve equitable economic opportunity and quality of life for area residents.



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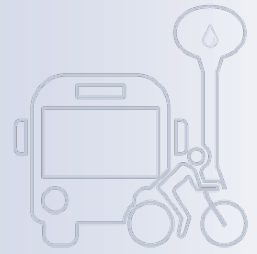


Chapter 7

TRANSPORTATION, UTILITIES, AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES



CHAPTER 7: TRANSPORTATION, UTILITIES, AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES



INTRODUCTION

The past decade of rapid population growth in Altoona has placed significant pressure on the community's infrastructure and service capacity. In response, the City has invested in several new studies, plans, and large-scale projects. Additionally, as Altoona grows outward and upward, new challenges and opportunities arise in connecting, integrating, and funding the infrastructure, utility, and transportation network.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations that aim to facilitate a safe, efficient, and sustainable utility, transportation, infrastructure, and community facility network over the planning period. See Appendix A for an inventory of existing facilities, projects, plans, and related data.

What is Social Equity and Cohesion?

As defined in the City of Altoona Place Plan, Social Equity and Cohesion is a multi-dimensional concept, the complexity of which is undergoing increased recognition and study by practitioners to better understand how the built environment is deterministic of uneven racial and economic equity. Quality public spaces positively contribute to public health and economic vitality, as well as safety, youth development, opportunity, mobility, and general quality of life. Therefore, in order to pursue this vision and operationalize values, communities must affirmatively orient public realm priorities to ensure all residents have equal access, and indeed focus additional resources into areas of the community where historically marginalized peoples reside to eliminate inequities, achieve social justice and equitable outcomes.

STRATEGIES SUMMARY

- Incorporate climate resilience and adoption into infrastructure planning.
- Proactively plan for and implement new utilities and community facilities that promote sustainability, climate resiliency, equity, fiscal responsibility, and public health.
- Improve multi-modal transportation accessibility, safety, and connectivity.
- Prepare for transportation technology changes through adapting policies, information sharing, and infrastructure improvements.
- Continue to work with the Altoona School District on future land use planning decisions and establishing neighborhood-scale schools.
- Develop, adopt, and enforce a city-wide official map to align transportation and land use strategies.
- Implement the Altoona Place Plan and complete an update in 2025.
- Utilize tactical urbanism to test infrastructure enhancement and investment opportunities.



GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICES

Definitions of goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations are found in Chapter 2: Issues and Opportunities.

Goals

1. Provide a safe, efficient, and interconnected multi-modal transportation system that meets the needs of all users, prioritizes bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities, promotes public health, and decreases reliance on the automobile.
2. Make informed and strategic investments in utilities, infrastructure, community facilities, and public services to balance fiscal responsibility with maintaining and improving residents' high quality of life.

Objectives

1. Ensure all residents are provided equitable access to public services such as police and fire protection, utilities, transportation accessibility, education, and parks and open space.
2. Utilize compact growth patterns that maximize the use of existing utilities and facilities within the City, and plan for an orderly, logical, and cost-efficient extension of municipal utilities and facilities in planned growth areas.
3. Require pedestrian-oriented neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices as new development occurs and existing areas are revitalized.
4. Actively participate in and coordinate multi-jurisdictional transportation, utility, infrastructure, and community facility system improvements in the City's planning area (including Eau Claire County, Altoona School District, the City of Eau Claire, the Town of Washington, and the State).
5. Support regional transit services in Altoona and throughout Eau Claire County.
6. Provide equitable access to quality parks, recreation, library space, and open space facilities and services designed to meet the needs of all age groups in Altoona.
7. Plan for interconnected new neighborhoods and development that results in safe and convenient access to existing development and prevents isolation by major transportation corridors.
8. Address climate change, public health, and sustainability through the adaption of policies, integration of best practices, conducting planning processes, and resource allocation.



Policies

1. Promote infill development, redevelopment, and revitalization of areas that use existing utility systems and roads, and are close to existing community facilities such as schools, parks, and other public investments.
2. Continue the five-year Capital Improvements Program that sets priorities for completing public infrastructure, utility, and community facility project, which can be funded from available fiscal resources.
3. Establish and enforce a Citywide Official Map to reserve sufficient rights-of-way for future arterial and collector streets, pedestrian and bicycle paths, parks, utility infrastructure, and bridges.
4. Adopt a Complete Streets Policy that requires multi-modal elements as part of every roadway infrastructure project. Integrate United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, National Association of City Transportation Officials, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and Wisconsin

Department of Transportation guidelines, best practices, and performance measures into the policy to facilitate true complete streets.

5. Implement the Altoona Place Plan, utility and community facility studies, and regional transportation, utility, hazard mitigation, and sustainability plans. Complete and coordinate on updates to these plans over the planning period. Many of these plans are summarized in Appendix A.
6. Coordinate with other governmental units to avoid the duplication of services and promote shared services, facilities, and planning, where appropriate.
7. Work cooperatively with the School District in planning for new or upgraded school facilities and notify the School District of major residential developments that may affect school funding and programming.
8. Any future remodeling, renovation, or new construction of a City facility should consider the financial feasibility of incorporating renewable energy sources, sustainable building practices, and LEED Certification standards. Where feasible, the City should consider implementing such features.
9. Partner with UW-Extension, Eau Claire County, neighboring communities and school districts, and local groups to organize opportunities to educate the public on sustainability, climate resiliency, equity, and public health.
10. During future right-of-way upgrades and improvements, establish bike paths or lanes, integrate canopy trees, pedestrian-scale lighting, traffic calming devices, seating, bicycle parking, public art, wayfinding signage, and stormwater management features.
11. Require all new streets to include both pedestrian and bicycle facilities, encouraging street designs with traffic-calming elements that minimize traffic volumes and speeds through and in residential neighborhoods.
12. Encourage connectivity by requiring new subdivisions to provide multiple vehicular access points whenever possible, and prohibit the construction of cul-de-sacs, except when extreme topography or existing development patterns necessitate their use. In these instances, other alternatives to cul-de-sacs should be explored, and bicycle and pedestrian connections should be attempted.
13. Promote bicycling and walking by providing bicycle and pedestrian educational programs such as bicycle rodeos through partnerships with the School District and Police Department.
14. Incorporate electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in public parking areas and remove obstacles to incorporating EV charging stations in private parking areas.



STRATEGIES

Incorporate Climate Resilience and Adaption into Infrastructure Planning

Investments in infrastructure are long term. The City's roads, drinking water, energy, stormwater, and wastewater systems – everything that supports our lives and livelihoods – will be subjected to climate conditions substantially different than those they were designed for, over most of their future service life. In many cases, these future climate conditions could significantly impact infrastructure performance, and may result in service disruptions, failures, and costly retrofits.

Identifying and developing climate change adaptation strategies will improve infrastructure planning, design, management, and operation under these future conditions. Also, the construction and operation of infrastructure have itself a substantial environmental footprint, increasing the greenhouse gas emissions that drive climate change. Climate

change mitigation actions can reduce this footprint and help reduce the magnitude of future climate change from infrastructure. In addition, these resilience and adaptation strategies have multiple benefits that yield other positive returns to risk management, water quality, preserve habitat and natural systems, aesthetics, and others.

Many of these contributing strategies are incorporated throughout this plan:

- Integrate and increase green infrastructure
- Prioritize non-motorized mobility
- Preserve environmental corridors and steep slopes
- Incorporate future climate projections into utility planning
- Facilitate building efficiency and distributed renewable energy systems
- Support weatherization and updates to older homes and structures

Altoona will incorporate the latest climate projections and utilize mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency strategies into all infrastructure activities.

Develop, Adopt, and Enforce a City-wide Official Map

As of 2021, Altoona had an adopted Official Map, which only includes a few key locations within the City, mostly concentrated in future growth areas along USH 12. It is recommended that the City complete a City-wide Official Map process based on the recommended improvements as shown on Map 4. This includes recommendations from the City's Safe Routes to School Plan, Place Plan, Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, and existing Official Map:

- A future planned right-of-way network surrounding USH 12 on the far southwest side of the City and its planning area.
- 7th Street in front of the High School needs improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- 10th Street and 3rd Street are barriers due to speed and volume of traffic; increased intersection improvements are needed.
- Increase options for students to walk and bike to and from the Elementary School.
- Establishment of the Otter Creek Greenway to protect the corridor for wildlife habitat and viewing, in addition to a multi-use trail.



What is an Official Map?

An Official Map is a plan implementation tool authorized under Wisconsin Statutes (Section 62.23(7)) for adoption by cities and villages. An Official Map is a municipal ordinance that may be used to show alignments of future roads, expanded rights-of-way for existing roads, and other planned public facilities like trails and parks. When land development is proposed in a location that the Official Map has identified for a future public facility, the city or village may obtain or reserve land for that future facility through public dedication, public purchase, or reservation for future purchase.

Cities and villages generally use Official Maps to show future highways and bypasses, other future arterial and collector streets, trails and parkways, and suggested wider rights-of-way for some existing major streets. They rarely show planned minor streets, as their locations are usually difficult to determine in advance of development.

Wisconsin Statutes attach some unique authority to Official Maps. For example, a city or village may require that no building permits be issued within land shown for a future public facility on its Official Map. In addition, a community may require that no subdivision or land division may be recorded unless its arrangement conforms to the Official Map. These and related provisions may apply within both the municipal limits and within the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction.

Improve Multi-Modal Transportation Accessibility and Safety

Since the 1950s, right-of-way infrastructure has been primarily designed to accommodate vehicular travel and only secondarily accommodated the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

Infrastructure design should reflect the values and behavior the community wants. This has been expressed as safe, economical, environmentally responsible, and convenient choices that also support personal health and an enjoyable urban environment that culminates in a high quality of life. These goals indicate that reorienting the transportation system to prioritize walking, biking, and transit use for all people is a top priority. This macro goal means rethinking both transportation and land use with a long-term, generational goal of realizing this vision.

Altoona should proactively reorient its public rights-of-way to serve users of all travel modes. This means that the design, construction, and upgrade of new and existing facilities must involve the thoughtful implementation of multi-modal transportation facilities. One way to ensure this takes place is through the adoption of the Community Streets Policy, which would require that any new roadway project incorporate multi-modal transportation elements based on best practices and performance measures provided by federal and state agencies. Specific multi-modal elements to consider and implement over the planning period include:

Rethinking street patterns and design. Incorporate traffic-calming measures through narrower street widths (28-32 feet), Traditional Neighborhood Design principles, high level of connectivity on-street parking, on-street bicycle facilities, curb extensions and bump-outs, speed bumps, raised crosswalks, changes in pavement texture, and generous boulevards.

Active Travel

Active travel, meaning walking or bicycling for transportation, is considered the most sustainable form of personal mobility. The environmental benefit is ten times greater than substituting a typical gasoline vehicle for an electric vehicle powered by renewable power. In addition, cutting down automobile use reduces other energy intensive infrastructure, energy, and supply chain impacts. Further, walking and biking are proven to improve physical and mental health and cost far less than driving.

To realize these benefits, people do not need to transition immediately and completely to being "car free." A good start is simply by substituting short trips for walking and biking. Electric assist bikes, or e-bikes, are another good option for active transportation. E-bikes utilize a small motor to assist the rider to navigate topography and extend a rider's range (i.e., the distance the rider can comfortably bike). The availability and declining cost of e-bikes, along with expanding cycling infrastructure, can rapidly improve residents' abilities to choose bicycling for more transportation trips in the immediate term.

When it comes to calming traffic in cities, the reality is that engineering—not education or enforcement—is the single biggest influence on the success. The desired speed and behavior is achieved not by passively posting a sign or painting lines, but by actively engineering means that force drivers to reduce their speed and increase their vigilance.

Enhancement intersections for all users. Shorten crossing distances, increase visibility for all users, add street furniture, establish signalized intersections, facilitate on-street bicycle turning movements, and incorporate refuge medians in long-distance and high-volume intersections.

Improve local and regional bicycle facilities. Depending on the local level of service demands on the roadway, either increase on-street bicycle facilities or develop off-street multi-use paths. Bicycle facilities should be physically separated or protected from automobile lanes whenever possible. Bicycle routes should be well maintained and designed to be as free of possible safety and comfort impediments such as uneven pavement, abrupt curb ramps, and conflict points with pedestrians or motorists. Additionally, continue to prioritize projects that fill gaps in the existing network and create a well-integrated regional network. Finally, implement local and regional plans to increase network connectivity, safety, and user-friendliness and pursue becoming a designated Bicycle Friendly Community.

Prioritize sidewalks in new development and within the existing network. Require sidewalks on both sides of all existing and proposed streets, identify and prioritize infilling existing gaps within the sidewalk network, develop and implement a City-wide Sidewalk Plan, and implement local and regional plans. Revisit facility standards and stringently evaluate infrastructure projects to ensure every detail supports safe, convenient, and enjoyable walking and bicycling.

Increase public transit options. Public transit, such as buses, paratransit, rideshare, and others provides essential means of transportation for people without the ability, means, or desire to drive, walk, or bike. Additionally, it provides a more environmentally-friendly means of transportation as compared driving a single-occupancy vehicle. Use of transit is also associated with healthier and more active lifestyles, as people who use public transportation get significantly more daily physical activity, simply from walking between transit stops and their destinations. Increasing the number of routes, frequency, types, and options for public transit throughout the City is critical to providing truly multi-modal transportation, more equitable transportation access, and healthier lifestyles. This will require continued coordination and planning with the Eau Claire Transit and direct investment by the City of Altoona.

Update Site Design Requirements. The City primarily controls transportation conditions through the design and maintenance of public right-of-way, such as roads and sidewalks. However, the design of property determines the convenience for pedestrians to navigate to and from their destinations, the quality and availability to bicycle parking,

League of American Bicyclists – Bicycle Friendly Community

The League of American Bicyclists annually awards communities throughout the U.S. as diamond, platinum, gold, silver, or bronze Bicycle Friendly Community. This is a program designed to recognize and award municipalities that have taken steps to actively support, encourage, and accommodate bicycling for transportation and recreation.

It is recommended that Altoona strive to become a more bicycle-friendly community through an official designation. This can be done by implementing and advancing the recommendations of the Altoona Place Plan and Chippewa-Eau Claire Metropolitan Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The League of American Bicyclists applies local-level criteria and metrics through its designation process in which the City can apply in its future infrastructure projects and provide insight on gaps in the services it currently offers.

A recent study published by the WISPIRG Foundation in 2019 titled “Millennials on the Move” explores the lifestyles preferred by many young people across Wisconsin. The study polled Wisconsin college students and found that 75% said that it was important for them to live in a place with non-driving transportation options after graduation. Overall, many people’s preferences are changing when it comes to transportation and providing increased multi-modal transportation options and connectivity will be one way to increase the retention and attraction of young people over the next 20 years.

(Source: WISPIRG Foundation, Millennials on the Move)

and the overall enjoyment of the environment. The public influences these arrangements through development standards with a property is developed, as well as the mobility choices in “voting with their feet”. Updating development standards to incorporate walking and bicycling best practices ensures that the entire network from end-to-end is of high quality.

Expand, Rehab, and Install New Utilities and Community Facilities

As Altoona continues to grow, it will place increasing demands on its municipal facilities. Through this planning process, specific utilities and community facility improvements or additions were identified. Additionally, the City should continue to utilize a Capital Improvement Planning process that includes 5- and 10-year time horizons to carefully anticipate needs and opportunities and to allocate resources to implement the recommendations below.

Utility or Facility	Recommendations
Water Supply	Implement the recommendations of the Water Utility Service Study.
Sanitary Waste Service	Implement the recommendations of the Water Utility Service Study.
Stormwater Management (Quality and Quantity)	Coordinate with the City of Eau Claire on wastewater treatment planning. Work with WCWRPC to update the Urban Sewer Service Area Plan and require all amendment to the plan be reviewed and approved by the WCWRPC.
Public Transit	Continue to enforce the City’s Stormwater Utility and Stormwater Utility Credit Policy. Update the City’s Stormwater Management Ordinance following the completion of a City-wide Stormwater Management Plan.
Public Works	Coordinate with Eau Claire Transit to implement the Transit Development Plan.
Public Library	Relocate the Public Works Departments to the Eau Claire County Highway Department site on Spooner Avenue. Implement the recommendations of the City of Altoona Municipal Facilities Space Needs and Facility Assessment Study.
City Administration	Implement the recommendations of the City of Altoona Municipal Facilities Space Needs and Facility Assessment Study. Consider a library development impact fee to contribute to meeting facility service benchmarks.
Parks, Recreation, and Trails	Implement the recommendations of the City of Altoona Municipal Facilities Space Needs and Facility Assessment Study.
Schools	Implement the recommendations of the City of Altoona Place Plan and Chippewa-Eau Claire Metropolitan Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Conduct a park impact fee study and revise the parkland dedication fee ordinance, consider creating a park improvement fee.
Police	Continue to collaborate with school district staff to assess projected student growth from City development and identify potential sites for new school sites, as needed.
Fire and EMS	Implement the recommendations of the City of Altoona Municipal Facilities Space Needs and Facility Assessment Study.
Waste Disposal and Recycling	Implement the recommendations of the City of Altoona Municipal Facilities Space Needs and Facility Assessment Study.
Community Forestry	Create new waste reduction, recycling, and composting educational programming and policies.

Prepare for Transportation Technology Changes

As transportation technology continues to rapidly evolve, it will be important for Altoona to be prepared to accommodate changes. Over the past few years, bike-share, ride-share, and car-share have all become prevalent throughout the United States, and potentially the most revolutionary change is also rapidly approaching, automated self-driving vehicles. While it is impossible to know what the exact outcomes of transportation technology changes will be, the City can continuously evolve its ordinances, procedures, and planning to accommodate these changes. This could be as simple as an ordinance change to allow car-sharing or electric car charging stations in public parking lots, or it could be as significant as redesigning public facilities and infrastructure to better accommodate self-driving vehicles.

Additionally, smart transportation infrastructure is another rapidly evolving topic related to the future of transportation. Smart transportation infrastructure relies on the “internet of things,” which is the integrated systems of devices that collect real-time and traditional data while also communicating that data to the greater network. Smart transportation infrastructure can involve smart streetlight and smart traffic light technology that improves performance by responding to traffic and weather conditions in real time. It can also involve sensors in roadways that not only guide autonomous vehicles, but also to increase roadway efficiency and safety. Over the next two decades, planning for and implementing smart infrastructure within roadways will be key to laying the groundwork for a smart transportation system. As of 2021, most smart transportation infrastructure was being implemented into the interstate highway system and large metropolitan areas, but it is now beginning to become more prevalent throughout the country. As more devices are implemented, tested, and proven to be successful, they will become increasingly cost-effective for smaller communities to integrate.

The next two decades will see rapid changes in the way people use transportation, and Altoona will have to be prepared and flexible enough to continuously evolve as new challenges arise. While we do not yet know exactly what transportation will look like in the coming years or its potential implications, there are some preliminary considerations to plan for:

- **Updating Infrastructure.** Autonomous vehicles rely heavily on lane striping and signage in the roadway to navigate and function effectively, and so it may become increasingly important for cities to uniformly upgrade and maintain these features. Additionally, in future roadway projects, considerations could be made for off-street or on-street staging facilities for autonomous vehicle pick-up and drop-off, instead of traditional on-street parking, parking lots, or parking garages. Finally, smart infrastructure investments should be considered in all future roadway projects, especially on major arterials. Enhanced data gathering, connectivity, and communication will make for more efficient and safe roadways. Adapting to this new technology will be key over the planning period.
- **Changing Revenue Sources.** Incorporating high-capacity electric vehicle charging stations within municipal parking lots could promote and accommodate ridesharing and become a new revenue source for the City. Also, over time, traffic violation revenue may decrease significantly because of overall safer roadways. It may be appropriate to intermittently budget for lower revenue totals from this source to avoid dramatic changes to local resources.
- **Proactively Addressing Inequities.** The initial phase of autonomous vehicle integration may disproportionately disadvantage lower-income individuals who may not be able to afford the technology. Potential adjustments to traffic enforcement practices and/or other tax policies may be necessary to curb this inequity.
- **Technology Systems.** As many larger governing bodies increasingly integrate intelligent transportation systems (ITS), it will be important for Altoona to participate in data collection and sharing, in addition to utilizing wireless and cloud-based technologies within their own practices (smart transportation infrastructure).

- **Electric Vehicle Policies.** While there are multiple policy changes that may be required over the planning period to reflect transportation technology changes, one that can be addressed right away is removing barriers to alternative fuel vehicles. This can be done through:
 - Incentivizing new multi-family or commercial developments through increased development intensity opportunities or reduced parking requirements to include electric car charging stations within their onsite parking areas.
 - Encouraging electric vehicle charging infrastructure to be incorporated into new and existing homes.
 - Allow car-sharing spaces and electric car charging stations in public parking lots.
 - Over time, convert the City's vehicle fleet to more energy efficient, electric, and alternative fuel models.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations

In 2020, there were 345,000 electric vehicles sold in the United States, an increase of over 30% from 2019 sales. Overall, there are now 1,500,000 electric vehicles on U.S. roads and over 31,000 electric vehicle charging stations. Typical locations for EV charging stations include restaurants and retail stores, shopping centers, gas stations, hotels, office parks, multi-family buildings, and public parking lots. It is anticipated that sales will increase over the planning period, and it is important to plan for public locations suitable for EV charging stations, in addition to reducing barriers to installing them on private property. Some communities have even developed requirements for EV charging stations within new development or, at a minimum, installing the infrastructure during construction that will be needed to accommodate stations in the future.

(Source: Blastpoint, 2021)

Continue to Coordinate with the School District on Future Planning Decisions

With the rapid growth experienced in Altoona over the past decade, the Altoona School District has needed to expand its facilities and staffing to meet the demands of a growing population with many new young families. The City and School District have had a longstanding working relationship, which involves notifying the School District of residential development projects, safe routes to school programs, and direct involvement of both parties in ongoing planning processes.

Schools are catalysts for creating community as children's activities, daily social interactions, and community projects are methods for creating connections and establishing strong neighborhoods. Beyond their impact on the character of neighborhoods and housing values, schools serve their primary purpose of educating youth and preparing them to participate in the workforce and contribute to society. Schools are also among the largest employers in the area, creating stable middle-income jobs that can be embedded in neighborhoods.

Schools and other civic and institutional uses should be embedded in neighborhoods and accessible to residents, not isolated in remote locations. Neighborhoods should be designed and planned in conjunction with existing and future schools and civic uses at their center and seek complementary synergies. Smaller schools connect and better serve the neighborhood and walkable schools can support daily activity and healthier children and staff. New schools should be sized and located to be easily accessible by children, parents, and staff on foot or bicycle. When well placed in neighborhoods, schools can provide amenities to the community, such as outdoor spaces and potential for after-hours community or recreation uses.



The Altoona School District campus includes the Intermediate, Middle, and High School as well as the Administration offices integrated into a traditional neighborhood. This campus is a tremendous asset that allows many residents to be in close proximity to the school, with a traditional neighborhood street and sidewalk grid that provides multi-modal transportation accessibility. The City and district have ongoing activities to coordinate Safe Routes to School and other programs to further improve conditions. The school campus currently hosts the Altoona Compassion Coalition food pantry that collects and distributes food assistance, an excellent example of community cooperation. St. Mary's Catholic School is also located in the traditional central neighborhoods of Altoona with integrated into the fabric of the community.

The Altoona Elementary School was completed on a new site in 2016 on the edge of the City without the ingrained traditional neighborhood and without a larger planning effort for its vicinity. The site was acquired and designed to allow for future expansion. The City has worked with the School District to plan around this newer site, including improving infrastructure and focused pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

As the City continues to grow and new neighborhoods are planned, the City and School District should plan and coordinate very intentionally to create complete, compact neighborhoods with future schools in strategic, central locations. It is recommended that the City continue to coordinate land use and development decisions with the Altoona School District's long-range planning efforts. As enrollment changes, it is likely that the School District will need to consider the acquisition of land for one or more new schools. The City intends to work with the School District to proactively identify appropriate sites for a school before land costs escalate and or other development occurs in the most desirable areas.

Utilize Tactical Urbanism to Test Infrastructure Improvements

Instituting changes to the built environment to improve walking, biking, or other conditions can be costly if not incorporated into a regularly-schedule project. Rather than designing a new intervention and hoping it will work as intended, tactical urbanism is an approach to utilizing using short-term, low-cost, and scalable interventions to catalyze long-term change.

Potential measures can be tested to see how they perform and are received by the community. For example, protected bike lanes can be created by placing traffic barrels or some other physical barrier that can be easily removed, and matched with outreach efforts, encourage people to utilize the new route. If this is well received, the City could consider utilizing a more permanent intervention such as concrete barricades or including a design in the next road project.

Some measures may be short-term by design, such as seasonal opportunities to create outdoor spaces in the summer or arranging snow and other features to program areas for winter. For example, pop-up retail is often known as a sidewalk sale create visual interest and interaction by drawing people to the area. Block parties and food trucks can be used to create social engagement events that are intended to build community rather than testing a potential change to the physical environment. These tactical experiments can test changes to infrastructure, parks, support community building and economic development strategies with modest investment.



Implement the Altoona Place Plan

The Altoona Place Plan provides the vision, guiding principles, goals, and implementation strategies for the community's parks, outdoor recreation, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The plan analyses facility needs and service demands to identify implementation strategies for upgrades and expansions to existing facilities and creation of new facilities. Additionally, to remain eligible to receive federal and state grant monies, the plan must be updated every five years.

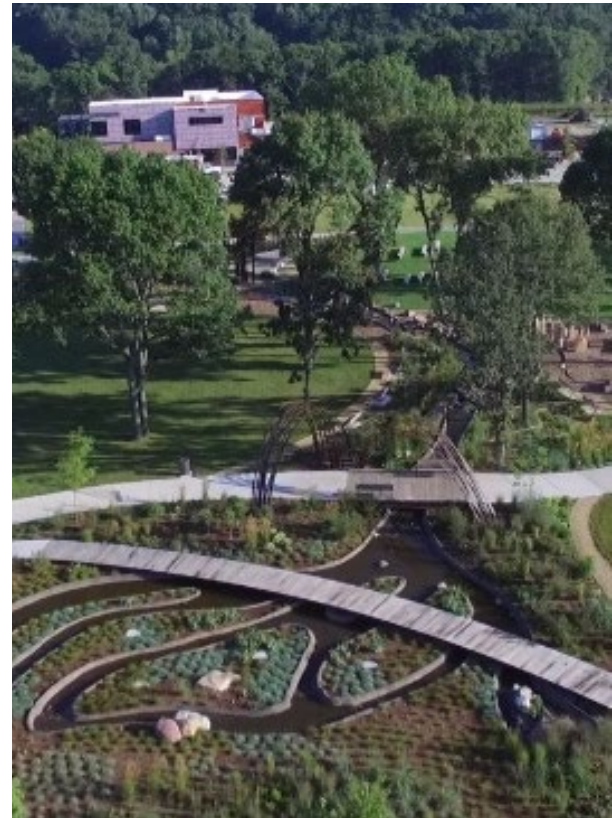
The Place Plan has five overarching and foundational public realm objectives, which include:

- Maintain and improve public health and quality of life for all residents.
- Improve environmental stewardship, natural systems, aesthetics, and climate mitigation and resiliency.
- Improve municipal fiscal and structural performance.
- Provide active and passive recreational opportunities in all seasons.
- Facilitate economic development.

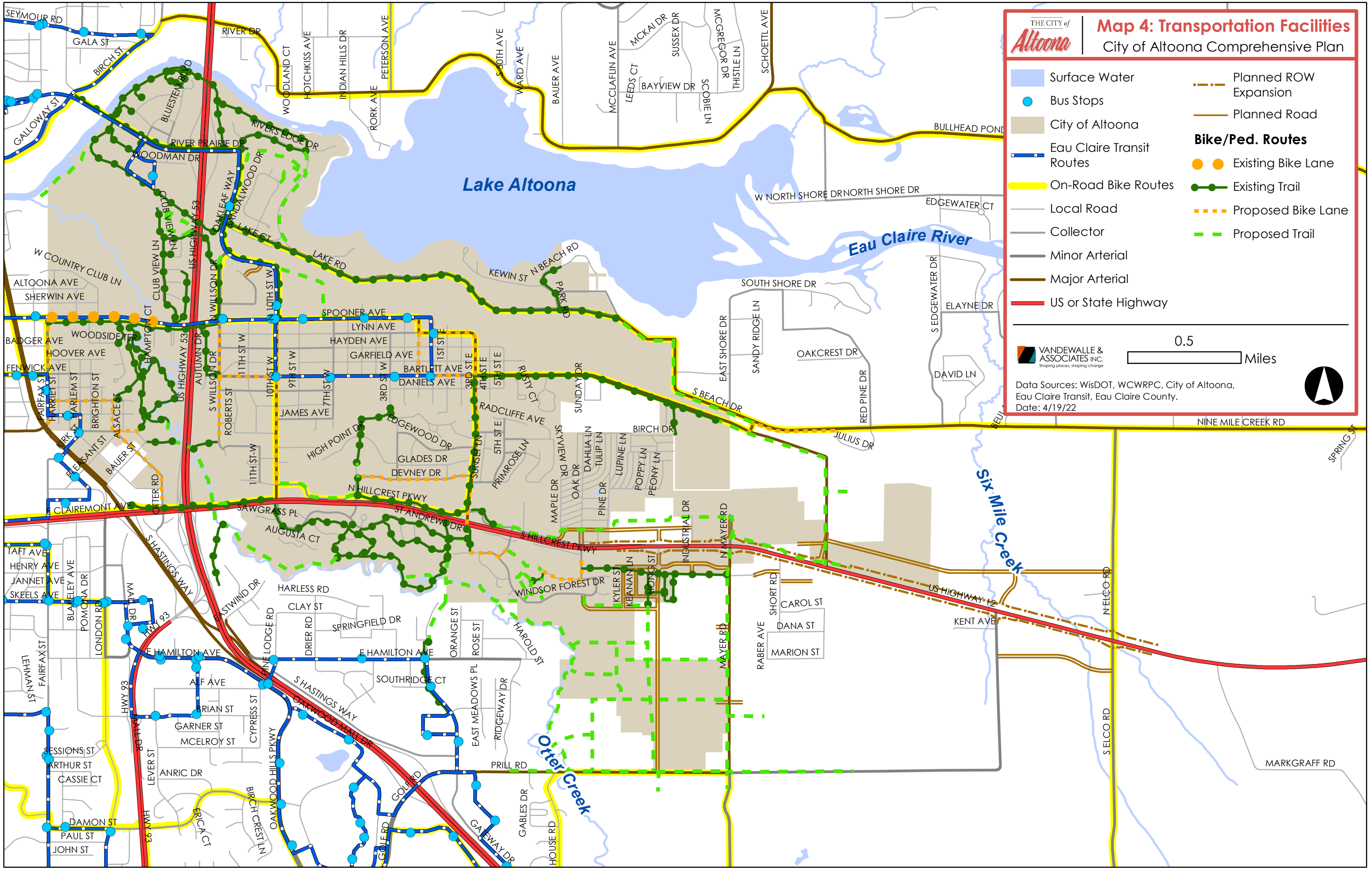
This Plan and the objectives of the Place Plan align strongly in connecting and integrating public open space throughout the community to foster improved public health and quality life, advance environmental stewardship and climate resiliency, promote fiscal sustainability, and drive economic development opportunities.

There are also several project prioritization principals in the Place Plan that aim to implement the objectives stated above and advance many of this Plan's goals, objectives, policies, and strategies, these include:

- Enhancing network connectivity of all public spaces and natural areas.
- Integrating equity into the location, design, and access of public space spaces.
- Targeting investment in facilitates and amenities with the highest potential impacts.
- Being cost efficient to improve the fiscal and structural performance of the City.
- Reinvesting in existing infrastructure through continuously evaluating and monitoring facilities and programming.
- Strengthening collaborative partnerships to fund future programs and facilities.
- Being innovative and adaptive through trend-based programming.
- Leveraging all available resources, including the private sector and volunteer groups, to provide funding, maintenance, and land acquisition.



Additionally, as noted above, the City has conducted Safe Routes to School planning that has identified existing multi-modal transportation barriers to and from community facilities. In combination with this work, the City has also been involved in the Chippewa Valley Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and is currently working on a City of Altoona Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan which will provide strategies for continuing to improve active transportation opportunities throughout the community. Finally, as noted in the following chapter, there is an opportunity to continue to connect natural resources with recreation and tourism. Furthering all these initiatives and aligning these plans will both assist in many of the City's economic development and natural resource preservation goals, but also play a role in advancing many of this Plan's overarching goals for climate action, social equity, and economic vitality. This City will continue to implement the Place Plan and the other related plans within this strategy and update the Place Plan within the next five years.



THE CITY of

Altoona

Map 4: Transportation Facilities

City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan

Surface Water

Bus Stops

City of Altoona

Eau Claire Transit Routes

On-Road Bike Routes

Local Road

Collector

Minor Arterial

Major Arterial

US or State Highway

Planned ROW Expansion

Planned Road

Bike/Ped. Routes

Existing Bike Lane

Existing Trail

Proposed Bike Lane

Proposed Trail

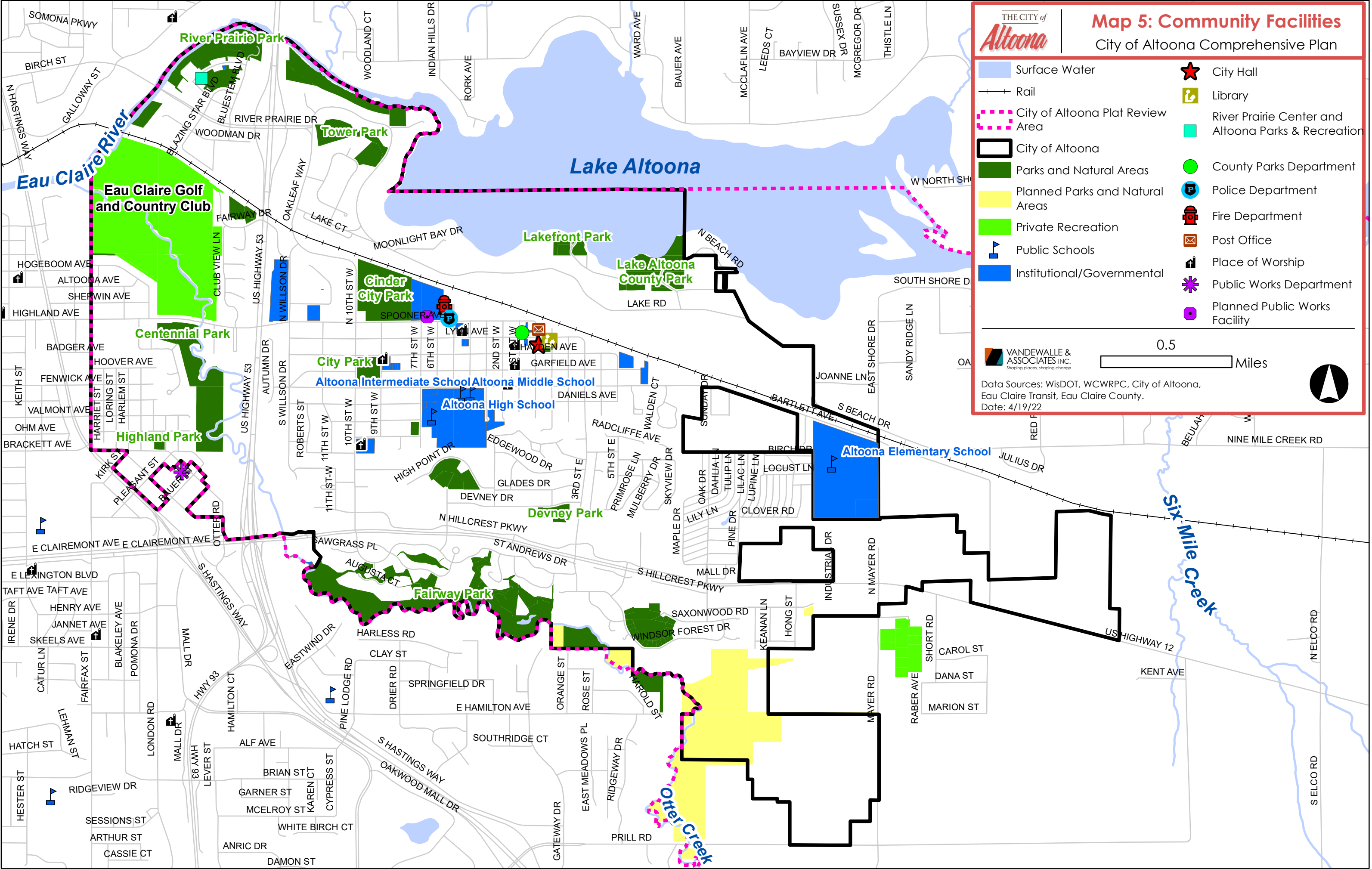
VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES INC.

Shaping places. shaping change.

0.5 Miles

Data Sources: WisDOT, WCWRPC, City of Altoona, Eau Claire Transit, Eau Claire County.

Date: 4/19/22



THE CITY of
Altoona

Map 5: Community Facilities

City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan

Surface Water

Rail

City of Altoona Plat Review Area

City of Altoona

Parks and Natural Areas

Planned Parks and Natural Areas

Private Recreation

Public Schools

Institutional/Governmental

City Hall

Library

River Prairie Center and Altoona Parks & Recreation

County Parks Department

Police Department

Fire Department

Post Office

Place of Worship

Public Works Department

Planned Public Works Facility

VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES INC.

Shaping places. shaping change.

0.5 Miles

Data Sources: WisDOT, WCWRPC, City of Altoona, Eau Claire Transit, Eau Claire County.

Date: 4/19/22

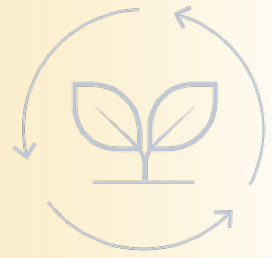


Chapter 8

AGRICULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES



CHAPTER 8: AGRICULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES



INTRODUCTION

An integral component of the City's high quality of life is the preservation and improvement of its surrounding agricultural and natural resources. Part of Altoona's identity is defined by its local and regional amenities such as Lake Altoona, the Eau Claire River, Otter Creek, woodlands, open space, and surrounding rural landscape. As growth pressures increase on all sides of the community and within it, there is an ever-increasing need to proactively protect and enhance these features and resources over the planning period.

This chapter is intended to provide the goals, objectives, and policies related to both agricultural and natural resource preservation, protection, and improvement. It also details a set of key recommendations to help advance or achieve them. Background information, data, and existing plans related to agricultural and natural resources can be found in Appendix A.

STRATEGIES SUMMARY

- Advance the City's role in climate resilience and sustainability through the implementation of stormwater best management practices and the preservation of natural and agricultural resources.
- Limit development within the City's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction and foster a compact development pattern within the City's boundaries.
- Connect natural resources with recreational opportunities and tourism.
- Support long-term farmland preservation efforts outside of the City's future growth areas.
- Improve and preserve urban biodiversity through well-integrated and connected greenways, forests, vegetation, native plantings, and gardens.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICES

Definitions of goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations are found in the Issues and Opportunities Chapter of this Plan.

Goals

1. Protect the health, integrity, sustainability, and quality of natural resources and ecological systems for the benefit of present and future generations.
2. Work with the surrounding municipalities to preserve and protect agricultural uses from premature, inefficient, or potentially damaging development in mutually agreed areas.

Objectives

1. Protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas and isolated natural areas from new development.
2. Advance the City's role in becoming a more sustainable, energy-conscious, and climate resilient community through regional partnerships and development of local policies and plans.
3. Promote compact development patterns within the City's Sewer Service Area and maintain a hard edge between urban development and the countryside.
4. Discourage land uses, land divisions, and activities that may conflict with agricultural uses or adversely affect farm investments in long-term farming areas outside of the City's long-term growth areas.
5. Prioritize the preservation of productive agricultural soils and environmentally sensitive areas in the City's planning area as a factor in decisions on future community expansion.

Policies

1. Use the City's extraterritorial subdivision review and Official Map to prevent premature rural development and work with surrounding communities to encourage an orderly, efficient development pattern that minimizes conflicts between urban and rural uses. Within the City, encourage compact new development as well as infill and redevelopment within the City to preserve lands outside of the City's growth area for agriculture, natural resources, or open space.
2. Control and limit the creation of scattered rural home sites and subdivisions that are not served by public water and sanitary sewer within the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction.
3. Carefully consider the location of prime farmland and environmentally sensitive areas before making decisions on the expansion of urban services or community growth.
4. Work with Eau Claire County on any future updates to the Hazard Mitigation Plan, Farmland Preservation Plan, Land and Water Resource Management Plan, Forest Land Use Plan, and County-wide Comprehensive Plan.
5. Require natural resource features to be depicted on all site plans and preliminary plats and certified survey maps in order to facilitate preservation of natural resources. These should include wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains, drainageways, and wooded areas. Once identified, establish maximum clearance or removal standards for these features and require onsite mitigation where those standards cannot be met.
6. Use the City's Zoning, Subdivision, and Official Map to protect waterways, shorelines, wetlands, and floodplain areas within the current City limits and extraterritorial area.
7. Enforce erosion control and stormwater management standards to facilitate maximum infiltration of stormwater volume using Best Management Practices such as rain barrels, infiltration swales, pervious pavement, rain gardens, and green roofs.
8. Establish municipal and City-wide renewable energy and carbon emission goals as part of a Climate Action Plan or by pursuing certification by a rigorous and independent sustainable community program.
9. Develop sustainable infrastructure standards and preferred strategies so that developers understand what are acceptable for meeting water quality and quantity control objectives.
10. Reduce pavement/impervious surface area through use of porous pavements wherever possible (streets, walkways, drives, parking lots, patios, etc.).
11. Encourage the use of green infrastructure, natural landscaping, and similar development practices that enhance the integration of natural systems in the built environment and support awareness and enjoyment of these systems.



STRATEGIES

Advance Stormwater Best Management Practices

Continue to integrate Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) wherever possible to mitigate the negative impacts stormwater runoff can have on downstream properties and waterways, especially Lake Altoona, Otter Creek, and the Eau Claire River. Stormwater BMPs aim to control runoff volume by managing precipitation as “close to where it hits the ground” as possible, thereby facilitating infiltration of precipitation into groundwater and evaporation of water back into the atmosphere. This approach decreases peak stormwater quantities and improves the overall quality of the stormwater that does enter streams and lakes. The City should promote, and in certain cases require, the following BMPs:

Partner with local and regional interest groups and the WisDNR to promote water quality protection activities. In addition, assist in watershed restoration and planning to improve water quality in Lake Altoona and Otter Creek. This can be done by implementing many of the recommendations below.

Maximize permeable surface areas. This technique focuses on reducing the impervious footprint of development sites and breaking up large, paved areas with permeable surfaces and/or natural ground cover and vegetation. Since the impacts of stormwater runoff are far more effectively managed by natural systems, such as wetlands and forest ecosystems, than by pervious ground cover that has been altered by construction or other human impacts (e.g. front lawns), the preservation of environmental corridors will go a long way in mitigating stormwater impacts. Where paved surfaces are necessary, these areas should be graded so they drain to infiltration areas. This approach also includes the incorporation of narrower widths for local neighborhood streets that will never carry large traffic volumes or high-speed traffic, and the development of narrower lots, which are typically associated with less impervious street and sidewalk surface per lot.



Continue to utilize progressive construction site erosion control practices. Construction sites generate a significant amount of sediment runoff if not managed properly. Under current state laws, erosion control plans are required for all construction sites that are larger than one acre. It is recommended that the City continue to enforce erosion control ordinances and techniques for the protection and continued improvement of water quality. In particular, progressive erosion control systems should be components of new development sites. These techniques include providing silt fencing surrounding the construction project, minimizing the amount of land area that is disturbed throughout the construction process, and quickly reestablishing displaced vegetation.

Retrofit existing stormwater outlet points. There are a few areas of the City where storm water is directed into natural systems such as Lake Altoona and Otter Creek with little treatment or slowing. These areas of the City were developed prior to greater awareness and concern for how storm water from human landscapes impact natural systems, in terms of quality, temperature, and rate of flow. The City should consider retrofitting these areas with green infrastructure features, including upstream within the catchment area, to improve water quality.

Manage Salt. Salt is utilized to manage pavement conditions through the long Wisconsin winter by public agencies on roadways, and by residents and businesses in their drive areas. Unlike some other contamination of storm water, some of the salt dissolves in the water and it is not removed in conventional storm water ponds. Some storm water features that hold water until it evaporates rather than reaches natural water bodies remove salt, but salt still impacts these

facilities. In addition, salt negatively impacts areas near roadways such as boulevards and drainageways that are not controlled by infrastructure. Salt has increasingly been recognized as a cumulative stress pollutant that is changing the chemistry of Wisconsin waterways. Agencies are seeking to reduce salt use and identify strategies to effectively manage pavement in ways that limit salt pollution. These include applying a salt brine solution rather than dropping solid salt, and using alternatives such as a solution containing beet juices. The City should continue to seek ways to reduce salt use, and to design and manage infrastructure to limit the impacts of salt on the environment.

Incorporate infiltration and retention areas in new development. Where stormwater basins are necessary to effectively manage runoff, such basins and associated conveyance routes should be carefully integrated into the surrounding development pattern and should incorporate native/natural edge vegetation whenever possible to ensure the aesthetic and functional integrity of the site. Facilities should be regarded as assets for enhancement, beautification, and interest instead of relegated as undesirable site requirements. Other infiltration techniques include:

- **Rain gardens:** A rain garden is a landscaping features that are designed, located, and installed for the purposes of capturing stormwater runoff and allowing it to infiltrate back into the ground. The City may codify rain garden design standards and allow them to apply toward meeting landscaping requirements.
- **Rain barrels:** A rain barrel collects and stores the water that drains from rooftops to prevent it from running offsite. A hose can be connected to the barrel, and the collected rain can be used to water the lawn or garden or to wash the car. Barrels can also be set to slowly empty themselves, allowing the water to filter back into the ground. It is recommended that the City develop a rain barrel program and provide residents with information about how and where they can purchase their own rain barrels.
- **Permeable pavers:** Pavement and/or concrete is typically impervious, forcing water away from it. Permeable pavers aim to change that by allowing water to seep through the pavement itself or providing gaps for the water to seep into. Both methods allow stormwater to be controlled at the source, while helping to reduce runoff and increase the filtering of the water. Permeable pavement is a rapidly evolving and improving technology that offers a new form of onsite stormwater management. The City may integrate permeable paver standards into its Zoning Ordinance and standard engineering specifications to encourage use where appropriate.
- **Retention ponds:** Retention ponds are designed to filter out sediment and other solids from stormwater, while also retaining runoff on-site. These ponds usually have some water in them most of the time to allow materials in the water to separate out and sink to the bottom. These are typically used in larger-scale developments or subdivisions. Several existing retention ponds exist in the City, and are necessary to continue to be utilized in site-specific situations moving forward.
- **Bioswales:** A bioswale is a small-scale combination of a detention pond and vegetate buffer strip. It is typically designed to be sloped, so that it both filters the water through organic materials that make up the buffer, while also containing the water during rain events. Bioswales are typically dry most of the time, other than directly after rain events or snow melts. These swales can be attractively landscaped combining rain garden techniques to create a more ecologically, visually, and hydrologically valuable asset. Overall, they remove pollutants, silt, and other debris that might be in the water, while also mitigating peak stormwater flow. The City may integrate bioswale standards



into its Zoning Ordinance and standard engineering specifications to encourage use and count toward meeting site landscaping requirements.

- Green (vegetated) roofs: This stormwater feature effectively act like sponges, absorbing water from rainstorms that would otherwise run off the roof. Green roofs also function as filters, removing pollutants from rainwater. They can also have a dual function in facilitating solar panels or recreation space on rooftops. The City may consider adopting green roof standards and evaluate integrating them into future municipal facility projects.
- Vegetated buffer strips and berms: Locating areas of vegetation either alone or in combination with landscaping berms around properties helps restrict the off-site flow of water. Also, the addition of organic material into soil aids in the decomposition and filtration of pollutants.

Leverage resources, adapt policies, and develop plans. Altoona has a Stormwater Ordinance, Stormwater Utility, and Environmental Resources Ordinance to manage the interaction of water through the community and implement many of the elements above. The utility exists to provide much-needed resources to address larger-scale stormwater dynamics in the community. The City should also consider the development of a Green Infrastructure Plan to help identify existing issues, provide defined standards for the integration of green infrastructure into new and existing developments, and establish action steps for increasing green infrastructure best practices throughout the community.

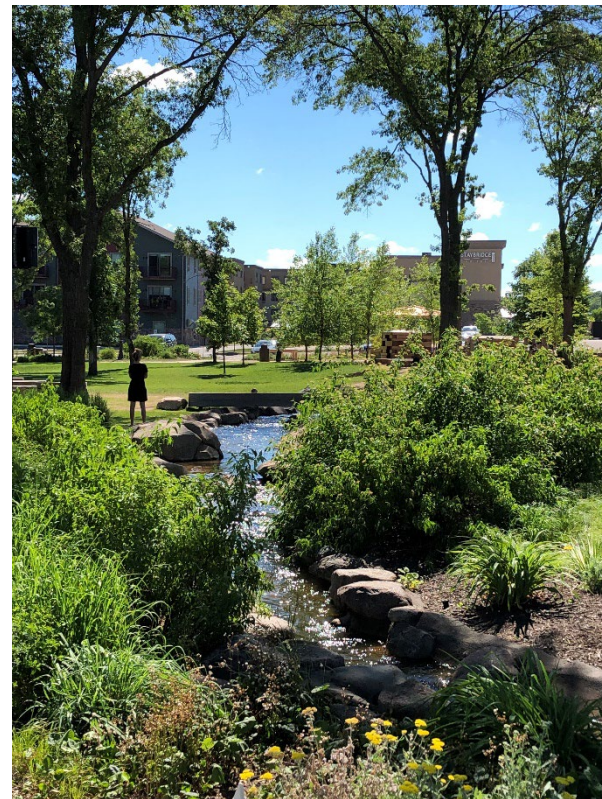
Overall, the City will continue to focus on maximizing pervious surfaces and minimizing the potential for groundwater and surface water contamination. Stormwater systems will be designed as an integrated system of green infrastructure, features of visual interest and ecological value, and avoid long underground conveyance and large regional facilities were ever possible.

Improve and Preserve Urban Biodiversity

Many species of wildlife can coexist successfully within and on the fringes of cities if community plans recognize and maintain the necessary habitats and conditions. It is also important to reduce conflict between the built environment and the natural environment. For example, birds can collide with glass clad buildings, and runoff from lawns and pavement impairs soil and surface water quality. As the City becomes more developed, preservation of urban biodiversity is not only essential for protecting wildlife and the natural environment, but it also adds richness to urban life.

Community Forestry. Over the past decade the City has continued to expand its community forestry capacities. Earlier in the decade, the City's efforts were focused on preparing for and combatting the spread of Emerald Ash Borer, but activities were limited in terms of tree trimming and new planting activities to improve or maintain overall urban trees. The City now has a focused effort and resources on tree planting and capacity in city staff to proactively maintain a forestry program.

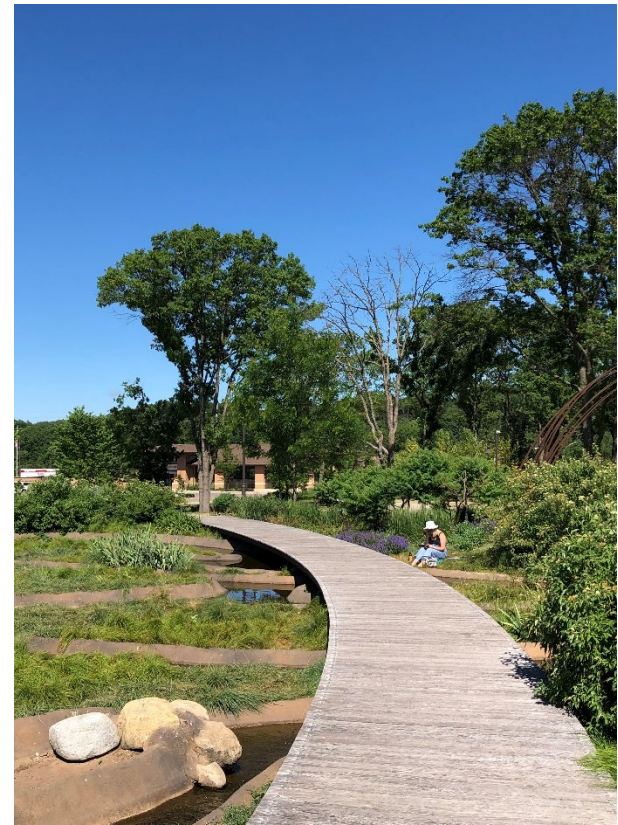
The benefits of a robust urban forest and tree canopy are many. Urban forests help to filter air and water, control storm water, conserve energy, create shade, regulate temperature, absorb and store carbon, and provide animal habitat. They also add beauty, form, and structure to urban design. By reducing noise and providing places to recreate, urban forests strengthen social cohesion, spur community revitalization, and add economic value to our communities.



The City should complete a tree inventory and create an urban forestry plan. This process will identify and describe ecologically sound strategies and an action plan for achieving the City's goals of creating and maintaining a robust and healthy tree ecosystem. This plan may also inform the update of policies and standards for landscaping in private development.

Preserve and Improve Greenways to Support Habitats. Linking parks and open spaces is not only valuable for humans. An interconnected greenway system also allows wildlife to move among habitats and to have greater habitat extent to support their population and respond to stresses in the environment. Improving biodiversity supports wildlife, such as pollinators and birds, in many ways. Greenways should be kept as "natural" as possible. Multi-use paths should be designed to allow people to access and enjoy these areas while minimizing impact. In addition, it is essential that the City continues to analyze greenways and open spaces to determine changes to enhance them. Some of the primary methods for enhancement include bank stabilization, habitat restoration, minimizing compaction of soil, managing storm water runoff, creating and preserving buffer areas, and reducing invasive species.

Integrate Vegetation. There are many ways the City and the community can improve the built environment to enhance urban biodiversity. The City should seek opportunities for well-integrated greenspace in developed areas and encourage trees and native plantings in boulevards, remnant properties, along stormwater facilities, and transportation corridors. Urban life is significantly enhanced with the addition of shade-providing trees and water filtering vegetation.



Replace Lawns with Native Plantings and Gardens. The traditional suburban lawn is comprised of non-native species, requires significant time, water, and energy to maintain, and does not contribute to local wildlife. Most lawn areas are mowed, but otherwise not utilized for recreation or other uses. Many lawn areas could be transitioned to more ecologically valuable, visually interesting, resource efficient, and lower maintenance conditions. Strategies could include the addition of pollinator gardens, food gardens, rain gardens, native grasses, and flowers. These native lawn substitutes create a similar appearance but are more ecologically productive and require less maintenance.

As described in the Place Plan, nature is not only in parks and open spaces, it can be found throughout the community. Even the street trees and plantings between buildings can support biodiversity and act as a nearby nature access point for residents. Altoona supports the integration of vegetation into the built environment. Building site standards should be revisited to integrate ecologically sound and practical requirements and guidance to improve where and how green infrastructure is utilized. Methods such as rain gardens, bioswales, green roofs, and urban agriculture should be integrated wherever possible to support biodiversity and increase equitable access to the myriad positive health benefits associated with contact with nature.

Foster a Compact Development Pattern to Protect Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Agricultural Resources

From time to time, development proposals for areas in the Town near to the City's municipal limits have permitted large-lot residential development. This type of large-lot development impedes the City's ability to provide municipal facilities in an efficient, cost-effective manner. This type of development also consumes agricultural land at a much faster rate (up to 25 times faster) than more compact development within the City.

Altoona will promote a compact development pattern, focusing on techniques that reduce the amount of land required for additional growth such as infill development, redevelopment, Traditional Neighborhood Design, and higher density new development. In addition to helping keep development out of productive agricultural areas, woodlands, and environmentally sensitive areas, a compact and sustainable development pattern will benefit regional water quality, facilitate multi-modal forms of transportation, provide more affordable housing options, promote public health, and will be less expensive to serve with public utilities and services. In general, private well and septic development in areas within the long-term growth areas and the ETJ is strongly discouraged.

This Plan includes the following policies and approaches to support the City's vision and values through a compact development pattern within its ETJ:

- Encourage the Town of Washington and Eau Claire County to adopt and implement land use plans that emphasize agricultural preservation, allow very limited amounts of development (1 dwelling per 40 acres), and protect natural resources in areas.
- Discourage the creation of scattered homes sites and subdivisions not served by public water and sanitary sewer within Altoona's extraterritorial jurisdiction.
- Exercise ETJ plat review authority as established by state statutes.
- Do not approve subdivisions (five or more lots) within the ETJ, except in mutually agreed upon areas.

The City will continue to proactively protect environmentally sensitive areas with strategies including:

- Enforce zoning and subdivision regulations that require all natural resource features be depicted on site plans, preliminary plats, or certified survey maps in order to facilitate the preservation of natural resources.
- Continue to update local green infrastructure standards to reflect technology changes and best management practices, as stated above.
- Use public acquisition, dedication, or conservation easements to preserve critical natural resource areas, particularly in critical watershed areas and adjacent to existing parks and natural areas.
- Utilize the Official Map to protect environmental corridors within the City limits and its ETJ.
- Update, maintain, and enforce the City's Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Ordinance.

Link Natural Resource Preservation with Recreational Opportunities and Tourism

Altoona has a significant opportunity to leverage its high quality natural resources to support recreation and tourism. One way to accomplish this is through increasing passive recreation options within existing resource areas. Natural resource preservation areas can serve as important components of the City's overall park and recreation system, providing opportunities for outdoor education, relaxation, and exercise. Such areas also maintain and enhance the beauty of a community or neighborhood and serve a variety of ecological functions by providing habitat for wildlife, enhancing water and air quality, and providing natural flood control.



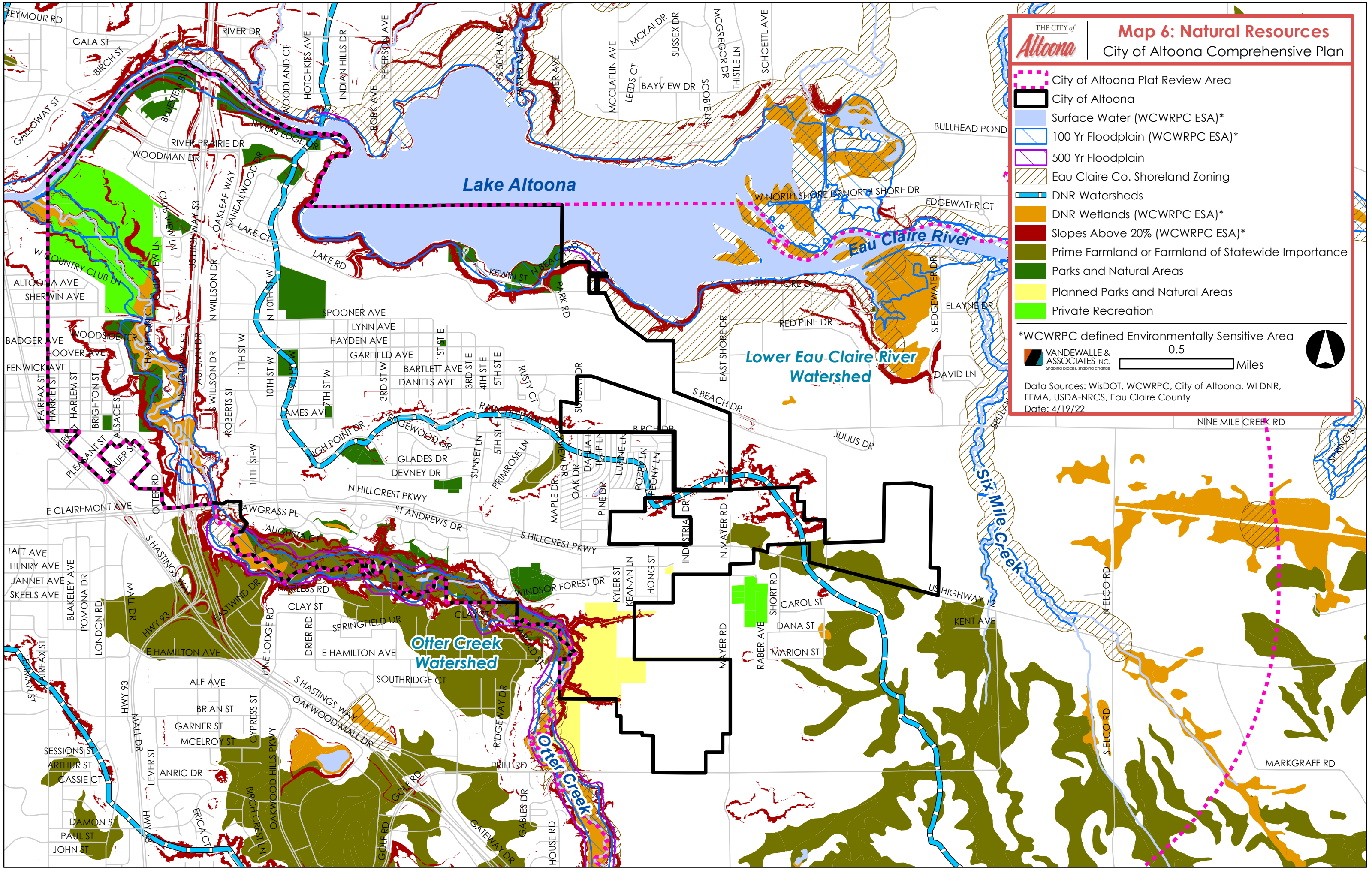
Additionally, the City has a unique opportunity to capitalize on the combination of its current draw to tourists and its outstanding natural resources and open spaces. Linking natural resources protection to its tourism base presents opportunities, including:

- Work with the WisDNR, Eau Claire County, and other local and regional groups to increase interpretive signage and wayfinding within natural areas to provide educational opportunities.
- Improve Lake Altoona access via existing parks. Both Eau Claire County (Lake Altoona Park) and the City of Altoona (Lake Front Park) have parks located on the shores of Lake Altoona. These parks can be further enhanced to increase tourism as regional destinations, providing direct access to the lake.
- Continue to enhance the Otter Creek corridor, working with Eau Claire County, the City of Eau Claire, and WisDNR to develop and connect trails and passive recreational opportunities.
- Use River Prairie as a model for successfully integrating natural resources within a large-scale development project that could be replicated in the future. Additionally, continue to enhance the recreational, educational, and public gathering opportunities that River Prairie provides in serving as a regional destination.

The City will continue to implement the Place Plan and collaborate with other regional entities on the implementation of their park, open space, natural resources, bike and pedestrian, and other plans to accomplish the above strategies.

Support Farmland Preservation Efforts in Eau Claire County

Eau Claire County's Comprehensive Plan, Farmland Preservation Plan, and Land and Water Resource Management Plan all identify long-term farmland preservation as a key priority. The County has instituted and administered various strategies for achieving this goal, including Exclusive Agricultural Zoning Districts, designating Farm Preservation Areas and Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA), assisting WCWRPC with administering Sewer Service Areas and environmentally sensitive areas, and several other programs to assist local farmers. As part of this effort, the City will remain informed and involved on any future updates to the County's Comprehensive Plan, Farmland Preservation Plan, and Land and Water Resources Management Plan, in addition to Farmland Preservation Programs administered by Eau Claire County.



THE CITY of
Altoona

Map 6: Natural Resources
City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan

City of Altoona Plat Review Area

City of Altoona

Surface Water (WCWRPC ESA)*

100 Yr Floodplain (WCWRPC ESA)*

500 Yr Floodplain

Eau Claire Co. Shoreland Zoning

DNR Watersheds

DNR Wetlands (WCWRPC ESA)*

Slopes Above 20% (WCWRPC ESA)*

Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance

Parks and Natural Areas

Planned Parks and Natural Areas

Private Recreation

*WCWRPC defined Environmentally Sensitive Area

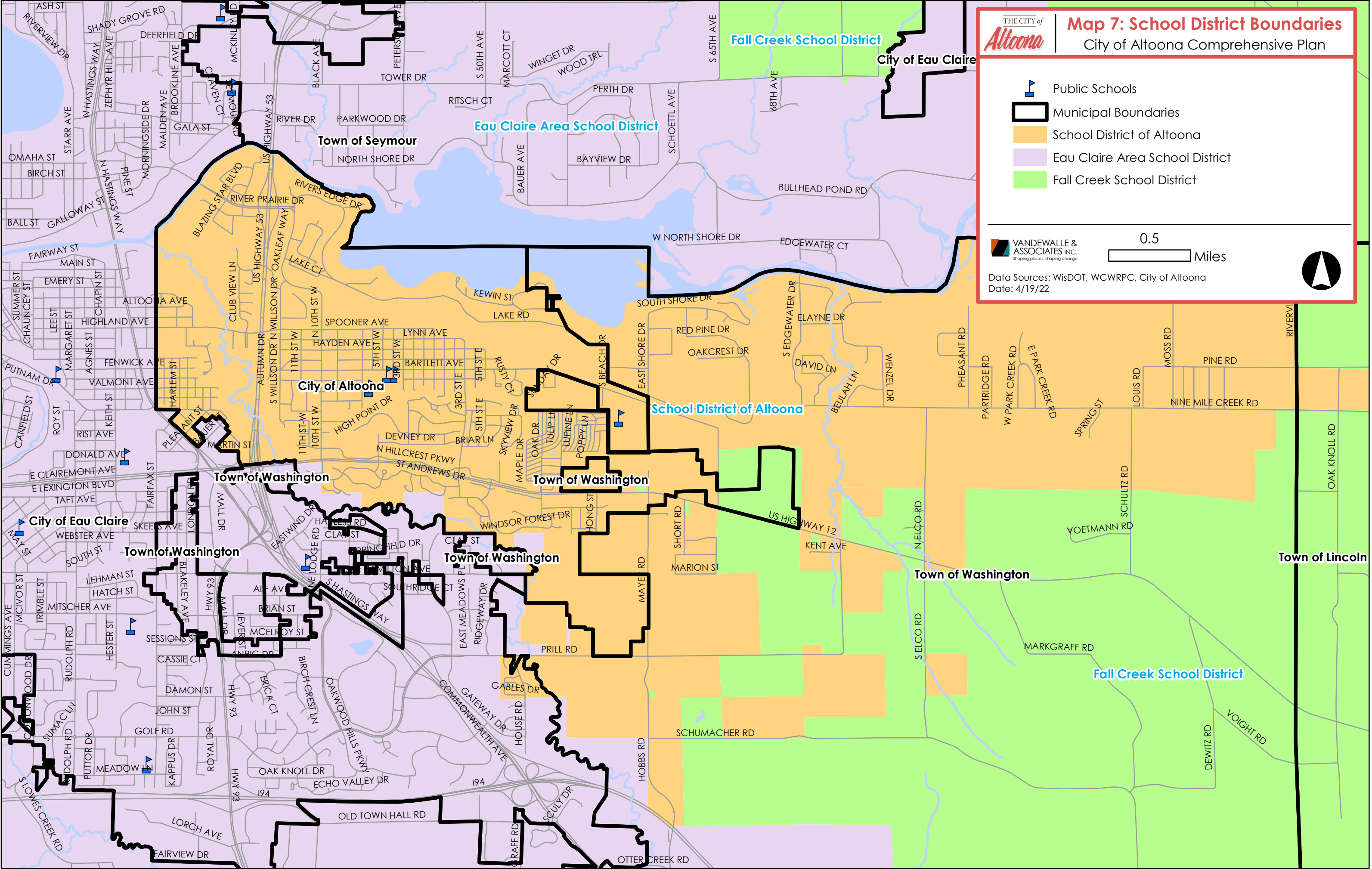
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North Arrow

VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES INC.
Shaping places, shaping change

Data Sources: WisDOT, WCWRPC, City of Altoona, WI DNR, FEMA, USDA-NRCS, Eau Claire County

Date: 4/19/22





THE CITY of


Altoona


Map 7: School District Boundaries


City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan


Public Schools

Municipal Boundaries

School District of Altoona

Eau Claire Area School District

Fall Creek School District


VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES INC.
Shaping places, shaping change

0.5

Miles

Data Sources: WisDOT, WCWRPC, City of Altoona

Date: 4/19/22



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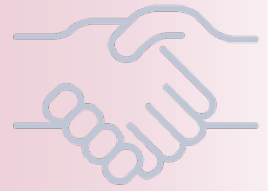


Chapter 9

INTERGOVERNMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES



CHAPTER 9: INTERGOVERNMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES



INTRODUCTION

Intergovernmental cooperation is the relationships, the culture of collaboration, and the formal or informal agreements in which officials of two or more jurisdictions communicate visions, coordinate on plans and policies, and address and resolve issues of mutual interest. Many longstanding challenges related to land use, transportation, natural resources protection, and more have been difficult for a single jurisdiction to address, as they exist within regional systems, independent of municipal boundaries. For this reason, they will require action and cooperation with other jurisdictions within the region. As noted throughout this Plan, Altoona has many different overlapping, adjoining, or abutting governmental jurisdictions. Without communication, coordination, and partnerships with these entities, it will be impossible for the City to fully achieve the vision, goals, and recommendations of the public as summarized in this Plan.

This chapter is intended to promote consistency between this Plan and plans for neighboring jurisdictions, provide opportunities for increased collaboration and partnerships, and promote efficiencies between jurisdictions. All regional context and existing plans related to neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions can be found in Appendix A.

STRATEGIES SUMMARY

- Collaborate on regional initiatives.
- Engage in proactive and regular coordination with adjacent and overlapping governments and entities.
- Develop, implement, and enforce long-term intergovernmental agreements with neighboring municipalities.
- Participate in state-wide groups on topic-specific initiatives and in general government coordination and effectiveness.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICES

Definitions of goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations are found in the Issues and Opportunities Chapter of this Plan.

Goals

1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial intergovernmental relationships and agreements with surrounding jurisdictions.

Objectives

1. Work with surrounding communities to encourage an orderly, efficient land use pattern that minimizes conflicts between urban and rural uses and preserves farming, open space, and natural resources in mutually agreed areas.
2. Encourage collaboration and coordination among the City of Altoona, Eau Claire County, City of Eau Claire, and the Town of Washington regarding planning initiatives, utilities, and development policies.
3. Continue to build upon existing and establish new partnerships with neighboring governments, Altoona School District, Eau Claire County, and State agencies on providing shared services and facilities.
4. Work with the Altoona School District on school district planning, transportation, potential school siting, joint recreational spaces and programming, workforce development, equity, diversity and inclusion efforts, and other areas of mutual concern.



Policies

1. Consider additional joint services and facilities where consolidating, coordinating, or sharing services or facilities will result in more efficient service provision or cost savings.
2. Cooperate with other governments and nonprofit agencies on planning for natural resources, recreation, climate action, sustainability, housing, social equity, public health, transportation, and other regional systems that encompass more than just the City of Altoona's boundaries.
3. Actively monitor, participate in, and review and comment on other future planning initiatives that are undertaken by overlapping or are adjacent to entities.
4. Pursue intergovernmental boundary agreements with the City of Eau Claire and Town of Washington.
5. Work to resolve identified and possible differences between the City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan and plans of adjacent communities.
6. Exercise extraterritorial authority where necessary to protect City interests or where intergovernmental cooperation efforts do not yield desirable results. Only extend public utilities and services to lands that have been annexed into the City of Altoona.
7. Partner with the Altoona School District and other local educational institutions on planning for future facilities and boosting workforce development.
8. Continue to participate and partner with the various local and regional economic development organizations.

STRATEGIES

Pursue Intergovernmental Agreements with the City of Eau Claire and Town of Washington

Altoona should initiate and participate in intergovernmental discussions with surrounding governments with the goal of achieving consistency among comprehensive plans and implementation programs. These discussions would ideally result in formal intergovernmental agreements committing each community to the mutually acceptable outcomes of these discussions.

In general, formal agreements help communities minimize competition for development, ensure that future development is of high quality and appropriately managed, provide all parties with a greater sense of certainty on the future actions of others, and promote municipal efficiency in an era of diminishing government resources. Formal intergovernmental agreements may cover:

- **Municipal Boundary Agreements:** Intergovernmental boundary agreements frequently suggest limits or guidelines to long-range city annexation, generally in exchange for some compromises from a participating town. Such compromises may include the town's agreement not to legally contest any annexation petition that is within the agreed annexation area and/or to limit town development in the possible future annexation area. Provisions for future maintenance, upgrades, or extensions of roads affected by annexations are often also covered in intergovernmental agreements. A boundary agreement can define future boundaries or areas of land use controls where two or more cities and villages jurisdictions overlap.
- **Sewer Service Area Agreements:** Some intergovernmental agreements include provisions that define where public sewer and/or water services may be extended and where they may not over the term of the agreement. These areas largely define where more intensive urban (publicly sewerred) growth may occur. Some agreements include



provisions that do not allow intensive development with onsite waste disposal (septic) systems in such designated or planned areas.

- **Future Land Use Agreements:** Frequently, intergovernmental agreements include maps or descriptions that specify future land uses or development densities considered acceptable or unacceptable. Some agreements also include provisions that the communities will then amend their comprehensive plans to be consistent with the future land use provisions in the agreement, or to not amend their comprehensive plans in a manner that would be inconsistent with the agreement. Mutually acceptable, more detailed arrangements with all neighboring jurisdictions would come into effect with a potential intergovernmental agreement.
- **Shared Services Agreements:** As budgetary constraints continue to evolve over time in the region, intergovernmental agreements for services may become increasingly critical. For example, shared agreements could be for police, fire, EMS, parks, sanitation, utilities, and other services. Cooperation and a collaborative approach to evaluating the service needs of the entire region may point to the need for increased service-based agreements between the City and neighboring jurisdictions.

Any one or combination of the intergovernmental agreements listed above should specify the length of time that it is applicable. Twenty years is a typical timeframe (e.g., through 2042), as this corresponds with the comprehensive plan time horizon. Occasionally, agreements have provisions for automatic extensions if neither party decides to withdraw. Most agreements also include provisions for periodic review and possible amendments if both parties agree. This keeps the agreement top of mind and allows for adaptations as conditions change. It is recommended that the City actively pursue intergovernmental agreements following adoption of this Plan.

Collaborate On and Take a Leadership Role in Regional Initiatives

Because many of the City's goals and objectives relate to issues that extend beyond municipal boundaries, Altoona intends to maintain an active and open dialogue with surrounding communities, jurisdictions, and entities. A few specific opportunities to participate in regional initiatives include:

- **Economic Development.** Various economic development organizations such as the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC), Eau Claire Area Economic Development Cooperation, Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce, Visit Eau Claire, and Momentum West work beyond the boundaries of Altoona to advance economic development efforts. It is recommended that the City continue to play an active role in all regional economic development activities.
- **Natural Resources, Parks, and Trails.** Inherently, these amenities transcend boundaries in terms of their location, jurisdiction, and connectivity. Because they play a pivotal role in providing a high quality of life to residents and act as regional tourism amenities and destinations, it is recommended that Altoona continue to work with WisDNR, WCWRPC, Eau Claire County, the City of Eau Claire, and others to enhance the connectivity, protection, and useability of these assets.
- **Transportation.** Within the City of Altoona, there are local, county, and state roadways. Maintaining, planning, and improving these roadways requires coordination between local, county, and state jurisdictions. As the City continues

Intergovernmental Agreements Under Wisconsin Law

There are two main types of intergovernmental agreements under Wisconsin Statutes. The first is available under Section 66.0301, which allows any two or more municipalities to agree to cooperate for the purpose of furnishing services or the joint exercise of any power or duty authorized under State law. While this is the most commonly used approach, a "66.0301" agreement is limited by the restriction that the municipalities must be able to exercise equal powers. Another second type of intergovernmental agreement is a "cooperative (boundary) plan" under Section 66.0307 of Wisconsin Statutes. This approach is more labor intensive and ultimately requires State approval of the agreement, but the "66.0307" approach does not have some of the limitations of the "66.0301" agreement format.

An increasingly common approach is for communities to first enter into a "66.0301" intergovernmental agreement, which in part directs the communities to then prepare a "66.0307" cooperative plan covering issues such as boundary changes.

to grow, evolve, and change, it is increasingly important to evaluate needs and collaborate on major projects to increase efficiency and effectively allocate resources. Additionally, as the City's demands for public transit services evolve overtime, Altoona should continue to collaborate with Eau Claire Transit on regional bus and paratransit service provision, planning, and funding.

- **Education.** The Altoona School District boundaries cover nearly the entire City and extend into the Town of Washington. It is critically important for Altoona and the School District to continue to partner together on future planning, school siting, services, and workforce development efforts, as recommended throughout this Plan. Additionally, there are several area higher-education institutions near Altoona, including the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, University of Wisconsin-Stout, and Chippewa Valley Technical College. It is recommended that the City continue to partner and work with these entities, focusing on regional initiatives.
- **Sanitary Sewer.** Altoona relies on the City of Eau Claire wastewater treatment plant to serve the City's sanitary sewer demands. The plant was improved in 2014 to handle anticipated demand through the year 2030. If significant growth continues in the region, additional improvements to the system may be required. Proactively working with Eau Claire on sewer capacity is necessary to preserve capacity for growth.
- **Climate Action, Sustainability, Equity, and Public Health.** There are many local and regional groups working on various projects and programs related to advancing these initiatives. As documented throughout this Plan, Altoona should play a key leadership role in advancing these topics as at the local and regional level to improve health outcomes, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and waste, increase energy efficiency, improve social equity, evaluate and expand equitable services, and prepare for climate change.
- **Housing.** Building on the work already completed through the Chippewa Valley Housing Task Force and City of Altoona Housing Action Plan, the City Altoona can continue to play a leadership role in partnering with regional entities to continuously evaluate regional housing needs, collaborate on programming efforts, and leverage alternative funding sources in order to better align housing development with community goals and values and to meet unmet housing needs.



Contribute to Statewide Initiatives

Local government services and duties are diverse and complex, ranging from infrastructure to policing, economic development to parks and recreation. Encouraging city staff and officials to participate in and contribute to state-wide initiatives and professional associations are tools to maintain city services and activities consistent with current best practices. This participation is also valuable to contribute to dialogue among and between governments and their partners on issues that transcend any single jurisdiction. This participation can also result in learning about examples of creative and innovative actions or activities to bring back to Altoona.

The City and staff currently or recently contribute to several statewide efforts, including those sponsored by the Wisconsin League of Municipalities, Local Government Institute of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Local Government Climate Coalition, Wisconsin City-County Managers Association, Wisconsin Treasurers Association, and many others. The City should continue to encourage and support participation in state-wide initiatives and professional associations to benefit the community and region.

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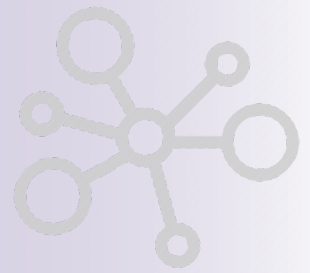


Chapter 10

ACTION PLAN



CHAPTER 10: ACTION PLAN



INTRODUCTION

To advance the vision and goals of this Plan, specific actions will be required based on the strategies described in each individual chapter. This chapter provides a roadmap for the City with prioritized action items for implementation, including potential partners and timing. Further detail about how this Plan can be used, monitored, amended, and updated over the planning period is provided in Appendix A.

STRATEGIES

Figure 10.1 provides a detailed list and timeline of the major actions that the City intends to complete to implement this Plan. Often, such actions will require substantial cooperation with others, including other jurisdictions, governments, and groups. This list is not exhaustive. It includes the strategies and recommendations that are likely to be near-term actions. The City Council may choose to pursue additional actions or prioritize other actions as conditions change.

The table has four different columns of information, described as follows:

- **Topic:** The first column identifies the chapter or topic area of this Plan where additional information regarding the recommendation may be found or more generally describes the overarching category in which the Action Item falls under.
- **Action Item:** The second column lists the specific steps, strategies, and actions recommended to implement key aspects of the Plan.
- **Potential Partners:** The third column implies that City staff will take the lead on most (if not all) Action Items, but also lists other agencies, groups, or entities who would be a valuable partner in the pursuit of accomplishing that Action Item.
- **Implementation Timeframe:** The fourth column responds to the comprehensive planning statute, which requires implementation actions to be listed in a stated sequence. The suggested timeframe for the completion of each recommendation reflects the priority attached to the recommendation. Each timeframe is defined as follows:
 - **In Progress** means that the Action Item has been initiated or addressed at some level, but it is not yet complete and remains an implementation priority corresponding to strategies in the Plan. In Progress status often used for Action Items that were identified in past Comprehensive Plans or have been long-established objectives of the City. These Action Items should be continuously reevaluated to make sure that progress is being made.
 - **Short** means that the Action Item should be pursued over the next 5 years, following the adoption date of this Plan.
 - **Medium** means that the Action Item should be pursued over the next 10 years, following the adoption date of this Plan.
 - **Long** means that the Action Item should be pursued 10+ years, following the adoption date of this Plan.

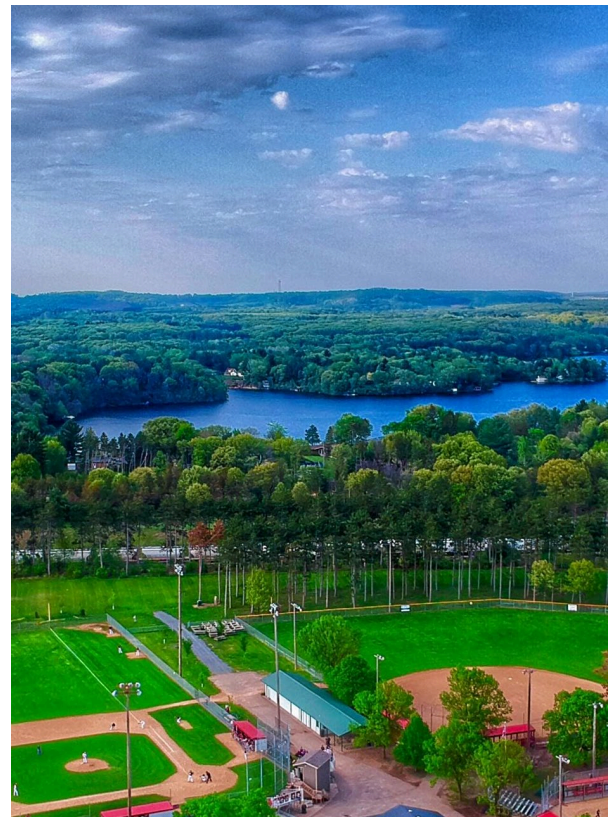


Figure 10.1.: Implementation Action Items

Topic	Action Item	Potential Partners	Time Frame
Land Use and Community Character	Identify environmentally contaminated sites in the City and develop community strategies to advance the cleanup of those sites.	Delta Institute, WI DNR	Ongoing
Livability, Sustainability, and Health	Grow existing and develop new community events that celebrate the community's diversity, culture, and history.	Eau Claire Public Arts Council	Ongoing
All	Participate in county, regional, and state updates to existing plans and development of new plans.	County, WCWRPC, and state	Ongoing
Land Use and Community Character	Require Neighborhood Plans in advance of all new neighborhood development that are guided by the principles of Traditional Neighborhood Design.	Developers and property owners	Ongoing
Land Use and Community Character	Use the Future Land Use Map as the basis for all public and private sector development decisions and land use change, including annexations, zoning map amendments, conditional use permits, subdivision approvals, and extension of municipal utilities.	City	Ongoing
Economic Development	Contribute to partnerships between local institutions and employers on workforce development training.	School District, UW-Eau Claire, local businesses	Ongoing
All	Continue to identify opportunities for property acquisition to guide land use, housing, economic development and other goals.		Ongoing
Housing and Neighborhoods	Implement the recommendations of the City of Altoona Housing Action Plan. Consider updating the plan in 2025.	Regional Housing Task Force	Ongoing
Land Use and Community Character	Exercise the City's authority to review of any future subdivision within its extraterritorial jurisdiction.	City	Ongoing
Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Leverage county, regional, state, and federal opportunities for grants and alternative funding sources to support transportation and community facilities projects.	County, WCWRPC, City of Eau Claire, state	Ongoing
Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Continue to use and update the City's Capital Improvement Plan and annually review for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan	City	Ongoing
Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Implement the City of Altoona Place Plan. Update the plan in 2025 to maintain consistency with 5-year WI DNR funding requirements.	WCWRPC, County, City of Eau Claire	Ongoing
Implementation	Complete an annual <i>Progress Update</i> tracking the implementation of this Action Plan, incorporating these actions into the City Annual Work Plan.		Annual

Topic	Action Item	Potential Partners	Time Frame
Livability, Sustainability, and Health	Complete a Climate Action or Renewable Energy Action Plan to complete an audit of current conditions, establish a baseline, and create renewable energy and greenhouse gas emissions goals and action items.	Xcel Energy, Eau Claire Energy Cooperative, Eau Claire, County	Short
Livability, Sustainability, and Health	Provide increased in-house City staff training on sustainability and climate action best practices.	County, WCWRPC, UW-Eau Claire	Short
Livability, Sustainability, and Health	Increase use of communication platforms and public education events on sustainability and climate action.	School District, UW-Eau Claire, other local groups	Short
Livability, Sustainability, and Health	Expand community involvement of young people and marginalized communities in City processes.	School District	Short
All	Foster new local advocacy groups to take a leadership role in assisting to implement this Plan.	Local groups	Short
Livability, Sustainability, and Health	Partner with local health organizations to develop and implement a framework for integrating a health in all policies approach.	County, local health care providers	Short
All	Rewrite or update the Subdivision Ordinance, Zoning Ordinance, and Sign Ordinance to reflect the recommendations of this Plan.	City	Short
Land Use and Community Character	Integrate health outcomes and determinants into future neighborhood, corridor, and other land use plans and infrastructure projects.	County	Short
Land Use and Community Character	Work with the Altoona School District on future school locations and expansions.	School District	Short
Economic Development	Create a TIF policy or guide that encourages, requires, or provides additional support for integrating sustainability and equity benchmarks into projects as a condition for city financial participation.	UWEC/UW-Extension, Wisconsin Local Government Climate Coalition	Short
Economic Development	Study opportunities and strategies to support expanded access to affordable and quality childcare.	UWEC/UW Extension, County, School District, regional employers	Short
Economic Development	Create an Equitable Development Framework	City of Eau Claire, UWEC/UW-Extension	Short
Economic Development	Complete a Downtown Revitalization Plan.	Developers and property owners	Short
Housing and Neighborhoods	Conduct or provide training opportunities for City staff and officials on housing to stay up to date on this constantly evolving topic.	UW-Eau Claire/UW-Extension	Short
Housing and Neighborhoods	Establish an Affordable Housing Fund by adding another year to any future expiring TIF district.	City	Short
Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Develop and adopt a City-wide Official Map to reserve land for future city facilities and infrastructure.	WCWRPC	Short

Topic	Action Item	Potential Partners	Time Frame
Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Adopt a Complete Streets Policy that requires all future street projects to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities.	City	Short
Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	During all future remodeling, renovation, and new construction projects of municipal facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate LEED certified standards into building and site design • Install electric car charging stations • Add green roofs and solar panels • Convert the City's fleet to electric or alternative energy vehicles 	City	Short
Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Develop and implement a sidewalk infill plan to identify and prioritize filling gaps in the existing network, leveraging the WCWRPC's recently completed sidewalk audit.	City	Short
Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Conduct a development impact analysis and create a community impact template to utilize in evaluating development proposals.	UW-Extension, WCWRPC	Short
Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Develop and implement a tree inventory and an Urban Forestry Plan	City, WI DNR	Short
Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Consider a library impact fee to contribute to meeting facility service benchmarks.		Short
Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Conduct a park impact fee study and revise the parkland dedication fee ordinance, consider creating a park improvement fee.	City, WCWRPC	Short
Agricultural and Natural Resources	Develop and codify raingarden, permeable paver, bioswale, green roof, and other green infrastructure standards.	UW-Eau Claire/UW-Extension, WCWRPC	Short
Intergovernmental Cooperation	Establish intergovernmental boundary agreements with the Town of Washington and City of Eau Claire.	Town of Washington and City of Eau Claire	Short
Livability, Sustainability, and Health	Establish a new community garden and support a local Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) program.	UW-Extension, FairShare CSA Coalition	Medium
Livability, Sustainability, and Health	Create an annual sustainability award to showcase local successes and built awareness.	WCWRPC, Economic Development Cooperation, Chamber of Commerce	Medium
Livability, Sustainability, and Health	Become a designated Wisconsin Healthy Community.	County	Medium
Economic Development	Complete Corridor Plans for Spooner Avenue, USH 12, and Hastings Way/Fairfax Street.	Developers and property owners	Medium


Topic	Action Item	Potential Partners	Time Frame
Economic Development	Complete a City of Altoona Arts and Culture Plan to increase collaboration with the arts community and prioritize future public art installments.	Eau Claire Public Arts Council	Medium
Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Establish new public safety education events related to bicycling (i.e. Bicycle Rodeo).	WCWRPC, local groups	Medium
Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities	Become a Bicycle Friendly Community as designated by the American League of Bicyclists.	City	Medium
Agricultural and Natural Resources	Complete a stormwater management and/or green infrastructure plan.	UW-Eau Claire/UW-Extension, WCWRPC	Medium
Agricultural and Natural Resources	Create a local rain barrel program.	City of Eau Claire, County	Medium
Agricultural and Natural Resources	Expand educational programming within the City's parks and natural areas.	School District, County, City of Eau Claire, UW-Extension, Beaver Creek Reserve	Medium
Implementation	Complete a full update the City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan by 2032.	City	Long



2022

CITY OF ALTOONA, WISCONSIN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
Appendix A

DRAFT: 4.27.22



Prepared by:

**VANDEWALLE &
ASSOCIATES INC.**



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INTRODUCTION

This Data Analysis, Plan Inventory, and Existing Conditions document contains relevant demographic, housing, development, education, and economic trends experienced in the City of Altoona, neighboring communities, Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties, and Wisconsin. It also provides the existing conditions, relevant plans, and supplemental statutorily required information for each chapter that correlates directly to that chapter in the main body of the Plan. In total, it gives an understanding of the trends currently influencing Altoona today as well as how they may affect the City in the future.

It is important to note that while this plan was being written, the world was experiencing the unprecedented global COVID-19 pandemic. The social and economic implications of this event are not yet known. Because of this, the data and trends provided in this document may be significantly altered in the coming years.

Additionally, as of the writing of this Plan, the U.S. Census had only provided some 2020 Census data and there was no American Community Survey completed in 2020. This limits the data available to complete this analysis. Due to these issues, a combination of 2019, 2020, and 2021 data are used throughout this document.

CHAPTER 2: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

POPULATION TRENDS

According to the Wisconsin Department of Administration, the City of Altoona's population in 2021 was 8,651. Overall, the City has experienced varying patterns of population growth since 1970. The community grew rapidly during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, however that stalled between 2000-2010. Over the last decade, the City has again experienced rapid growth of nearly 30%. The stalled population growth during the 2000s is likely in part due to the Great Recession, housing market collapse, and subsequent stagnant economic recovery that many communities have experienced since. However, unlike other small-to-mid sized Wisconsin communities, Altoona has bounced back and recovered more quickly.

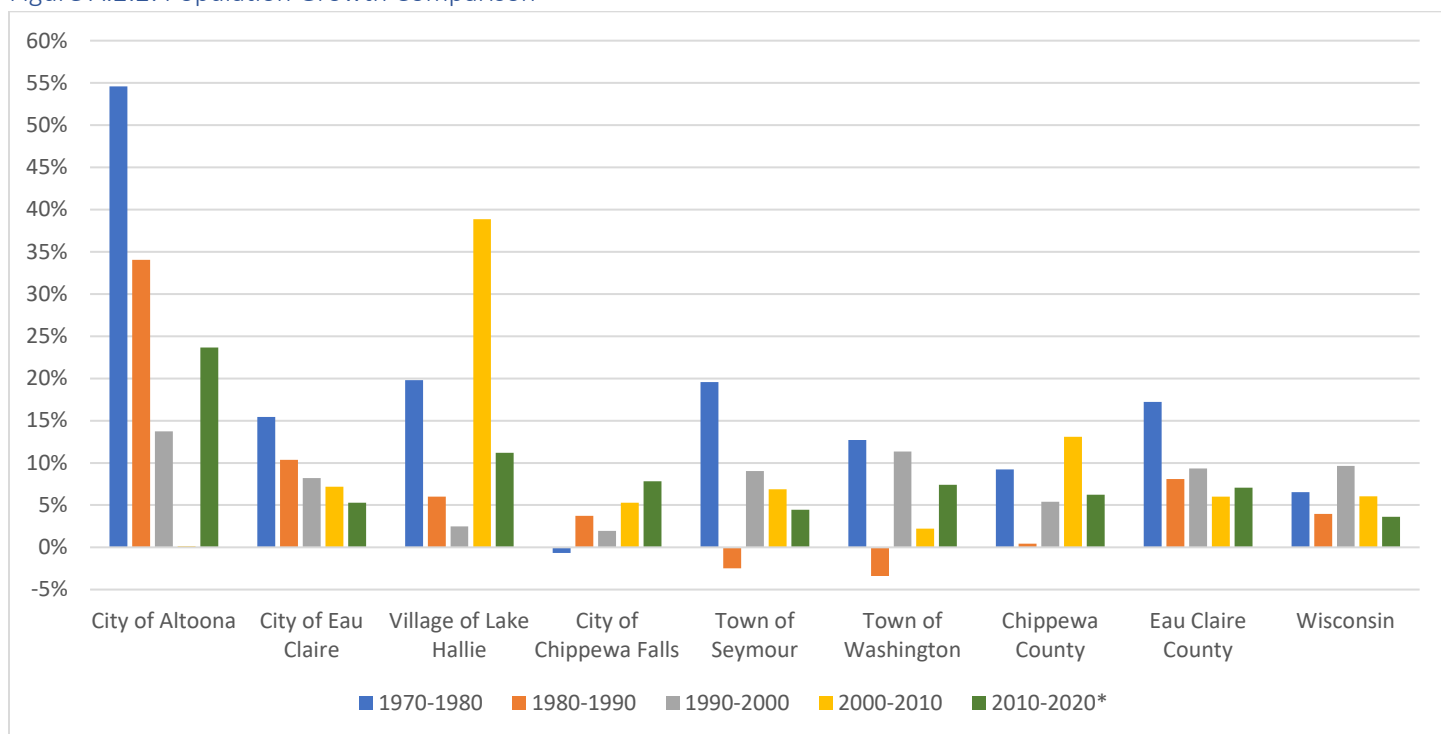
In comparison to other neighboring communities, the County, and the state, Altoona has experienced much more population growth by percentage increase, especially between 1970-1990 and 2010-2021. It should also be noted that the since 1990, the entire region has experienced sustained growth and has been less impacted by the Great Recession than other areas of the state, as measured by population change.

Figure A.2.1: Population Comparison

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
City of Altoona	2,842	4,393	5,889	6,698	6,706	8,293
City of Eau Claire	44,619	51,509	56,856	61,516	65,931	69,421
Village of Lake Hallie	3,568	4,275	4,531	4,644	6,448	7,170
City of Chippewa Falls	12,351	12,270	12,727	12,976	13,661	14,731
Town of Seymour	2,362	2,824	2,754	3,003	3,209	3,352
Town of Washington	5,757	6,489	6,269	6,980	7,134	7,662
Chippewa County	47,717	52,127	52,360	55,195	62,415	66,297
Eau Claire County	67,219	78,805	85,183	93,142	98,736	105,710
Wisconsin	4,417,821	4,705,767	4,891,769	5,363,675	5,686,986	5,893,718

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1970-2020 Census.

Figure A.2.2: Population Growth Comparison



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1970-2020 Census.

POPULATION FORECASTS

Projections are important components of the planning process and provide a guide for decision makers. Since the market has fluctuated over the past 30 years, it is more important to factor in multiple projection scenarios to account for the various outcomes that could occur in the future. Seven different population projection scenarios for the City through the year 2040 were calculated and compared.

These projections were derived using a variety of methodologies:

- Linear Growth Rate 1990-2021, 2000-2021, 2010-2021. This set of projections were calculated using the average annual population change over the time period and projecting that rate forward to 2042. The average annual population change for the various time periods ranged from 89 to 177 new residents per year.
- Compounded Percentage Rate 1990-2021, 2000-2021, and 2010-2021. These estimations are determined utilizing the annual average percentage change over the time period and extrapolating that rate forward to 2042. The average annual percentage change for the three time periods ranged from 1.5%-2.6% annual growth.
- Department of Administration (WisDOA) Projection. In 2013, the State Department of Administration forecasted population change for all communities in Wisconsin based on 2010 U.S. Census data. As shown, this data is clearly outdated based on the growth experienced in the City over the last decade. These projections do not indicate a decline; rather, they are based on the 2010 Census and not the DOA's updated 2021 population estimates.

Based upon these scenarios (excluding the outdated WI DOA projections), the City's population is projected to be between 10,522 and 14,943 in the year 2042. For the purposes of this Plan, the City will utilize the Compounded Growth Projection scenario from 2000-2021. This factors in both the increased population growth experienced between 2010-2021, in addition to the lower population growth experienced between 2000 and 2010. This population scenario will also be used for housing and land use demand projections later in the Plan. While it is certainly possible that the City will not grow to this population or grow beyond this projection by 2042, a careful approach to land use planning suggests that this Plan shows how that amount of growth could be appropriately accommodated. Market conditions, regional growth, and City's policies will influence the actual rate of population growth.

To note, the City's 2009 Comprehensive Plan projected the City's population in 2020 to be 7,941, which was slightly lower than the City's actual 2020 population total (8,293). Additionally, the previous Plan's 2030 projected population (8,595) is significantly lower than this Plan's projected 2030 population (9,794). When the 2009 Plan was written, it did not account for the rapid growth experienced in the City over the past decade and instead based the population projections on the minimal growth in the City between 2000-2007.

Figure A.2.3: City of Altoona Population Projections

	2010	2020	2021*	2025	2030	2035	2040	2042
WisDOA Projections	6,706	8,293	8,651	7,485	7,695	7,825	7,945	None
Linear Growth 1990-2020 (1)	6,706	8,293	8,651	9,007	9,453	9,898	10,344	10,522
Linear Growth 2000-2020 (1)	6,706	8,293	8,651	9,023	9,488	9,953	10,418	10,604
Linear Growth 2010-2020 (1)	6,706	8,293	8,651	9,358	10,242	11,126	12,011	12,364
Compounded Growth 1990-2020 (2)	6,706	8,293	8,651	9,187	9,903	10,675	11,507	11,858
Compounded Growth 2000-2020 (2)	6,706	8,293	8,651	9,142	9,794	10,493	11,242	11,557
Compounded Growth 2010-2020 (2)	6,706	8,293	8,651	9,600	10,934	12,454	14,185	14,943

*Source: WisDOA, 2021 Population Estimates.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990-2020 Census.

1. Extrapolated based on the average annual population change over the given years.

2. Extrapolated based on the average annual percent change over the given years.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Demographic data suggests that Altoona's population is getting younger. This is the opposite of national trends where most communities are experiencing an increasingly aging population with Baby Boomers now reaching retirement age. Altoona on the other hand is attracting more young families with children, in part due to the rapid growth experienced over the past decade. However, if these growth patterns change over the next 20 years, there could be an increasingly older population that emerges. This will present both potential opportunities and issues for the City.

Overall, in 2020, the City had just over 1,900 millennials (age 25-39) and just under 2,500 residents within retirement age (age 55 or older). Within the region, there were 33,581 millennials and 50,851 residents within retirement age. *Source: EMSI Economy Overview, Altoona*

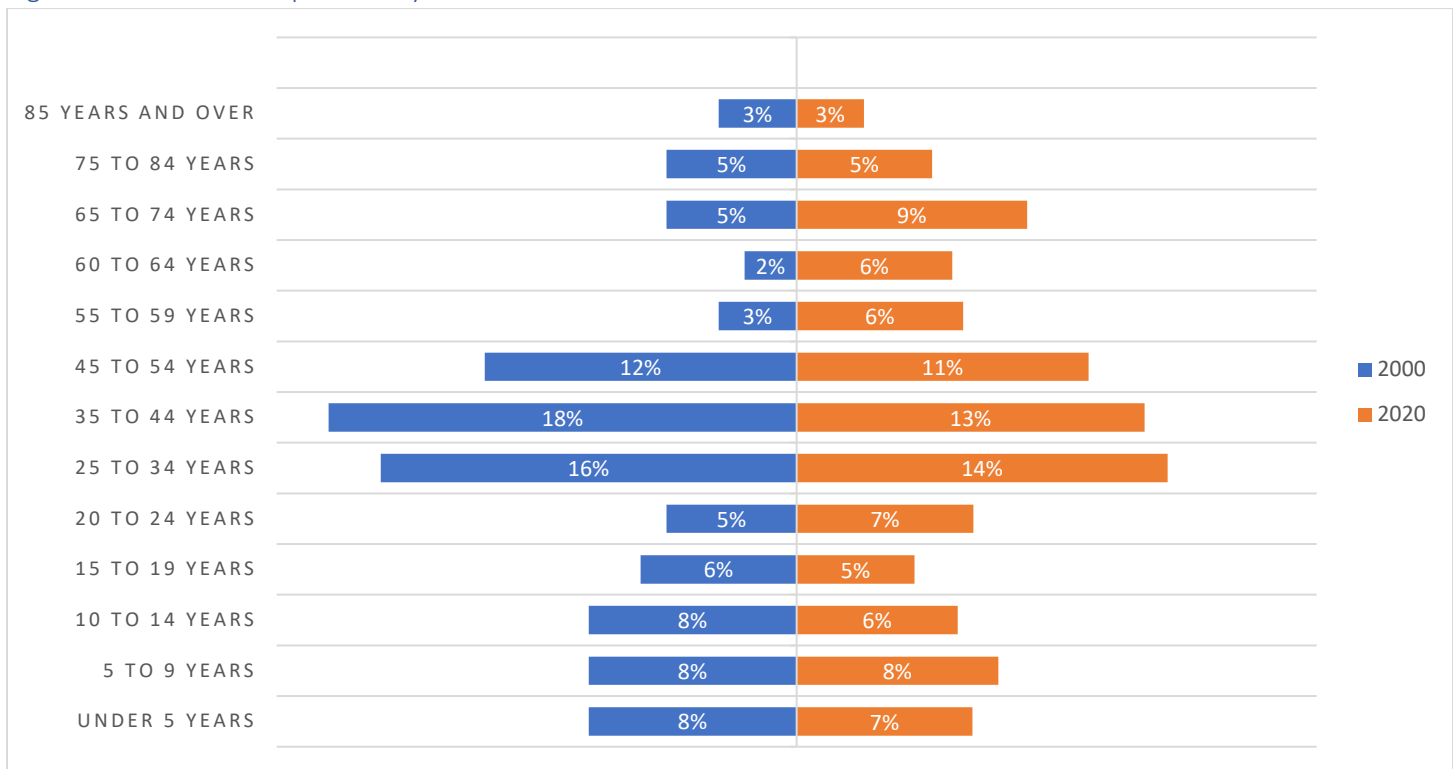
Figure A.2.4: Age Distribution

	Median Age			Percentage Under 18			Percentage Over 65		
	2000	2010	2019*	2000	2010	2019*	2000	2010	2019*
City of Altoona	37	38	36	25%	24%	24%	16%	17%	17%
City of Eau Claire	29	30	32	21%	20%	19%	12%	11%	14%
Village of Lake Hallie	-	38	37	-	26%	24%	-	11%	11%
City of Chippewa Falls	38	37	38	24%	22%	21%	18%	15%	18%
Town of Seymour	40	39	44	27%	25%	23%	12%	9%	16%
Town of Washington	38	42	46	27%	24%	21%	10%	14%	21%
Chippewa County	38	40	41	26%	24%	22%	15%	14%	18%
Eau Claire County	32	33	35	23%	21%	20%	12%	12%	16%
Wisconsin	36	38	40	26%	24%	22%	13%	13%	18%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000-2010 Census.

Figure A.2.5: Altoona Population Pyramid



2020 Data Source: EMSI, Q2 2021 Data Set.

2000 Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census.

Many communities throughout Wisconsin have steadily experienced a demographic shift over the past 20 years with an increasingly diverse race and ethnicity makeup. While the City is still over 90% white, the Asian and Hispanic or Latino populations have both increased since 2000. The City is cognizant of this shift, but must continue to recognize potential barriers, increase inclusiveness, and strive to provide equitable services and representation in local government.

Figure A.2.6: Race and Ethnicity

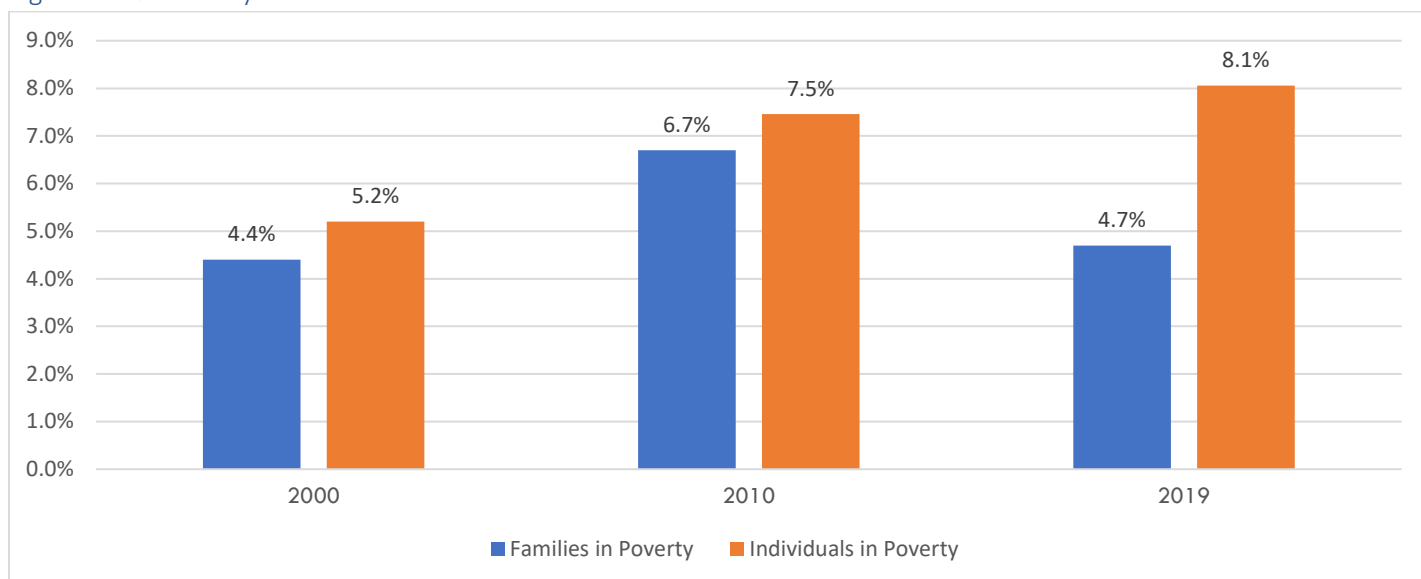
	2000	2010	2020
Race			
White	95.9%	93.5%	90.9%
African American	0.4%	0.9%	0.7%
American Indian	0.6%	0.4%	0.0%
Asian	1.1%	1.9%	3.5%
Other	0.3%	0.8%	0.0%
Two or More	1.6%	2.5%	1.4%
Ethnicity			
Hispanic or Latino	0.9%	2.7%	3.3%

2020 Data Source: EMSI, Q2 2021 Data Set.

2000 and 2010 Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Census.

Another trend that the City must be cognizant of over the planning period is both individuals and families in poverty. The 2008 Great Recession played a part increasing poverty rates for both families and individuals in 2010. While the rate of families in poverty have decreased between 2010-2019, the number of individuals in poverty remains relatively the same. Nationally, the same poverty trends are taking place as the income inequality gap continues to get larger, wages stay stagnant, and student debt rises. It should also be noted that the global COVID-19 pandemic has played a role in increasing this divide and perpetuating the income inequality gap. It will be important for the community to consider these trends when adding or revising services in the future.

Figure A.2.7: Poverty



*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000-2010 Census.

PUBLIC HEALTH

In planning and assessing the community's existing and future service needs, it is crucial to review and compare the public health of the area compared to neighboring and similar sized counties. Eau Claire County ranks 21 out of 72 Wisconsin counties in the 2021 Community Health Assessment County Health Rankings, approximately in the middle of comparable counties. Additionally, Assessment offers even greater detail on relevant data in comparison to the state and country overall. There are several key areas in which the County has prioritized as focus areas where the figures below show needed improvement.

Figure A.2.8: Public Health Context

	Overall Health Outcome Ranking*	Percentage of Adult Obesity	Poor or Fair Health
Eau Claire County	21 out of 72	28%	15%
Chippewa County	16 out of 72	31%	15%
Dunn County	18 out of 72	39%	15%
Marathon County	17 out of 72	34%	14%
Fond du Lac County	34 out of 72	32%	15%
La Crosse County	25 out of 72	26%	14%
Wisconsin	N/A	32%	15%

*Health outcomes rankings are a combination of factors including length of life, quality of life, health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and physical environment.

Source: 2021 County Health Rankings, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.

Figure A.2.9: Public Health Context 2

	Adults Aged 20+ Diagnosed With Diabetes*	Leading Cause of Death**	Life Expectancy***
Eau Claire County	10%	Heart Disease (205 per 100,000)	80.4
Chippewa County	8%	Heart Disease/Cancer (234 per 100,000)	80.0
Dunn County	8%	Cancer (187 per 100,000)	80.7
Marathon County	8%	Cancer (179 per 100,000)	80.5
Fond du Lac County	7%	Heart Disease (219 per 100,000)	80.3
La Crosse County	6%	Heart Disease (179 per 100,000)	80.2
Wisconsin	9%	Heart Disease (199 per 100,000)	79.5

*Source: CDC, 2017.

**Source: 2017 Wisconsin Public Health Profiles. Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

***Source: Life Expectancy in Wisconsin 2010-2014. Wisconsin Department of Health Services, 2016.

Other data trends to note from the 2021 Eau Claire County Community Health Assessment (2016-2018 data):

- Eau Claire County has a higher rate of drug arrests per 100,000 people than Wisconsin or the United States, but lower rates of overdose deaths than Wisconsin.
- Eau Claire County has a higher rate of suicide per 100,000 people than Wisconsin or the United States.
- Eau Claire County has a higher percentage of motor vehicle deaths involving alcohol than that of Wisconsin or the United States.
- Eau Claire County has similar percentages of adults with obesity compared to that of Wisconsin and the United States.
- The percentage of people who are food insecure (lacking adequate access to food) is lower in Eau Claire County than that of Wisconsin or the United States.
- Eau Claire County has a higher rate of childhood deaths (under 1 year old) than that of Wisconsin or the United States.
- Eau Claire County has similar rates of adults who smoke every day than that of Wisconsin or the United States.

HOUSEHOLD TRENDS

Average household size is also another metric that can be used to evaluate housing needs and preferences, in addition to land use demands in the future. Since 2000, Altoona's average household size has increased to 2.36 people per household. This is the opposite state and national trends, where average household sizes have been decreasing in part due to the increase in the aging population, people having children later in life, and generational lifestyle preferences. However, due to the rapid growth in the City over the past decade, Altoona has been less affected by these shifts than other communities in Wisconsin.

Following that same trend, the total number of housing units has increased since 2010, in contrast to less growth experienced between 2000-2010. The rates of housing unit growth in Altoona are much higher than those in other neighboring communities and regionally, yet the region has also experienced sustained growth. The dramatic changes in Altoona are a key component of the City's existing issues and future opportunities. As such, this topic is explored in greater detail throughout this Plan, including the Issues and Opportunities, Land Use, and Housing Chapters.

Figure A.2.10: Housing Units and Households Comparison

	Total Housing Units			Total Households		
	2000	2010	2019*	2000	2010	2019*
City of Altoona	3,117	3,119	3,409	2,844	2,983	3,224
City of Eau Claire	24,753	28,099	29,008	24,016	26,497	27,440
Village of Lake Hallie	-	2,378	2,726	-	2,315	2,648
City of Chippewa Falls	5,951	6,594	6,437	5,638	6,030	6,027
Town of Seymour	1,177	1,247	1,313	1,108	1,201	1,276
Town of Washington	2,675	2,815	3,356	2,555	2,743	3,032
Chippewa County	22,821	26,783	28,385	21,356	24,223	25,601
Eau Claire County	37,474	41,759	44,089	35,822	39,240	40,981
Wisconsin	2,321,144	2,593,073	2,694,527	2,084,544	2,274,611	2,358,156

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. This figure may differ from the official count in each local community due to the five-year sampling window of the ACS. This figure is used for consistency in comparison over time.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000-2010 Census.

Figure A.2.11: Household Size and Housing Ownership Comparison

	Average Household Size			Percent Owner-Occupied Housing Units		
	2000	2010	2019*	2000	2010	2019*
City of Altoona	2.30	2.32	2.36	62%	62%	64%
City of Eau Claire	2.38	2.27	2.34	57%	57%	57%
Village of Lake Hallie	-	2.65	2.50	-	70%	65%
City of Chippewa Falls	2.20	2.18	2.20	58%	57%	50%
Town of Seymour	2.69	2.62	2.59	91%	95%	89%
Town of Washington	2.68	2.58	2.45	81%	84%	83%
Chippewa County	2.53	2.5	2.39	76%	74%	73%
Eau Claire County	2.46	2.35	2.43	65%	65%	65%
Wisconsin	2.50	2.41	2.39	68%	70%	67%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000-2010 Census.

Figure A.2.12: Housing Costs Comparison

	Median Gross Rent			Median Monthly Owner-Occupied Costs (with a mortgage)			Median Value of Owner-Occupied Units		
	2000	2010	2019*	2000	2010	2019*	2000	2010	2019*
City of Altoona	\$539	\$597	\$778	\$897	\$1,215	\$1,229	\$98,400	\$134,200	\$157,600
City of Eau Claire	\$485	\$661	\$835	\$896	\$1,263	\$1,261	\$92,800	\$136,900	\$155,000
Village of Lake Hallie	-	\$865	\$981	-	\$1,254	\$1,288	-	\$156,500	\$182,100
City of Chippewa Falls	\$439	\$574	\$818	\$791	\$1,157	\$1,093	\$81,300	\$119,900	\$135,100
Town of Seymour	\$563	\$894	\$932	\$953	\$1,381	\$1,532	\$111,300	\$210,100	\$233,200
Town of Washington	\$495	\$711	\$738	\$1,060	\$1,603	\$1,544	\$128,200	\$213,300	\$231,000
Chippewa County	\$446	\$616	\$821	\$824	\$1,244	\$1,241	\$88,100	\$146,300	\$167,400
Eau Claire County	\$486	\$657	\$823	\$913	\$1,305	\$1,315	\$96,300	\$147,200	\$169,400
Wisconsin	\$540	\$713	\$856	\$1,024	\$1,433	\$1,430	\$112,200	\$169,000	\$180,600

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000-2010 Census.

HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS

For planning purposes, the number of households is used to estimate demand of additional housing or dwelling units. If household size decreases, the number of households (and hence housing units) can be expected to increase for a given population. Changes in household composition will also influence the level of demand for various types of housing units such as housing suitable seniors or for families with children. Trends indicate that there will be a continued need for a range of household types for various age, income, and lifestyles.

The number of projected households for Altoona through the year 2042 was calculated using the population projection numbers used above, in addition to a customized household size projection over the next 20 years. This Plan assumes that the City's 2019 household size figure will remain the same over the planning period. This attempts to balance the WI DOA's projected household size decline for the City with the increase in household size the City experienced over the previous 20 years (2000-2019). As with the population projections, multiple projections were calculated using different methods and years to provide a range of potential household totals.

Based on this projection, in 2042, the City could have a total of approximately between 4,458 to 6,332 households in 2042, or 793 to 2,666 more households than in 2021. For the purposes of consistency, the chosen household projection method was the Compounded Growth projection between 2000-2021, the same method chosen for the City's population projection totals. This calculation method estimates that there will be approximately 4,897 total households in 2042, or nearly 1,231 more than 2021.

Figure A.2.13: Projected Number of Households

	2019*	2021	2025	2030	2035	2040	2042	2021-2030	2021-2042
Linear Growth 1990-2021(1)	3,224	3,666	3,817	4,005	4,194	4,383	4,458	340	793
Linear Growth 2000-2021(1)	3,224	3,666	3,823	4,020	4,217	4,414	4,493	355	828
Linear Growth 2010-2021(1)	3,224	3,666	3,965	4,340	4,715	5,089	5,239	674	1,573
Compounded Growth 1990-2021(2)	3,224	3,666	3,893	4,196	4,523	4,876	5,025	530	1,359
Compounded Growth 2000-2021(2)	3,224	3,666	3,874	4,150	4,446	4,764	4,897	484	1,231
Compounded Growth 2010-2021(2)	3,224	3,666	4,068	4,633	5,277	6,010	6,332	968	2,666
Projected Household Size**	2.36	2.36	2.36	2.36	2.36	2.36	2.36		

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

**2019 ACS 5-Year Estimate (2.36) was projected to continue over the planning period to balance the WisDOA's projected decline for Altoona over the next 20 years and the City's actual increase in household size between 2000-2019.

1. Extrapolated based on the average annual population change over the given years.

2. Extrapolated based on the average annual percent change over the given years.

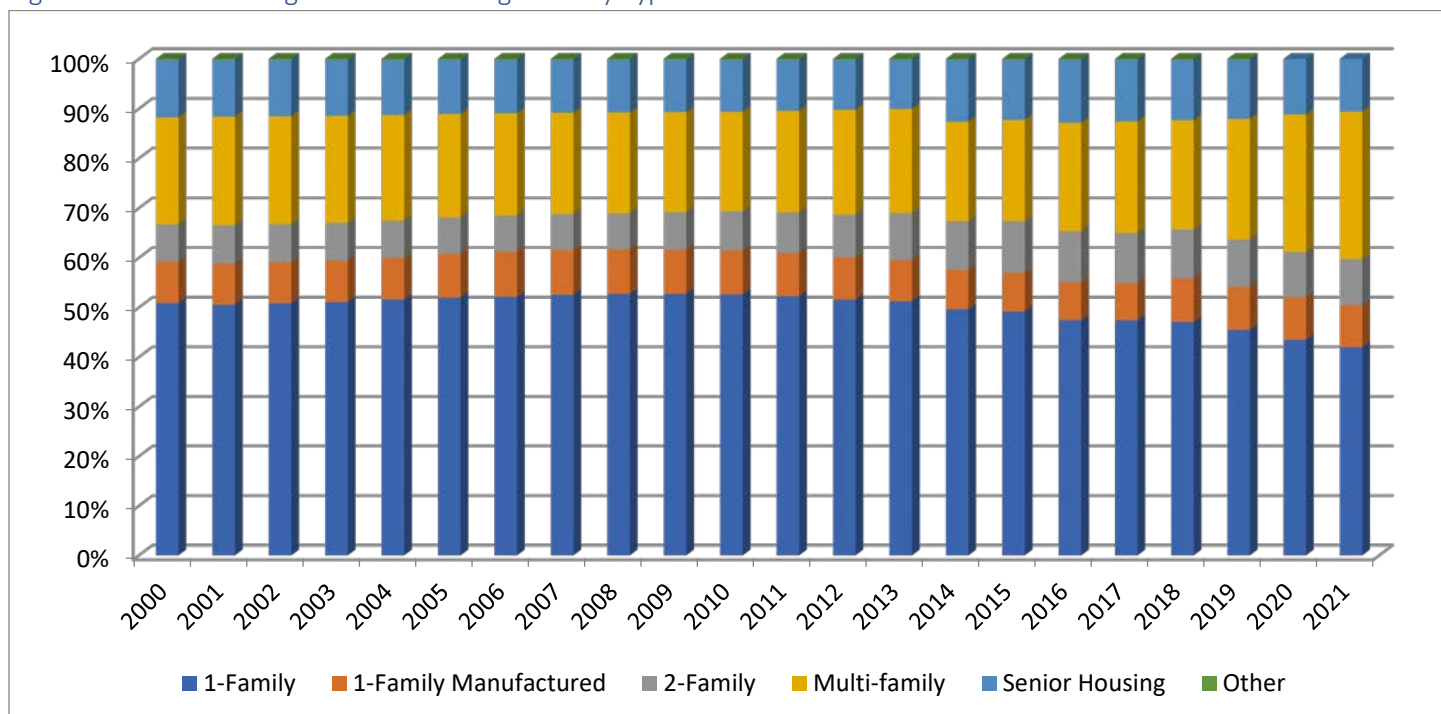
The City's housing unit mix continues to diversify as it grows and expands. While nearly all new dwellings added to the city between 2000 and 2010 were single family dwellings, this dropped to about one in four new dwellings between 2011 and 2020- despite the total number of new single family dwellings added being greater than the recent decade. Significantly more two-family and multi-family units were constructed during the last decade that has resulted in greater balance in the City's housing composition. This is in part due to policy shifts, the region's demand for alternative housing types, rising cost of housing overall, and state and national trends of expanding multi-family dwelling construction.

Figure A.2.14: Percentage of Total Housing Units

	2000	2010	2021	New Unit Change Between 2010-2021
Single Family	59.2%	61.4%	50.4%	26.7%
Two Family	7.5%	7.9%	9.3%	12.3%
Multi-Family	21.5%	20.0%	29.6%	50.1%
Senior Housing	11.5%	10.4%	10.6%	10.8%

Source: City of Altoona, 2021

Figure A.2.15: Percentage of Total Housing Units By Type



Due to a multitude of factors, housing affordability is one of the most prominent issues of our time. This is a result of a combination of recent factors, including the Great Recession and slow economic recovery, changing personal preferences, shifting demographics, tightened lending practices, lack of developers, and overall financial feasibility of building new housing in many areas of the country. In addition, generations of housing policy at the state and federal level have created a system wherein home ownership is emphasized as the primary wealth accumulation tool for most households, resulting in investment flowing into housing to create returns on investment through rapidly rising housing prices, driving prices higher at a far greater rate than growth in wages. Further, land use policies such as zoning have constrained the location and type of new housing, reducing the available supply, reinforcing the increase in prices. Compounding this trend, transportation policies have subsidized travel, and combined with local zoning choices and development priorities, created land use patterns that separate centers of employment and services from housing, forcing many people to seek housing further away from work and services in arrangements that require significant car travel, increasing household cost and time requirements.

As a result, the number of households across the country that are cost burdened is on the rise. Cost burdened is defined as spending over 30% of a household's total income on housing costs. Households spending greater than 30% often have trouble paying for essentials, transportation, and have a greater chance of financial insecurity. The rate of cost burdened households in Altoona is similar to both Eau Claire County and Wisconsin overall. In Altoona, 26% of households are cost

burdened and 10% spend over 50% of their income on housing. Housing affordability will remain one of the most pressing issues throughout the country over the next decade.

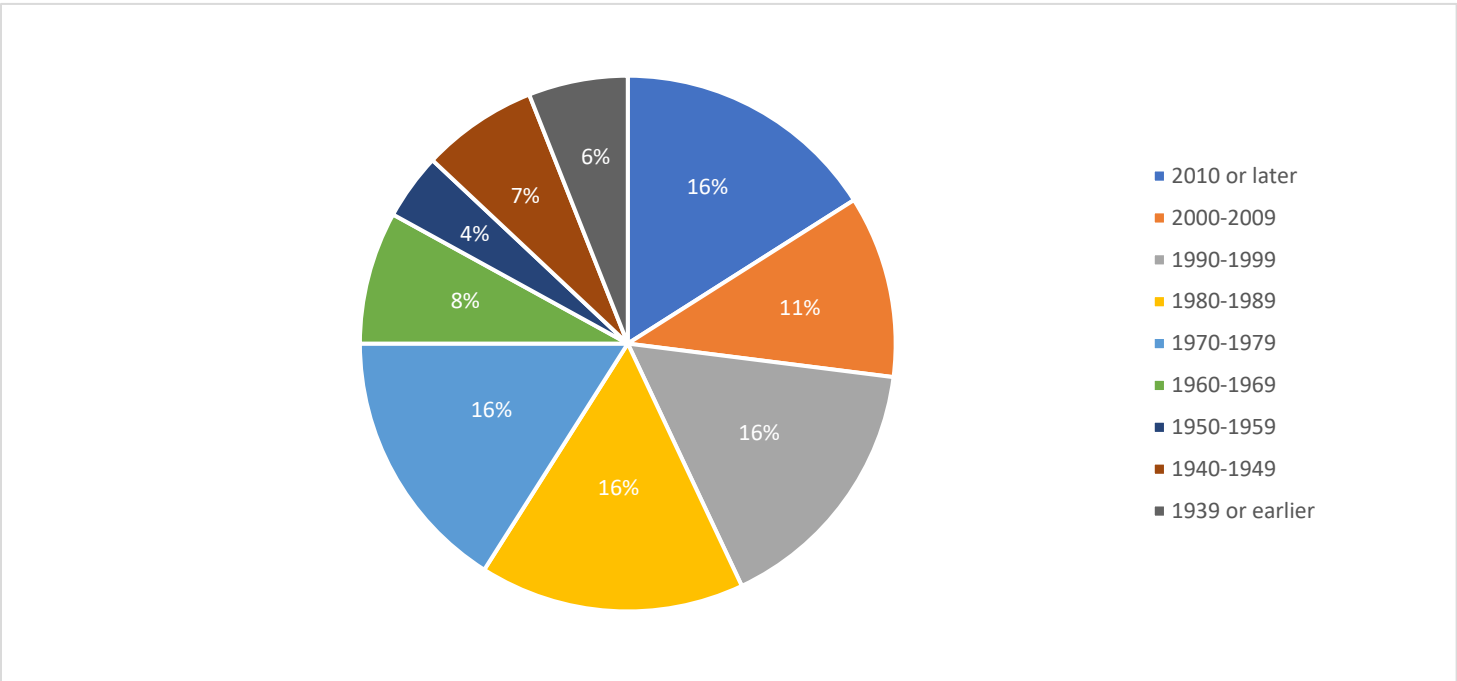
Figure A.2.16: Cost Burdened Households

	City of Altoona	Eau Claire County	Wisconsin
Cost Burden <=30%	74%	72%	73%
Cost Burden >30% to <=50%	16%	16%	15%
Cost Burden >50%	10%	12%	12%

Source: U.S. HUD 2018 CHAS data calculated using ACS 2013-17

Prior to 2010, the age of the City of Altoona’s housing stock was balanced due to the decades of relatively consistent population and housing growth experienced. The community has some older housing and an increasing percentage of new housing. This presents opportunities in both the revitalization of older neighborhoods and the development of new neighborhoods. The data provided below includes the estimated age of dwellings up to 2019. There have been 491 new dwellings permitted in the City since that time. This means that the actual percentage of the overall housing stock built between 2010-2021 is higher than shown in Figure A.2.17. Local permit data indicates that 32 percent of all dwellings in Altoona have been constructed since 2010.

Figure A.2.17: Age of Housing as a Percentage of Total Housing Stock



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

CHAPTER 3: LIVABILITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND HEALTH

BRIEF HISTORY OF ALTOONA

In 1870, the railroad reached Eau Claire. The City was incorporated in 1872, however East Eau Claire (now the City of Altoona), was not included in the incorporation. In 1887, Altoona was incorporated separately from the City of Eau Claire, directly adjacent to the railroad line and by 1929, Altoona had its first community well and sewage system.

The City grew quickly between 1970-2000, attracting residents who wanted the convenience and access to nearby amenities in the region. During the 2010s, Altoona realized new growth and investment resulting in part from the Highway 53 bypass constructed through the city. This allowed Altoona to invest in property owned by the city along the Eau Claire River. The project became River Prairie, a diverse mix of uses, attractions, commerce, and recreational opportunities turning the community into a regional destination, which has contributed to the rapid population increase over the past five years.

HISTORIC SITES AND RESOURCES

The Wisconsin Historical Society maintains an Architecture and History Inventory (AHI)—a collection of information on historic buildings, structures, sites, objects, and historic districts throughout the State of Wisconsin. There are 17 AHI documented sites, buildings, and structures in Altoona, including several churches and homes. There are no properties in the City that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES

The Wisconsin State Historical Society lists archeological sites throughout the State in its Archeological Sites Inventory (ASI). These sites include cemeteries/burial sites, effigy mounds, and campsites/villages. At this time there are no archeological sites within Altoona's City limits listed on the ASI. Under Wisconsin law, Native American burial mounds, unmarked burials, and all marked and unmarked cemeteries are protected from encroachment by any type of development. Many of these sites are located on private land and may not be viewed by the general public. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires federal agencies to ensure that their actions do not adversely affect archeological sites on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Archeological sites can be protected during the course of State agency activities if the sites have been recorded with the Office of the State Archeologist.

LIVABILITY COMPONENTS

Modern day Altoona distinguishes itself by providing a high quality of life to its residents. Some of these attributes include:

Civic Organizations, Schools, and Community Spaces

- River Prairie Center. Recently completed, River Prairie features parks, trails, river access, a man-made creek, Prairie Event Center, an amphitheater, and hosts many different events and functions throughout the year. It is truly the community's gathering place.
- Altoona School District. Ranked in the top 15% of all school districts in Wisconsin, the Altoona School District provides a high-quality public education system within the community. It has helped continue to attract new residents to the City and plays a major part in community's livability.
- Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas. Featuring 14 different parks and conservancy areas, Altoona's 181 acres of parks and open space provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities. Additionally, the community is surrounded by high-quality natural resources including Altoona Lake, the Eau Claire River, and Otter Creek.
- Altoona Public Library. Located in downtown Altoona, the library features a wide variety of events, programming, and resources.
- Altoona VFW Post 10405 and Altoona Lions Club. Also located in downtown Altoona, the VFW offers community events, fundraisers, and a gathering place for veterans. The Lions Club also uses the VFW building.

Community Events

- River Prairie Cultural Festival. Celebrating the cultural diversity of the entire Chippewa Valley, this event features food trucks, local vendors, and performances each summer.
- Summer Concert Series. During each summer, the City hosts free live concerts each week in River Prairie featuring local artists from throughout the Valley.
- Eau Claire Area Events. Throughout the Valley, a wide variety of events are held during the year in which Altoona residents are welcome including music festivals, farmer's markets, education events, car shows, movie nights, and more.

In addition to the components listed above, Altoona features a strong sense of community and a willingness to try new things. Together, these play a key role in driving the community forward in an ambitious, but community-centered way.

The Public Policy Institute of the American Association of Retired People (AARP) has created a tool to analyze and compare communities based on multiple aspects of livability. This includes housing, neighborhoods, transportation, environment, health, engagement, and opportunity. Each category is scored, and a community average is generated, producing the community's livability score. As of 2021, Altoona scored a 59 out of 100, with its highest attributes being a clean environment, access to quality health care, strong civic engagement, and inclusive opportunities. The Altoona's livability score is slightly higher than the state overall (57), Eau Claire County (57), and the City of Eau Claire (56).

ONGOING SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Altoona has demonstrated a strong commitment to advanced community sustainability by participating in the following programs and initiatives:

- **Setting Renewable Energy Goals.** In 2008, the City passed a resolution supporting the goal of replacing 25% of the City's municipal operations electric power and transportation fuels to renewable resources by 2025.
- **Planning.** The City collaborated with the City of Eau Claire and Eau Claire County to create and adopt a 25x25 Plan for Energy Independence in 2011. However, the City has not continued to active track and report its energy consumption. The City of Eau Claire recently adopted a Renewable Energy Action Plan. While not an Altoona-led initiative, the City of Eau Claire's leadership in the Chippewa Valley on this planning effort serves a model for the City of Altoona and other communities in the area. The plan was completed in 2019 through a partnership with Xcel Energy and establishes goals, actions, and timelines for 30% greenhouse gas reduction over the next 10 years, with a target of net carbon neutrality by 2050.
- **Committing to Natural Resource Preservation and Redevelopment.** The City has established a commitment toward improving the efficiency of the built environment and preserving the natural environment. This has primarily been accomplished through continued protection of environmental corridors along Lake Altoona, the Eau Claire River, and Otter Creek, encouraging more efficient development patterns, and through implementing more stringent stormwater management standards. Additionally, the development of River Prairie is a model redevelopment in the City incorporating mixed-use development, connections to natural resources, public open space improvements, and sustainable building practices.
- **Promoting Non-Automobile Transportation.** Altoona continues to enhance multi-modal transportation options through planning and direct capital improvement. This has included a Safe Routes to School Plan, Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (ongoing), and Park and Open Space Plan. It has also directly invested in bus route expansions in the City, bicycle trail/route/on-street connections, sidewalk enhancements, and intersection safety improvement.

CLIMATE ACTION PLANS

Wisconsin's Changing Climate Assessment Report (2022)

The Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI) partnered with the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to produce the Changing Climate Assessment Report for 2021. By Executive Order of the Governor, the WICCI was tasked with updating its previous report completed in 2011. New data showed that statewide temperatures are rising, rain and snow amounts are increasing, and extreme storms are becoming more frequent. Below are several of the report's key findings:

- Wisconsin's average daily temperature has become three degrees Fahrenheit warmer since the 1950's.

- The previous two decades were the warmest on record and the past decade was the wettest. Average precipitation has increased 17% (about 5 inches) since 1950.
- Very extreme precipitation events will increase in frequency in the future causing immense impacts around the state.

This report documents data sets gathered from around the state by over fifty different scientists and covers impacts to air, land, water, people, and the built environment. Each section outlines solutions for mitigating further impacts and adapting to these changes. Many of the recommended strategies and solutions of the Changing Climate Assessment Report align with those of this Plan as Altoona and the greater Chippewa Valley region advance their collective effort toward climate adaption and resiliency.

Wisconsin Clean Energy Plan (2022)

Authored by the Wisconsin Office of Sustainability & Clean Energy (OSCE) in collaboration with state agencies, local governments, native nations, frontline communities, NGO's, utility companies, and industry representatives, The Wisconsin Clean Energy Plan was developed to move the state towards the achievement of a clean energy economy and sustainable state for future generations.

As the State's first such initiative, the Clean Energy Plan represents a major step in advancing sustainability and climate action goals at the state, regional, and local levels to mitigate the effects of climate change. The plan advocates for transportation, workforce development, policy, and sustainable climate action strategies that reduce carbon emissions in the short and long-term by supporting and bolstering clean energy opportunities. Informed by the core values of environmental justice, social and economic equity, and collective action, the Clean Energy Plan achieves the objectives of:

- Putting Wisconsin on a path for all electricity consumed within the state to be 100 percent carbon-free by 2050
- Ensuring that the State of Wisconsin is fulfilling the carbon reduction goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement
- Reducing the disproportionate impact of energy generation and use on low-income communities and communities of color
- Maximizing the creation of clean energy jobs, economic development and stimulus, and retention of energy investment dollars in Wisconsin, and providing equitable opportunities to obtain them
- Improving the reliability and affordability of the energy system
- Strengthening the clean energy workforce through training and education while retraining workers affected by the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy sources to adapt to new technologies
- Protecting human and environmental health by reducing ecosystem pollution from fossil fuels

The Wisconsin Clean Energy Plan places sustainability strategies into four major pathways to create momentum towards a more sustainable society. The plan calls for increasing clean energy technology use by expanding funding options for projects, investing in sustainable infrastructure, creating new emissions goals, expanding state energy resources for generation, technology innovation, and the equitable expansion of clean energy. This can be accomplished through the implementation of new policies while leveraging and adapting existing policies and programs. The plan also endeavors to maximize energy efficiency by strengthening energy efficiency standards and goals to reduce energy waste and save consumers money on energy costs. This, along with other sustainability initiatives, can also be accomplished by modernizing buildings and industry within the state through the expansion of funding and support to help developers and businesses complete sustainable development. Supporting the innovation of transportation methods to create low to no-emission vehicles, support multimodal transportation, and promote sustainable development patterns will also help the state achieve its sustainability goals.

The City of Altoona plans to advance its own clean energy initiatives over the planning period and leverage any future opportunities provided by the state through the implementation of the Clean Energy Plan in furthering climate adaption, sustainability, and resiliency.

PUBLIC HEALTH INITIATIVES

The City, in partnership with the Eau Claire City-County Public Health Department, provides a variety of services and advances local initiatives related to public health. These include:

- Monitoring air quality, beach quality, and private well and septic system testing.
- Administering Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) resources from for healthy food, nutrition, and access to health services.
- Providing immunization, family planning, and other testing/vaccine clinics.
- Completing region-wide Community Health Assessments and Community Health Improvement Plans, in addition to locally focused Health Impact Assessments.

Eau Claire County is designated as a Gold-level Wisconsin Healthy Community by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (2019-2021). The purpose of the designation is to recognize and encourage local efforts that improve the overall community's health and well-being. It also aims to promote collaboration centered around health improvement. Some of the County's health initiatives include the enforcement of laws prohibiting alcohol sales to minors, health food in convenience stores, trauma-informed care, neighborhood associations, Nurse-Family Partnerships (NFP), proper drug disposal programs, health home environment assessments, suicide prevention training, chronic disease management, and the services listed above.

2021 Eau Claire County Community Health Assessment

The purpose of the assessment was to identify and prioritize significant community health needs, as well as to identify potential resources to address those needs. The Community Health Assessment lists 14 Health Focus Areas for Eau Claire County:

1. Drug Use
2. Mental Health
3. Alcohol Misuse
4. Obesity
5. Health Nutrition
6. Chronic Disease Prevention and Management
7. Communicable Disease Prevention and Control
8. Physical Activity
9. Healthy Growth and Development
10. Vaping/Tobacco Use and Exposure
11. Environmental and Occupational Health
12. Injury and Violence Prevention
13. Reproductive and Sexual Health
14. Oral Health

The top identified priorities were drug use, mental health, alcohol misuse, obesity, and health nutrition.

CHAPTER 4: LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN

An accurate depiction of the City's existing land use pattern is the first step in planning for a desired future land use pattern. As of 2021, Altoona encompasses approximately 5 square miles. Figure A.4.1 summarizes the existing acreage allocated to each of the various land use categories within the municipal boundaries. The Existing Land Use pattern is also depicted on Map 3.

Agriculture

A total of 278 acres of agricultural land uses are located within Altoona. Beyond the City's boundary there are significant tracts of agricultural land uses to the south and east.

Residential Development

The largest single land use in Altoona is single family residential, at approximately 23% of the city area. This is not uncommon in that most incorporated communities have similar land use patterns. Most of these homes are connected to municipal sewer and water services, but some remain on private well and septic. Two Family Residential, Twin-Home Residential, and Multi-Family Residential land uses are located throughout the community and make up about 7% of all developed land in the City. The Hillcrest Estates Mobile Home Park accounts for 3% of the City's total land area.

Commercial Development

In Altoona, approximately 7% of land is in a commercial use. Most of this land use type is concentrated along USH 12, around the USH 53/River Prairie Drive interchange, and along Hastings Way on the boundary of Altoona and Eau Claire. There is also a small clustering around downtown.

Community-serving, larger-scale commercial and office development is generally located around the USH 53/River Prairie Drive interchange. These businesses are newer and are easily accessible from the highway. Smaller-scale auto-oriented commercial is located along USH 12 and Hastings Way. Finally, downtown offers more walkable small-scale commercial in the older core of the City.

Industrial Development

Industrial land uses make up a very small amount of the City's total area (2%). Older industrial uses are located near the rail line along Spooner Avenue and Bartlett Avenue, while newer industrial uses are concentrated at the corner of Mayer Road and USH 12.

Other Land Uses

About 379 acres within Altoona is in a park, open space, or recreational land use. Surface water and woodlands combine to make up approximately 221 acres. Community facilities such as government buildings, schools, other institutional buildings, and utilities account for about 160 acres. Road and the Union Pacific railroad rights-of-way account for 704 acres. Finally, vacant lands are those that have been subdivided into smaller developable lots, but are not developed as of the writing of this Plan. This accounts for approximately 178 acres.

Key community facilities include River Prairie Park and Cinder City Park (Altoona Hobbs Sports Center); Altoona High School, Intermediate School, and new Elementary School; City Hall and Public Library, and the Eau Claire County Highway Shop which will soon be the City Public Works facility.

Figure A.4.1: Existing Land Use Totals

Existing Land Use	Acres	Percent
Agricultural	278	8.4%
Single-Family Residential	768	23.1%
Twin-Home Residential	40	1.2%
Two-Family Residential	46	1.4%
Multi-Family Residential	135	4.1%
Mobile Homes	106	3.2%
Commercial	230	6.9%
Industrial	74	2.2%
Governmental/Institutional	120	3.6%
Recreational	379	11.4%
Right-of-Way (Roadways and Railroad)	707	21.3%
Utilities	40	1.2%
Forest	50	1.5%
Vacant	178	5.4%
Surface Water	171	5.1%
Total	3,324	100%

Source: City of Altoona, V&A, 2022

EXISTING LAND USE CONFLICTS

The most prominent land use conflict in Altoona centers on the railroad that bisects the community to the north and west. Generally, the railroad has significant impacts on nearby land uses (noise) and acts as an access barrier between Lake Altoona to the north and much of the rest of the City to the south. Light industrial land uses that have traditionally been developed surrounding the railroad remain in several areas and are now located directly adjacent to many neighborhoods.

LAND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

A review of historical land development trends provides a foundation for projecting future land demand for new housing, commercial, and industrial development. Residential land development has experienced tremendous growth over the past decade. Nearly 1,500 new dwellings have been created in the City since 2010, as shown in Figure A.4.2. This is in contrast to many small communities in the state that have experienced little housing growth post-Recession.

Altoona's housing composition has traditionally been dominated by single family homes. However, that has begun to change over the past decade, with the addition of over 700 new multi-family dwellings since 2010. By comparison, there were only 16 new multi-family dwellings constructed in the entire decade of 2001-2010. See Figure A.4.3. This has started to shift the housing unit makeup of the community to be more balanced in terms of housing choices available.

New commercial and light industrial development in the City is generally occurring within River Prairie and along USH 12. While River Prairie is nearly built out, additional opportunities for new development exist along USH 12 as Altoona continues to grow south and east, in addition to infill and redevelopment areas within the existing municipal boundaries. In total, between 2010 and 2021, approximately 900,000 square feet of new commercial and industrial space has been constructed in the City, of which over 650,000 square feet is in River Prairie.

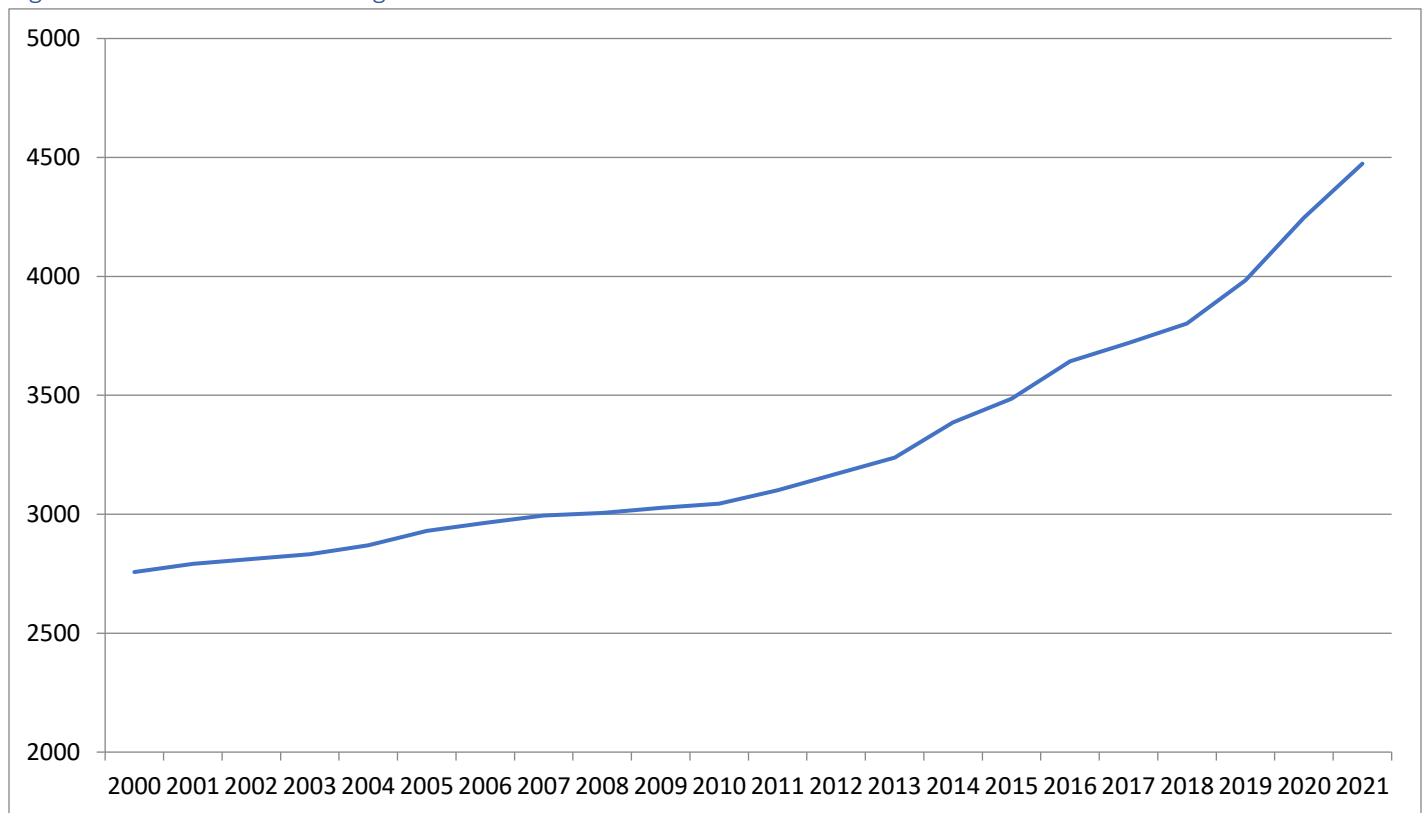
Overall, new residential neighborhood developments and some new commercial and light industrial developments will be needed over the planning period to accommodate anticipated growth as shown in the population projections (Figure A.2.3).

Another important factor to consider in planning for future growth and development is the City's municipal tax rate in comparison to other surrounding communities, as shown in Figure A.4.4. Between 2015 and 2020, Altoona's and most surrounding communities' tax rates decreased, however Altoona's overall tax rate remains the highest. Additionally, all incorporated communities maintained significantly higher rates than neighboring towns. This is very common throughout Wisconsin because of the greater number of services provided within an incorporated municipality verses an unincorporated municipality.

Trends in Altoona’s land market show a very similar situation as the construction trends above, with much more significant growth occurring over the past decade than between 2000 and 2010, as shown in Figure A.4.5. Overall, equalized land values in Altoona have increased by 241% since 2000. This is a similar trend to most of the neighboring communities; however, the City grew by percentage at a much higher rate. If development trends continue at similar rates over the planning period, land values will most likely increase at similar rates.

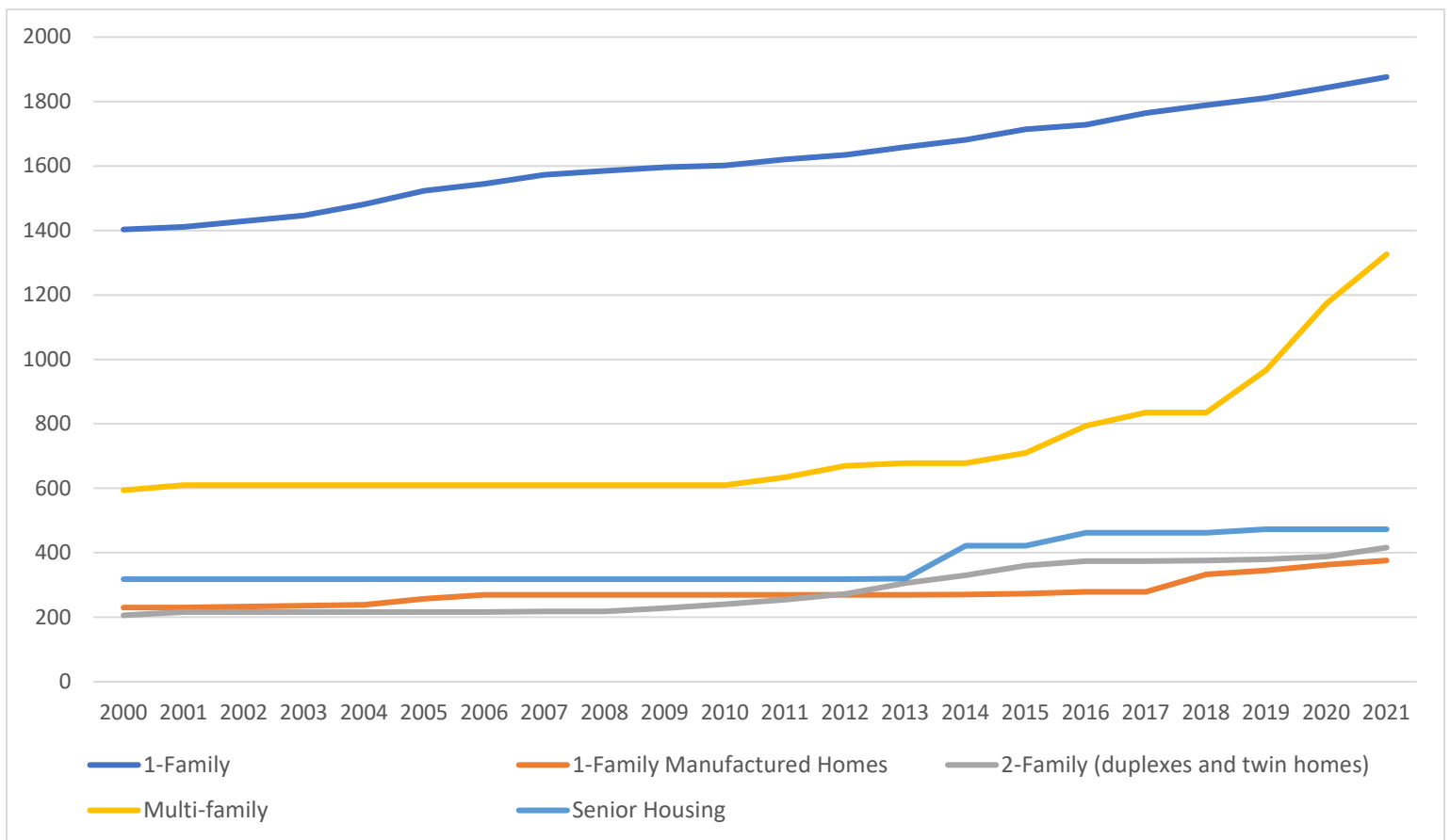
In analyzing Altoona’s equalized land values by type (Figure A.4.6), it is no surprise that residential experienced a large increase, but so did commercial and industrial land values. This can be attributed to the City’s large number of new housing units, population increases, build out of River Prairie, and local industrial expansions. Altoona is slowly diversifying its tax base, but residential still remains the highest total land value type.

Figure A.4.2: Total New Housing Units



Source: City of Altoona, 2022

Figure A.4.3: New Dwellings By Building Type



Source: City of Altoona, 2021

Figure A.4.4: Gross Municipal Tax Rate Per \$1,000 in Value

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
City of Altoona	\$23.85	\$23.01	\$22.09	\$21.51	\$21.13
City of Eau Claire	\$22.70	\$23.22	\$22.53	\$21.19	\$20.78
Village of Lake Hallie	\$18.60	\$18.19	\$17.51	\$18.33	\$17.16
City of Chippewa Falls	\$22.41	\$21.63	\$20.95	\$22.11	\$20.67
Town of Seymour	\$17.78	\$17.88	\$17.41	\$16.99	\$16.56
Town of Washington	\$15.39	\$15.57	\$15.29	\$14.96	\$14.71

Source: Wisconsin Policy Forum, 2021

Figure A.4.5: Equalized Value Comparison

	2000	2010	2020	2000-2020 Change	2010-2020 Change
City of Altoona	\$236,592,900	\$383,350,000	\$806,015,500	241%	110%
City of Eau Claire	\$2,706,974,200	\$4,224,623,800	\$6,119,427,100	126%	45%
Village of Lake Hallie	N/A	\$501,357,300	\$750,359,400	NA	50%
City of Chippewa Falls	\$535,833,800	\$751,396,500	\$1,227,874,800	129%	63%
Town of Seymour	\$145,709,400	\$250,294,200	\$356,472,900	145%	42%
Town of Washington	\$385,214,300	\$626,819,300	\$857,315,000	123%	37%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue, 2021

Figure A.4.6: City of Altoona Equalized Value By Type

	1990	2000	2010	2020	1990-2020 Change	2010-2020 Change
Residential	\$77,868,800	\$170,861,100	\$268,334,700	\$462,036,100	493%	72%
Commercial	\$23,645,300	\$59,138,100	\$100,443,300	\$311,721,500	1,218%	210%
Personal	\$3,281,500	\$6,050,500	\$7,510,000	\$16,763,900	411%	123%
Manufacturing	\$153,100	\$543,200	\$6,889,300	\$15,212,900	9,837%	121%
Undeveloped	\$0	\$0	\$31,900	\$64,000	N/A	101%
Agricultural	\$0	\$0	\$140,800	\$217,100	N/A	54%
All	\$104,948,700	\$236,592,900	\$383,350,000	\$806,015,500	668%	110%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue, 2021

LAND SUPPLY

The supply of land available for development includes areas of the City that have been planned or approved for development, but are not yet completed; vacant areas within the City that have not been approved or platted for development; developed land within the City that is appropriate for redevelopment; and land that is not within the corporate limits of the City, but is potentially available for future expansion. As a suburban community, directly adjacent to incorporated communities and Lake Altoona, the City has limited opportunities for future municipal expansion (south and east). However, there is still a large land supply available in this area for new development.

The land available for development is determined by several factors:

- Wetlands, floodplains, water bodies, public ownership, conservation easements, or other characteristics that make not suitable for development
- Other potential building limitations (e.g. infiltration area, steep slopes, shallow depth to water table, and hydric soils) will also influence which undeveloped areas are actually appropriate for developed uses
- Drainage basins (and the relative ability to efficiently provide lands with urban services like sanitary sewer) also form opportunities and limitations for development
- Man-made barriers including railroads, bridges, highways, and neighboring municipality's policies, growth areas, and existing developed lands also limit future developable land areas

Taking these factors into account, the optimal areas for future growth are infill and redevelopment in key locations along major corridors and in the downtown, undeveloped lands south of USH 12 to Prill Road, east of the city and north of USH 12 to the railroad, and east along USH 12 to 9 Mile Creek Road.

PROJECTED LAND USE DEMAND

The ever-changing national, regional, and local market trends, policies, and future priorities will continue to drive population change, household size, the balance of residential and non-residential uses, and the density of development in the Altoona area. These factors, in turn, determine the demand for land development.

Wisconsin statutes require comprehensive plans to include projections, in five-year increments, for future residential and non-residential land uses in a community over the planning period. As described in Issues and Opportunities Chapter, for the purposes of this Plan, population change over the next twenty years will be based on the Compounded Growth Projection based on 2000-2021 population change.

Figure A.23 presents the projected land use demand for the City through the year 2042. The following analysis for land use demand considers several factors:

- **2021 to 2042 Population Change:** For the purposes of this Plan, the City's 2042 population is projected to be 11,557, or an additional 2,906 new residents. This figure is based on the actual population growth that occurred between 2000 and 2021. (Additional population projections were prepared and considered in the development of this Plan; these are discussed in the Chapter 2 section of this Appendix.)
- **Projected Number of New Households in 2042:** The projected number of new households is based on the projected population growth divided by the projected average household size for the given five-year increment. The WI DOA projects that household size will decrease in Altoona over the next 20 years; however, U.S. Census American

Community Survey data has shown a continued increase in average household size over the past 20 years. Due to these differences, a constant average household size was used to project the future number of households (2.36 through 2042). This aims to account for differences between the data.

- **Projected Residential Acreage Demand:** The City’s desired average future residential density is approximately 6 dwelling units per gross acre. This was used to calculate the projected number of residential acres needed to meet the desired future density.
- **Non-Residential Acreage Demand:** The City chose to prioritize a mixture of residential and non-residential development in the future. It was assumed that for every new acre of residential development, 1/3 of an acre would be need for additional non-residential development.
- **Preliminary Acreage Demand:** The land use projections assume that approximately 33% of any new development will be needed for roads and utilities, sidewalks, parks, etc.
- **Flexibility Factor:** Because Altoona cannot guarantee the timing and location of new development, it is prudent to incorporate a flexibility factor into projections of land use demand to ensure that the actual supply of land appropriate for development will be available to meet expected demand. Providing a flexibility factor can also serve to keep land prices in check. In addition, providing alternative areas for growth is critical to preventing drastically uneven patterns and rates of growth that can make providing utilities and services inefficient or costly. Finally, the rationale for some flexibility in the land supply could provide a reasonable basis for negotiating adjustments to the approved Urban Service Area (the WCWRPC- and State-approved boundary for public water and sanitary sewer service provision, beyond which the City and sewer district is not allowed to extend municipal sanitary sewer service). The assumed flexibility factor was two times the preliminary acreage demand.

Figure A.4.7: Projected Land Use Demand

	Projection Used	2020-2025	2025-2030	2030-2035	2035-2040	Total
Projected Population Increase ⁽¹⁾	Compounded Growth 2000-2021	491	653	699	1,063	2,906
New Household Projection Increase ⁽²⁾	Compounded Growth 2000-2021	208	276	296	451	1,231
Residential Acreage Demand ⁽³⁾	Compounded Growth 2000-2021	35	46	49	75	205
Non-Residential Acreage Demand ⁽⁴⁾	Compounded Growth 2000-2021	11	15	16	25	68
Preliminary Acreage Demand ⁽⁵⁾	Compounded Growth 2000-2021	61	82	87	133	363
Flexibility Factor ⁽⁶⁾	Compounded Growth 2000-2020	123	163	175	266	726

1. Projection based on a linear growth equation using population changes between 1990-2020.

2. Source: WI DOA, 2013 average household size projections by municipality 2020-2040.

3. Assumed 6 dwelling units per acre.

4. Assumed every new residential development would include a minimum of 33% additional acres for non-residential development.

5. Sum of residential acreage demand and non-residential acreage demand, in addition to an assumed 33% more land area needed in every new development for roads, stormwater management, utilities, sidewalks, parks, etc.

6. Assumed 2x the preliminary acreage demand total as a margin of error.

Based on the above calculations, it is projected that the City of Altoona will need approximately 726 additional acres of land to meet the projected population and housing growth over the next twenty years. The City’s Future Land Use Map (Map 4) shows greater than 726 acres for future City growth in existing undeveloped areas. The projections and map are different because of the uncertainty and unpredictability regarding when land will become available for development, in large part due to property owner’s decisions. Additionally, this Plan prioritizes a combination of infill development, redevelopment, and new development both within the City’s existing boundaries and beyond. As documented in the Alternative Growth Scenario Plans in Chapter 4 of the Plan, infill and redevelopment were accounted for in terms of helping to meet some of the projected population and housing demand. Depending on how much infill and redevelopment takes place will also impact the amount of additional land will be needed beyond Altoona’s boundaries. The combination of these factors results in the need to provide flexibility in the amount of land shown for future development on the Future Land Use Map (Map 4), the projections above, and the Alternative Growth Scenario Planning analysis.

LAND USE PLANS

The following section provides an overview of adopted land use plans that intersect with and influence land use planning for the City of Altoona.

West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission Comprehensive Plan (2010)

Covering Barron, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Polk, and St. Croix Counties, the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC) produced a regional Comprehensive Plan in 2010. This document covers the same topics of the City of Altoona's Comprehensive Plan, but with a regional scope and context. Many of the goals, objectives, strategies, recommendations, and the overarching vision statement align with Altoona's Comprehensive Plan. Specifically related to land use planning, the regional plan includes two overarching goals:

- Our land use patterns will reflect: distinct urban centers of sustainable, mixed-use design, efficient and cost-effective infrastructure and services, and multi-modal transportation options; and, rural areas where working lands, natural resources and traditional rural character are preserved.
- All levels of government will work cooperatively to realize their respective land use goals and mutual benefits through open and responsive processes.

Land use strategies aimed at achieving these goals include utilizing land use best practices, creating multi-modal transportation opportunities, fostering infill and redevelopment, continuing to promote rural preservation, leveraging available resources, collaborating with neighboring jurisdictions, increasing public engagement in land use planning, and overall improving plan consistency throughout the region.

Eau Claire County Comprehensive Plan (2020)

The Eau Claire County Comprehensive Plan was updated in 2020. It too aligns with and reflects many of the goals, objectives, strategies, and recommendations of the City of Altoona's Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, the County's land use goals include maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with all jurisdictions serving county residents, ensuring new development is harmonious with the existing built and natural environment, and balancing land use regulations with individual property rights. Overall, the plan calls for maintaining a future land use plan that balances agriculture, housing, business and industry, public uses, and the preservation of open space and natural resources.

City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan (2009)

Building on the City's first Comprehensive Plan in 1999, the City of Altoona adopted an update to the Comprehensive Plan in 2009. The 2009 Plan did not anticipate the rapid growth experienced in the community over the past decade. It utilized data from the early 2000s when population and development growth were at a much slower pace. Many of the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations from the 2009 version of the plan were incorporated into this Plan, but were updated to reflect current trends, practices, and policy objectives.

The previous Comprehensive Plan also explored two different alternatives in terms of future growth. Both anticipated future growth to occur to the south and west, in addition to the redevelopment of River Prairie and other corridors. Alternative 1 did not show urban growth beyond the 2009 Urban Service Area, whereas Alternative 2 showed urban growth for the full extent of the City's 1.5-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction. The alternatives were combined into the adopted Future Land Use Map attempting to balance both growth options.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER COMPONENTS

Altoona has been and remains a highly desirable place to live, work, and visit. An important aspect of this is the City's commitment to high quality of life and community character. The following aesthetic components of development contribute to Altoona's unique community character.

Natural Environment

A defining element of the City's character is the natural environment, which includes Lake Altoona, the Eau Claire River, Otter Creek, and the rolling topography and dense woodlands that surround them. To the south and east, productive agricultural lands help define the surrounding countryside. Overall, the landscape and natural components of the area evoke a strong sense of place throughout the region.

Connectedness of the Transportation Network, Accessibility, and Walkability

One of the most distinct features of the urban core versus the periphery is the transportation network hierarchy. In both Old Altoona and the new River Prairie development, there is an increased level of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, accessibility, infrastructure, and interconnectedness because of the urban form, density, natural features, and more traditional development patterns, in comparison to the edges of the community where winding and dead-end roads create barriers to pedestrians and bicyclists. However, through the use of interconnected paths, trails, sidewalks, enhanced crossings, on-street facilities, and modernized traffic patterns, the overall transportation network can be improved. All future transportation infrastructure and development should keep in mind the larger network and how to continue to increase its interconnectedness, mode choice, and reduce reliance on automobile transportation.

Density and Intensity

Altoona has a variety of urban forms including suburban design, commercial office parks, suburban strip commercial, and mixed-use centers. Some offer well designed transitions and interactions between density and character creating a sense of place and identity, others are a product of segregated uses and densities. As new development and redevelopment occurs, applying urban design best practices will be required to integrate and manage transitions between densities and intensities, and between existing and new development, to create desirable and accessible places to live and work that align with the community's vision and values as expressed in this Plan.

Building Scale

Carefully planned appearance, building configuration, and site layout can help to incorporate buildings of various scales between new development and existing development, particularly in residential neighborhoods. Thoughtful consideration should be made to integrate different densities, intensities, and building scales in a manner that creates the appearance of a cohesive neighborhood, rather than defined and segregated uses, densities, and scales.

Building Footprint

Consistent building setbacks are also important in both residential and non-residential areas. Where building setbacks are allowed to vary, they should vary only in a carefully planned manner. Restrictive covenants and zoning effectively address this concern. Minimal and zero- setbacks are essential to creating and maintaining a true pedestrian-oriented character. The design and features of this setback zone, and the interactive features of the building front, are equally important to create an interactive streetscape that is interesting, functional, and encourages people to utilize and enjoy these spaces. This was achieved with the River Prairie development and should be replicated downtown and within new mixed-use centers.

Architecture

Architectural styles can provide an opportunity to promote the community's character and assist in achieving its vision for the future. Infill and redevelopment should incorporate high-quality materials, pedestrian-orientation, and visual interest that transitions well within its existing surroundings. In peripheral locations and new development areas, styles should be of probable long-term merit rather than reflective of short-term trends. Quality materials should be stressed, and the relative availability and affordability of the dominant architectural elements should be ensured.

Landscaping

Landscaping standards that encourage ecologically sound and visually attractive practices should be required of all forms of development. Landscaping should be encouraged around building foundations, in and around paved areas, and along streets with required supplemental plantings in "yard" areas. Landscaping in front setback areas should be of particular attention to contribute to an active and attractive streetscape.

Landscaping materials should be of adequate size to ensure both a high degree of survivability and immediate visual effectiveness. Invasive plant species should be prohibited, and non-native or low-durability species (such as box elders, silver maples, and certain willows and poplars) should be avoided, as should dangerous or toxic plants such as certain hawthorns or poison sumac. Landscaping should be installed before building occupancy, or, alternatively, performance guarantees should be required in the absence of installation. Preservation of existing trees should also be prioritized.

Lighting and Signage

Lighting and signage have a dramatic impact on a community's character. Aesthetic considerations of signage and lighting are important to enhancing the economic value and community's character of the City. In communities where a natural setting is critical, strong control over the intensity and spread of lighting for streets, buildings, parking lots, and pedestrian

areas are critical. Such control should also strongly limit the variation of lighting levels on a site, and the visibility of light bulbs and other sources. Several communities have developed “dark sky” ordinances that provide these regulations and could be model for Altoona’s exterior lighting performance requirements.

Public Art and Public Furnishings

The use of public art and furnishings conveys a sense of public investment, uniqueness, history, culture, and pride in a community that cannot be replicated through other means, particularly in areas with many visitors. Such investments create a festive community character which encourages repeat visits. The use of public art and furnishings, particularly in public spaces relating to waterfronts, plazas, trailheads, busy pedestrian streets, business districts, and institutional uses, should be encouraged. In all instances, these furnishings should be of high aesthetic quality and proven durability. These investments may support local artists and invite attention to arts and creativity. River Prairie serves as an example of successfully integrating public art and furnishings to create a sense of place and draw visitors from around the region.

CHAPTER 5: HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

EXISTING HOUSING INVENTORY

Below is a summary of the City's housing trends over the past 20 years. Detailed housing units and households' data are provided in the Chapter 2 portion of Appendix A.

- Altoona experienced rapid population growth between 1970-2000, with relatively little growth between 2000-2010. This trend then reversed over the last decade with population increasing by nearly 30% between 2010 and 2020.
- Nearly 1,500 new dwellings have been constructed in the City since 2010.
- Average household size in the City has *increased* over the past 20 years (2.3 in 2000, 2.36 in 2019). This is notable, as many Wisconsin communities experienced a decrease in average household size over that time period.
- Approximately 64% of dwellings are owner-occupied, which is a similar figure to many neighboring incorporated communities.
- Median owner-occupied home values in Altoona increased significantly over the past two decades.
- Both median gross monthly rents and monthly owner-occupied costs have increased faster than area median income over the past two decades.
- It is projected that the City could increase by over 2,900 new residents and 1,200 new households over the planning period.
- The City's housing stock has diversified over the past decade, with an increase in new two-family, multi-family, and senior housing options, however single family homes remain the predominate unit type.
- 26% of Altoona households are housing cost burdened (spending greater than 30% of their income on housing), a comparable percentage to that of Eau Claire County and Wisconsin.

HOUSING PROGRAMS

The following programs and organizations provide assistance to rent, purchase, or renovate housing. These programs are generally available to low- and moderate-income individuals and those with disabilities. In addition to the programs listed below, information regarding numerous other housing programs is available through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Small Cities Housing Program

Local governments and counties can apply for CDBG funds for a variety of projects to principally benefit low- and moderate-income households. Eligible projects include home rehabilitation assistance, programs to provide homeownership opportunities to renters, payment of relocation costs, small public facilities projects, demolition or removal of buildings, conversion of buildings to low- or moderate-income dwelling units, acquisition of property for the construction of low- to moderate-income dwelling units, and site improvements for the construction of low- to moderate-income dwelling units. This program is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Administration, Division of Energy, Housing, and Community Resources (DEHCR).

HOME Investment Partnership Program

This program utilizes federal grants to provide money to states and localities that can be used to fund a range of activities that build, buy, and/or rehabilitate affordable housing for rent or homeownership or provide direct rental assistance to low-income people. Wisconsin has prioritized homeownership and the conservation of quality owner-occupied housing for these federal funds. Homebuyer assistance and owner-occupied rehabilitation are some of the eligible activities Wisconsin DEHCR offers.

Housing Cost Reduction Initiative (HCRI)

This is another Wisconsin DEHCR program using state funds to award grant money to homebuyers for the purchase of affordable homes or to prevent foreclosure. Eligible grant applicants include counties, cities, village, or towns, among other non-profit and other organizations.

Downpayment Plus (DPP) and Downpayment Plus Advantage

Downpayment Plus and Downpayment Plus Advantage are down payment and closing cost assistance programs available to low- and moderate-income homebuyers. Both programs are funded by the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago's (FHLBC) Affordable Housing Program (AHP). Funding through these programs is available to FHLBC member financial

institutions. A grant is paid on behalf of the borrower at the time of closing. To qualify for DPP, borrowers must earn at or below 80 percent of the area median income, sign a five-year retention agreement, participate in homebuyer counseling, and use the home as their primary residence.

Eau Claire County and Altoona Housing Authority

Several programs are provided by the Housing Authority which offer services and opportunities for residents of Altoona. These programs include the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, Altoona Public Housing, Family Self-Sufficiency Program, and Housing Rehabilitation Program. The Housing Authority is located in downtown Altoona at the Eau Claire County Agriculture and Resource Center, providing easy access for City residents.

Western Dairyland Economic Opportunity Council (WDEOC)

Offering a wide variety of services, the WDEOC, works to alleviate poverty-related conditions in communities across Eau Claire, Buffalo, Trempealeau, and Jackson Counties. While their services range well beyond just housing, a few specific to that subject include operating homeless shelters, the Housing First program to provide long-term services to chronically homeless individuals and families, the Rapid Rehousing program which assists in moving people into permanent housing situations, and offering first time homebuyer loans and down payment assistance. More on the WDEOC can be found in the Economic Development Chapter.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)

The state offers home buyer education, home loan lenders, and a variety of programs for purchasing or refinancing. They also work with municipalities and developers in promoting new affordable housing units throughout the state using low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC). There are two types of LIHTC's that WHEDA administers, the 9% Federal Housing Tax Credit and the 4% State Housing Tax Credit. Eligible projects are competitively awarded each year.

Tax Incremental Districts (TIDs)

In 2009, the state amended the Tax Incremental Financing enabling law to allow municipalities to keep a district open for an additional year and allocate that increment to affordable housing efforts. In the future, the City could utilize this strategy in successful and expiring TIDs to provide additional funds for affordable housing units. With all three existing Altoona TIDs to close in the next ten years, the City should consider utilizing this tool to create and fund various qualifying affordable housing programs, and to create a focused plan to effectively utilize these resources for the greatest impact.

HOUSING PLANS

West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission Comprehensive Plan (2010)

Covering Barron, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Polk, and St. Croix Counties, the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC) produced a regional Comprehensive Plan in 2010. This document covers the same topics of this Plan, but with a regional scope and context. Many of the goals, objectives, strategies, recommendations, and the overarching vision statement align with Altoona's Comprehensive Plan. The regional plan includes two overarching goals specifically related to housing:

- West central Wisconsin will have a range of affordable, efficient housing options that provide a safe, healthy living environment.
- Maintain our existing housing stock, preserve traditional residential neighborhoods, and encourage new housing to be developed in a manner which is consistent and compatible with the context of its surroundings.

Chippewa Valley Housing Task Force Recommendations (2019)

The task force was created in 2018 to increase the collective understanding, identify constraints, investigate potential solutions, generate recommendations, and increase collaboration to address housing issues in the region. The final report was produced in 2019 included recommendations for development regulations, policies, public-private partnerships, public funding, and civic strategies.

City of Altoona Housing Action Plan (2019)

Based on the work of the Chippewa Valley Housing Task Force, the City established its own Housing Action Plan in 2019. This Plan customized the recommendations of the Task Force to best fit the City of Altoona related to development regulations, policies, funding, partnerships, and civic opportunities. Each topic includes short, mid, intermediate, and long-range strategies for the City to addressing existing housing issues.

The recommendations of both the Task Force and Housing Action Plan have been integrated into the goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations on this Plan.

CHAPTER 6: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WORKFORCE TRENDS

Below is a summary of existing and past workforce trends in Altoona and the region:

- Top occupations of Altoona residents were transportation and material moving, office and administrative support, and healthcare. In the greater metro area (Eau Claire MSA), they were office and administration, sales, transportation and material moving, production, and food preparation and services. (2020)
- Fastest-growing occupations in Altoona were transportation and material moving financial, construction, healthcare, and computer occupations are all also experiencing growth. In the greater metro areas, fastest-growing occupations were business and finance, transportation and material moving, healthcare, and construction. (2020)
- The highest location quotient ratio for occupations in the City was transportation and material moving (over 2.0). In the greater metro areas, it was production. (2020)
 - Location quotient is the ratio of employment in a particular industry in Altoona compared to employment in that industry nationally. The ratio indicates whether there is a concentration of employment in a given industry within the City, compared to nationally, suggesting industry specialization or competitive advantage. Disruptions to sectors with a high location quotient could disproportionately impact the community.
- The top-earning occupations in the City include management, architecture and engineering, science, healthcare, and computers. Top-earning occupations in the region are management, architecture and engineering, healthcare, computers, and science. (2020)
- In the region, 93% of the population had a high school degree or higher and 28% had a bachelor's degree or higher. The most in-demand skills in the region were merchandising, nursing, life support, and restaurant operation. (2020)

(Source: EMSI, 2021)

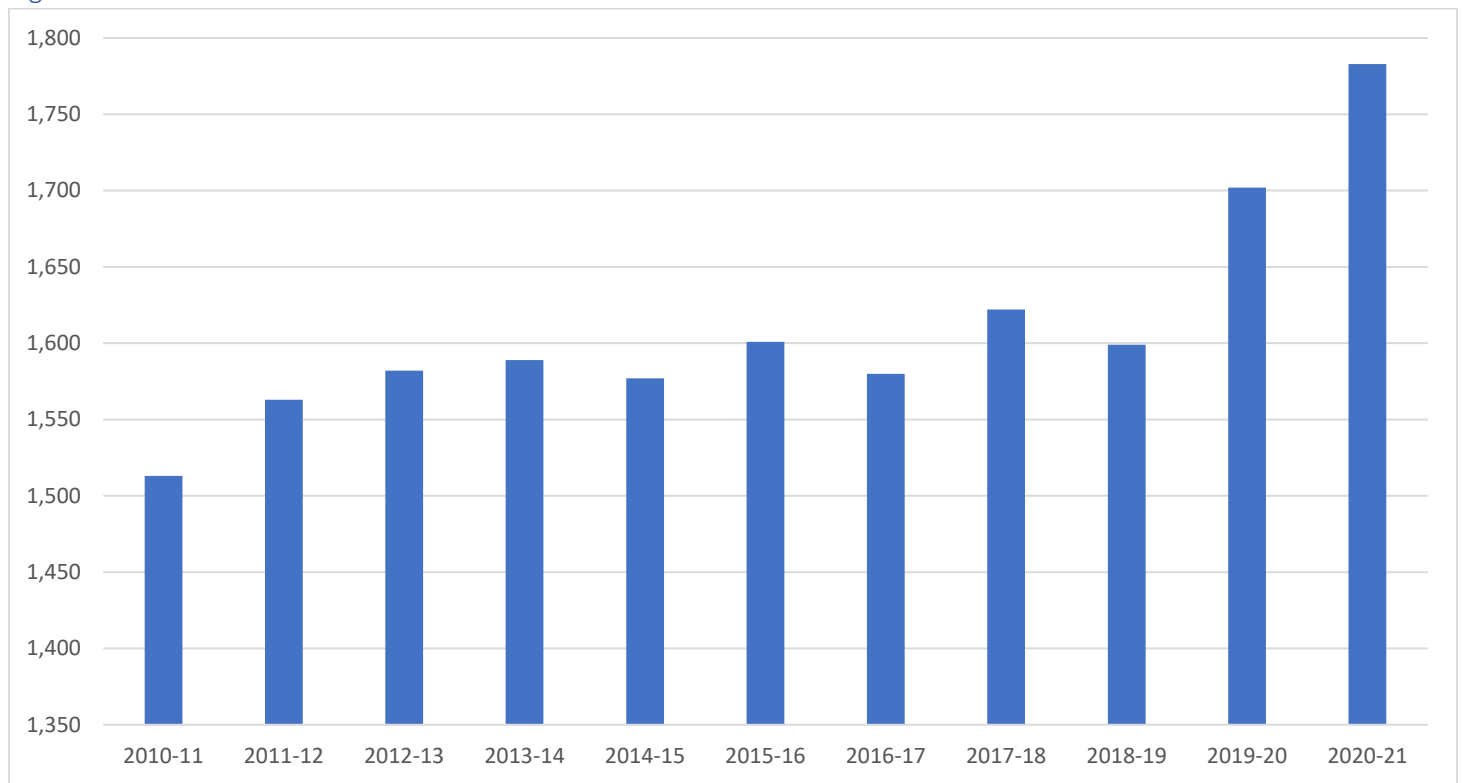
The City of Altoona's workforce is interconnected with the greater Chippewa Valley. Over 90% of people who live in the City and are employed work in municipalities other than Altoona (Figure A.6.8). As shown above, many of the same top, fastest-growing, and highest-earning occupations are very similar to those of the greater metro area. Overall, the City of Altoona's residents are mostly employed in the management, business, science, and arts industries (38%), in addition to sales and office industries (29%) (Figure A.6.3). This reflects similar patterns in 2000.

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development calculated employment projections between 2018 and 2028 by occupational group for Eau Claire, Barron, Chippewa, Clark, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, and St. Croix Counties combined (Figure A.6.4). These projections provide a look into where the region may be headed in the future. To note, some of the projected fastest-growing occupations include professional and business services and education and health services, both areas that fit within the traditional occupations of City residents. Over the next 20 years, continuing to grow these occupations within the City and Eau Claire County will help the local economy adapt to changing demands and drive economic growth in the future.

Another key component to understanding the City's workforce is education. Over 90% of the City's population over the age of 24 years old have graduated high school and 30% have a bachelor's degree or higher. Both are very similar percentages to the greater metro area and the state as a whole (Figure A.6.5). As the economy continues to evolve over the next 20 years, it is critically important to have a prepared and educated workforce ready to adapt to new technologies and innovations. This provides opportunities for local employers and the continued expansion of the local economy.

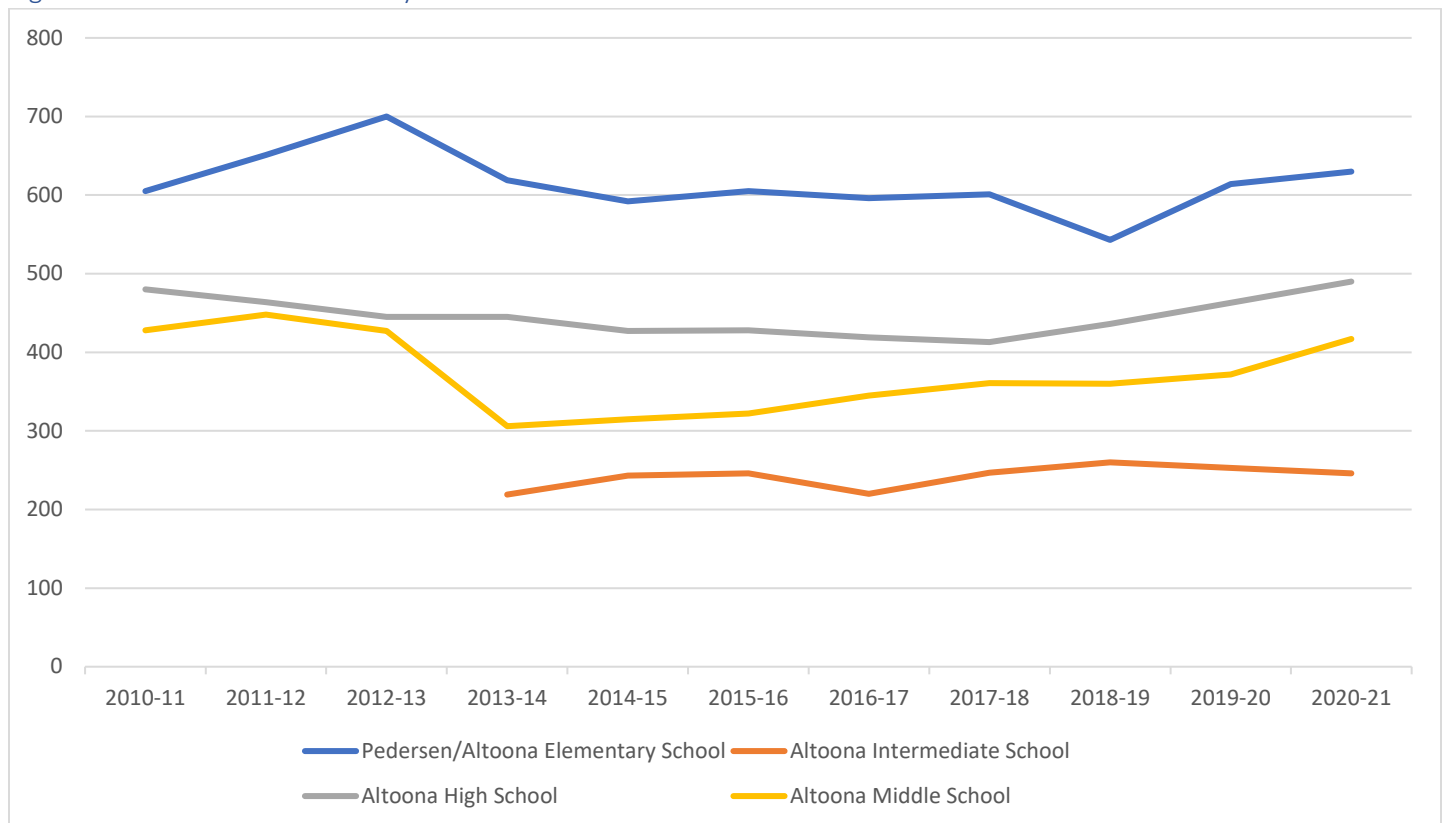
At the local level, enrollment in the Altoona School District has increased rapidly over the past decade (18%) (Figure A.6.1 and A.6.2). This is mainly in response to the significant growth in housing and population over that time period. Overall, the District plays a key role in workforce preparedness of future generations. It continues to add new programs and is highly ranked among School Districts in the state. Maintaining a high-quality education system in the City and providing local employers with skilled workers are both key components of improving and adapting the workforce over the next 20 years.

Figure A.6.1: Altoona School Total Enrollment



Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2021

Figure A.6.2: School Enrollment By School



Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2021

Figure A.6.3: Occupational Groups

	2000	2010	2019*
Management, Business, Science, and Arts	34%	33%	38%
Service	13%	12%	12%
Sales and Office	30%	29%	29%
Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance	9%	10%	6%
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving	15%	16%	15%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000-2010 Census.

Figure A.6.4: Eau Claire, Barron, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, and St. Croix County Employment Projections

	2018 Total	2028 Projected Total	Total Change	Percent Change
All Industries	222,885	235,100	12,215	5.5%
Natural Resources and Mining	4,738	4,937	199	4.2%
Construction	8,449	9,935	1,486	17.6%
Manufacturing	36,716	37,701	985	2.7%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	40,223	42,442	2,219	5.5%
Information	1,607	1,558	-49	-3.0%
Financial Activities	7,112	7,360	248	3.5%
Professional and Business Services	15,662	16,725	1,063	6.8%
Education and Health Services	50,932	55,056	4,124	8.1%
Leisure and Hospitality	21,133	22,930	1,797	8.5%
Other Services (Except Government)	8,380	8,629	249	3.0%
Government	11,723	11,733	10	0.1%
Self-Employed and Unpaid Family Workers	16,160	16,094	-66	-0.4%

Source: Department of Workforce Development State of Wisconsin Southeast Workforce Development Area Industry Projections, 2021

Figure A.6.5: Educational Attainment – Population 25 and Older

	High School Graduate (or higher)			Bachelor's Degree (or higher)		
	2000	2010	2019*	2000	2010	2019*
City of Altoona	90%	92%	94%	27%	28%	30%
City of Eau Claire	90%	93%	94%	29%	32%	34%
Village of Lake Hallie	-	91%	98%	-	20%	19%
City of Chippewa Falls	84%	89%	92%	16%	18%	22%
Town of Seymour	89%	81%	96%	22%	19%	35%
Town of Washington	92%	87%	98%	35%	26%	37%
Chippewa County	84%	88%	93%	15%	18%	21%
Eau Claire County	89%	92%	94%	27%	30%	32%
Wisconsin	85%	89%	92%	22%	26%	30%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000-2010 Census.

ECONOMIC TRENDS

Below is a summary of existing and past economic trends in Altoona and the region:

Total Jobs

- Between 2015-2020, the number of jobs increased in Altoona by 5% to a total of 4,203. This rate significantly outpaced the national growth rate of only 1.3% during that time period. The average earnings of those jobs were \$56,700 in 2019.
- During that same time, the total number of jobs in the greater metro area declined slightly (0.7%) to a total of 88,807. The average earnings of these jobs were nearly identical to those in Altoona in 2019 (\$59,600).

- Overall, regional job growth is anticipated to increase over the next five years as the area recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic and economic fallout experienced during 2020.

Labor Force Participation

- Regionally, of the 108,435 working age residents, 85% were in the labor force and only 3% were unemployed as of 2020. In 2021, the highest unemployed age groups were residents aged 25-44.
- Overall, labor force participation rates declined significantly in 2020, but rebounded in early 2021. However, the figures are still lower than the rates experienced in 2016-2017. Unemployment also experienced a similar trend, with peaks in 2020, but has returned back to 2016 levels by the spring of 2021.

Industries

- The top five largest industries in the City are healthcare and social assistance, transportation and warehousing, government, professional and technical services, and finance and insurance. Unsurprisingly, many of these industries are reflective of the fastest-growing industries as well (transportation and warehousing, professional and technical services, and finance and insurance).
- Additionally, the two highest location quotient ratios for industries in the City are transportation and warehousing and finance and insurance (both over 2.0).
- In comparison, at the metro level, the largest industries are health care, government, manufacturing, and retail. The fastest-growing industries are management, transportation and warehousing, and finance. The highest location quotient was management (over 2.0).
- The top five highest earning industries for workers includes information, finance and insurance, educational services, professional and technical services, and government. Reflecting many of the top industries in the City.
- Overall, Altoona is made up of mostly small businesses. Of the 316 businesses in the City, nearly 80% of those businesses have 19 or fewer employees. This is similar at the regional scale as well with 83% of the 6,892 businesses in the region having less than 19 employees.

(Source: EMSI, 2021)

Altoona has generated more job growth over the past five years than the greater metro area. This is due to the growth of commercial and industrial businesses in the community, especially in River Prairie. Recent regional shifts in labor force participation rates and unemployment have been caused by two overarching factors: the global pandemic and an aging population. While in the short-term labor force participation is anticipated to rebound from the effects of the pandemic, it will be important to be cognizant of the long-term impacts of more retirees. As the labor pool fluctuates, this causes challenges for local businesses and employers.

Many of the top industries in the City are also reflective of recent commercial and industrial development experienced over the past decade. For example, as River Prairie has become built out with financial institutions, office buildings, health care providers, and retail, those industries and subsequently the number of jobs in those fields has increased. Many are also the highest-earning industries for workers. Together, these are all positive trends for Altoona.

As of 2020, Altoona's largest private sector employers were mostly medical, office, financial services, and information businesses. As stated above, this is reflective of the growth in the local jobs in these sectors. However, based on commuting data, almost all residents of Altoona travel outside of the City to work in other neighboring communities. Additionally, Altoona's businesses are still predominantly small-scale in that they employ 19 or fewer people (80% of Altoona businesses). It will be important to continue to grow new large- and small-scale employers over the next 20 years, diversify the job base, and provide opportunities for residents to work and live in the community.

Over the past 19 years, the number of minutes spent commuting to work for City residents has increased from 18 minutes in 2000 to 21 minutes in 2019 (Figure A.6.9). This is not uncommon, nearly all communities across the U.S. have experienced similar increases as people continue to live farther from their place of work. On a different, but related note, the number of people who both work in Altoona and live in Altoona is very low. Only around 8% of the people employed in the City live in the City, while over 3,000 City residents work outside of the City. For comparison, in Eau Claire County, 50% of people who work in the County also live in it (Figure A.6.8). Overall, these trends reflect the location of Altoona in the greater metro area where large employment centers are easily accessible for commuters. With the growth of River

Prairie and other recent developments providing more local job opportunities, these trends may shift over the next 20 years.

Another factor that plays a part in the City's economy is wealth and spending power. Between 2010 and 2019, the City's median household income rose considerably, from \$42,885 to \$55,571 (Figure A.6.6). Similarly, per capita incomes also rose during that same time. The per capita income is defined as the total personal income, divided by the total population. This is used as a measure of the wealth of the population and provides insight on how much disposable income City residents have.

Beyond just incomes, cost of living should also be considered. One of the most effective ways of analyzing the cost of living is through the comparison of different area's living wage. A living wage is defined as the hourly rate that an individual must earn to support their family if they worked full time (defined as 2080 hours per year). In general, Eau Claire County is relatively affordable compared to other similar sized counties in the state and Wisconsin as-a-whole (Figure A.6.7).

Another key figure to consider is the ALICE population. ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. This is a measure of the employed population that are above national poverty levels, so they do not qualify for federal assistance, but have wages that make it difficult to build wealth, save money, and afford essential goods and services.

- 34% of households in Wisconsin were considered to be ALICE or below poverty in 2018
- 23% of households in Wisconsin were considered to be ALICE in 2018, which is an increase from 17% in 2007
- 35% of households in Eau Claire County were considered to be ALICE or below poverty in 2018

Source: ALICE State Reports, Wisconsin, 2020

Figure A.6.6: Income Comparison

	Median Household Income			Per Capita Income		
	2000	2010	2019*	2000	2010	2019*
City of Altoona	\$40,394	\$42,855	\$55,571	\$21,236	\$26,026	\$31,960
City of Eau Claire	\$36,399	\$41,565	\$55,477	\$18,230	\$23,041	\$29,252
Village of Lake Hallie	-	\$60,264	\$68,119	-	\$24,836	\$30,188
City of Chippewa Falls	\$32,744	\$40,010	\$46,909	\$18,366	\$22,712	\$26,122
Town of Seymour	\$48,365	\$66,789	\$71,554	\$20,263	\$27,966	\$35,014
Town of Washington	\$55,570	\$75,049	\$75,000	\$27,026	\$37,291	\$40,405
Chippewa County	\$39,596	\$48,672	\$59,742	\$18,243	\$23,952	\$29,991
Eau Claire County	\$39,219	\$45,846	\$59,476	\$19,250	\$24,826	\$30,983
Wisconsin	\$43,791	\$51,598	\$61,747	\$21,271	\$26,624	\$33,375

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000-2010 Census.

Figure A.6.7: Living Wage

	1 Working Adult With 1 Child	2 Working Adults With 2 Children
Eau Claire County	\$28.85	\$20.17
Chippewa County	\$28.60	\$19.91
Dunn County	\$28.43	\$19.74
Marathon County	\$28.87	\$20.23
Fond du Lac County	\$28.70	\$20.07
La Crosse County	\$29.37	\$20.54
Wisconsin	\$30.17	\$21.24

Source: Living Wage Calculator, 2021

Figure A.6.8: Commuting Patterns

	2018 Total	2018 Percentage
Employed in Altoona and Live in Altoona	325	8%
Employed in Altoona, but live elsewhere	3,490	92%
Live in Altoona and work elsewhere	3,171	91%
Employed in Eau Claire Co. and Live in Eau Claire Co.	29,646	49%
Employed in Eau Claire Co., but live elsewhere	31,116	51%
Live in Eau Claire Co. and work elsewhere	17,362	37%

**Source: U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap, 2018

Figure A.6.9: Commuting Patterns 2

	2000	2010	2019*
Mean Travel Time To Work	18	17	21

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000-2010 Census.

Figure A.6.10: Largest Private Sector Employers

Employer	Industry	Number of Employees
Oakleaf Surgical Hospital	Medical	100-249
National Business Institute	Private Education	100-249
Group Health Co-Op	Medical	100-249
Oakwood Health Services	Medical	100-249
Genesis Health Care	Medical	100-249
Eau Claire Country Club	Recreation	50-99
United Health Group	Medical	50-99
Certified Inc.	HVAC	50-99
UPS	Shipping	50-99
Midwest Family Broadcasting	Communications	50-99
Orgel Wealth Management	Finance	50-99
Senasys	Wholesaler	50-99
WAXX	Communications	20-49
Citizens Community Bank	Finance	20-49
Northwestern Mutual	Finance	20-49
Premium Lawn Services	Wholesaler	20-49
Benedict Refrigeration Services	Wholesaler	20-49
Macman Inc.	Information	20-49
Broadband Solutions	Information	20-49

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, 2021

ENVIRONMENTALLY CONTAMINATED SITES

The WI DNR's Environmental Remediation and Redevelopment Program maintains a list of contaminated sites, or brownfields, in the state. WI DNR defines brownfields as "abandoned or under-utilized commercial or industrial properties where expansion or redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived contamination." Examples of brownfields might include a large abandoned industrial site or a small corner gas station. Properties listed in the WI DNR database are self-reported, and do not necessarily represent a comprehensive listing of possible brownfields in a community.

As of 2021, there were 23 sites identified in the City by the Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS). However, there are only two open cases (near the Union Pacific Railroad switch yard and end of Saxonwood Road). Both open cases are classified as environmental repair or open ERPs. These sites are oftentimes older, and have been releasing contaminants to the soil, groundwater, or air over a long period of time. There are no open cases for leaking underground storage tanks or LUSTs, but seven sites in the City have continuing obligations for underground storage tanks. These are typically sites with tanks that are or were known to be contaminating the soil and/or groundwater with petroleum. Specific locations, property ownership information, and status of remediation efforts for all BRRTS sites are available from the DNR. These properties may need special attention for successful redevelopment to occur.

In 2021-2022, the City retained a consultant to lead a brownfields inventory, in order to help the City identify, plan, and prioritize key sites for brownfield redevelopment. The work was ongoing as of the writing of this Plan and will be a helpful resource in exploring remediation and redevelopment efforts throughout the community over the planning period.

The locations of these environmentally contaminated sites were considered when making the land use recommendations in this Plan. The City encourages remediation and redevelopment of these sites for future economic development, where appropriate.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND AGENCIES

Capital Improvement Plan/Budget

A capital improvement plan is a community's financial plan of future capital improvements to be carried out during a specific timeframe—capital improvement costs are intended to be matched with anticipated revenues. The City's Capital Improvement (CIP) Budget allocates funding for infrastructure, utilities, public improvements, and other related projects. The CIP is updated annually and is a key short-range planning tool for allocating resources and implementing projects. The City's CIP can be found in Transportation, Utilities, and Community Facilities section below.

Tax Incremental Financing (TIF)

The City of Altoona utilizes tax incremental financing to fund public improvements and/or economic development projects that would not be feasible without the use of TIF. Costs associated with TIF projects are typically funded from the issuance of debt, with the principal and interest paid back with increased tax increment from properties within the TIF resulting from investment by the city. To date, Altoona has established 4 TIF districts and 3 remain active as of 2021.

For more information on the City's existing TIDs, see the Economic Development Chapter.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2020-2025

The West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC) produced the most recent CEDs for Eau Claire, Clark, Chippewa, Dunn, Barron, Polk, and St. Croix Counties in 2020. This document serves as a regional economic development strategy that includes economic goals, strategies, framework, and work plan. As it was produced during the global COVID-19 pandemic, it also includes a three-phase recovery plan and ten-point action plan for economic developers. The five overarching goals of the plan include:

- Strengthen community, county, and regional infrastructure
- Sense-of-place as an economic development tool
- Encourage and support new or existing businesses
- Address regional workforce development and attraction issues
- Improve housing opportunities for all

WCWRPC also administers the Regional Business Fund which includes a revolving loan fund, micro loan fund, growth loan fund, downtown façade loan fund, technology enterprise fund, and EDA fund programs to eligible businesses in the region.

Eau Claire Area Economic Development Cooperation (EDC)

The EDC works to advance economic property through business and job growth by being the center for regional economic development leadership. They offer services and programs for startup businesses, workforce development, grants, and produce data and publications. This public-private partnership is funded by local businesses and governments alike. EDC provides direct assistance to the City of Altoona in helping to organize local events, business attraction, creating a local economic profile, and supporting local small businesses.

Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce

With over 1,000 businesses and organizations in its network, the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce advocates for local businesses in the area. Their work includes advocacy, workforce programming, education and scholarships, and hosting events. Several Altoona businesses are Chamber members.

Visit Eau Claire

As regional tourism and marketing organization, Visit Eau Claire works to promote regional economic growth through marketing of area destinations, events, and opportunities. Their website hosts a regional event calendar and guides to find local attractions and destinations. Their marketing includes areas beyond just the City of Eau Claire and provide several informational resources for Altoona-based events, destinations, and attractions.

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)

Through WEDC, the state operates several economic development related grant programs. For example, the Blueprint for Prosperity Initiative includes Wisconsin Technical College Wait List Reduction grants, High School Pupil Worker Training Grants, and Workforce Training Grants for Persons with Disabilities, and the Wisconsin Fast Forward program includes mainly worker training grants by sector. Additionally, the Community Development Investment Grant Program focuses on downtown community development and supports urban, small city, and rural communities in their redevelopment efforts. There are also brownfield grants that include both a general program and site assessment program. The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation also hosts a wide variety of other grant programs that could be applied for by the City, non-profits, or local businesses. For more information related to these various programs, eligibility, and requirements, see the WEDC website.

U.S. Small Business Administration

The U.S. Small Business Administration's Certified Development Company (504) Loan Program provides growing businesses with long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets, such as land and buildings. 504 Loans can be used to fund land purchases and improvements; grading; street improvements; utilities; parking lots; landscaping; construction of new facilities; or modernizing, renovating, or converting existing facilities. A Certified Development Company (CDC) is a nonprofit corporation set up to contribute to the economic development of its community. In addition, to the programs listed, there are many Federal-level programs through the EDA and USDA.

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

The federal government passed the American Rescue Plan Act in the spring of 2021 which allocates money to each individual local government (Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund). Funds can be utilized for, among other qualified uses, response to negative economic impacts of COVID-19, government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue, and investments in infrastructure. The Act also provided stimulus money to County, Regional, and State organizations that will be allocated through grants. Utilizing these resources in the coming years will be key to helping the community's local businesses bounce back from the economic impacts of the pandemic, in addition to advancing various initiatives throughout this Plan.

ASSESSMENT OF ALTOONA'S ECONOMIC STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Figure A.6.11: Strengths and Weaknesses for Economic Development

Strengths	Weaknesses
Location and Access	
Location on USH 53 and 12, a short distance from I-94	Distance to major metro areas (Minneapolis and Madison)
Proximity to Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls	Limited land available near existing highway interchanges
Direct regional railroad access	Not located on an interstate highway
Adjacent to Altoona Lake, Otter Creek, and Eau Claire River	Growth areas are a considerable distance from USH 53 and I-94
Available land to grow	
Infrastructure	
Bicycle and pedestrian facilities network, with planned expansion	Need to expand renewable energy production and reduce carbon emissions
Metro bus route expansion	Aging infrastructure and high demand for new infrastructure associated with growth
Recently conducted space needs study and utility capacity studies to help guide future public facilities investments	Continuing need for increased public services
	City facilities require expansion and reinvestment to keep up with recent growth and contemporary best practices
Education/Workforce	
Highly rated and growing School District	School District facilities nearing capacity
Proximity to the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire	Aging regional workforce
Educated and skilled workforce	
Local Opportunities	
Significant high-quality recreational and cultural amenities	Engagement of underrepresented populations
High quality of life	Not as regionally competitive for new large-scale industrial and commercial development
Recent job growth in high wage occupations	Most residents work outside of the City
Regional destinations (River Prairie, Altoona Lake, etc.)	Need for additional small business opportunities
Collaboration with regional governments and institutions	Intergovernmental cooperation with Town
Success in public/private partnerships	Maintaining high-quality services while growing
Significant housing and commercial growth over the past decade, and continuing demand	Additional neighborhood plans needed

CHAPTER 7: TRANSPORTATION, UTILITIES, AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Transportation access is a key component of community health and growth because it facilitates the flow of goods and people, determines access to employment and services, and influences travel mode choices. The transportation system contributes to the character of the community and arrangement of land uses, occupies a significant portion of the city's land, and large portion of the city's budget to maintain. Altoona is well connected to the region through the existing roadway network, in addition to other transportation systems, such as freight rail, regional bicycle and pedestrian networks, and metro bus services.

Roadways

Interstate Highway 94 is located just south of the City of Altoona's southern boundary and provides interstate access to Minneapolis and Madison. According to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), in 2020, an average of 24,500 vehicles per day traveled along I-94 at the interchange of I-94 and USH 53, just south of Altoona.

U.S. Highway 53 is the primary north-south arterial roadway through Altoona connecting the City to Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, and Superior. On average in 2017, between 44,200 and 47,100 vehicles per day traveled through Altoona on USH 53 (WisDOT).

U.S. Highway 12 is the primary east-west arterial roadway through Altoona. It connects the City to Eau Claire and several other smaller communities to the southeast. In 2017, the roadway carries on average between 8,100 and 19,600 vehicles per day, with the highest traffic volumes surrounding the USH 12/53 interchange.

County Trunk Highway (CTH) A (3rd Street and Spooner Avenue) are almost entirely within the City of Altoona and serve as key local through traffic routes. County Trunk Highway AA (Mayer Road) connects Altoona to Eau Claire. CTH AA serves as an alternative route to USH 53. County Trunk Highway KB (Bartlett Avenue) runs parallel to the railroad tracks in the northeast corner of the City. This roadway connects Altoona to Lake Altoona on the north and to CTH SS (9 Mile Creek Road) to the south.

Finally, Altoona's local road system consists of mostly improved urban sections. The main local roadways are 10th Street, Oakleaf Way, Bartlett Avenue, and River Prairie Drive.

Roadway Function Classification System

Wisconsin's functional classification system groups roads and highways according to the character of service they offer, ranging from rapid through access to local land access. The purpose of functional classification is to enhance overall travel efficiency and accommodate traffic patterns and land uses by designing streets to the standards suggested by their functional class. The four main functional classes include:

- **Principal Arterials.** Serve longer inter-urban type trips and traffic traveling through urban areas, including interstate highways and other freeways.
- **Minor Arterials.** Provide intra-community continuity and service trips of moderate length, with more emphasis on land access than principal arterials.
- **Collectors.** Provide both land access and traffic circulation within residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and industrial areas. These roadways collect traffic from local streets in residential neighborhoods and channel it onto the arterial system.
- **Local Streets.** Provide direct access to abutting land and access to collectors. Local roads offer the lowest level of mobility. Through traffic movement on this system is usually discouraged.

Source: WisDOT, Facilities Development Manual, Procedure 4-1-15

Rail

Through the City of Altoona, freight rail service is provided by Union Pacific Railroad, with a switch yard located on Lake Road. The rail line connects Minneapolis to greater central Wisconsin and beyond.

Commuter rail in Wisconsin runs from Milwaukee to La Crosse, with the closest station to Altoona located in Tomah (80 miles south). The City of Minneapolis and St. Paul also have commuter rail service, with stations approximately 100 miles west of Altoona. Altoona is a party of the Chippewa- St Croix Passenger Rail Commission of organized counties and cities between Altoona and Hudson, along the route of an envisioned passenger rail service connecting Eau Claire to Minneapolis/Saint Paul.

Airports

Airports certified for carrier operations nearest to the City include Chippewa Valley Regional Airport in Eau Claire, Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport in Minneapolis, MN, La Crosse Regional Airport in La Crosse, and Dane County Regional Airport in Madison. There are also several small hard-surface runways on public and private airports within Eau Claire and Chippewa County.

The Chippewa Valley Regional Airport only has one commercial airliner that provides regular passenger service to Chicago. While it is the closest in proximity to Altoona, most residents travel out of the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport located 100 miles to the west. The airport is the largest and busiest airport in the upper Midwest, hosting nearly 20 different airlines at over 130 different gates with approximately 35 million passengers per year. A local shuttle service provides van service from Eau Claire to the MSP airport multiple times per day.

Public Transportation and Para-Transit

Public bus service is provided to Altoona through Eau Claire Transit (ECT), which serves the City of Eau Claire and Altoona with 17 regular routes and 3 express bus routes. Only two routes currently run in Altoona. The main bus route through the City connects Altoona High School and Spooner Avenue with downtown Eau Claire. The other only reaches a very small portion of the City connecting to River Prairie. The 2020 Transit Development Plan included expansion of this route to serve additional areas of Altoona to the east, and the City's 2022 budget includes implementation of that expanded route beginning in the second half of the year.

Eau Claire County also operates an on-demand para-transit service that is contracted through a private provider. This service is available to any resident of the county.

Additionally, there are several private regional bus service providers located in Eau Claire and private rideshare service provided by Uber and Lyft.

Truck and Water Transportation

USH 53 and 12 are the only designated long truck routes within and through Altoona. There is no waterborne freight or passenger transit in the City.

REVIEW OF CITY, STATE, AND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANS

The following is a review of local, State, and regional transportation plans and studies related to Altoona. The transportation recommendations of this Plan are consistent with these plans.

City of Altoona Official Map

In 2020, Altoona amended its Official Map, a planning tool for future right-of-way, public utilities and infrastructure, and stormwater management. Only portions of the City are reflected on the Official Map, most recently amended to include a future right-of-way connection between Twin Oak Drive and North 10th Street, a planned right-of-way network surrounding USH 12 east of the City and its extraterritorial planning area. The Official Map is reflected on Map 5.

City of Altoona Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2022)

Partnering with the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC), the City produced its first Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in 2022. Previously, the city utilized a 2007 trail study to plan for a city-wide trail network on a limited scope, and the River Prairie General Development Plan for a comprehensive network in that sector of the city. Building on the strategic framework provided within the Altoona Place Plan, the City and WCWRPC developed a City-wide plan for Bicycle and Pedestrian recommendations, improvements, standards, and connections. The planning processes for this

Plan and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan were conducted in 2021-2022. This provided the opportunity to reflect common goals, recommendations, and action items within both plans.

City of Altoona Safe Routes to School Plan (2017)

Through the assistance of the WCWRPC, the City of Altoona adopted a Safe Routes to School Plan. This plan evaluates existing conditions and future improvements needed to provide healthy and safe walking and biking opportunities for students in the community to get to and from school. Key findings of this plan include:

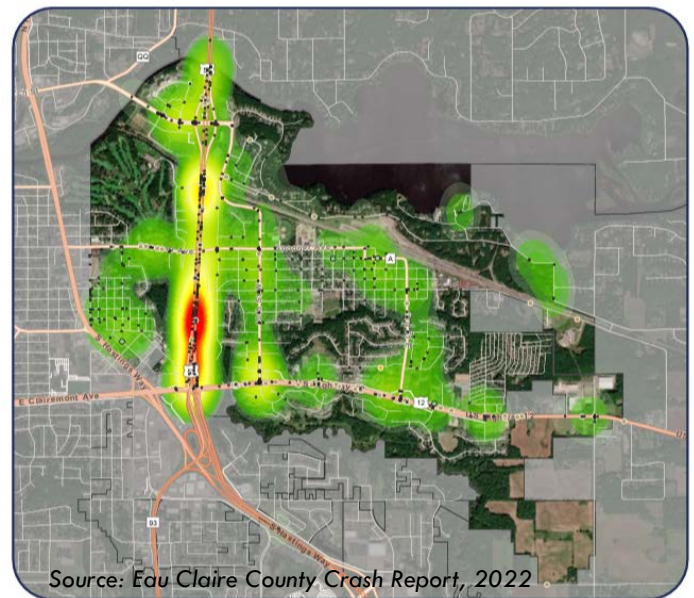
- The City and School District have made good strides to providing a more walkable and bikeable environment for students over the past decade.
- 7th Street in front of the High School need improvements
- 10th Street and 3rd Street are barriers due to speed and volume of traffic.
- There are limited options for students to walk and bike to and from the Elementary School.
- Opportunities exist for increasing programs and projects associated with safe routes to schools.

Many of the projects and ideas from this plan were integrated into the City's Place Plan and ongoing Bicycle and Pedestrian planning process.

Eau Claire County Crash Report (2022)

West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission prepared the Eau Claire County Crash Report that documented road crash data for each municipality and overall summary statistics between 2016-2020. Within Eau Claire County, the report found that more serious and fatal crashes occurred on state highways and during the hours of 7 PM – 6 AM and 9 AM – 4 PM. The number of total crashes was also much higher in the winter months where inclement weather is more prevalent and most likely to occur on a Friday.

Specifically related to Altoona, there were a total of 704 crashes that occurred between 2016-2020, four involved pedestrians, two involved bicycles, and 63 involved deer. Additionally, there were two fatalities and three serious injury crashes. The highest concentrations of crashes occurred on STH 53, but there was a total of 370 other crashes that occurred on local streets and roads in the City. See map of Altoona crashes from the report.



Overall, through the implementation of the City's Comprehensive Plan and the other local, county, regional, and state plans listed in this Appendix, Altoona aims to improve multi-modal transportation accessibility and safety for all transportation users.

Eau Claire County Comprehensive Plan (2020)

Within the transportation component of the County's Comprehensive Plan are several key goals and objectives that are consistent with that of Altoona. These include:

- Enhance multi-modal opportunities including bicycle and pedestrian facilities and public transit planning.
- Maintain a safe and functional road system throughout the county.
- Coordinate on major projects with WisDOT and all local municipalities.

Transit Development Plan (2020)

Eau Claire Transit (ECT) adopted the Transit Development Plan in 2020, which is a required five-year plan to help guide implementation of transit services in the area, with an emphasis on sustainable growth that considers immediate and future needs. As of 2018, ECT provided over 960,000 passenger trips on 17 fixed routes. The plan found that users of Route 17, the main existing bus route through Altoona, did not meet existing needs. Three different proposed alternatives were identified within the plan for the Route 17. The chosen alternative was to create additional service times on the existing route.

Chippewa-Eau Claire Metropolitan Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2017)

In 2017, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the greater Chippewa-Eau Claire planning area developed the regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Overall, this plan built on over 20 years of regional and local bicycle and pedestrian planning to develop the regional framework. The three overarching goals of this plan are:

- Improve safety and comfort for bicyclists and pedestrians with facilities, education, and enforcement designed to reduce crashes with drivers; improve safe walking, biking, and driving practices; and eliminate preventable pedestrian and bicyclist deaths.
- Expand the connectivity of the bicycle and pedestrian transportation network to provide improved access to destinations through better use of existing facilities and construction of new facilities to complete the network.
- Increase the number of people walking and biking for transportation, recreation, health, overall community quality-of-life, environmental benefit, and economic generation; use direct encouragement, accommodation, planning, and policy change.

Chippewa-Eau Claire MPO Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (2021)

The Regional Transportation Plan establishes a five-year plan for proposed transportation improvements within the region and is required U.S. Department of Transportation. The most recent version was completed for 2022-2026. Projects within the City of Altoona include USH 53 bridge repair over Otter Creek (2022), curb ramp upgrades to USH 12 (2024), and the reconstruction of Fairfax Street (2023).

Six-Year Highway Improvement Program for Northwest Wisconsin: 2021-2026

WI DOT maintains a six-year improvement program for State and Federal highways within the Southeastern Region. The State of Wisconsin has over 115,000-miles of public roads, from Interstate freeways to city and village streets. The highway improvement program covers only the 11,745-mile State highway system that is administered and maintained by WI DOT. The other nearly 104,000 miles are improved and maintained by the cities, towns, counties, and villages in which the roadways are located. The State highway system consists of over 800 miles of interstate freeways and nearly 11,000 miles of State and U.S. marked highways. At this time, there are multiple projects planned in the City of Eau Claire and one along USH 12 in Town of Washington (Fall Creek Bridge).

Connections 2030: Wisconsin's Long-Range Transportation Plan

Connections 2030 is the state's long-range transportation plan adopted in 2009. This plan focuses on strategies to maintain and enhance the State's transportation system to support future mobility and economic growth. The policies in this plan will aid transportation decision-makers when evaluating transportation programs and projects. Through implementation of this plan, WI DOT aims to:

- Ensure transportation system safety and security
- Preserve the existing and future transportation system
- Optimize investment in the system for continued safety, enhance mobility and efficiency
- Respond to local, regional, national, and international economic trends to maintain State economic competitiveness
- Consider environmental issues to maintain Wisconsin's quality of life
- Provide users with transportation choices

Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan: 2020 (1998)

This plan presents a blueprint for improving conditions for bicycling, clarifies the WI DOT's role in bicycle transportation, and establishes policies for further integrating bicycling into the current transportation system. While there are no Darien-specific recommendations, the plan map shows existing State trails and future "priority corridors and key linkages" for bicycling along the State Trunk Highway system in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Pedestrian Plan Policy (2001)

Adopted in 2001, this plan highlights the importance of maintaining and expanding walking and pedestrian facilities throughout the State. Additionally, the plan outlines measures to increase walking and promote pedestrian comfort and safety. It also provides a policy framework addressing pedestrian issues and clarifies WI DOT's role in meeting pedestrian needs.

EXISTING UTILITY AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLANS

City of Altoona Place Plan (2021)

In 2021, the City of Altoona completed an update to its Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and Bicycle and Pedestrian Strategy; this outcome of that effort was the Altoona Place Plan. This document creates an ambitious vision for public space in the city, serves as a guide for park, open space, and public space improvements over the next five years and beyond, and serves to make the City eligible for state and federal grants through the WI DNR. The Place Plan also provided the foundation for the City's preparation of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, which currently is underway as of the writing of this Plan.

The Place Plan has four overarching project prioritization principles:

- Enhance network connectivity for all public spaces and natural areas, including parks, environmental corridors, and networked bicycle and pedestrian systems.
- Equity in the location, design, and access to public spaces.
- Target investments, facilities, and amenities of potential high impact.
- Be cost efficient and improve fiscal and structural performance of the City, recognizing that public open spaces are fundamental parts of the urban environment and provide significant public benefits that are expected by citizens.

City of Altoona Municipal Facilities Space Needs and Facility Assessment

In 2021, the City completed a space needs and facility assessment. This study focused on evaluating existing facilities and staff, in addition to future needs by the year 2040. Key findings included:

- Additions to the existing City Hall building in 2035 and Public Library in 2030 through the acquisition and removal of homes surrounding the building today.
- Acquisition of the County Highway property (2022), relocation of the City's Public Works operations to the site (2023), in addition to expansion of the Emergency Services operations directly to the east (2030).
- Increased staff for all City Departments of up to 87 full time, 43 part time, and 63 seasonal employees over the next 20 years. As of 2022, the City employs 43 full time staff, 64 part time staff, and 53 seasonal staff.

The City will consider these findings through the annual budgeting process and update of the Capital Improvement Plan.

Chippewa Falls-Eau Claire Urban Sewer Service Plan for 2025 (2017-2018)

The WCWRPC is the local planning and administrative agency serving as the local advisory and decision-making committee on sewer service area changes. Sewer service area plans are required to anticipate future wastewater needs, identify areas suitable for development, and protect environmentally sensitive areas. All large urban areas are required to have a sewer service area plan. In 2017-2018, the WCWRPC updated the plan and its policy for review and approval of any proposed amendments to these boundaries, in addition to definitions of water quality assessments and environmentally sensitive areas. The sewer service area plan surrounding the City of Altoona extends east beyond the City's existing municipal boundary past 9 Mile Creek Road and Mayer Road. It is inclusive of the areas planned for development over the next 20 years. However, in the event the City needs to extend beyond that boundary, an amendment would have to occur prior to any development and sewer utility connections being extended. The process for amending the sewer service area plan is as follows:

1. City submittal of review application to WCWRPC.
2. WCWRPC review of application and preparation of report.
3. Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Technical Committee review and recommendation.
4. MPO Policy Committee holds Public Hearing and provides advisory decision.
5. Decision is provided to the WI DNR for review and final decision on request.

Water Utility Service Study

As of the writing of this Plan, the City of Altoona was conducting a study of its existing water utilities and future needs. Currently, the City operates six wells capable of pumping 1,145 gallons per minute, with an average daily usage of 831,000 gallons. Recent maximum pumpage during dry weather peaked at 1.63 million gallons, requiring a partial watering ban. The study will analyze current and future demand and identify immediate and long-term infrastructure improvements.

Based upon initial study results and recent demand, the City is placing a priority on the construction of two new wells. The need for an additional three to five new wells is projected within the next twenty years, as well as an additional reservoir.

EXISTING UTILITY AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

City Hall Administration Building

Altoona City Hall is located downtown and is connected to the Altoona Public Library. All administration services are handled from this facility. The building was most recently added onto in 2003, with incremental remodeling projects since then. It currently houses 10 full time and 20 seasonal employees.

Public Works Department

The Public Works Department has three existing buildings on its site on the far west side of the City along Vernon Street. It handles all street repair and maintenance and utility services for the City. Currently, the Department has 7 full time and 2 part time seasonal employees. The Eau Claire County Highway Shop on Spooner Avenue is planned for the future location of the Public Works Department beginning in 2023.

Police Department

Altoona's Police Department has 16 full time employees and 3 part time employees, of which, 16 are sworn officers. The Department shares a facility with the Fire Department on Spooner Avenue adjacent to the Eau Claire County Highway Shop. Other programs and community events offered by the Department include providing a School Resource Officer, hosting Bike Rodeos and National Night Out, and involvement in over ten other events each year.

Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

The City of Altoona's Fire Department shares a facility with the Police Department. They currently have 4 full time employees, 52 part time employees, and 3 seasonal employees. The Department responds to approximately 1,000 calls a year, with around 15% being fire calls and 85% being EMS calls. They currently have three engines, a squad vehicle, brush truck, support vehicle, heavy rescue trailer, UTV, and rescue boat.

Parks and Recreation Department

The City's Parks and Recreational Department has multiple buildings at various sites including the maintenance building at Cinder City Park, main recreational offices at the River Prairie Center, a River Prairie operations and maintenance garage and storage building, and the Fish House recreational building at Altoona City Park. Between the various locations, the department stores equipment, runs programming, and has administrative offices. The River Prairie Center and Fish House were completed in the past five years. The Department employs 5 full time and nearly 30 seasonal staff.

Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling

Contracting for curbside solid waste and recycling in the City are the responsibility of property owners. Brush and yard waste can be disposed within the City at the Public Works brush site on Garfield Avenue between April and November each year. Eau Claire County also offers locations for brush, yard waste, recycling, and garbage drop off.

Telecommunications and Power Distribution

AT&T, CenturyLink, Spectrum, Version, Sprint, T-Mobile, Mediacom, Viasat, HughesNet, King Street Wireless, and West Wisconsin Telcom Cooperative all provide telecommunication and internet service to the City of Altoona. Electric power is provided by Xcel Energy (generally the western 2/3 of the city) and Eau Claire Energy Cooperative, and natural gas is provided by the Northern States Power Company. Infrastructure capacity will continue to be monitored by private service providers. As needed, the City will collaborate with telecommunications and electric and natural gas service providers to identify the appropriate locations for new infrastructure.

Water Supply

The City's Water Utility provides municipal water service to residents. Water is supplied by an aquifer via six active wells and 2 storage facilities. Combined the wells can provide 950 gallons per minute, with an average daily usage of about 1.3 million gallons.

The City's water distribution system consists of water mains and approximately 525 fire hydrants, and two 500,000-gallons elevated storage tanks.

As noted above, the City is currently evaluating its water utilities via an ongoing study. This study will indicate where future wells and storage areas are needed to accommodate existing and anticipated growth over the planning period.

Wastewater Treatment

Residential development outside of the City’s municipal boundaries is served by individual, on-site wastewater treatment (septic) systems. Property owners will monitor and maintain privately owned septic systems. Most areas of the city are served with public sewer and water systems, except for large properties along Lake Road and a few other isolated properties.

The City of Eau Claire provides wastewater treatment service. Within Altoona, there are two existing lift stations connected via trunk lines which all feed to the wastewater treatment plant located in the City of Eau Claire. The City of Altoona owns the sanitary sewage collection system (40 miles of pipe) that connects to the larger system via a force main near Otter Creek.

In 2014, the wastewater treatment plant was improved to handle anticipated growth to the year 2030.

City Capital Improvements Plan (2022-2026)

The City utilizes an annual Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) to identify and prioritize future infrastructure projects. The 2022 CIP identifies the following street, utility, and pavement replacement projects.

Figure A.7.1: 2022 City of Altoona CIP

Type	Project	Year
Street and Utility	Fairfax Street Reconstruction	2023
	11 th Street West & Bradwood Avenue	2023
	Sherman Highlands – Phase 3	2024
	Country Club Estates – Phase 3	2025
	Sherman Highlands – Phase 4	2026
Pavement Replacement	Annual Pavement Replacement Program	2023-2026

Source: City of Altoona, 2021

Stormwater Management

Altoona created a stormwater ordinance and stormwater utility in 2006. This provides stormwater management standards for post-construction of all new development, construction site erosion control requirements, and imposes a stormwater utility fee for existing impervious surfaces throughout the City.

The City also has a Stormwater Utility Credit Policy that was adopted in 2007. This policy gives credit to commercial, industrial, institutional, or commercial-multi-family projects for incorporation of stormwater best management practices. Developments must demonstrate a reduction of 25% of the amount of stormwater leaving the site, and if this is the case, the property owner receives a 50% reduction on their monthly stormwater utility fee. Altoona is a designated MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) by the Wisconsin DNR. MS4 permits require municipalities to reduce polluted storm water runoff by implementing storm water management programs with best management practices.

Health Care Services and Child Care Facilities

Altoona residents may receive medical care at the OakLeaf Hospital located in the City or utilize the many other health care service providers in the City of Eau Claire such as the Mayo Clinic, Sacred Heart Hospital, Prevea Health, and Infinity Health Care.

There are eight licensed childcare facilities or certified childcare facilities in Altoona. A licensed facility consists of Family Childcare Centers, Group Childcare Centers, and Day Camps providing care for 4+ children. There are just over 80 within Eau Claire County that could potentially provide services for City residents.

Public Library

The Altoona Public Library is located downtown and shares a facility with City Hall. The library has 3 full time and 8 part time staff. It offers residents a wide variety of services including computer and internet access, borrowing of physical materials (books, magazines, DVDs, Kindles, iPads, and more), borrowing of electronic materials (e-books and e-audio books), and printing/copying. There is also a wide range of programming provided through events, educational opportunities, clubs, meeting space, and more. As noted above, it is recommended that the library expand its existing building footprint over the next 10 years to accommodate anticipated future demand.

Cemeteries

There are no existing cemeteries within the City's municipal boundaries, however there are several located in the City of Eau Claire.

Parks and Open Space

The City of Altoona's park and open space system provides area residents with numerous opportunities to participate in recreational activities, such as passive nature viewing and trails, playground equipment, playfields, plaza and event space, to name a few. Figure A.7.2 lists and describes Altoona's existing park and recreational facilities.

Figure A.7.2 Public Park and Recreational Sites in the City of Altoona

Park	Description	Acres	Ownership
Altoona City Park	Baseball diamonds, tennis courts, basketball court, open pavilion, Fish House recreational center, and playgrounds.	6.0	City
Centennial Park	Climbing hill, playgrounds, and off-road trails for biking, hiking, and walking.	13.4	City
Cinder Park	Altoona Hobbs Sports Center, baseball fields and pavilion.	25.7	City
Devney Park	Baseball field, tennis courts, basketball courts, and pavilion.	3.9	City
Fairway Park	Basketball courts, pickleball courts, and a pavilion.	55.4	City
Highland Park	Tennis court, basketball court, picnic area, and pavilion.	1.7	City
Lakefront Park	Handicap accessible fishing dock, picnic table, and restrooms.	3.9	City
River Prairie Park	River Prairie Center, stage/amphitheater, multi-use trails, pavilions, picnic tables, non-motorized boat launch, playground, splash pad, community garden, and plaza.	21.7	City
Tower Park	Undeveloped open space.	12.7	City
Jellybean Hill	Sledding hill, walking trail, nature viewing area.	7.4	City
River Prairie Conservancy	River access, woodlands, interpretive displays, nature viewing areas, and multi-use trails.	24.7	City
Clubview Conservation Park	Woodlands, open space, and stormwater pond.	3.9	City
Perseverance Park		1.02	City
Library Park	Open space and garden area.	0.2	City
City Total		181.6	
Lake Altoona County Park	Boat landing, lake access, clubhouse and shelter, beach, volleyball courts, and horseshoe pits.	13	County
Eau Claire Golf Club	18-hole private golf course	250	Private

Source: City of Altoona

School System

Altoona School District serves the City and some portions of the Town of Washington. The Fall Creek School District serves the remainder of the Town of Washington within the City's growth area.

There are a total of 4 schools within the Altoona School District with just under 1,800 total students enrolled. All four schools are located within the City's municipal boundary. The new Altoona Elementary School (grades K-3) was completed in 2017, and the former elementary school was repurposed into an intermediate level school (grades 4-6). District enrollment has increased by 18% over the past decade, reflective of the rapid growth the City has experienced over that time frame. The City and School District work collaboratively on many different community initiatives. It is likely expanded school capacity will be needed over the planning period based on projected growth.

In 2017, the School District set out on a fundraising campaign to upgrade the Athletic Complex. The project was completed in 2019 with the grand opening of the OakLeaf Stadium.

Both Chippewa Valley Technical College and the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire are located in the City of Eau Claire. Additionally, there is an additional location of Chippewa Valley Technical College in the City of Chippewa Falls, Menomonie, and River Falls.

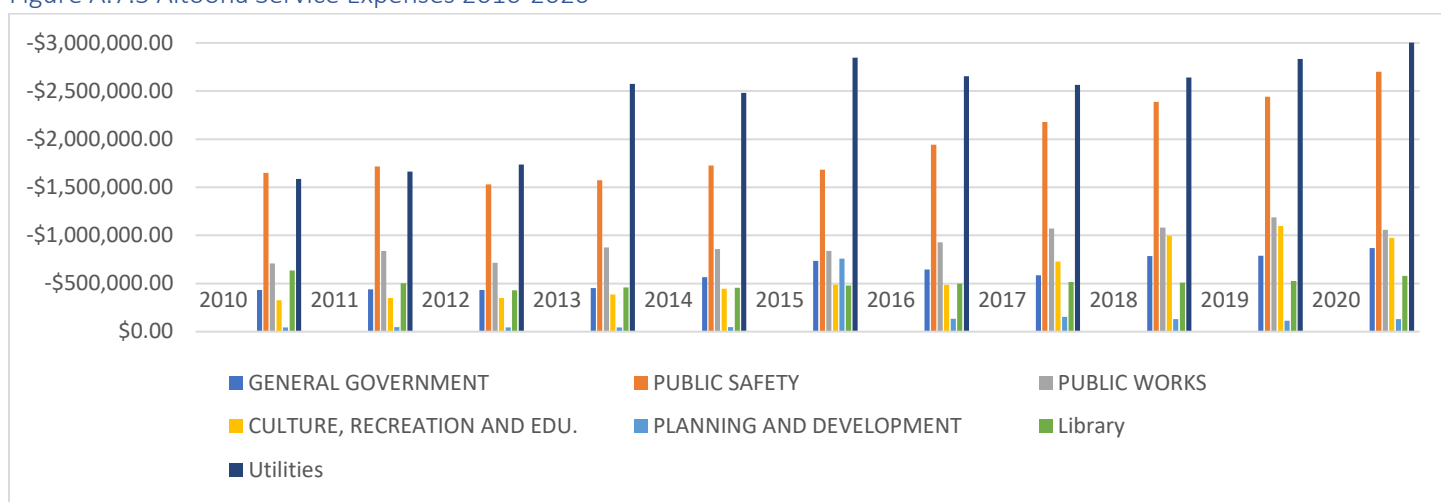
Other nearby universities include the University of Wisconsin- Stout in Menomonie, University of Wisconsin-River Falls in River Falls, and the University of Minnesota in St. Paul.

SERVICE COSTS AND REVENUES

As Altoona has grown over the past decade, so have the City's service expenses. As noted above, many community facilities and departments are in need of additional resources over the planning period to increase their operational capacity with new buildings, staffing, and infrastructure.

Over the past decade, City service expenses have continued to increase, in particular public safety and utilities. While this steady cost increase coincides with an increase in tax revenue, in order to maintain the City's high quality of life, Altoona must continue to invest in its infrastructure, staffing, and services without creating a financial burden in which it cannot climb out of if development slows. This topic is discussed in greater detail within the scenario planning section of the Plan.

Figure A.7.3 Altoona Service Expenses 2010-2020



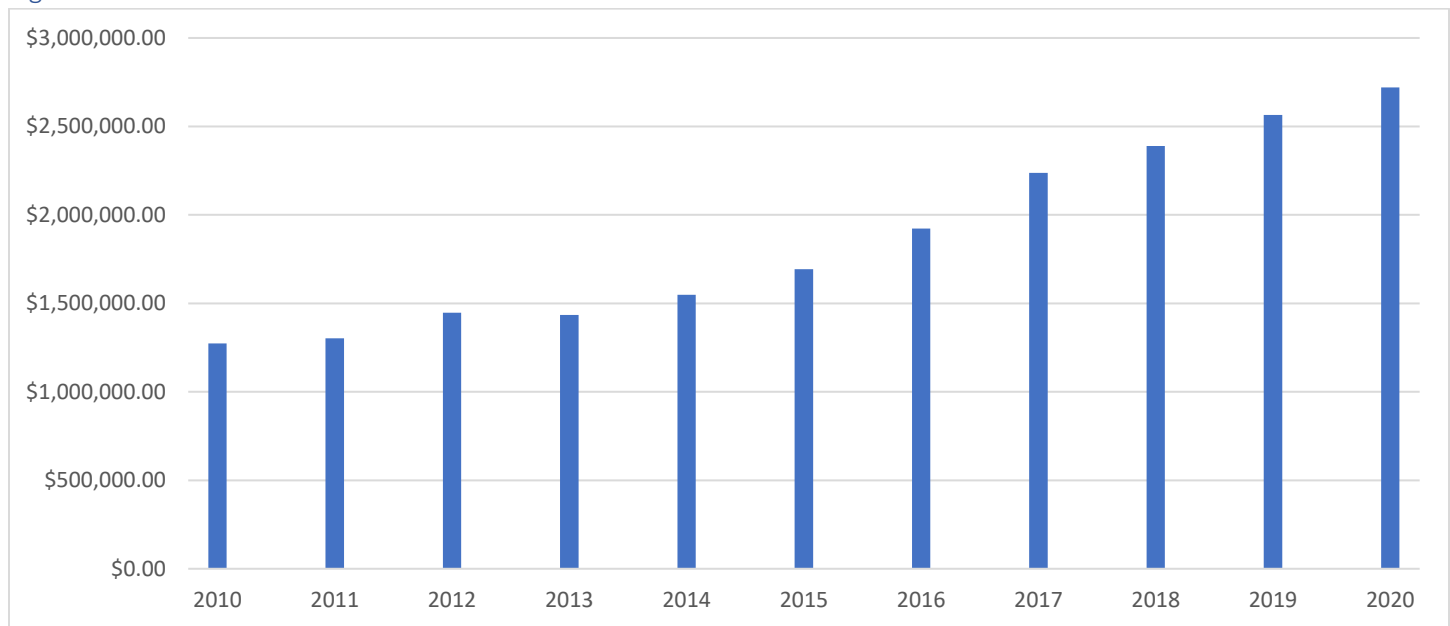
Source: City of Altoona, 2021

Figure A.7.4 Operating Spending Per Capita 2013-2018

	Altoona	All Municipalities in Wisconsin
2013	\$575	\$921
2014	\$588	\$922
2015	\$705	\$935
2016	\$656	\$963
2017	\$740	\$964
2018	\$759	\$1,010

Source: Wisconsin Policy Forum, 2021

Figure A.7.5 Altoona Tax Revenues 2010-2020



Source: City of Altoona, 2021

Figure A.7.6 Altoona Property Tax Levy 2014-2019

	Property Tax Levy Per Capita	Property Tax Levy (in thousands)
2014	\$340	\$2,401
2015	\$337	\$2,426
2016	\$354	\$2,601
2017	\$376	\$2,789
2018	\$378	\$2,905
2019	\$418	\$3,262

Source: Wisconsin Policy Forum, 2021

CHAPTER 8: AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

The City of Altoona is bordered by woodlands and farmland to the south and east. As the City and region have developed overtime, the area's economy has gradually shifted away from agriculture as prominent component. Today, agriculture is diverse within Eau Claire County featuring horticulture crops, dairy production, and specialty products.

ASSESSMENT OF FARMLAND VIABILITY

Prime farmland or farmland of statewide importance is shown on Map 2. These areas are located around Otter Creek, in addition to pockets of existing farmland to the south and east of Altoona along Prill Road and portion of USH 12 east of the City's municipal boundaries. This data reflects that of the Eau Claire County Farmland Preservation Plan and was provided by the WCWRPC. Protecting the area's agricultural soils, especially the high-quality prime soils, is a key component of the City's land use priorities.

Prime farmland is defined as an area with Class I or Class II land capabilities as identified by the natural resource conservation service of the federal department of agriculture. Any land beyond those identified as Class I or Class II may be included if they were identified as prime farmland in a certified farmland preservation plan.

Land capability classification shows, in a general way, the suitability of soils for most kinds of field crops. Crops that require special management are excluded. The soils are grouped according to their limitations for field crops, the risk of damage if they are used for crops, and the way they respond to management. The criteria used in grouping the soils do not include major and generally expensive landforming that would change slope, depth, or other characteristics of the soils, nor do they include possible but unlikely major reclamation projects. Capability classification is not a substitute for interpretations designed to show suitability and limitations of groups of soils for rangeland, for forestland, or for engineering purposes.

In the capability system, soils are generally grouped at three levels—capability class, subclass, and unit.

Capability classes, the broadest groups, are designated by the numbers 1 through 8. The numbers indicate progressively greater limitations and narrower choices for practical use. The classes are defined as follows:

- Class 1 soils have slight limitations that restrict their use.
- Class 2 soils have moderate limitations that restrict the choice of plants or that require moderate conservation practices.

Farmland of statewide importance is determined by the appropriate State agencies. Generally, this land includes areas of soils that nearly meet the requirements for prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION EFFORTS

The City's current subdivision and land division regulations within its 1.5-mile radius extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) compliment the county and state efforts to preserve farmland by restricting new development density in areas not served by sanitary sewer.

Eau Claire County Farmland Preservation Plan (2015)

Eau Claire County has a long history of farmland preservation planning. The county's first Agricultural Preservation Plan was adopted in 1983 and was most recently updated in 2015. The plan reaffirms the County's longstanding goals for preserving areas best suited for farming, protecting the agricultural economic base of the area, entitle farms to tax credits, minimize unsewered development, and minimize land use conflicts.

Federal Farm Bill (2018)

In addition to the State programs listed below, local farmers can participate in numerous other Federal programs and initiatives that are intended to encourage long-term farming activities. The 2018 Farm Bill reauthorized and initiated several Federal programs, including the following:

- The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is a voluntary conservation program designed to encourage producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities and by undertaking additional conservation activities.
- The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides a voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers that promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. EQIP offers financial help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.
- Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA) helps agricultural producers manage financial risk through diversification, marketing, or natural resource conservation practices. NRCS administers the conservation provisions while Agricultural Marketing Service and Risk Management Agency implement the production diversification and marketing provisions.
- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) helps landowners, land trusts, and other entities protect, restore, and enhance wetlands, grasslands, and working farms and ranches through conservation easements.
- The Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) helps landowners restore, enhance, and protect forestland resources on private and tribal lands through easements and financial assistance. Through HFRP, landowners promote the recovery of endangered or threatened species, improve plant and animal biodiversity, and enhance carbon sequestration.
- The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS helps producers through partnership agreements and RCPP conservation program contracts.

Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program

The Wisconsin legislature adopted the Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative in 2009, also known as the Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Program. Three main components of this program include continuation of the Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Tax Credits program, establishment of Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEA) program, and the Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) program. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) administers all three programs under the State's Working Lands Initiative. Each program is described in greater detail as follows:

- The Wisconsin Farmland Preservation Tax Credits program provides landowners with an opportunity to claim farmland preservation tax credits which are applied against tax liability. To be eligible, acres claimed for the tax credit must be in a farmland preservation area that is identified in a certified county farmland preservation plan.
- An Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA) is defined as a contiguous land area devoted primarily to agricultural use and locally targeted for agricultural preservation and agricultural development. Land eligible for AEA designation must be a contiguous land area, primarily in agricultural use, and located in a farmland preservation area as identified in a certified county farmland preservation plan.
- The Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) program provides state funding for the purchase of agricultural conservation easements to prohibit development that would make the farmland unsuitable or unavailable for agricultural use. The easements are completely voluntary and allow the landowner to be compensated for limiting the development potential of the farmland. Agricultural Conservation Easements are permanent and are carried over to subsequent landowners as property is sold.

Farmland Tax Relief Credit Program

Based on the Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative detailed above, the Wisconsin Department of Revenue offers another important farmland preservation program, the Farmland Tax Relief Credit Program.

The Farmland Tax Relief Credit Program provides direct benefits to all farmland owners with 35 or more acres who yield a certain profit from the land, use the land consistently for farming, and have an established farmland preservation agreement or are in an exclusive agricultural zone. The credit is computed as a percentage of up to \$10,000 of property taxes, with a maximum credit of \$1,500.

NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

The City and regions' natural resources, especially environmentally sensitive areas such as soils, environmental corridors, lakes, rivers and streams, wetlands, shorelands, floodplains, woodlands, prairies, and steep slopes are critical factors in local planning decision making. Preservation, restoration, and enhancement of these and other environmentally sensitive natural features is important for the integrity of the natural environment, climate resiliency and sustainability, and the visual attractiveness of the of the City.

Scientific data demonstrates that on average, Wisconsin has become warmer and wetter over the past 60 years and this trend is expected to continue and increase in the decades ahead. At the same time, Wisconsin has experienced prolonged periods of drought, punctuated by abrupt periods of heavy precipitation. These changes in climate are already having an adverse impact on the State and City's natural resources. Altoona will need to weigh these anticipated impacts when deciding how it will adapt to changes to the natural and built environment.

The following is a summary of natural resources within Altoona and its planning area. Many of these features are also illustrated on Map 2.

Ecological Landscapes

An ecological landscape is defined as a region characterized by a combination of physical and biological attributes such as climate, geology, soils, water, or vegetation. Different ecological landscapes offer distinct management opportunities based upon their levels of biological productivity, habitat suitability for wildlife, hydrology, and presence of rare species and natural communities.

The City of Altoona is located within the Western Coulee and Ridges ecological landscape, which is largely composed highly eroded, unglaciated topography with steep sided valleys and ridges, high gradient headwaters streams, and large rivers with extensive, complex floodplains, and terraces. Altoona's location adjacent to Lake Altoona, the Eau Claire River, and Otter Creek, in addition to the woodlands that border them are examples of this type of landscape.

Environmental Corridors and Isolated Natural Resource Areas

Environmentally sensitive areas consist of wetlands, floodplains, shorelands, streams, steep slopes, woodlands, prairies, endangered or threatened species, parks, prime farmland, wellhead protection and groundwater recharge areas, historical resources, and surface waters.

Protection of environmentally sensitive areas from incompatible land uses and other contributors to degradation and destruction is an essential planning objective. These areas should be preserved and protected in essentially natural land uses. These areas are shown on Map 2 and are generally located along Otter Creek, Six Mile Creek, the Eau Claire River, Lake Altoona, and areas of prime farmland and steep slopes east and south of the City.

It is City and WCWRPC policy to limit development within environmentally sensitive areas. Altoona has adopted an Environmental and Natural Resources Ordinance to accompany environmental area maps to contribute to preserving these features.

Metallic and Non-Metallic Resources

There are currently no metallic or non-metallic mining operations in Altoona or the surrounding area.

Under §295.20, Wis. Stats., landowners who want to register their property as a non-metallic mining deposit are required to notify each county, city, village and/or town that has zoning authority over their property. Registrations must be recorded at the County Register of Deeds in the county where the mineral deposit is located. State law limits the ability of a municipality or a county to rezone or otherwise interfere with the future extraction of a mineral resource from a registered non-metallic mineral deposit. It is important to note that zoning changes prohibiting mining on land registered as a marketable non-metallic mining deposit cannot take effect during the registration period. Registration is effective for ten years and renewable for an additional ten years. In addition, registration on property with active mining operations can be renewed for as long as mining is ongoing. Zoning changes may take effect after the registration has expired.

Steep Slopes and Topography

Steep slopes are defined as having a 12 percent grade or greater. The City has several areas where steep slopes are present including near Lake Altoona, Otter Creek, and in the central part of the community between the High School and High Point Drive. Beyond the City's existing boundary, steep slopes are located just east of Altoona Elementary School and south of USH 12 between Mayer Road and South Prill Road.

Wildlife and Rare Species

Species common to the central Wisconsin region are rabbits, squirrels, woodchucks, and raccoons. Larger mammals such as white-tailed deer, coyotes, and foxes also inhabit the region. Common bird species include cardinals, robins, woodthrushes, great blue herons, wrens, blue jays, cranes, hawks, and killdeer. Detailed information regarding the types and precise locations of endangered animals, plants, and natural communities is maintained by the WI DNR.

Woodlands

Woodlands, which comprise approximately 0.6% of the land within the City, are generally located adjacent to surface water bodies and along the steep slopes running through the center of the community and just to the east of the City. Existing woodlands that have not been broken up by development are invaluable to the City's character and natural beauty. As such, remaining woodland areas should be preserved, and any development in and around them should take special care not to destroy or deteriorate these resources.

Watersheds and Surface Waters

Altoona is located within two watersheds: the Lower Eau Claire River and Otter Creek Watershed. They essentially split the community north-south along 10th Street and east-west along the existing ridge between Highway 12 and Bartlett Avenue.

Surface water includes Lake Altoona, the Eau Claire River, and Otter Creek within the City's municipal boundaries, and Six Mile Creek is within the City's ETJ.

Floodplains

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates floodplains, which are areas predicted to be inundated with flood waters in a 100-year storm event (e.g. a storm that has a one percent chance of happening in any given year). The only floodplains that exist in Altoona are located along the three water bodies as mentioned above. The City's Environmental and Natural Resources Ordinance was established to regulate development in floodplain areas.

Flood Storage

Flood storage areas are a portion of the floodplain that acts as a natural flood storage capacity area within a watershed. The volume of runoff water expected within a watershed is the basis for how much regional flood discharge the flood storage area is capable of holding. This is included in the FEMA floodplain flood fringe area extent.

The importance of these areas cannot be underestimated because they reduce the amount and duration of flooding that occurs within the floodplain immediately downstream. The most common example of flood storage areas are wetlands, also described below. Protecting these areas and keeping them intact is important for protecting all areas downstream, especially as impervious surfaces amounts increase and larger stormwater events occur more frequently.

Groundwater

Groundwater is the primary source of drinking water in the City of Altoona and in Eau Claire County. Groundwater is comprised of the portion of rainfall that does not run off to streams or rivers and that does not evaporate or transpire from plants. This water percolates down through the soil until it reaches the saturated zone of an aquifer. It is a critical resource, not only because it is used by residents as their source of water, but also because rivers, streams, and other surface water depends on it for recharge. Groundwater contamination is most likely to occur where fractured bedrock is near ground surface, or where only a thin layer of soil separates the ground surface from the water table. Consumer confidence reports issued by WI DNR demonstrate that Altoona's drinking water quality is good, with no violations of disinfectant byproduct or inorganic compound contaminants. In the rural areas located throughout Eau Claire County, however, a potential groundwater contaminant is nitrate-nitrogen, which can come from improperly functioning on-site wastewater systems, animal feedlots, livestock waste facilities, sludge and septage application, lawn and agricultural fertilizers, and decaying plant debris.

Wetlands

Wetlands are important ecological features that help protect and enhance a region's water quality by preventing pollutants from reaching lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater. Wetlands protect shorelines from erosion and reduce potential flood damage by storing and infiltrating runoff from rainstorms and snow melt. Additionally, wetlands provide critical habitat for many native plant and animal species. According to the Wisconsin DNR Wetland Inventory Maps, wetland habitats exist along Otter Creek within the City of Altoona.

Rain/Flooding Events

Over the past 40 years, total annual precipitation has increased. Some of these larger events have caused billions of dollars of damage each year all over the world. West Central Wisconsin is not immune to these trends. In fact, between 1980-1989 the average precipitation totals per year were about 31 inches, however between 2010-2021, the average increased to nearly 37 inches of per year (based on Chippewa Valley Airport Weather Station Perception Totals from NOAA 1980-2021). Accounting for increased precipitation totals and larger precipitation events are important components of this Plan and have been addressed throughout.

NATURE-BASED RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Eau Claire County and the Chippewa Valley are home to a wealth of outdoor recreational opportunities. The following is a brief summary of state parks, wildlife areas, natural areas, and county parks that are located near the City of Altoona.

State Trails

The Chippewa River State Trail runs from the downtown Eau Claire to Durand. To the northeast, it connects to the Old Abe State Trail that runs north to Cornell and Brunet Island State Park. To the northwest, it connects to the Red Cedar State Trail which ends up in Menomonie. In total the trail network is 76 miles long and is open to bicyclists, hikers, or walkers.

State Parks

Lake Wissota State Park is located just east of Chippewa Falls. The park features hiking and biking trails, boating, fishing, camping, horseback riding, picnic areas, and winter activities.

Eau Claire County Parks

- Lake Altoona Park (in the City of Altoona)
- L.L. Phillips Park
- Tower Ridge Recreational Area and Ski Trail
- Big Falls County Park
- Harstad Park
- Lake Eau Claire Park
- Lowes Creek Park

City of Eau Claire Parks

The City of Eau Claire offers over 1,100 acres of parks and open space, 30 miles of trails, in 29 total park and recreation sites.

For all City of Altoona Parks and trails see the Utilities and Community Facilities chapter.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

The City of Altoona, in partnership with the City of Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Chippewa Valley Technical College, helps support the Midwest Renewable Energy Association project Solarize Eau Claire This program provides the opportunities for businesses and homeowners to participate in solar buying programs, driving down the cost of infrastructure and providing discounts. Xcel Energy and the Eau Claire County Energy Cooperative offer various incentive and rebate programs for efficiency, electric vehicle charging, and renewable energy equipment. Each are working to install small- and large-scale solar generating facilities throughout the region and have also partnered with the City of Altoona on energy projects. For example, the City of Altoona invested nearly \$300,000 in the Eau Claire Energy Cooperative Solar Farm in 2015 and the City is planning to undertake the creation of a Renewable Energy Action Plan with support from each utility.

NATURAL RESOURCES PLANS

Eau Claire County Hazard Mitigation Plan (2018-2023)

The County's Hazard Mitigation Plan was updated in 2018 with assistance by the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. This plan is an update of the 2013 version and was prepared with a grant secured through FEMA and the Wisconsin Division of Emergency Management. That plan focuses on evaluating the County's potential exposure to natural disasters and identifies appropriate mitigation strategies. Some of the key areas to note related to the City of Altoona include:

- High Priority – install storm shelters in parks and other public facilities, in addition to Hillcrest Estates
- Medium/High Priority – install emergency generators for public facilities, develop active shooter plans, and establish heating and cooling centers
- Medium Priority – increase warning siren coverage, incorporate hazard mitigation strategies into City plans, monitor critical infrastructure for cyberattacks
- Medium/Low Priority – implement wildfire mitigation strategies near Lake Altoona

City of Altoona Place Plan (2021)

As mentioned above, the City of Altoona completed an update to its Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and Bicycle and Pedestrian Strategy in 2021, called the Altoona Place Plan. This document also reflects goals, objectives, and recommendations for conservation and open space areas, beyond just active outdoor recreation. The Place Plan seeks to improve environmental stewardship, natural systems, aesthetics, climate mitigation, and resiliency. Some of the strategic priorities related to these topics include:

- Improving the design and management public lands, including incorporating climate resilience techniques and ecological restoration practices
- Expand use of green infrastructure throughout the city
- Implement an active forestry program
- Investing in quality-of-life amenities and opportunities
- Maximizing cooperation with other agencies and private entities

The Place Plan recommends establishing the Otter Creek Greenway as a natural resource corridor for wildlife habitat preservation, stormwater management, and potential multi-use trail. There are several other existing parks that act as conservancy lands throughout the City.

Eau Claire County Land and Water Resource Management Plan (2012-2022)

This plan is an update to the 1999 and 2007 Eau Claire County Land and Water Resource Management Plan. Specifically, it outlines the County's goals, mission, implementation strategy, and programs/partners. Goals and objectives of the plan are broken out into three program and services categories:

- Water Quality Protection - to protect the county's water resources by reducing the inputs of nutrients and sediments resulting from storm water runoff from construction sites and agricultural activities.
- Land Conservation Planning - Land Conservation Division administration ensuring implementation of this comprehensive Land and Water Resource Management Plan
- Land Preservation Planning - protect Eau Claire County's land and water resources, specifically for the purpose of reducing soil losses or preserving unique and valuable land resources.

Each of these areas have specified performance goals, outcome measures, and annual benchmarks within the 10-year activity plan within the document.

Eau Claire County Comprehensive Plan (2020-2040)

Goals of this plan related to agricultural and natural resources include the following:

- Preserve farmland and the rural landscape as a viable foundation for a strong agricultural economy.
- Minimize land use conflicts between farm and non-farm uses, as well as between farms.
- Protect sensitive environmental resources, wildlife habitat, rural vistas, and local cultural resources for current and future residents of Eau Claire County.

Implementation action items include supporting energy conservation and renewable energy programs, promote surface and groundwater conservation and protection, updating the County's Outdoor Recreation Plan, supporting environmental stewardship, and preserving environmental corridors.

Eau Claire County Forest Land Use Plan (2021-2036)

As of 2021, the County was working to update the plan which aims to manage, conserve, and protect natural resources on a sustainable basis for present and future generations. When completed, it will document needs and priorities, set goals, satisfy state and federal requirements, and provide a broad long-term and detailed short-term guideline for actions.

Eau Claire County Outdoor Recreation Plan (2016-2020)

This plan is an update of the 2011 version, and it outlines goals and objectives, inventories existing conditions, evaluates future demand, and includes action items for implementation. Key goals of the plan include:

- Provide quality park facilities and varied recreational opportunities and experiences to meet the needs of county residents, both now and in the future.
- Provide opportunities for nonresident recreational activity to an extent compatible with County residents' use of County facilities while preserving irreplaceable resources.
- Preserve and protect natural and historical resources within the County.

CHAPTER 9: INTERGOVERNMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING REGIONAL FRAMEWORK

The City of Altoona lies within Eau Claire County and the Chippewa Valley region. Altoona shares its western and portions of its northern boundary with the City of Eau Claire, the Town of Seymour on the northern side of Lake Altoona, and by the Town of Washington to the east and south. Map 1 depicts the boundaries of Altoona's neighboring and/or overlapping jurisdictions. Relationships with local, regional, and state jurisdictions were analyzed during the City's planning process to identify mutual planning issues, potential conflicts, and partnerships.

Important State Agency Jurisdictions

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WI DOT) is responsible for transportation planning throughout the state and is the primary agency for planning and managing federal and state highways, including USH 53 and 12. WI DOT also reviews and has influence in County and City transportation plans to ensure compatibility between plans. In addition, the WI DOT enforces standards and procedures for projects that include state funding. WI DOT provides service to Eau Claire County residents out of its offices in Eau Claire and Superior.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WI DNR) has an office in the City of Eau Claire that serves the Chippewa Valley and surrounding region. WI DNR is responsible for planning state parks, trails, and natural areas, in addition protecting the surface waters in the area. They also work closely with the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC) on sewer service area planning and implementation.

West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC)

WCWRPC has served as the regional planning agency for the area of west central Wisconsin for over 40 years. The commission consists of 21 members (three from each county) who provide information and planning services to the counties of Barron, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Polk, and St. Croix. WCWRPC addresses planning issues that transcend political and natural boundaries such as transportation, water supply, parks and open space, air and water quality, flooding, natural resource base deterioration, and changing land uses. The WCWRPC also provides technical assistance and programs to assist local governments in specialized planning and economic development services, including Safe Routes to School, administering U.S. Economic Development Agency (EDA) grant programs, and others.

The Regional Planning Commission's plans and studies are referenced throughout this Appendix, as they work on varying different scales including the regional, county, and local level.

WCWRPC also exercises considerable influence over local community planning through establishment and adjustments to sanitary sewer service boundaries. WCRPC has been granted this authority by the Wisconsin Department of Administration. Each Metropolitan Sewer District boundary is determined in part by the projected needs for the area served based on population and land use projections. City, Village, and unincorporated Sanitary Sewer Districts must demonstrate that land use decisions and sanitary sewer projects are consistent with these assumptions and planning goals in order to obtain approvals for adjustments to their sanitary sewer service boundaries, and they may not extend services outside of these boundaries without specific authorization from the State of Wisconsin via WCWRPC.

Metropolitan Planning Organization

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are entities funded by state and federal programs that provide multi-jurisdictional transportation planning coordination, and funding for priority projects. The Chippewa- Eau Claire MPO is administered by the WCWRPC.

Eau Claire County

As documented throughout this Appendix, Eau Claire County has several overlapping plans relevant to the City of Altoona, including:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Land and Water Resources Management Plan
- Hazard Mitigation Plan

- Farmland Preservation Plan
- Community Health Assessment
- Forest Land Use Plan
- Outdoor Recreation Plan

Each plan is summarized and provided in the section above. Additionally, many of the goals, objectives, recommendations, and actions items build on and reflect those within this Plan.

City of Eau Claire Wastewater Treatment

The City of Eau Claire provides wastewater treatment service to all City residents with municipal sewer service. Within Altoona, there are three existing lift stations connected via trunk lines which all feed to the wastewater treatment plant located in the City of Eau Claire. The City of Altoona owns the sanitary sewage collection system (23 miles of pipe) within the city that connects to the larger system via a force main near Otter Creek.

In 2014, the wastewater treatment plant was improved to handle anticipated growth to the year 2030.

Town of Washington

The Town of Washington borders Altoona to the south and east. The Town adopted an updated Comprehensive Plan in 2018, with assistance from Eau Claire County. On the Town's Planning Area Map, Altoona's Sewer Service Area and Plat Review Area are shown.

When reviewing the future land use maps of both the City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan and the Town of Washington Comprehensive Plan, there are some differences and some similarities between each.

- **North of the Railroad Tracks.** The Town has designated this area as Rural Residential. Some of this area includes existing rural subdivisions, but there are also large areas of agricultural and undeveloped land in this area. The City's Future Land Use Map includes portions of this area identified for Low-Scale Neighborhood and Planned Neighborhood.
- **USH 12.** The Town has designated future Rural Commercial, Rural Transition, Rural Residential, and Rural Industrial areas along Highway 12. Some of these areas have already been developed, while others remain in an existing agricultural or open space use. The City's Future Land Use Map reflects Planned Mixed Use, Planned Neighborhood, and Industrial in this corridor.
- **East Side of Mayer Road.** The Town has designated this area as Rural Transition, meaning lands are intended to remain undeveloped until more intensive residential development may be appropriate. This is reflective of the City's Future Land Use Map for this area with the Long-Term Growth Area designation shown.
- **South of Prill Road.** The Town has designated the areas surrounding the intersection of Prill Road and Mayer Road as Rural Transition, like other areas east of Mayer Road. This is reflective of the City's designation of Long-Term Growth Area and Agricultural.
- **CTH KB, South of Railroad Tracks.** The Town has designated the small remaining pocket of land between CTH KB and the City's existing mobile home park as Urban Mixed Use. This future land use designation generally aligns with the City's Future Land Use Map designation of Planned Mixed Use and Planned Neighborhood.

The City will continue to attempt to resolve future land use conflicts through discussions with the Town of Washington, and may consider working toward establishing an intergovernmental agreement with the Town. This recommendation is discussed in greater detail later in the Intergovernmental Cooperation Chapter.

Town of Seymour

The Town of Seymour last updated its Comprehensive Plan in 2009. The Town's Future Land Use Map shows areas north of Lake Altoona as Rural Residential. Most of this area is already developed in this manner and Altoona has no plans to extend services and grow north within the Town. Extending the City boundary to the north into the Town would require crossing the Eau Claire River or Lake Altoona, which is not anticipated. However, the City, County, and Town have a mutual goal of protecting the quality of the lake and downstream water bodies. Intergovernmental collaboration on this topic will be needed throughout the planning period.

City of Eau Claire

The City of Eau Claire updated its Comprehensive Plan in 2015 and is currently working on amendments to select Chapters. Altoona and Eau Claire have an existing collaborative relationship and work together on several shared goals, planning efforts, and initiatives. The two jurisdictions also work together on a variety of regional projects. Currently, the Eau Claire provides wastewater treatment and transit services to the City of Altoona through shared agreements. For the most part, both Eau Claire's and Altoona's Comprehensive Plans complement one another.

Eau Claire's Future Land Use Map shows compatible land uses along the shared boundary with Altoona. Of note is the area bounded by Otter Creek, Prill Road, and Mayer Road. The City of Eau Claire recommends this entire area as Low-Density Housing, which differs from the City of Altoona's Plan, which recommends Planned Neighborhood Type 2, Corridor Mixed Use, and Conservation there. While most of this area is currently in the Town of Washington, additional land use planning between the three municipalities is needed to reflect mutually agreed upon growth patterns through potential intergovernmental boundary agreements.

School Districts

The Altoona School District serves most of the City of Altoona and portions of the Town of Washington. As the District's population has grown rapidly in past decade, the School District continues to plan and evaluate for future facility needs. It is anticipated that another school and/or school expansions will be needed over the planning period. School District trends and planning are outlined in the Utilities and Community Facilities chapter.

The City and School District actively work on implementing the Safe Routes to School Plan, adopted in 2018 and prepared with assistance from the WCWRPC.

CHAPTER 10: ACTION PLAN

PLAN ADOPTION

A first step in implementing the City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan is making sure that it is adopted in a manner which supports its future use for more detailed decision making. The City has included all necessary elements for this plan to be adopted under the State's comprehensive planning legislation. The City has also followed procedures for adopting this Plan under Section 1001(4), Wisconsin Statutes.

PLAN MONITORING

This Plan is intended to be used by government officials, developers, residents, and others interested in the future of the City to guide growth, social change, development, redevelopment, preservation, and overall pursuit of the City's vision and values. Altoona intends to constantly evaluate its decisions on private development proposals, public investments, regulations, incentives, and other actions against the recommendations of this Plan. Following adoption of this Plan, all zoning, subdivision, and official map ordinances and decisions will have to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

This Plan will only have value if it is used, understood, and supported by the community. It is critical that the City make concerted efforts to increase community awareness and education of this Plan. To this end, efforts may include:

- Prominently displaying plan maps and other materials in City offices, gathering places, and online.
- Ensuring that user-friendly, attractive, and up to date materials are continuously updated and are easily accessible on the City's website.
- Speaking to current and future elected officials, community organizations and school groups about the Plan.
- Regularly presenting implementation progress reports to the City Council, Plan Commission, and other municipal bodies.
- Incorporating Plan implementation steps in the annual budget process, capital improvement planning, annual City and department work plans, and other planning initiatives the City is involved in.
- Encouraging all City Staff, commissions, committees, groups, task forces, and other related bodies to become familiar with and use the Plan in their decision making.
- Proactively engaging community institutions, organizations, and other jurisdictions to pursue cooperative implementation.
- Annually reviewing and assessing the Plan by evaluating performance against the implementation steps and timeframe described in Implementation Chapter. This review will appear on the agenda of a regular City Council meeting in late summer or early fall, in advance of the budget process. The City Council will hold a public hearing at the meeting in which the review is held. This meeting should also include the Planning Commission, department heads, and interested members of the public. Resident participation in this review should be actively solicited by public notice and a variety of other methods to achieve inclusive contribution, and public input allowed at the meeting at which the review is held. Any need for specific changes to the Plan in response to changes in the factors on which it was based could be addressed at this review. Amendments to the Plan will be made in accordance with the procedures described in the Plan Amendments section below.

PLAN ADMINISTRATION

This Plan will largely be implemented through an ongoing series of individual decisions about zoning, land division, official mapping, public investments, annexation, and intergovernmental relations. The Plan is likely to be faithfully implemented only through aligning the City's vision and values in an ever-changing environment that requires constant evaluation and calibration to match strategies and actions with these desired outcomes. Collaboration will be paramount. Altoona intends to use this Plan to inform such decisions under the following guidelines:

Zoning

Proposed zoning map amendments (rezonings) should be consistent with the recommendations of this Plan. Specifically, the Future Land Use Map will be used to guide the application of the general pattern of permanent zoning. However, the precise location of zoning district boundaries may vary, as judged appropriate by the Plan Commission and City Council. Departures from the exact land use boundaries depicted on the Future Land Use Map may be particularly appropriate for projects involving a mix of land uses and/or residential development types, properties split by zoning districts, and/or properties located at the edges of future land use areas. However, in their consideration of zoning map issues, the Plan

Commission and City Council will also evaluate the specific timing of the zoning map amendment request, its relationship to the nature of both existing and planned land uses, and the details of the proposed development. Therefore, this Plan allows for the timing of zoning actions and the refinement of the precise recommended land use boundaries through the zoning, conditional use, and land division processes.

Land Division

Proposed land divisions should be generally consistent, but not necessarily precisely consistent, with the recommendations of this Plan. Specifically, the Future Land Use Map and the Transportation and Community Facilities Map (and the policies behind these maps) will be used to guide the general pattern of development, and the general location and design of public streets, parks, and utilities. However, in their consideration of land divisions, the Plan Commission and City Council will also evaluate the specific timing of the land division request, its relationship to the nature of both existing and future land uses, and the details of the proposed development. Departures from the exact locations depicted on these maps will be resolved through the land division process for certified survey maps, preliminary plats, and final plats both within the City limits and the extraterritorial jurisdiction. This Plan allows for the timing and the refinement of the precise recommended development pattern and public facilities through the land division process as deemed appropriate by the Plan Commission and City Council.

Official Mapping

The Transportation and Community Facilities Map will be used to guide the general location and design of both existing and new public streets, public parks, and utilities. The City's Official Map may be updated to capture these recommendations. In their consideration of official mapping issues, the Plan Commission and City Council will also evaluate the specific timing of the development request, its relationship to the nature of both existing and future land uses, and the details of the proposed development. Departures from the exact locations depicted on Plan maps will be resolved through the official mapping and platting processes both within the City limits and the extraterritorial jurisdiction.

Public Investments

Proposed public investment decisions will be guided by the recommendations of this Plan. These investments may include parks and infrastructure projects through the Capital Improvement Plan, acquisition of land for development or preservation, or and other means. However, the timing and precise location of public investments may vary, as judged appropriate by the Plan Commission and City Council. This Plan allows for the timing and the refinement of the precise recommended public facilities and other public investments as deemed appropriate by the Plan Commission and City Council.

Annexations

Proposed annexations will be guided by the recommendations of this Plan. Specifically, the Future Land Use Map and the Transportation and Community Facilities Map of this Plan will be among the factors considered when evaluating a request for annexation. Annexation proposals on lands that are designated for urban development, as locations for future transportation facilities, and/or as locations for future community facilities will be more strongly considered for annexation approval. However, in their consideration of annexation proposals, the Plan Commission and City Council will also evaluate the specific timing of the annexation request, its relationship to the overall regularity of the corporate boundary, the ability to provide utilities and public services to the site, the costs associated with the proposed annexation, and consistency with goals described in this Plan to create a compact city.

Intergovernmental Relations

Proposed intergovernmental relations decisions, including intergovernmental agreements, will be guided by the recommendations of this Plan as deemed appropriate by the Plan Commission and City Council. However, in their consideration of intergovernmental decisions and agreements, the Plan Commission and City Council will also evaluate a wide variety of other factors. Departures from the recommendations of this Plan will be resolved by the City Council through the intergovernmental process.

Interpretation

The interpretation of this Plan shall be the responsibility of the City Council, as guided by recommendations of the Plan Commission.

PLAN AMENDMENTS

This Plan can be amended and changed. Amendments may be appropriate in the years following initial plan adoption, particularly in instances where the Plan is becoming irrelevant or contradictory to emerging policy or trends, or does not provide specific advice or guidance on an emerging issue. “Amendments” are generally defined as minor changes to the Plan maps or text. The Plan should be specifically evaluated for potential amendments every three years. Frequent amendments to accommodate specific development proposals should be avoided, or else the plan will become meaningless.

The State comprehensive planning law requires that the City use the same basic process to amend a comprehensive plan as is used to initially adopt the plan. This means that the procedures defined under Section 66.1001(4), Wisconsin Statutes, need to be followed:

1. Either the City Council or Plan Commission initiates the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment. This may occur as a result of a regular Plan Commission review of the Plan, or may be initiated at the request of a property owner or developer.
2. The City Council adopts a resolution outlining the procedures that will be undertaken to ensure public participation during the Plan amendment process (see Section 66.1001(4)a of Statutes and model resolution included in this Comprehensive Plan).
3. The Plan Commission prepares or directs the preparation of the specific text or map amendment to the Comprehensive Plan.
4. The Plan Commission holds one or more public meetings on the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment. Following the public meeting(s), the Plan Commission makes a recommendation by resolution to the City Council by majority vote of the entire Commission (see Section 66.1001(4)b of Statutes).
5. The City Clerk sends a copy of the recommended Plan amendment (not the entire comprehensive plan) to all adjacent and surrounding government jurisdictions and the County as required under Section 66.1001(4)b, Wisconsin Statutes. These governments should have at least 30 days to review and comment on the recommended Plan amendment. Nonmetallic mine operators, any person who has registered a marketable nonmetallic mineral deposit with the local government, and any other property owner or leaseholder who has requested notification in writing must be informed through this notice procedure. These governments and individuals should have at least 30 days to review and comment on the recommended Plan amendment.
6. The City Clerk directs the publishing of a Class 1 notice, published at least 30 days before a City Council public hearing and containing information required under Section 66.1001(4)d, Wisconsin Statutes.
7. The City Council holds the formal public hearing on an ordinance that would incorporate the proposed Plan amendment into the Comprehensive Plan.
8. Following the public hearing, the City Council approves (or denies) the ordinance adopting the proposed Plan amendment. Adoption must be by a majority vote of all members. The City Council may require changes from the Plan Commission recommended version of the proposed Plan amendment.
9. The City Clerk sends a copy of the adopted ordinance and Plan amendment (not the entire Comprehensive Plan) to all adjacent and surrounding government jurisdictions, nonmetallic mine operators, any person who has registered a marketable nonmetallic mineral deposit with the local government, and any other property owner or leaseholder who has requested notification in writing as required under Sections 66.1001(4)b and c, Wisconsin Statutes.

PLAN UPDATE

The State comprehensive planning law requires that a community’s comprehensive plan be updated at least once every ten years. As opposed to an amendment, an update is often a substantial rewrite of the Plan document and maps. Based on this deadline, the City should update this Comprehensive Plan by the year 2032, at the latest. The City should continue to monitor any changes to the language or interpretations of the State law over the next several years.

CONSISTENCY AMONG PLAN ELEMENTS


The State comprehensive planning statute requires that the implementation element “describe how each of the elements of the comprehensive plan shall be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive plan.” Because the various elements of this Plan were prepared simultaneously, there are no known internal inconsistencies between the different elements or chapters of this Plan.



2022

CITY OF ALTOONA, WISCONSIN
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
Appendix B

DRAFT: 4.27.22



Prepared by:

**VANDEWALLE &
ASSOCIATES INC.**



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INTRODUCTION

To provide sound public policy guidance, a comprehensive planning process should incorporate inclusive public participation procedures to ensure that final recommendations reflect a broadly supported vision. Near the outset of this planning process, the City Council and Plan Commission adopted the City's Public Participation Plan by resolution. The following public involvement opportunities were conducted as part of this planning process. This document provides summarized feedback from each event held throughout the development, review, and adoption of the 2022 City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan.

JOINT PLAN COMMISSION AND CITY COUNCIL KICKOFF MEETING

On July 8, 2021, a joint meeting of both the Plan Commission and City Council was held to kickoff the rewrite of the City of Altoona's Comprehensive Plan. This meeting included a summary presentation of the process and a discussion on key assets, issues, and opportunities withing the City. The following is a summary of the responses gathered in the meeting:

Assets

- Progressive and seeking growth, but maintain the small town feel where people feel connected.
- Build on River Prairie, lake, river, trail, and park system to maintain and enhance the high quality of life for residents.
- Great connections to the Chippewa Valley, Minneapolis, and northern Wisconsin.

Issues

- Housing diversity and affordable housing options
- Maintaining and providing services and infrastructure to support growth
- Tax base diversity
- Need to attract new young professionals and families
- Public transportation limitations

Missing In the City

- Running out of land for future growth
- Low-cost dining options and small-scale retail options
- Walkable amenities throughout the community
- Downtown and City core
- Amenities such as a dog park, swimming pool, skatepark, winter activities, etc.
- Civic curiosity and engagement.

Comparing Altoona to Other Communities

- City has great transportation accessibility with little traffic congestion
- City is a leader on positive changes (pro growth and business, River Prairie, regional destination, easy to work with, gets things done, open to partnerships and collaboration, etc.)
- City is viewed as a high tax community, but that isn't accurate. Need to be responsible in future infrastructure investments.

Future Community Growth

- Need open space and recreational amenities in new developments
- County Highway Shop rehabilitation to be a more of a civic campus
- Opportunities for downtown growth, infill development, redevelopment, and new development
- Need to keep existing housing stock looking good and maintain affordability
- Avoid homogenous new development, with phased expansion of new infrastructure

Top Priority

- Attract well-paying jobs
- Public financial sustainability, coupled with growth sustainability - protect the local tax payers

Vision For The Future

- Possible passenger rail stop near downtown
- Maintain intergovernmental cooperation in the region
- New year-round sports facilities that could be a regional draw
- Safe community with greater school and transportation system, unique and diverse neighborhoods, and local amenities

FOCUS GROUPS

On July 15-16, 2021, the City of Altoona hosted eight Focus Group Interview Sessions with community, regional, and state stakeholders. Over 40 total people participated in these meetings, which took place via Zoom. Stakeholders were grouped by topic area, which included: Economic Vitality; Economic Development; Housing; Transportation; Environment and Sustainability; Community and Neighborhood Design; and Diversity, Equity, And Inclusion. Below is a high-level summary of the feedback received.

Exciting Trends and Community Assets

- River Prairie redevelopment bringing new jobs, housing, and amenities to the community
- Community growth – housing, neighborhoods, schools, placemaking
- Strong education system that attracts people to the community
- Good regional collaboration – tourism, economic recovery, committees/boards, sustainability, equity
- High quality of life – small town feel with amenities, natural resources, family-friendly, parks
- Leveraging public-private partnerships
- Regional connections, location, and resources
- Better City development process compared to other communities in the region with open minded staff and elected officials
- Concentrated effort on community engagement

Missing Components of Altoona

- Regional or state destinations such as convention center, sports complex, shopping, restaurants, etc.
- No downtown core and small retail spaces
- Lack of industrial/manufacturing base
- Need a defined community identity
- Diverse housing opportunities for all incomes, ages, and lifestyle preferences
- Existing gaps in trail connections
- Need more green infrastructure
- Gaps or missing connections among various social services
- Lack of art and culture spaces, collaboration, and education

Issues

- The City needs space to grow and should avoid getting “boxed in” by growth of neighboring communities
- Infrastructure capacity
- Workforce availability, demographic shifts, and building/retaining talent in the region
- Concentrations of poverty in the City, present but sometimes invisible
- Increasing traffic volumes
- Protecting wildlife corridors and natural resources
- Increase relationship building and providing accessibility for all community members

- Need to increase and celebrate cultural diversity, instances of racism
- Entrenched institutions and systems that result in racial disparities

Priorities

- Sustainability efforts, climate change action
- Pursue equity and inclusion
- Improve parks and trails
- Support small-scale retail and diversifying tax base
- Invest in infrastructure to support future growth
- Foster entrepreneurship
- Coordinate across different entities and organizations to avoid duplication of efforts
- Address need for affordable housing
- Incorporate public health into decision-making
- Explore zoning changes to encourage desired types of development

MAP SURVEY

Between July 15 and August 9, 2021, the City of Altoona hosted an online map-based survey to gather input on future preservation and growth areas, existing gathering places and transportation issues, and new multi-modal transportation infrastructure ideas. The survey had 143 unique features added by residents to the map and 5,122 feature interactions (thumbs up or down vote). Below is a summary of the map features and several maps showing where they were suggested.

Top 10 Highest Ranked Features (Net Thumbs Up):

1. Preservation Area (66 net thumbs up)
2. Preservation Area (63 net thumbs up)
3. Gathering Places (57 net thumbs up)
4. Transportation Issue (56 net thumbs up)
5. Preservation Area (55 net thumbs up)
6. New Commercial (54 net thumbs up)
7. Transportation Issue (50 net thumbs up)
8. Preservation Area (49 net thumbs up)
9. Transportation Issue (49 net thumbs up)
10. Gathering Place (47 net thumbs up)/Transportation Issue (47 net thumbs up)

Top 10 Highest Interacted Features:

1. New Residential (49 thumbs up, 79 thumbs down)
2. New Residential (49 thumbs up, 31 thumbs down)
3. Gathering Place (58 thumbs up, 16 thumbs down)
4. Infill and Redevelopment Opportunity (47 thumbs up, 22 thumbs down)
5. Transportation Issue (40 thumbs up, 28 thumbs down)
6. Transportation Issue (26 thumbs up, 41 thumbs down)
7. Preservation Area (66 thumbs up, 0 thumbs down)
8. Preservation Area (64 thumbs up, 1 thumb down)
9. Transportation Issue (52 thumbs up, 12 thumbs down)
10. New Commercial (50 thumbs up, 14 thumbs down)

Land Use Features:

- 16 Infill and Redevelopment Features (Orange)
- 10 New Mixed Use Features (Purple)
- 9 New Residential Features (Yellow)

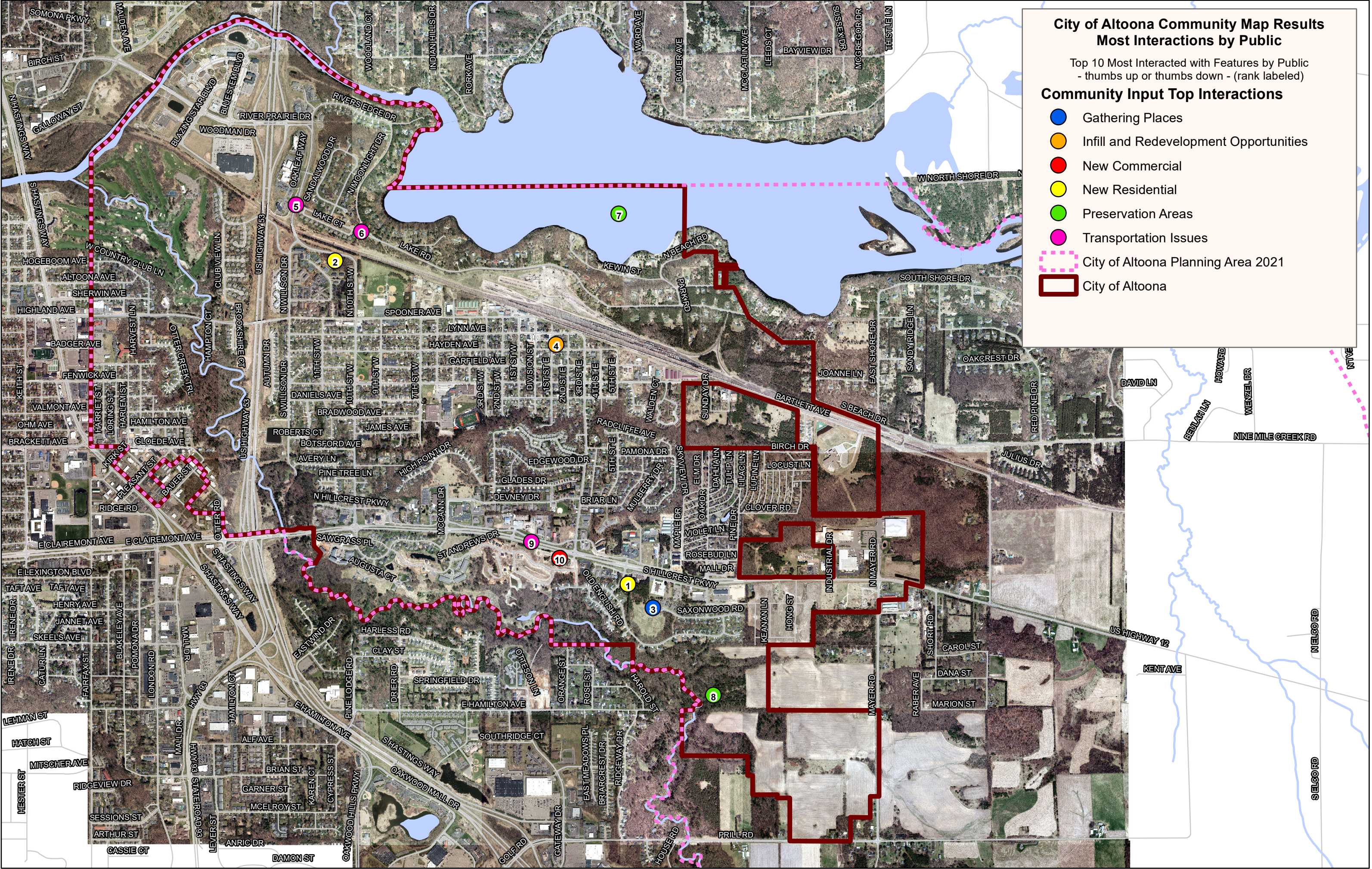
- 8 New Commercial Features (Red)
- 2 New Light Industrial Features (Grey)

Preservation and Recreation Features:

- 19 Gathering/Recreation Features (Blue)
- 17 Preservation Features (Green)
- 9 New Bike/Pedestrian Trail Features (Green)

Transportation Features:

- 45 Existing Transportation Issue Features (Purple)
- 9 New Bike/Pedestrian Trail Features (Green)
- 2 New or Improved Road Features (Red)



City of Altoona Community Map Results

Most Interactions by Public

Top 10 Most Interacted with Features by Public
- thumbs up or thumbs down - (rank labeled)

Community Input Top Interactions

●

 Gathering Places

●

 Infill and Redevelopment Opportunities

●

 New Commercial

●

 New Residential

●

 Preservation Areas

●

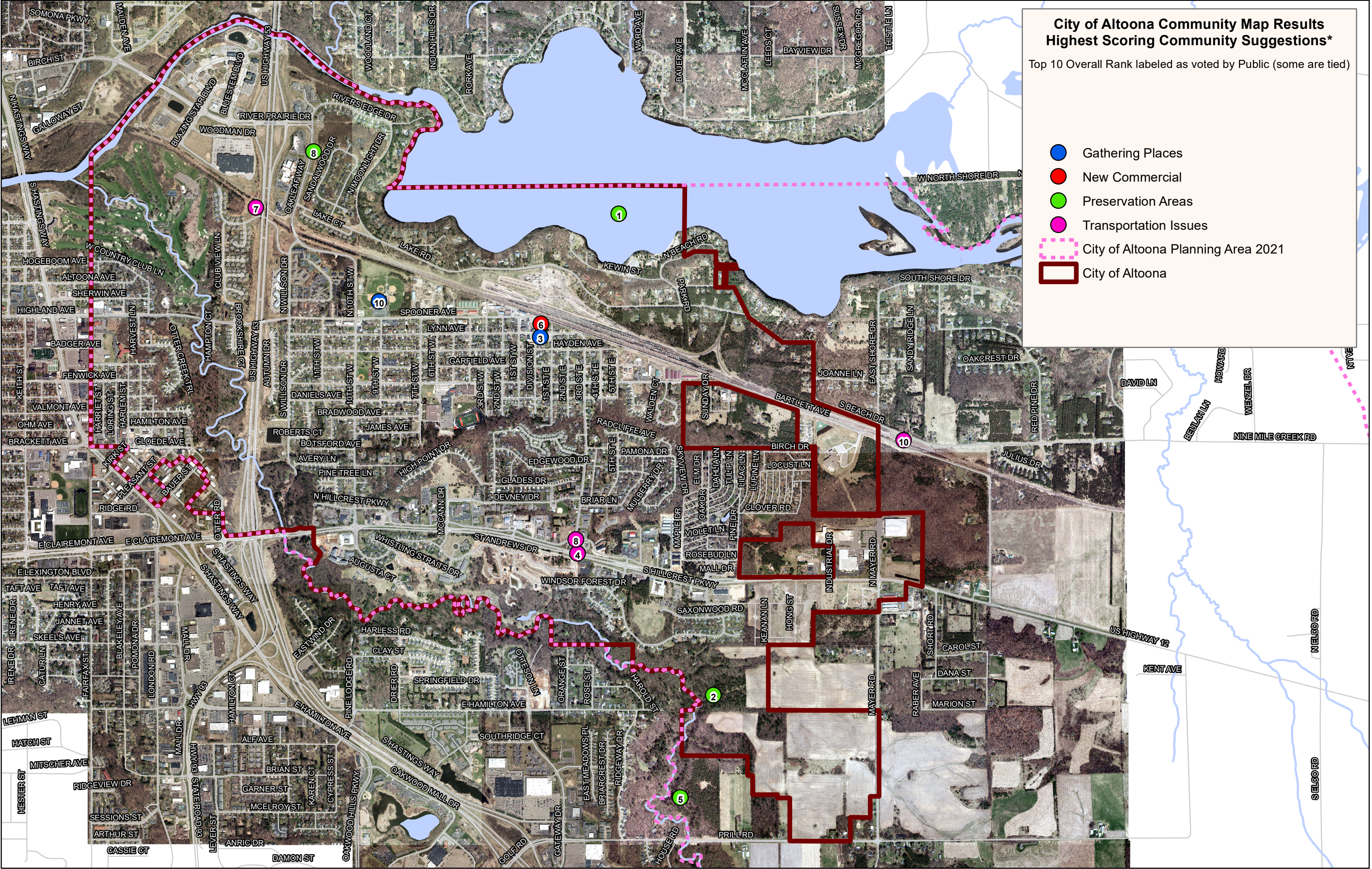
 Transportation Issues

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 City of Altoona Planning Area 2021

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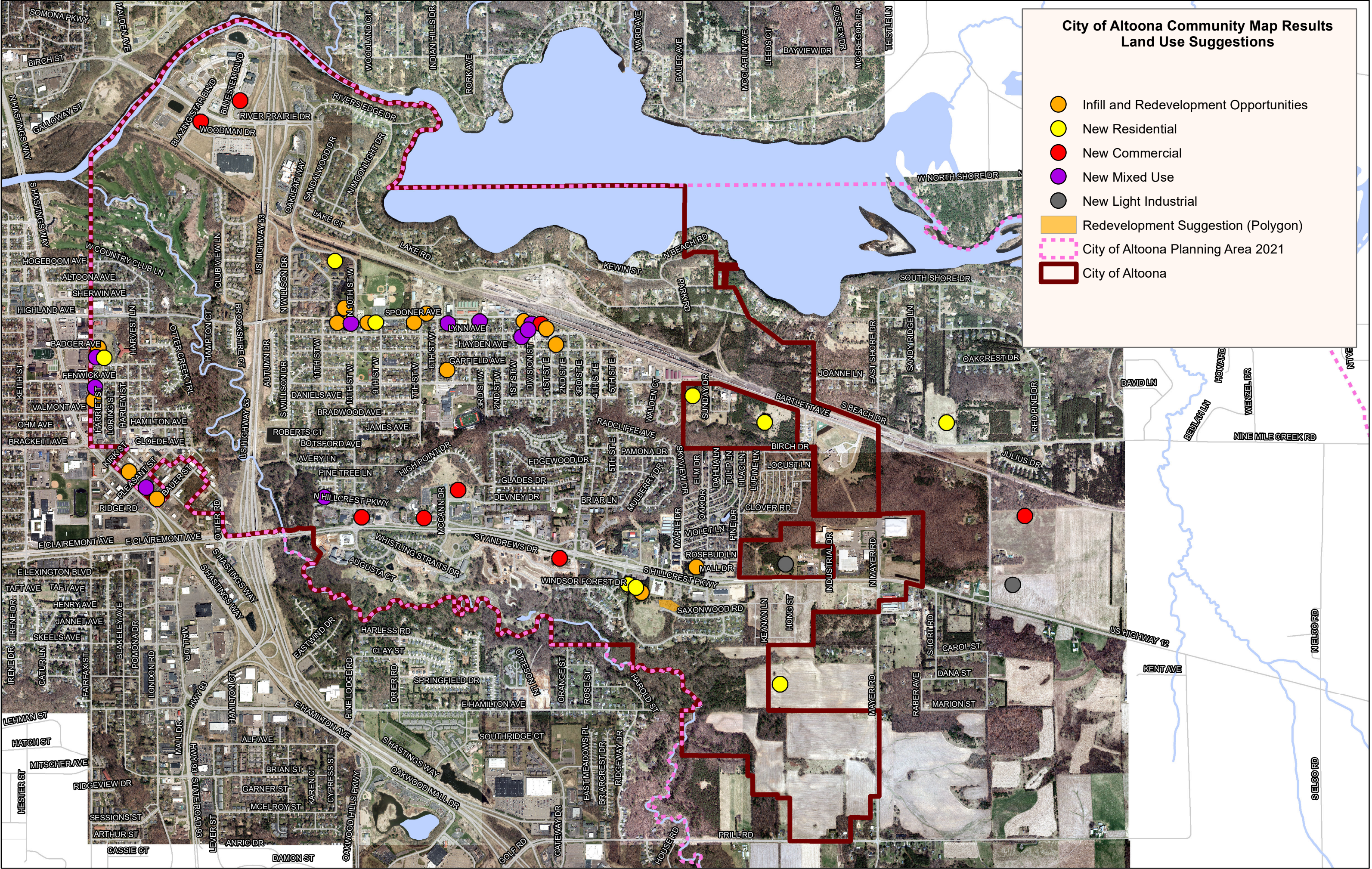
 City of Altoona



City of Altoona Community Map Results
Highest Scoring Community Suggestions*

Top 10 Overall Rank labeled as voted by Public (some are tied)








- Gathering Places
- New Commercial
- Preservation Areas
- Transportation Issues
- City of Altoona Planning Area 2021
- City of Altoona

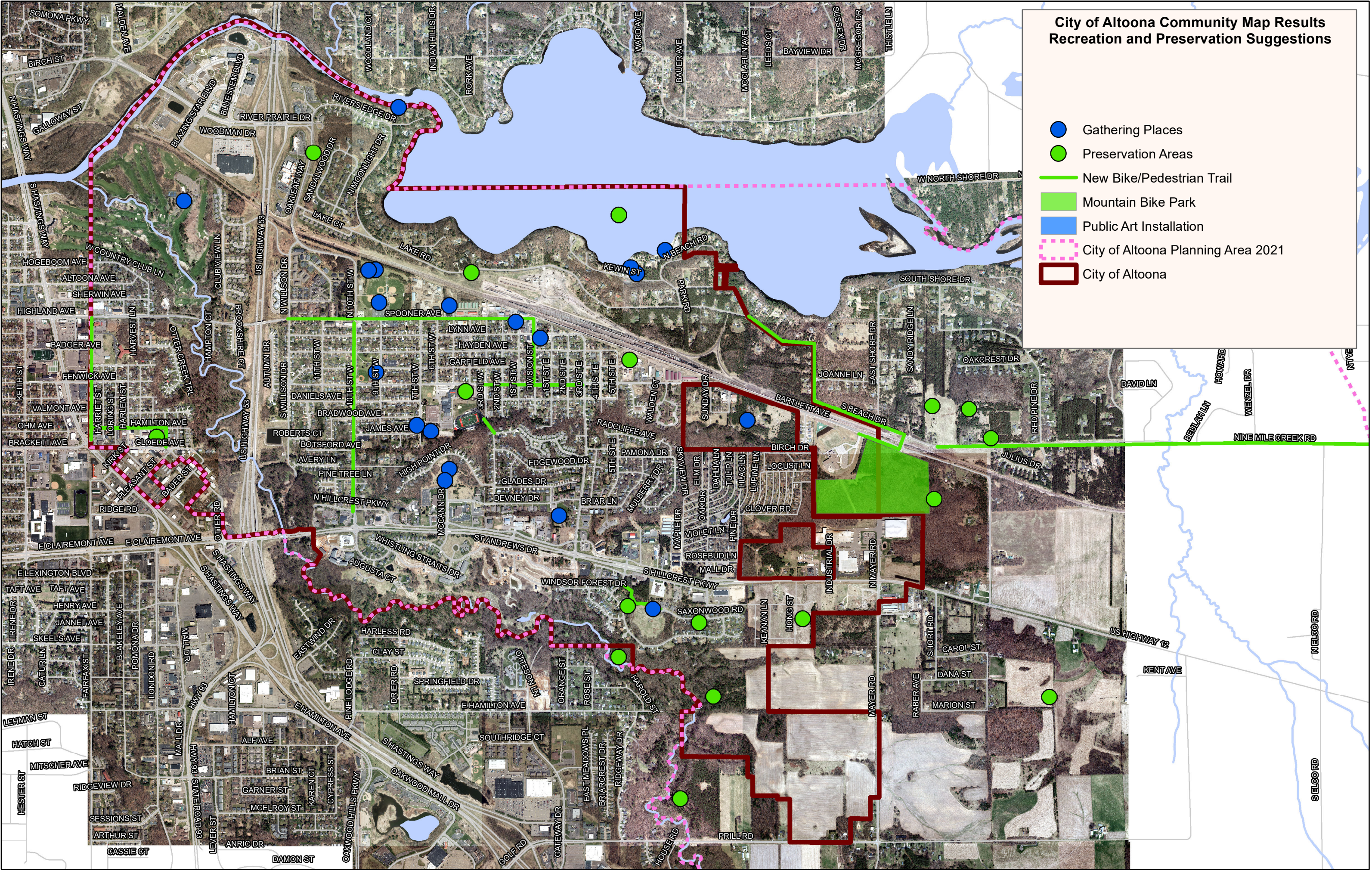


City of Altoona Community Map Results
Land Use Suggestions

- Infill and Redevelopment Opportunities
- New Residential
- New Commercial
- New Mixed Use
- New Light Industrial
- Redevelopment Suggestion (Polygon)
- City of Altoona Planning Area 2021
- City of Altoona

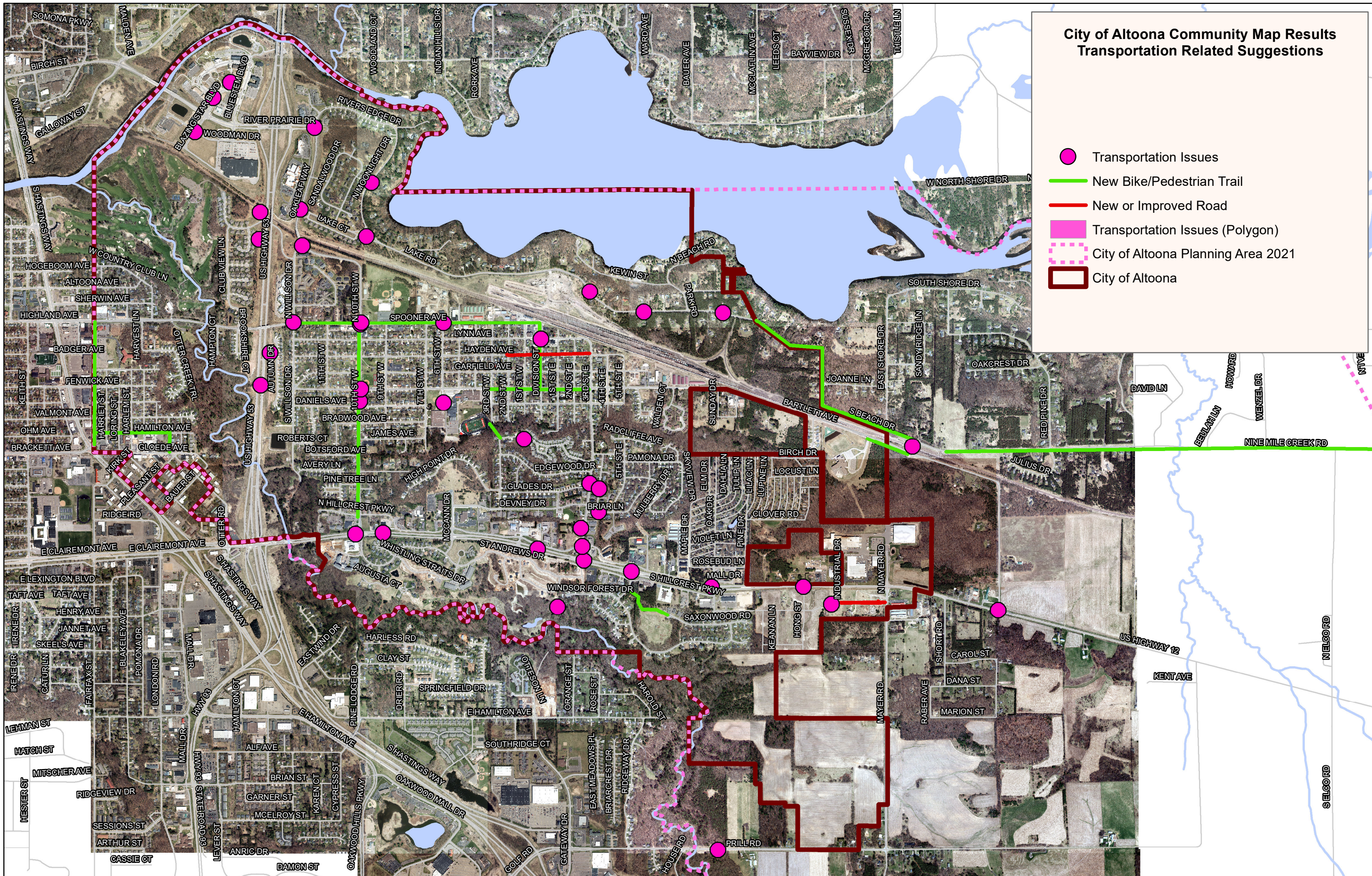
City of Altoona Community Map Results
Recreation and Preservation Suggestions

-  Gathering Places
-  Preservation Areas
-  New Bike/Pedestrian Trail
-  Mountain Bike Park
-  Public Art Installation
-  City of Altoona Planning Area 2021
-  City of Altoona



City of Altoona Community Map Results Transportation Related Suggestions

- Transportation Issues
- New Bike/Pedestrian Trail
- New or Improved Road
- Transportation Issues (Polygon)
- City of Altoona Planning Area 2021
- ▭ City of Altoona



VISIONING WORKSHOP AND SURVEY

VISIONING WORKSHOP

On August 5, 2021, a virtual Visioning and Prioritization Workshop was held to gather input on the development of the City's 2022 Comprehensive Plan. The meeting was attended by approximately 30 people. The event featured breakout group sessions on visioning and top priorities, with an interactive polling exercise to gather feedback on growth, quality of life, economic development, and infrastructure priorities.

Visioning Breakout Group Discussion

The large group was split into three different small breakout groups where a facilitated discussion took place to gather input on the community's vision for the future. Below is a summary of the feedback received during those sessions:

What do you value most about Altoona today?

- Location to bigger amenities and communities with local access to amenities and natural resources
- High quality school system
- Great place to live and do business with reasonable taxes
- City has established its own identity, but remains tight-knit, welcoming, and comfortable
- Right-sized community (not too big or small) with a high quality of life

In the future, what do you think will be the most important assets or qualities that Altoona could offer to residents or visitors?

- Lake Altoona, River Prairie, park and trail network, and recreational destinations
- High quality local school system
- Elected officials listening to the public and involving them in decisions being made
- Thoughtful mix of housing for different people and lifestyles

What do you think are the most significant challenges that the community faces today? How could we address them?

- Overcrowding, school impact of growth, and increased traffic
- Maintaining and improving the lake quality
- Sustainable taxes balanced with growth, infrastructure, and service needs
- Cost of living is increasing and there is a need to continue to improve the housing mix for all levels of income
- Improvement of bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the community, but especially along Hwy 12
- Reducing crime and utilizing technology to improve enforcement
- Expanding public transportation opportunities

What challenges do you foresee the community will face in the future (next 5 years and beyond)? How could we begin to address them now?

- Overdevelopment of residential and density
- Traffic and congestion
- Lack of industrial and commercial land in the City for jobs in the community
- Revitalize downtown and redevelopment of the former County Highway Shop
- Utilizing the money following the closure of the River Prairie TIF District
- Staffing and infrastructure concerns as the City grows
- Public health and bouncing back from the pandemic
- Climate change and planning for natural disasters
- Aging population impacting housing and workforce

What kind of community should Altoona be in the future? What would need to change in order to accomplish that?

- Quiet bedroom community that relies on Eau Claire and region
- Want to see a high-quality Lake Altoona
- Balanced growth

- Fiscal sustainability
- Sharing services and working collaboratively with neighboring communities
- Full-service community with shopping and retail options that compliments Eau Claire
- Recreational focused community that is welcoming to all and is a good neighbor

Prioritization Polling Questions

Following the breakout group sessions, the large group was guided through a polling exercise to help identify top priorities. The poll featured nine different questions, as listed below:

What mix of land use types should Altoona have in 2040?

- A. 17% Continue to maintain residential as the prominent land use in the City
- B. 8% Increase commercial/retail and office as a share of the land uses in the City
- C. 8% Increase manufacturing and light industrial as a share of land uses in the City
- D. 67% Seek a balanced mix of commercial/retail, industrial, and residential

Where should future growth be guided?

- A. 6% Outward - Develop farmland and woodland around the City
- B. 19% Inward and Upward - Add housing and businesses only within existing developed areas and encourage taller buildings to limit outward growth
- C. 75% Outward, Inward, and Upward - Balance edge development with existing infill opportunities

What types of residential neighborhood make-up should be prioritized?

- A. 33% Homogenous (format, tenure, costs, lifestyle, etc.)
- B. 27% Mixed (format, tenure, costs, lifestyle, etc.)
- C. 40% Some neighborhoods that are homogenous and some that are mixed

What type of new single-family housing development should be encouraged? (check all that apply)

- A. 20% Large lots (>15,000 sf)
- B. 53% Medium lots (10,000-15,000 sf)
- C. 13% Small lot front-loaded (7,000-10,000 sf)
- D. 20% Small lot alley-loaded (5,000-7,000 sf)
- E. 47% Balanced approach that accommodates some of each

What type of new multi-family housing development should be encouraged? (check all that apply)

- A. 57% Duplexes (2 units)
- B. 57% Townhomes (3-6 units)
- C. 21% Small multi-family (3-8 units)
- D. 29% Mid-size multi-family (8-20 units)
- E. 14% Large-size multi-family (20+ units)
- F. 36% Balanced approach that accommodates some of each

What new types of housing would you like to see incorporated into existing neighborhoods? (check all that apply)

- A. 60% Small lot infill (single-family homes on small lots)
- B. 20% Convert single-family homes into duplexes
- C. 53% Accessory dwelling units and in-family suites
- D. 47% Replace existing development with small multi-family (in appropriate locations)
- E. 20% None of the above

What is your top quality of life priority for the City to address over the next 10 years?

- A. 44% Enhance or grow recreational opportunities (parks, trails, facilities)
- B. 6% Focus efforts on increasing equity and unraveling institutional racism
- C. 0% Increase public art, artist spaces, and events
- D. 25% Advance sustainability measures, natural resource protection, and climate action

- E. 6% Walkability and bikeability (easy and safe mobility)
- F. 6% Life-long learning opportunities (library, community education programs)
- G. 6% Public health (built environment, active living, aging in place, education programs)
- H. 6% Other

What is your top economic development priority for the City to address over the next 10 years?

- A. 19% Revitalize downtown (Old Altoona)
- B. 12% Make land available for new light industrial and manufacturing
- C. 12% Foster entrepreneurship and small business opportunities
- D. 6% Increase commercial, retail, and office
- E. 0% Opportunities for home-based businesses
- F. 50% Enhance quality of life amenities and elements
- G. 0% Increase tourism
- H. 0% Other

What is your top infrastructure priority for the City to address over the next 10 years?

- A. 38% Develop and implement sustainability goals and action plan (energy, water quality, habitat, climate change, etc.)
- B. 0% Increase transit (bus) options
- C. 6% Enhance bicycle and pedestrian connections
- D. 0% Expand broadband facilities
- E. 25% More gathering spaces (parks, recreation, library)
- F. 31% Road repair and maintenance
- G. 0% Other

Wrap-Up Breakout Group Discussion

The large group was split into three different small breakout groups where a facilitated discussion took place to gather input on the top overall priority or big idea for the community's future. Below is a summary of the feedback received during those sessions:

What is your top priority for the City moving forward?

- Continue to consider this question long-term
- Focusing on infill development
- Balancing growth between infill/redevelopment and new development
- Pedestrian and bicycle connections and improvement of safety
- Long-term fiscal sustainability
- Maintaining the bedroom community with its own character and preservation of natural resources
- Don't try to be something that the City isn't – local amenities/businesses to serve its own population
- Strong education system

What did we miss in this evening's conversation?

- Adapting to technology changes
- Maintaining the top-notch public safety in the community
- Getting more people involved

What's your "big idea" for the future of Altoona? How could we accomplish it?

- Year-round sporting facilities or convention facility
- Lake Altoona destinations and gathering places

VISIONING WORKSHOP FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

Between August 5 and August 30, 2021, an online visioning survey was hosted on the City website. The survey mirrored the questions asked at the August 5th Public Workshop. In total, just over 200 people provided responses. Below is a summary of the results.

- Nearly 30% of respondents lived in Altoona for over 11 years and 26% have only lived in the City for 1-5 years.
- Over 75% of respondents owned their home.
- Only 10% of respondents were born and/or raised in Altoona.
- Most respondents of the survey were between 30-64 years old.
- Nearly all survey respondents did not participate in the August 5th Public Workshop.
- Highest valued components of Altoona today include:
 - River Prairie, parks and open space, schools, small town feel, trails and paths, community support, location, high-quality new development, safety, natural beauty and resources, and the progressive community thinking.
- Most important assets or qualities of Altoona include:
 - Schools, parks/trails/recreational amenities, job opportunities, housing options, safety, family-friendly, high quality of life, and climate reliance.
- Most significant challenges facing Altoona today include:
 - Housing affordability, rapid development, lack of planning for older parts of the community, too many multi-family developments, maintaining the small town feel, climate change, infrastructure constraints and funding, managing property taxes, racial inequity, safety, and employment opportunities.
- Most significant challenges facing Altoona in the future include:
 - Overcrowding and smart growth, thoughtful decision making, affordable housing, access to employment, school capacity and funding, climate change, losing the small town feel, increased crime, infrastructure and service capacity, and increasing inequity.
- Vision for the future:
 - Equitable, inclusive, diverse, and affordable, progressive, sustainable, innovative, small business-focused, family-friendly, safe, attractive, collaborative, close-knit community, maintaining identity, high-quality schools and education system for all, eco-friendly, visitor-friendly, and high-quality of life components.
- 62% of respondents preferred a balanced mix of land uses in 2040 (commercial/retail, office, industrial, and residential).
- Over 50% of respondents would like to see future growth happen inward and upward, while 30% preferred a balanced approach (some outward and some inward).
- Nearly 60% of respondents favored a mixed format of new residential neighborhoods (different sizes, formats, costs, lifestyles, etc.)
- In terms of new single-family housing development, 50% of respondents favored a balanced approach to lot sizes (large, medium, and small).
- Duplexes received the highest percentage of votes for the type of new multi-family most desired (64%), while over 50% of respondents favored a balanced approach (many different styles and densities).
- Small lot single-family infill was the preferred new housing type within existing residential neighborhoods (66%), but replacing existing development with small multi-family development was another preferred option receiving 46%.
- 28% of respondents voted that their top quality of life component to address over the next decade was enhance and grow parks, trails, and recreational opportunities.
- Revitalize downtown was the top economic development priority for the future (65%).
- 44% of respondents voted that developing and implementing sustainable goals and action plans were the top infrastructure priorities for the City over the next decade. Road maintenance and repair was also favored (22%).

SCENARIO PLANNING WORKSHOP AND SURVEY

SCENARIO PLANNING WORKSHOPS

On September 28 and 29, 2021, two Scenario Planning Workshops were held at the Fish House in Altoona City Park. The workshop on September 28th was held to gather input and feedback from the general public. Approximately 50 people attended. The workshop on September 29th was an opportunity for City Staff, Plan Commission members, and City Council representatives to provide feedback. Approximately 14 people attended.

The purpose of both workshops was to learn about, review, and provide feedback on different growth scenarios for the future of Altoona.

September 28th Public Workshop Summary

Future Needs

Attendees were asked to think broadly about how their needs might change between now and the next 10-20 years in respect to transportation, housing, employment, and parks and recreation. Below is a summary of responses provided:

Transportation

Increased bus service/routes, more multi-use paths, electric car charging stations, increased street trees, sound barriers along Hwy 53, lack of transportation connection on the edge of community, light rail service, safer crossings on Hwy 12, less truck traffic, airport, continue to primarily use vehicle travel, increase stop signs, no need for mass transit, and most people will be working from home.

Housing

Increased downtown housing and within the City before edge development, more affordable housing and rental options needed, assisted living facilities, density, enforce property maintenance code, allow aging residents to stay in their homes, keep development out of floodplain, more single-family and less multi-family (lower density housing), and stay the same.

Employment

Increase healthcare, tech, warehousing, manufacturing, and small businesses, may be able to work remote and live anywhere, improve downtown, most people who live in Altoona work somewhere else, and many people will be retiring.

Parks/Recreation

Need public open space (kids, families, and seniors), biking and walking trails, playfields, indoor recreational facility/public sports complex, winter activities, aquatic center, handicap accessible parks, increase pedestrian safety, public pool, a clean Lake Altoona, cross country skiing, gun range, and private yards and open space.

Other

Need School District involvement and planning, reliable high-speed internet, keep Altoona the same and don't be in direct opposition to existing development, keep historic preservation in mind, and focus within the City prior to annexation and expanding the City boundary.

Next, a presentation was provided that outlined the six different growth scenarios, how they were developed, and the pros and cons of each. Following the discussion, attendees were asked to 1) indicate which scenarios met each community goal and 2) rank each scenario upon which they preferred to see. Below are the results of each exercise:

Evaluating Scenarios Based on Community Goals

Residential Scenarios	Low Density (1)	Baseline Altoona (2)	Mixed Density (3)
Affordable neighborhoods and housing that enables people of many different ages, incomes, and lifestyles to live in Altoona	Somewhat Meets Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal
Provide a balanced mix of commercial/retail, office, industrial, and residential (diversify tax base)	Doesn't Meet Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal
Fiscally sound growth: minimize infrastructure costs	Doesn't Meet Goal/Somewhat Meets Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal	Meets Goal
Keep Altoona's identity while growing	Somewhat Meets Goal/Meets Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal	Doesn't Meet Goal
Protect natural resources, water resources, and open space	Meets Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal	Doesn't Meet Goal
Other Goals Written-In			
Maintain Schools	Doesn't Meet Goal		
Protect Neighborhoods	Somewhat Meets Goal		
Green Space, Park Space, and Trails	Meets Goal		Meets Goal
1-acre Lots	Meets Goal		

Commercial/Industrial Scenarios	Minimum (1)	Moderate (2)	Significant (3)
Provide a balanced mix of commercial/retail, office, industrial, and residential (diversify tax base)	Somewhat Meets Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal
Fiscally sound growth: minimize infrastructure costs	Somewhat Meets Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal	Doesn't Meet Goal
Keep Altoona's identity while growing	Somewhat Meets Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal	Doesn't Meet Goal
Protect natural resources, water resources, and open space	Meets Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal	Doesn't Meet Goal
Other Goals Written-In			
Warehousing buildings/light industrial		Somewhat Meets Goal	Meets Goal

Residential Scenario that met the most community goals:

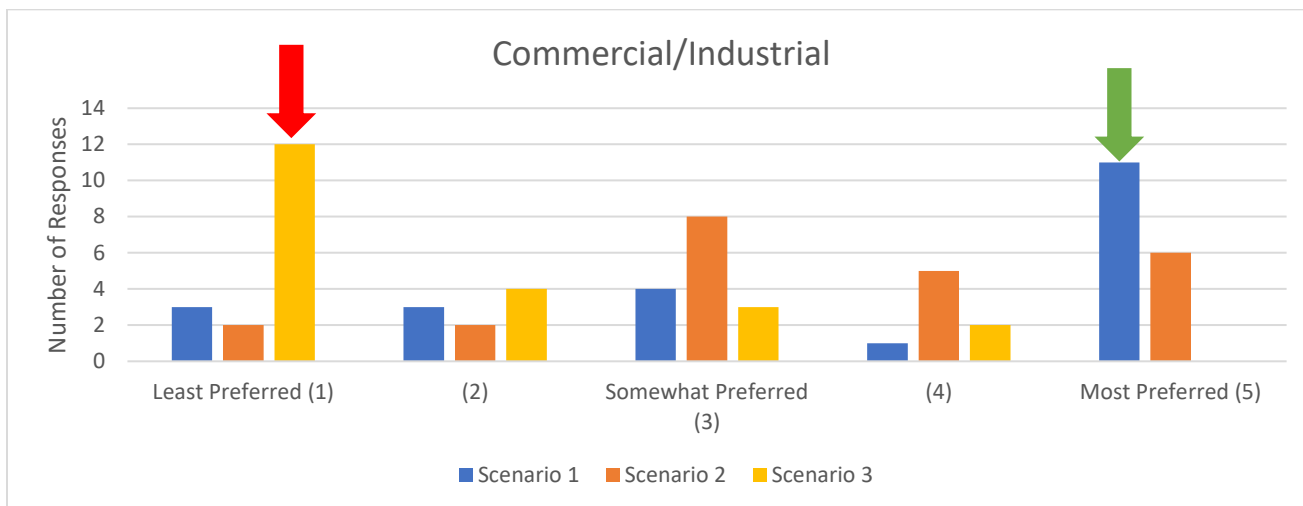
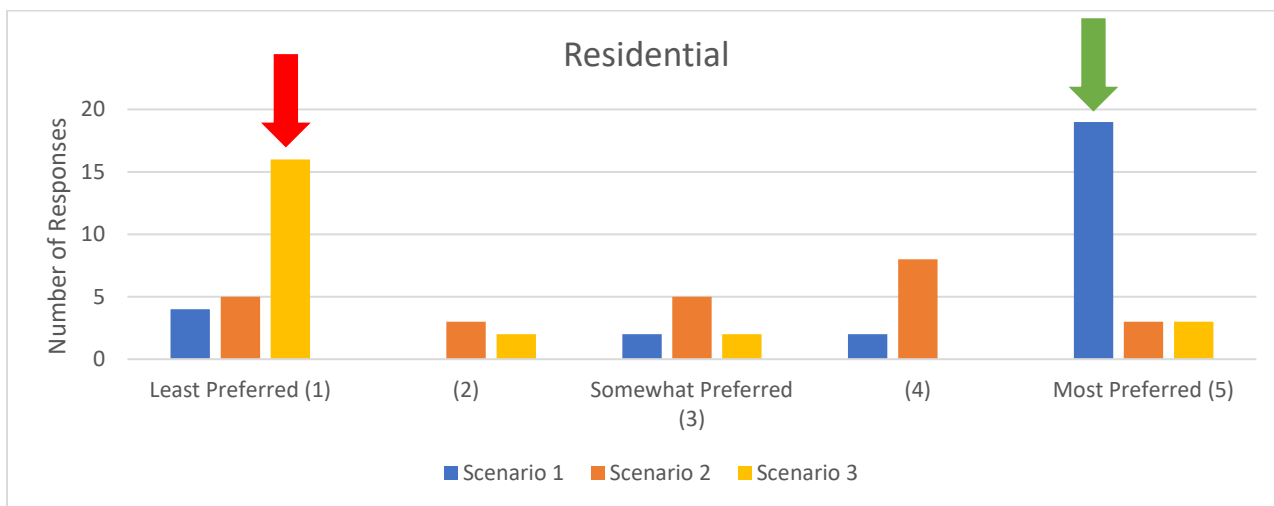
- Scenario 1 – Low Density = 7 responses
- Scenario 2 – Baseline Altoona = 5 responses
- Scenario 3 – Mixed Density = 1 response
- None of the above = 2 responses
- Balanced approach with some of each = 1 response

Commercial/Industrial Scenario that met the most community goals:

- Scenario 1 – Minimum = 4 responses
- Scenario 2 – Moderate = 5 responses
- Scenario 3 – Significant = No responses
- Balanced approach with some of each = 1 response

Preferred Scenario Ranking

Participants were asked to rate each scenario based on what they would most prefer to see in Altoona over the next 20 years (1 = least preferred, 5 = most preferred).



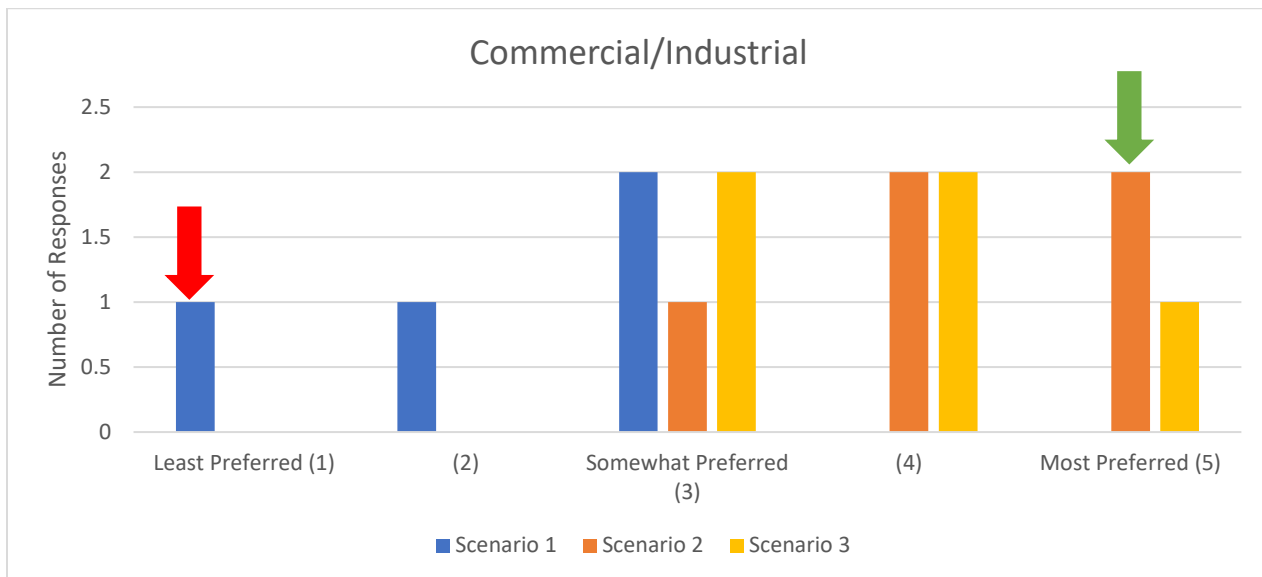
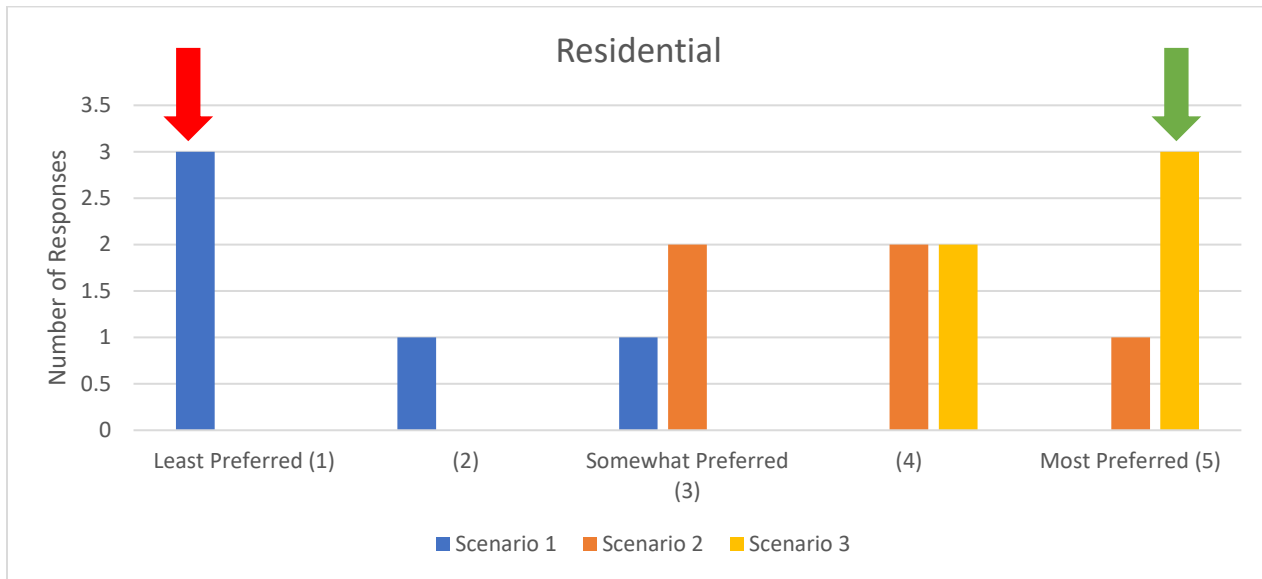
September 29th City Staff, Plan Commission, and City Council Workshop Summary
Evaluating Scenarios Based on Community Goals

Residential Scenarios	Low Density (1)	Baseline Altoona (2)	Mixed Density (3)
Affordable neighborhoods and housing that enables people of many different ages, incomes, and lifestyles to live in Altoona	Doesn't Meet Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal/Meets Goal	Meets Goal
Provide a balanced mix of commercial/retail, office, industrial, and residential (diversify tax base)	Somewhat Meets Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal/Meets Goal	Meets Goal
Fiscally sound growth: minimize infrastructure costs	Doesn't Meet Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal	Meets Goal
Keep Altoona's identity while growing	Somewhat Meets Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal/Meets Goal	Meets Goal
Protect natural resources, water resources, and open space	Somewhat Meets Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal	Meets Goal

Commercial/Industrial Scenarios	Minimum (1)	Moderate (2)	Significant (3)
Provide a balanced mix of commercial/retail, office, industrial, and residential (diversify tax base)	Somewhat Meets Goal	Meets Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal/Meets Goal
Fiscally sound growth: minimize infrastructure costs	Somewhat Meets Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal/Meets Goal
Keep Altoona's identity while growing	Somewhat Meets Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal	Doesn't Meet Goal/Meets Goal
Protect natural resources, water resources, and open space	Somewhat Meets Goal/Meets Goal	Meets Goal	Somewhat Meets Goal/Meets Goal

Preferred Scenario Ranking

Participants were asked to rate each scenario based on what they would most prefer to see in Altoona over the next 20 years (1 = least preferred, 5 = most preferred).



SCENARIO PLANNING WORKSHOPS FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

As a follow-up to the in-person Scenario Planning Workshops held on September 28th and 29th, the City produced an online survey mirroring the questions asked in the Workshops. The survey was open from October 15 through November 5, 2021.

The purpose of both the workshops and survey was to learn about, review, and provide feedback on different growth scenarios for the future of Altoona.

Online Survey Summary

A total of 202 people participated in the online survey. To note, each respondent did not choose to answer every question. Below are some of the demographic information of the people who participated.

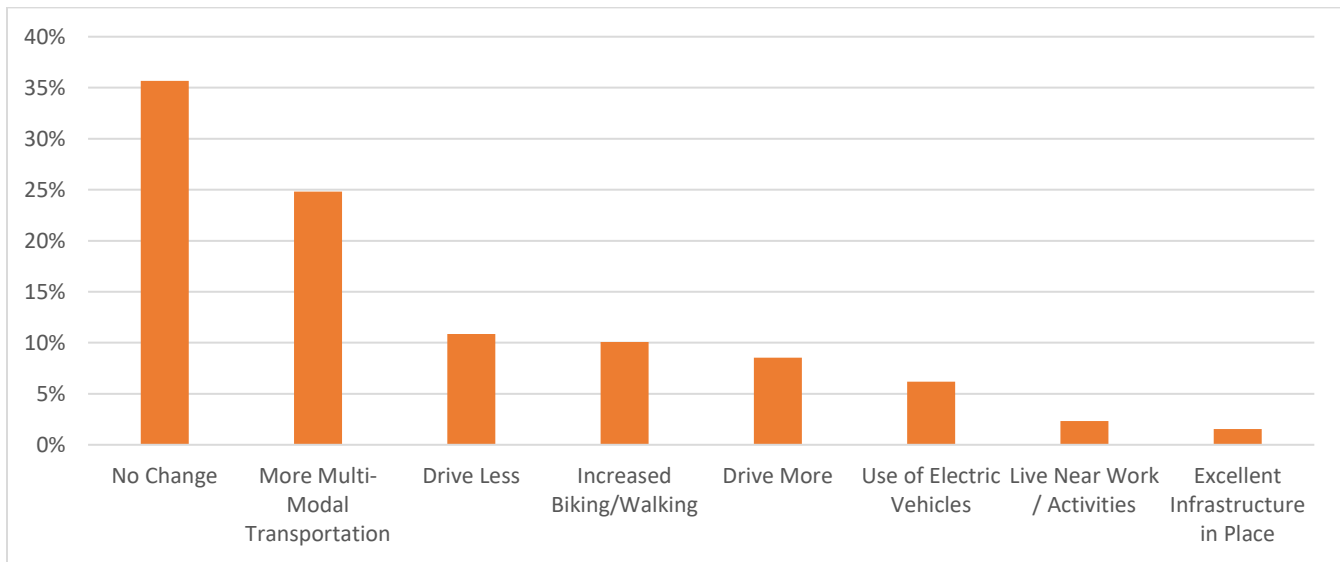
- 64% lived in Altoona, 25% lived in the Town of Washington, 7% lived in the City of Eau Claire, and 4% other
- Nearly 60% of people have lived in Altoona for over 5 years

- 83% of people did not grow up in Altoona
- 53% of people were under the age of 50 years old
- 86% of people own a home
- 87% of people identified as White or Caucasian
- 52% were female

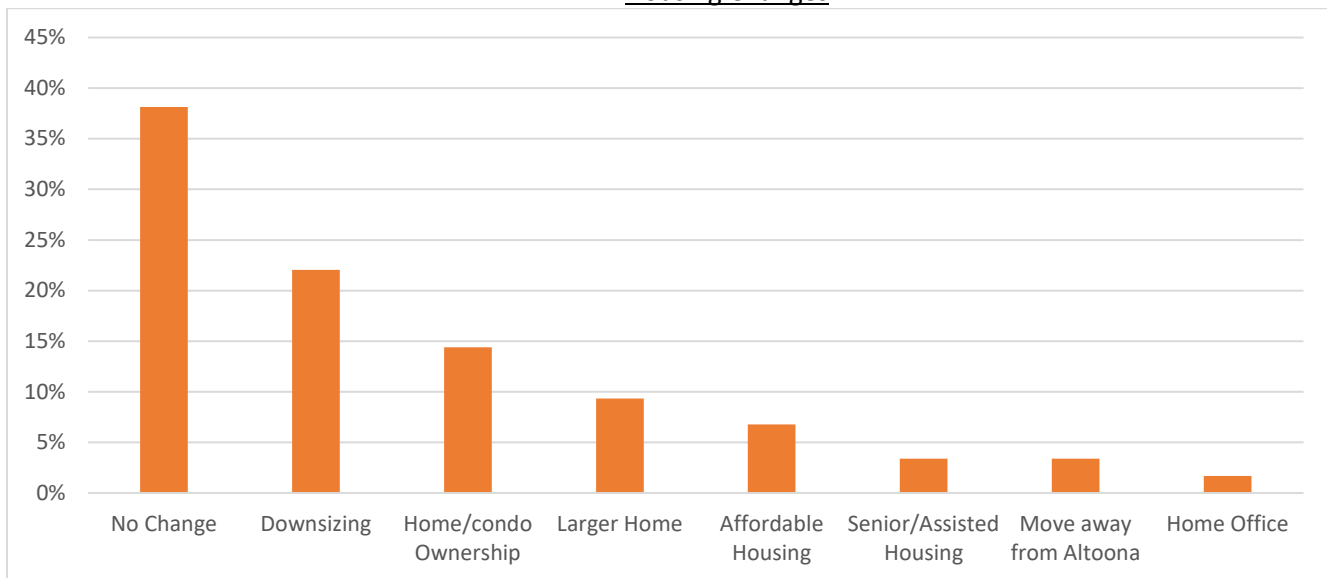
Future Needs

Attendees were asked to think broadly about how their needs might change over the next 10-20 years in respect to transportation, housing, employment, and parks and recreation. Below is a summary compilation of written responses provided:

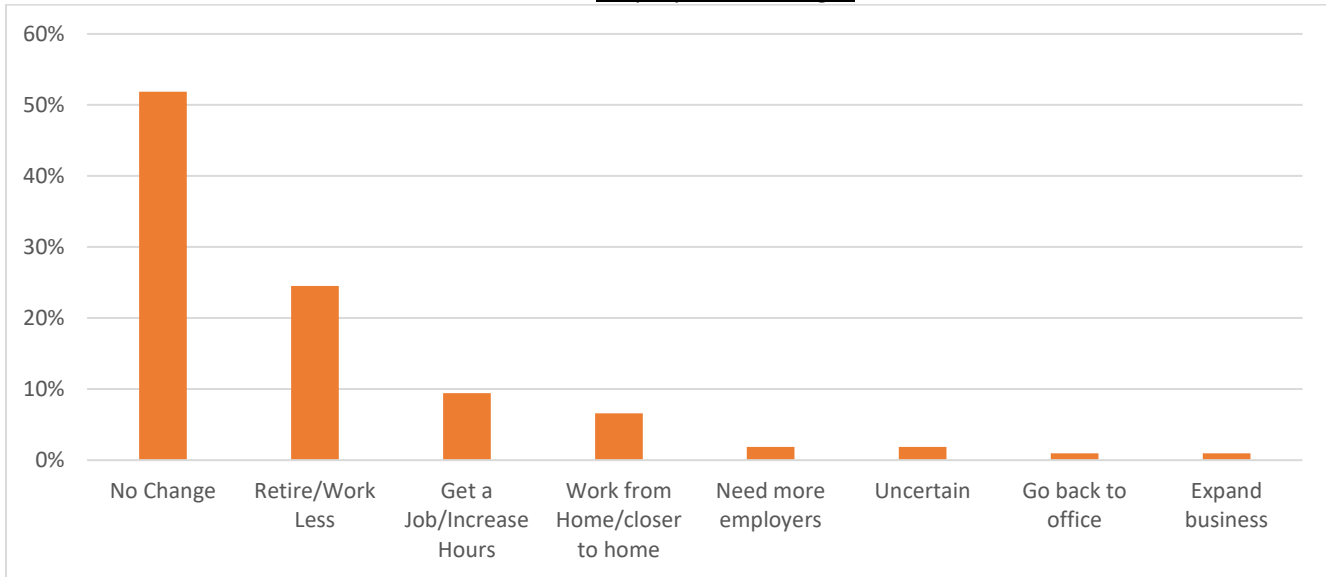
Transportation Changes



Housing Changes



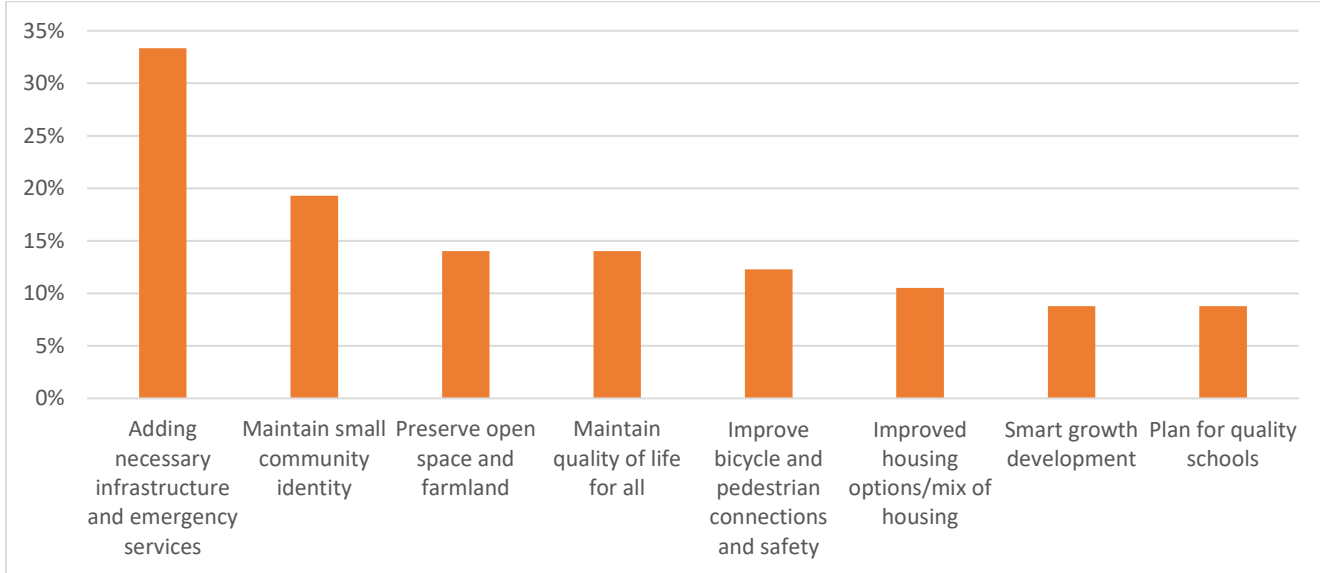
Employment Changes



Parks/Recreation Changes



Other Changes



Evaluating Scenarios Based on Community Goals

Residential Scenarios	Low Density (1)	Baseline Altoona (2)	Mixed Density (3)
Affordable neighborhoods and housing that enables people of many different ages, incomes, and lifestyles to live in Altoona	Doesn't Meet Goal (55%)	Doesn't Meet Goal (49%)	Meets Goal (40%)
Provide a balanced mix of commercial/retail, office, industrial, and residential (diversify tax base)	Doesn't Meet Goal (62%)	Doesn't Meet Goal (53%)	Somewhat Meets Goal (36%)
Fiscally sound growth: minimize infrastructure costs	Doesn't Meet Goal (55%)	Doesn't Meet Goal (49%)	Meets Goal (45%)
Keep Altoona's identity while growing	Doesn't Meet Goal (39%)	Doesn't Meet Goal (41%)	Somewhat Meets Goal (48%)
Protect natural resources, water resources, and open space	Doesn't Meet Goal (49%)	Doesn't Meet Goal (55%)	Meets Goal (46%)

Write-In Responses:

Summarized Written Response	Number of Responses	Response From
Maintain small community	6	Scenario 1
Maintain small community size	4	Scenario 2
No more apartments	4	Scenario 3
Attract People	3	Scenario 1
Plan for needed infrastructure	3	Scenario 2
Maintain small community	3	Scenario 3
Lower taxes, increased property values	3	Scenario 1
Plan for needed infrastructure; new well	3	Scenario 1
Climate Change	2	Scenario 1
Quality of life	2	Scenario 1
Climate change	2	Scenario 2
Preserve open space	2	Scenario 2
Preserve open space and natural beauty	2	Scenario 3
Attract people	2	Scenario 3
Climate change	2	Scenario 3
Community Library	1	Scenario 1
Affordable house	1	Scenario 2
Quality of Life	1	Scenario 2
Quality schools	1	Scenario 2
Plan for needed infrastructure	1	Scenario 3
Quality schools	1	Scenario 3
Quality of life	1	Scenario 3

Commercial/Industrial Scenarios	Minimum (1)	Moderate (2)	Significant (3)
Provide a balanced mix of commercial/retail, office, industrial, and residential (diversify tax base)	Somewhat Meets Goal (48%)	Somewhat Meets Goal (50%)	Somewhat Meets Goal (41%)
Fiscally sound growth: minimize infrastructure costs	Somewhat Meets Goal (39%)	Somewhat Meets Goal (45%)	Doesn't Meet Goal (47%)
Keep Altoona's identity while growing	Somewhat Meets Goal (38%)	Doesn't Meet Goal (41%)	Doesn't Meet Goal (60%)
Protect natural resources, water resources, and open space	Doesn't Meet Goal (40%)	Doesn't Meet Goal (45%)	Doesn't Meet Goal (63%)

Write-In Responses:

Summarized Written Response	Number of Responses	Response From
Maintain small town community	4	Scenario 1
Maintain small town community	3	Scenario 2
Maintain small town community	3	Scenario 3
Slow or no growth	3	Scenario 3
Climate change	2	Scenario 1
Climate action and change	2	Scenario 3
Preserve open space and natural beauty	2	Scenario 1
Maintain green space and natural beauty	2	Scenario 2
Climate change	2	Scenario 2
Attract people	1	Scenario 1
Quality of life	1	Scenario 1
Plan for needed infrastructure	1	Scenario 1
Attract people	1	Scenario 2
Quality of life	1	Scenario 2
Utilize rail line	1	Scenario 2
Preserve open space	1	Scenario 3
Quality of life	1	Scenario 3
Attract people	1	Scenario 3

Residential Scenario that met the most community goals:

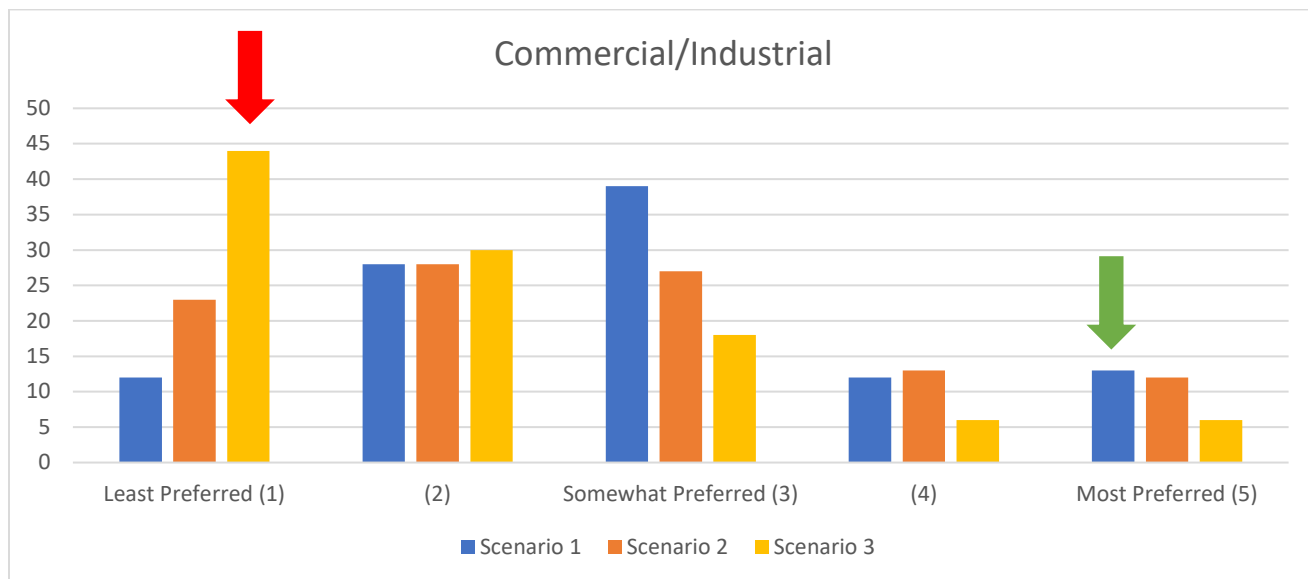
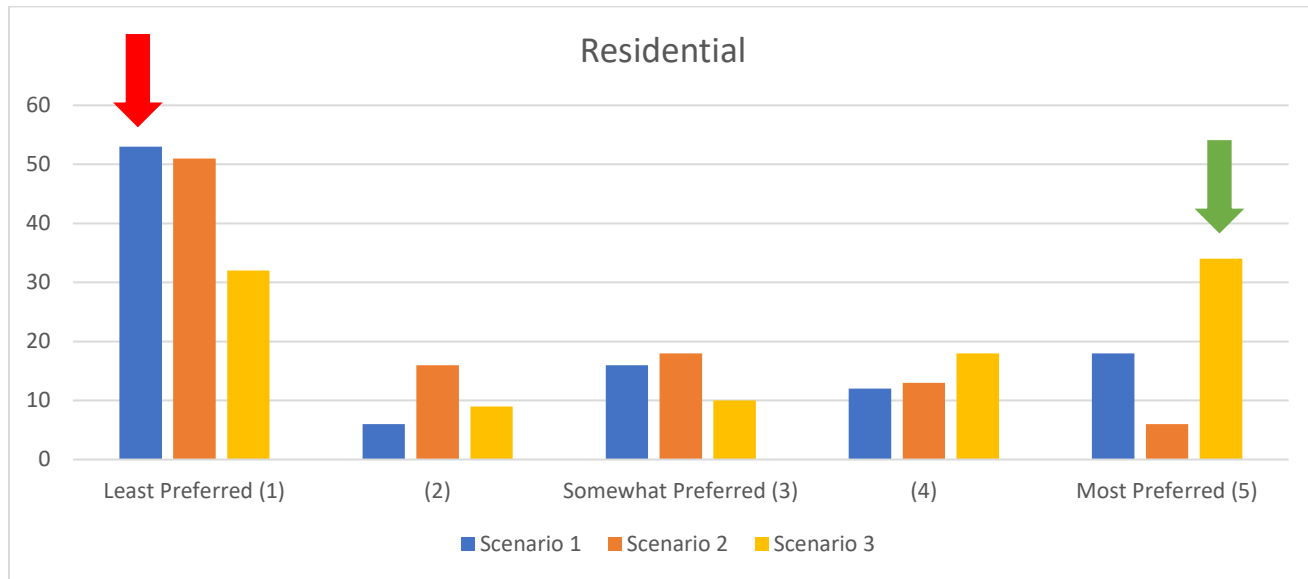
- Scenario 1 – Low Density = 23%
- Scenario 2 – Baseline Altoona = 17%
- Scenario 3 – Mixed Density = 43%
- None of the above = 9%
- Undecided = 7%

Commercial/Industrial Scenario that met the most community goals:

- Scenario 1 – Minimum = 42%
- Scenario 2 – Moderate = 28%
- Scenario 3 – Significant = 5%
- None of the above = 11%
- Undecided = 14%

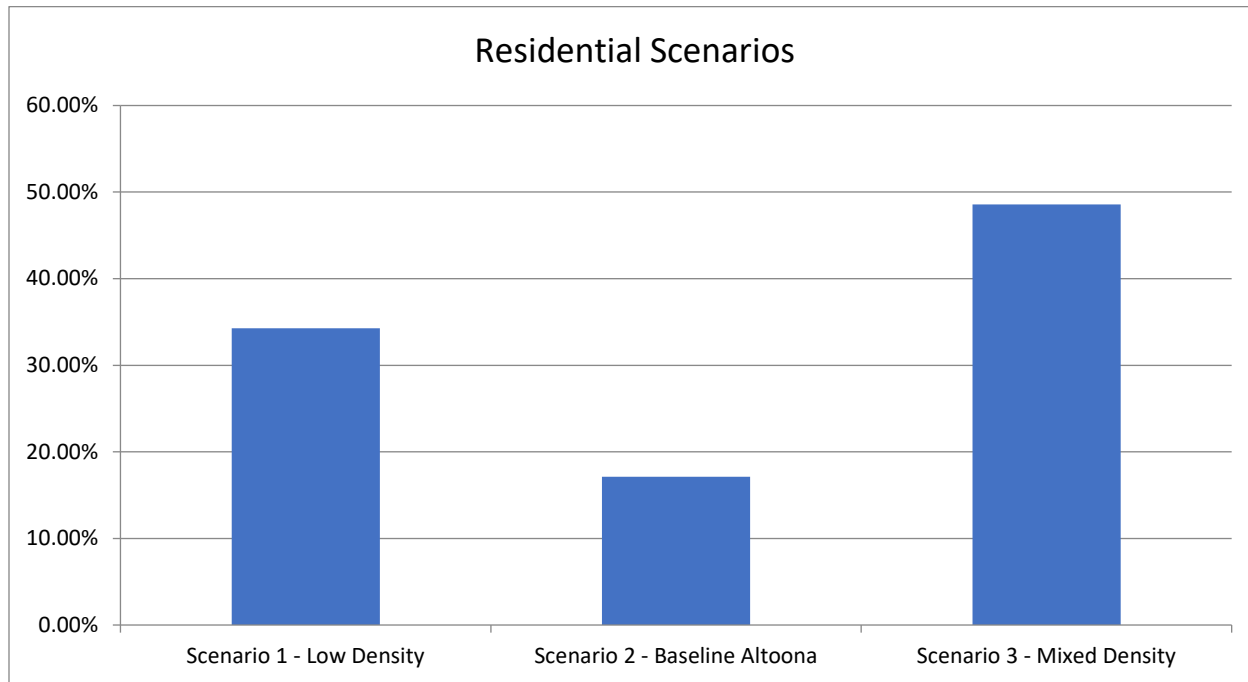
Level of Support Scenario Ranking

Participants were asked to rate each scenario based the level of support they have for each (1 = least preferred, 5 = most preferred).



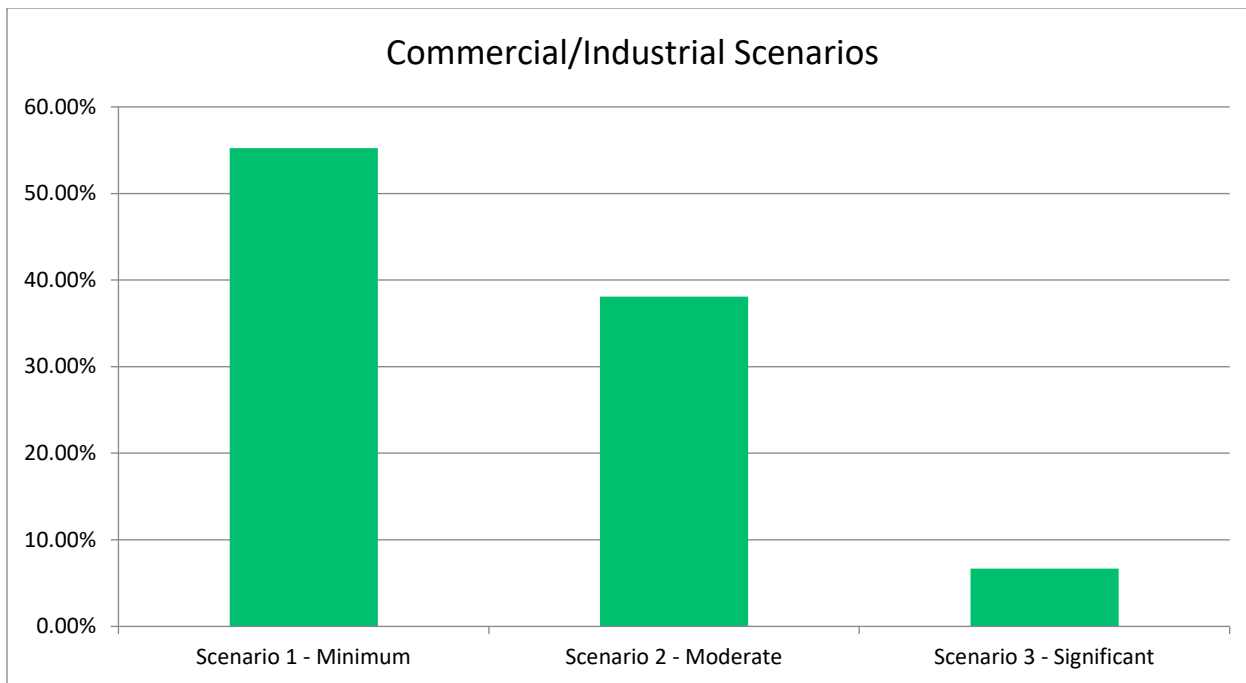
Preferred Scenario Ranking

Participants were asked which scenario they would most prefer to see in Altoona over the next 20 years.



Write-In Responses:

Summarized Written Response	Number of Responses
Increase housing options with walkable neighborhoods	13
Maintain small town community	11
Keep city development in the city	8
Compact growth with diverse housing types	7
More balanced growth; too many apartments	7
Keep housing available and affordable	6
More quality /balanced growth	6
Smart growth; prevent sprawl	5
Single family development with large lots	5
More live/work/play development (River Prairie)	4
Maintain beauty of the environment	4
Build up the downtown	3
Promote long term family and residents	3
Less growth; lower taxes	3
Maintain high quality of living	2
More sustainable development	1



Write-In Responses:

Summarized Written Response	Number of Responses
Keep development in the city; preserve town & farmland	16
Focus development downtown	9
More job opportunities	8
Small business development; no big boxes	7
More live/work type development (River Prairie)	5
Commercial growth without sacrificing identity	5
Need business taxes to offset residential taxes	4
Grow vertical; less land consumption	4
Unsure. Need more information	4
Altoona should be a bedroom community	3
Focus on redevelopment	2
Don't need more commercial space	1
Heavy industrial belongs away from housing	1
Decrease traffic congestion	1
Plan for future work from home culture	1

The final question provided respondents with the opportunity to write-in any additional comments, thoughts, and ideas. Below is a summary of those responses.

Summarized Written Response	Number of Responses
Slow down building; smart growth development (grow vertical)	18
Maintain small town community	6
Maintain green open space and parks	5
Mix of single-family housing options (affordable, quality)	3
Preserve Farmland	5
Protect Town Land	4
Develop Downtown (more office and retail)	3
Plan for needed infrastructure for excess development	3
More sustainable development	3
Senior assisted living and services	2
Less multi-family apartment development	2
Maintain strong library system	2
Traffic safety; streetlights	2
Increase walkable neighborhoods	1
Decrease property taxes	1
More living wage job creation	1
Maintain quality school system	1
Utilize rail line for passenger rail	1
Research needed for noise barrier	1

DRAFT REVIEW MEETINGS

Between the fall of 2021 and the spring of 2022, multiple City staff meeting were held to revise and refine the draft plan. In January, a Plan Commission meeting was held to review and discuss the draft first five chapters of the plan. The meeting centered around key policy decisions, in particular the draft Future Land Use Map. In February, an additional Plan Commission meeting was held to review and discuss the draft second five chapters of the plan. This meeting also centered on key policy decisions with a particular focus on housing, economic development, and the implementation action plan. Following both meetings and additional City staff review, the plan was updated to reflect key policy decisions and recommended changes. This document was distributed to the public in April 2022, in advance of the Public Open House and Joint Plan Commission and City Council review meeting.

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

**JOINT PLAN COMMISSION AND CITY COUNCIL
REVIEW MEETING**

PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION MEETING

DRAFT

City of Altoona

Neighborhood Plan

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PLAN FOUNDATION

The East Neighborhood Plan creates a planning framework to guide the implementation of this key growth area for the City of Altoona. Designed to facilitate a wide range of diverse housing options, vibrant open spaces, and neighborhood serving commercial uses set within an urban design that promotes active transportation and fiscal sustainability, this new emerging neighborhood will balance growth opportunities while facilitating sustainable initiatives for the City, as called for in the 2022 Comprehensive Plan and 2019 Housing Action Plan. Below are the three established planning lenses from the City's Comprehensive Plan that were, in tandem, used to guide the development of the East Neighborhood Plan. They include:

- **Climate Action:** Proactive and urgent action to mitigate climate change and improve the community's resiliency to the impacts of an ever-changing climate.
- **Social Equity:** Striving to achieve social equity through creating equitable access and quality of services and opportunities, addressing disparities in health, wealth, and safety outcomes, and the engagement and inclusion of all residents.
- **Economic Vitality:** Maintaining fiscal sustainability through efficient, responsible, and informed public investments, service improvements, and enhancement of quality of life amenities.



PLAN GOALS

The design and implementation of the East Neighborhood are guided by the following key principals which are interwoven throughout the neighborhood concept:

- Establish an ambitious vision that is also pragmatic in nature, taking into considerations realistic market conditions.
- This neighborhood will be both contemporary and timeless in urban design.
- Housing types will include a variety of options, focusing on diverse and affordable forms, scales, price points consistent with regionally representative incomes, and occupancy types ("missing middle") within sustainable walkable neighborhoods.
- Commercial uses and building forms will be context sensitive for neighborhood livability as well as highway-frontage functionality.
- Parkland will be strategically and intentionally located to be a focal point for residents.
- The transportation system will be arranged for efficiency, resilience, and convenience of multi-modal transportation options, taking into account long-term considerations regarding maintenance and potential public transportation access.
- The public realm acts as an instrumental component of the neighborhood featuring welcoming, enjoyable, walkable, and multi-functional spaces, integrating green infrastructure and ease of mobility.
- Environmental stewardship, including zero-net-energy and carbon neutrality, are integral elements of the neighborhood.

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN PRINCIPALS

Reflecting the goals, vision, and strategies of the City’s Comprehensive Plan, the neighborhood is designed to implement Traditional Neighborhood Design Principals that guide overall neighborhood character, building characteristics, and sub-neighborhood configurations.

Integrate a diversity of high-quality housing types to accommodate a variety of lifestyles and age groups.

- Ensure that a variety of housing types are included and arranged in a compact and interconnected form. Particular attention should be paid to the scale of buildings, walking distances, and the design of other neighborhood features such as streetlights and signage.

Ensure the long-term preservation of community character and high-quality of life.

- Design neighborhoods around community gathering places such as parks, public squares, outdoor dining establishments, schools, churches, and other community facilities
- Integrate environmental features as common open spaces for active or passive recreation and public gathering spots.

Provide housing, parks, and schools within walking distance of shops, services, and jobs.

- Integrate neighborhood-scale commercial and office uses and other small-scale community facilities in appropriate locations, generally along busier streets and intersections to draw on broader market.
- Create attractive and active streetscapes that incorporate site and building design strategies such as decreased setbacks, front porches, balconies, and other architectural features to create a safe, pleasant walking environment.

Blend multi-modal transportation options into neighborhood design.

- Design neighborhoods to facilitate pedestrian movement within and between neighborhoods. Provide sidewalks along all streets and multi-use trails in the environmental corridors and parks.
- Interconnect nearly all streets both within the neighborhood and to existing and future adjoining neighborhoods.
- Accommodate on-street parking and promote narrower streets to calm traffic and increase pedestrian safety.

Preserve environmental systems that define, sustain, and connect neighborhoods and communities.

- Integrate environmental features into the neighborhood as common open spaces for active or passive recreation, public gathering spots, or flood protection and stormwater management. Provide adequate vegetated buffers between development and natural features.

Reduce demand for resources needed for transportation, public infrastructure, services, and housing.

- Use sustainability and public health as lenses in which all new neighborhoods are designed.
- Integrate sustainable best practices such as on-site stormwater management, renewable energy production, waste reduction, and energy efficient fixtures and building materials.
- Both the short-term and long-term public health impacts should be carefully considered through multi-modal transportation opportunities, mixing of compatible land uses, and prevention of isolated, standalone neighborhoods that are not fully integrated into the larger community.
- Integrate stormwater management systems from lot to neighborhood focused on infiltration and filtration systems from roof to release point.
- Explore opportunities for distributed energy systems on a lot and neighborhood basis.
- Encourage green building construction techniques.
- Utilize efficient mixed use development patterns and housing formats to reduce land consumption and foster multi-modal walkable neighborhoods.

EAST NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Building on the goals and design principals described above, the following outlines each of the East Neighborhood Plan's key components. Together, these components aim to advance the City's vision and goals in the eventual build-out of the neighborhood.

Non-Residential Land Uses

The East Neighborhood Plan provides opportunities for residents in meeting some daily needs by providing space for future office, commercial, institutional, and mixed-use land uses.

- Commercial, employment, and institutional uses should be well-integrated into the neighborhood to serve both neighborhood and community wide needs, connected via multi-modal transportation opportunities.
- Commercial nodes are intended to leverage the regional exposure on USH12, but maintain neighborhood scale and character.
- Design of the commercial uses should balance vehicular and pedestrian access with a focus on creating urban environments that support the adjoining neighborhood.



Residential Land Uses

The East Neighborhood Plan incorporates a range of residential options to provide diversity in housing choice. Development formats include single-family, two-family, and multi-family options at different scales, forms, price points, and occupancy status.

Two-Family and Multi-Family

In various formats and locations, the East Neighborhood Plan includes multi-family opportunities that aim to:

- Maintain neighborhood character through high-quality architecture and materials, pedestrian-focused streetscapes, and a variety of scales.
- Integrate twinhomes/duplexes, four units, and townhomes, and interior hallway apartments to a variety of housing choices within the neighborhood while transitioning from higher density uses.
- Include a range of price points in both owner occupied and rental formats.
- Architectural character and site designs should focus on creating pedestrian focused environments with first floor entrances and appropriately scaled residential architecture that reinforces the pedestrian streetscape.



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Single Family

There are also opportunities provided for different single-family options based on size, scale, and configuration. A full range of formats and price points within single-family homes provides opportunities for time home buyers, people looking to move up, luxury buyers, and residents seeking to downsize.

- Alley-loaded configuration: This format orients the door and porch of the home to the street, with a minimal front setback to either the public street park space. Each would also have a rear-loaded garage facing a public or private alley along the property line. This configuration provides opportunities for narrower and smaller-size lots, can reduce land costs, offer a new product in the regional marketplace, and increase densities.
- Conventional configuration: This format reflects traditional configuration of single-family homes in Altoona. The front door faces the public street an attached or detached garage on either side of structure also facing (with access to) the public street. This configuration would require larger and wider lots than the alley-loaded option, but with well-planned building design and setbacks, can achieve a desirable option for portions of the future neighborhood while broadening the opportunities for diversity of housing formats and price points.



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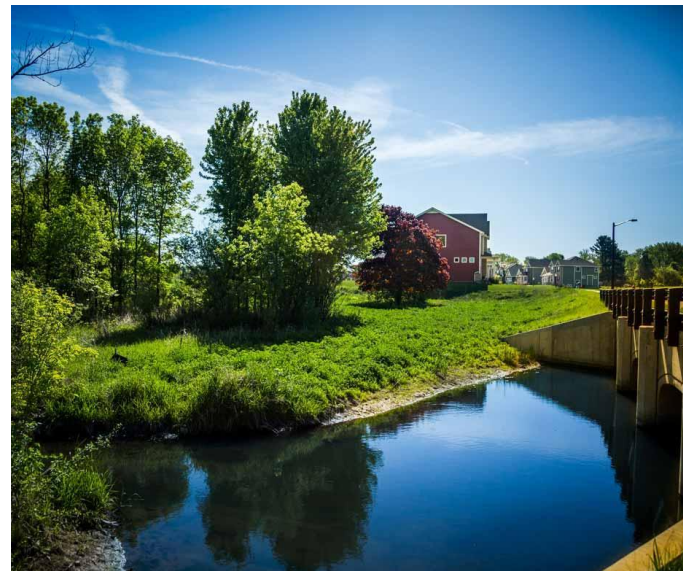
Zoning Requirements

The single-family, two-family, and multi-family options could be accomplished through the City's existing zoning ordinance. In some instances, this may be accomplished through the standard zoning districts, but in other formats, this may require the use of a Planned Unit Development. The Comprehensive Plan recommends a host of zoning amendments for the City to pursue through the implementation of the plan. If amended, this could allow all desired building formats and types in the East Neighborhood Plan without the need for a Planned Unit Development. Each are detailed further within the City's Comprehensive Plan.

PARKS & OPEN SPACE

A critical component of the East Neighborhood Plan is the integration of parks and open spaces. This neighborhood is envisioned to include some higher density building types, which emphasizes the need for well-connected park and open space where traditional on-site private amenities are not available. The plan features:

- The buffer and preservation of natural features located on the property that serve to provide connected green space corridors and natural habitats within the neighborhood.
- Developed neighborhood parks within walking distance of all future residents that are connected via sidewalks and a planned off-street trail network.
- A community park that serves to protect the former landfill site, while featuring robust open space and future amenities to serve the entire development.



TRANSPORTATION

The East Neighborhood Plan is designed to provide multi-modal connectivity both within the development itself and to the rest of the community. This can be accomplished through:

- Street cross section diversity that provides narrower local streets for traffic calming and added pedestrian and bicycle safety, in addition to wider streets for heavier vehicle traffic volumes, potential public transportation accommodations, and opportunities for on-street bicycle facilities. Narrow alleys are also identified to directly serve individual blocks and properties.
- The street layout is intended to reflect a traditional grid pattern, dispersing traffic volumes more evenly throughout the neighborhood that helps create a sense of place, safer intersections, and better overall connectivity. There are also multiple access points planned to adjacent arterial roadways and future access points to extend into future growth areas. Together, this serves to integrate the new neighborhood within the rest of the existing and future urban fabric.
- Promote active transportation options throughout. The neighborhood design is intended to provide and promote walking and bicycling options to and from destinations within the development and the greater City-wide network.
- The neighborhood street grid illustrates two alternative street extensions to the east to accommodate important interconnectivity with future growth areas. These connections will require additional engineering study to determine the extent that culverts or bridges may be needed to span the existing creek and drainage corridors.



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AT ALL LEVELS

Stormwater management within the neighborhood is focused on infiltrating and treating stormwater runoff throughout the neighborhood; from rain drop to release. The system should be designed with infiltration and filtration throughout the neighborhood, focused on a distributed network of differing scales of treatment.

- **Rain Gardens:** Each lot should have a private rain garden that will collectively produce substantial neighborhood and community environmental benefits. These rain gardens will absorb and filter stormwater runoff, while also enhancing the aesthetic character of the neighborhood.
- **Rain Barrels:** Each home should have a barrel that will capture rainwater for gardening or other related needs. This will also help prevent rain from becoming stormwater runoff and reduce municipal water usage.
- **Terrace Rain of Gardens:** Rain gardens on terraces of residential streets can provide micro-scale infiltration for the neighborhood. These facilities would be maintained by the adjoining homeowners.
- **Neighborhood-Wide Bio-Swales:** Bio-swales have tremendous



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environmental benefits and could be integrated along the rear lot line of homes within the neighborhood or within public open space, where feasible.

- **Neighborhood Median Swale:** Right-of-way medians in the neighborhood offer additional opportunities for regional treatment of stormwater runoff, filtration, and infiltration.
- **Permeable Pavement:** Porous or permeable pavement acts to allow some stormwater to infiltrate directly into the soil below, further reducing volumes during precipitation events. This practice could be utilized for driveways or parking areas.
- **Underground Detention Systems:** Within the larger developments of the neighborhood, there may be opportunities for the use of underground detention systems to hold stormwater runoff during large events that acts to slowly release water into the site's larger system.
- **Regional Detention and Infiltration Basins:** A regional system acts in concert with the smaller stormwater mitigation techniques identified above to capture, treat, and infiltrate runoff from the entire neighborhood. The East Neighborhood Plan identifies several potential sites where regional facilities could be located.

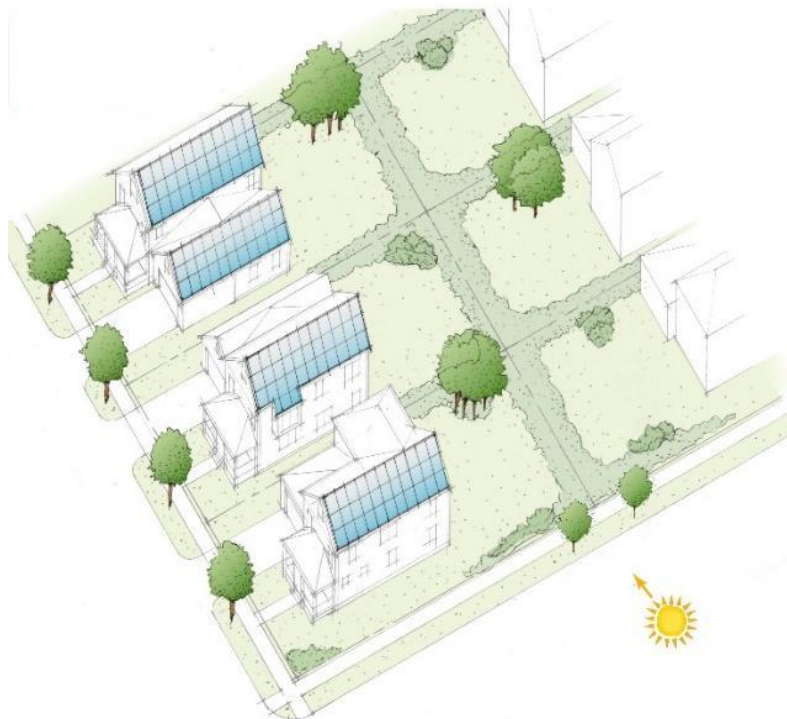


ALTERNATIVE ENERGY INTEGRATION

The opportunity to integrate distributed energy within the neighborhood is integral to reducing the environmental impact of the neighborhood development. Systems such as solar panels, geothermal, and electric vehicle charging should be evaluated for each development and building within the neighborhood.

On-Site Solar Panels: Individual buildings can provide their own energy supply or offset a portion of their energy demands by utilizing on-site solar panels. Below are recommendations for the future placement of on-site solar panels within the East Neighborhood:

- **Street and house orientation:** Orient streets and homes to maximize available sunlight exposure where and yard vegetation does not impede panels.
- **Roof and solar orientation:** The roof should run east/west with solar panels on the south facing slope to maximize sunlight exposure.
- **Neighborhood solar installations:** Additional solar installations could be achieved through exploration of solar lighting, solar shade/panel arrays for surface parking lots, or integration larger scale building roof systems for multi-family, commercial, or institutional uses.



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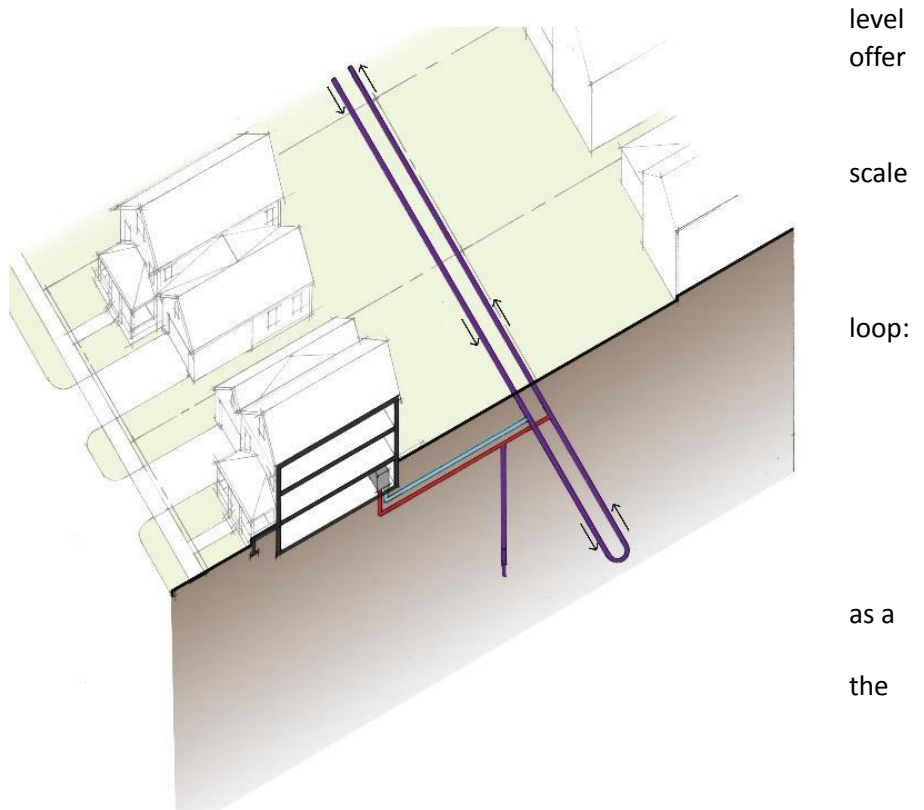
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- Site vegetation: Plant low growing vegetation to prevent shading of solar panels in select areas.
- Street trees: Plant canopy trees where they will not shade solar panels or utilize understory trees in select areas.

Geothermal: Potential neighborhood geothermal heating and cooling networks an environmentally sustainable option for reducing the neighborhood's carbon footprint. Exploration of economies of and/or municipal participation could facilitate a pilot study in the neighborhood.

- Neighborhood heating and cooling
Place the neighborhood level heating/cooling loop at the rear of property. This loop system is connected to each lot system and operated by a neighborhood "central pump" system. The upfront costs and operation of the neighborhood wide system could potentially be operated monthly fee/quasi-utility allowing the upfront costs to be spread out over life of the system.
- Vertical wells: Each lot can accent the neighborhood system with individual on-site vertical wells.
- Connecting piping: Each home can also be connected to the neighborhood system through private looping on each individual property.
- Heat pump and exchanger: Each home's heating and cooling systems are supplied through a private heat pump/exchanger, offering sustainable heating and cooling with lower utility costs. The energy demands of the private lot heat pump could be offset through pairing with on-site solar energy, as described above.



Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Systems: As the number of electric vehicles continues to increase, there are opportunities within the neighborhood to integrate EV charging systems.

- Residential: EV ready residential uses could either supply up front charging systems within the garage or parking area, or install dry conduit for pre-plumbed circuit extensions to accommodate easy installation in the future.
- Non-residential: Individual surface parking lots should provide designated areas for on-site EV charging station systems or, at a minimum, construct the conduit that could accommodate easy installation in the future.



SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ACTION

One of the City's key goals of this plan is to provide a sustainable and climate resilient new neighborhood in Altoona. As described above, this has also been a lens in which the City's Comprehensive Plan and the East Neighborhood Plan were developed. The design of the neighborhood was predicated on providing diverse housing options, mixed land uses, an interconnected multi-modal transportation network, protection of natural resources, plentiful parks and open space, adequate stormwater management, and alternative energy potential. Through the implementation of this plan, this vision can be accomplished.



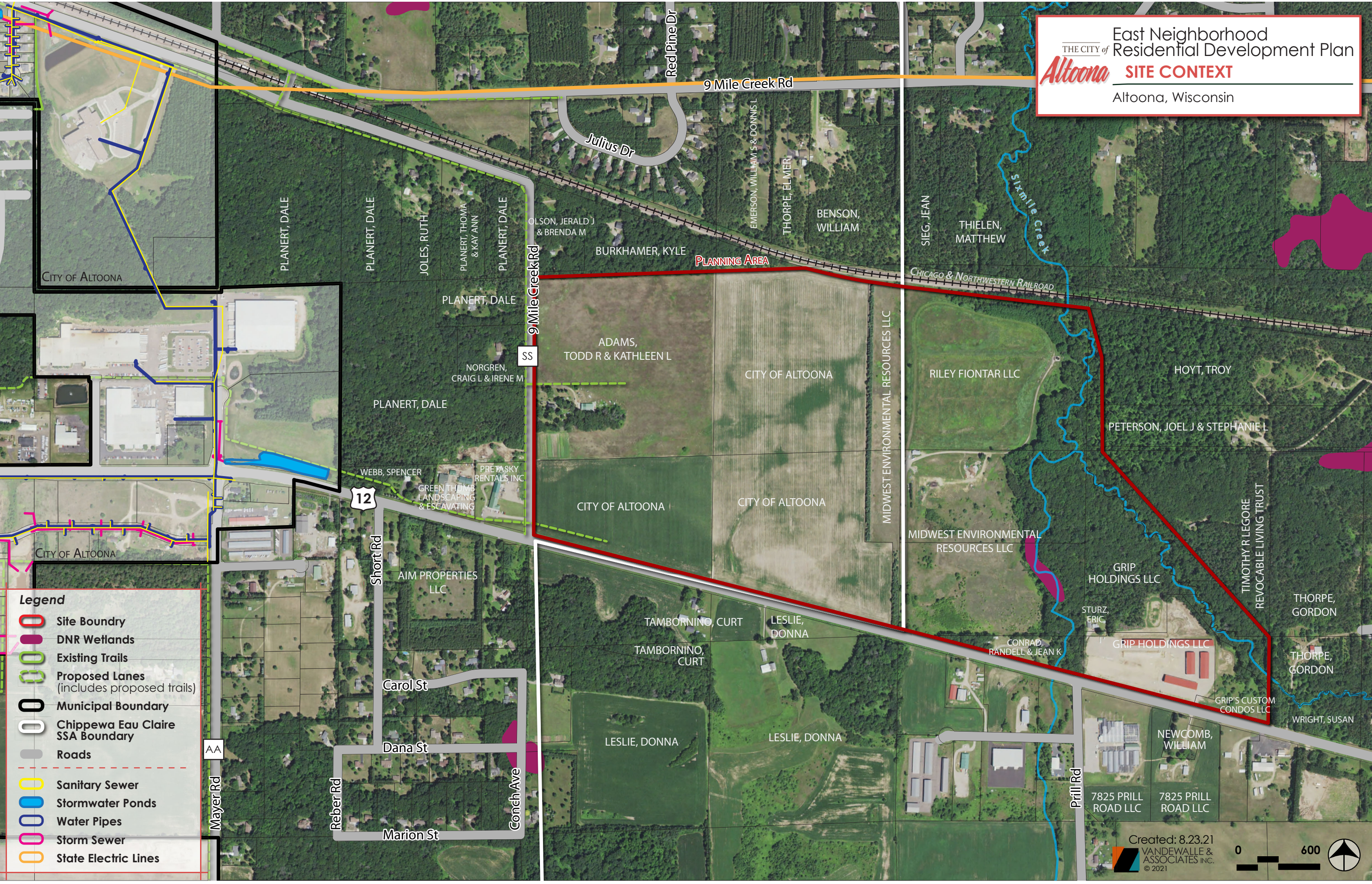
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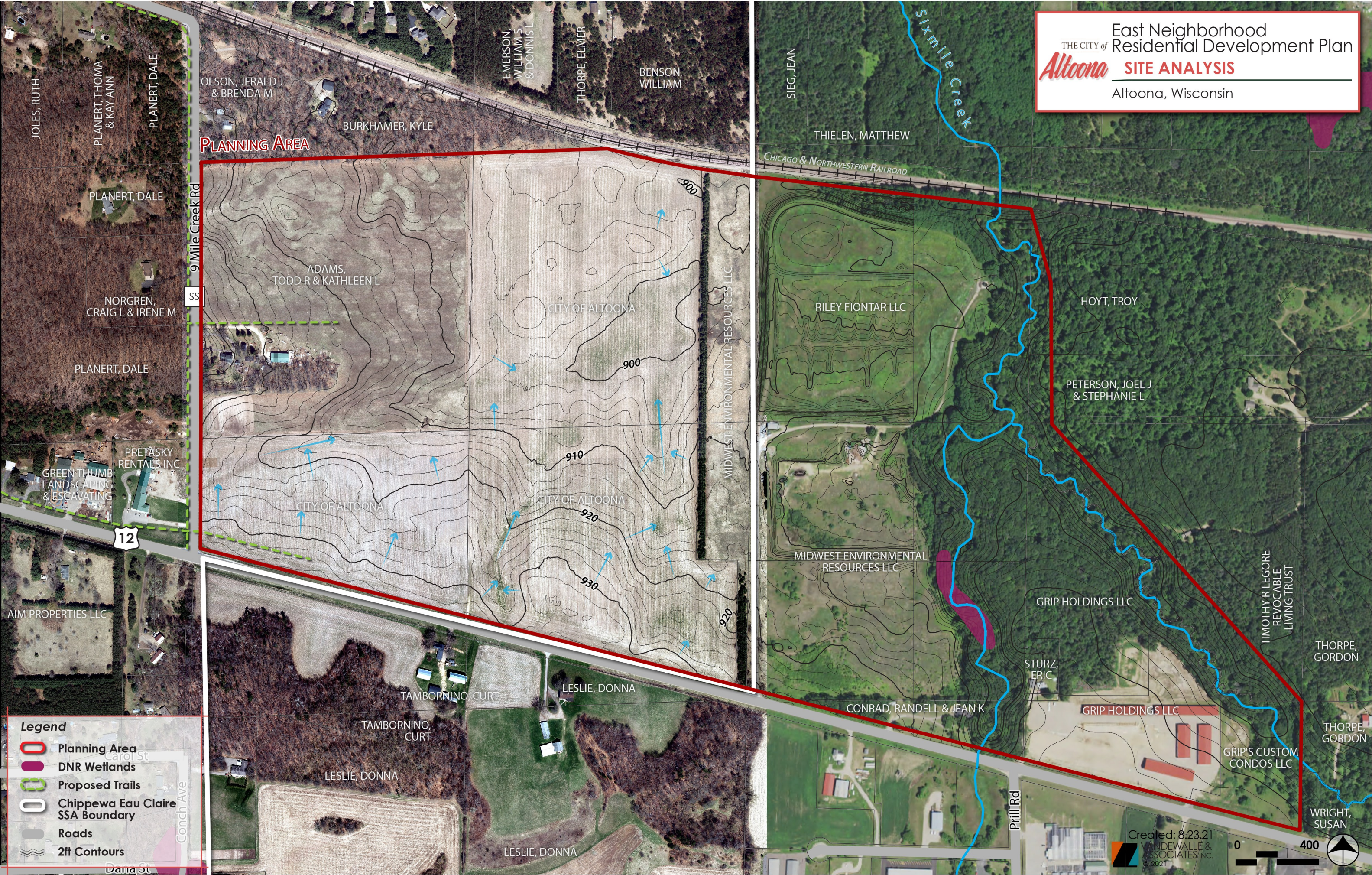
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THE CITY of **Altoona** East Neighborhood Residential Development Plan
SITE CONTEXT
Altoona, Wisconsin

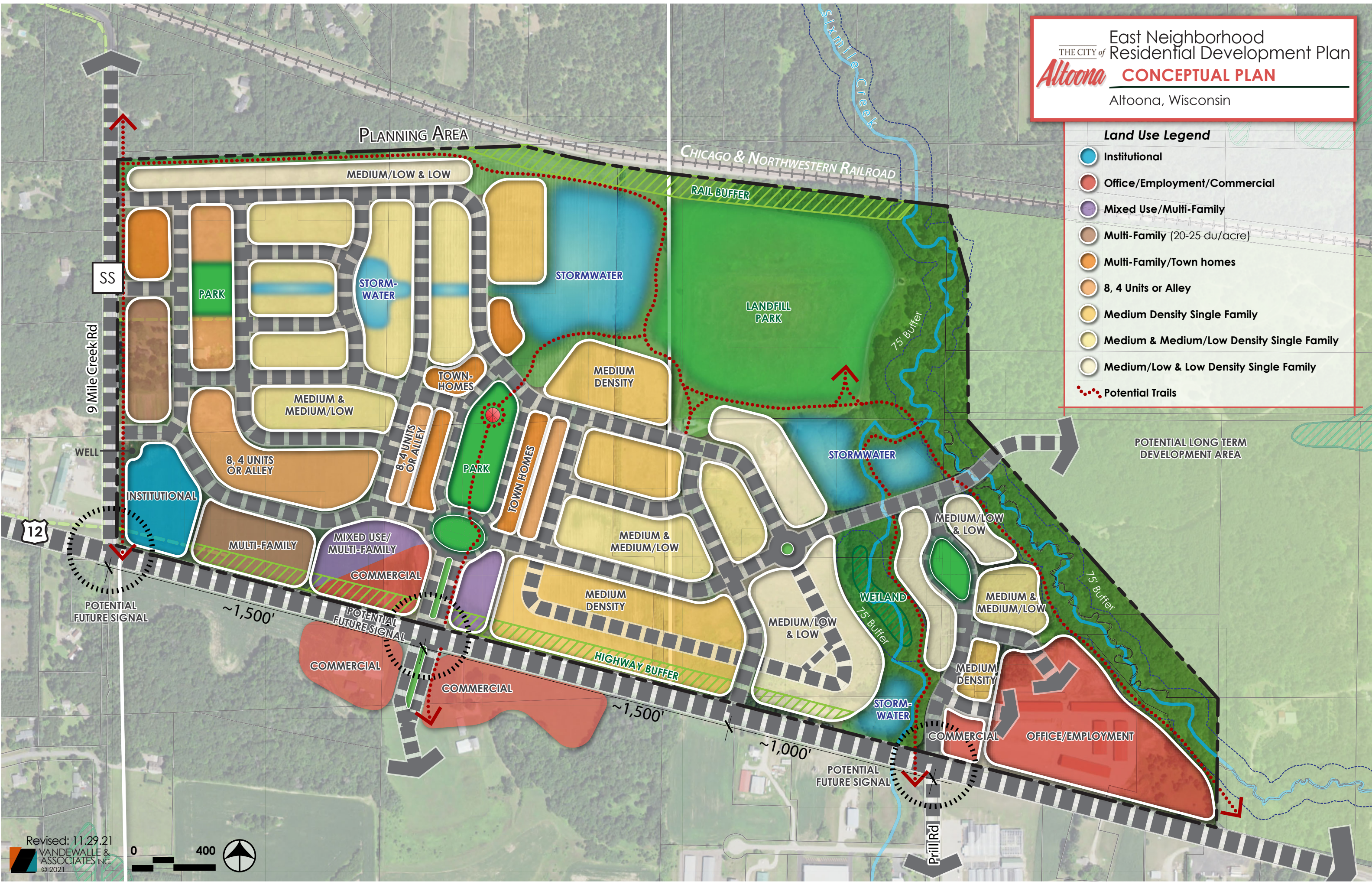


THE CITY of
Altoona East Neighborhood
Residential Development Plan
SITE ANALYSIS
Altoona, Wisconsin



THE CITY of **Altoona** East Neighborhood Residential Development Plan
CONCEPTUAL PLAN
 Altoona, Wisconsin

- Land Use Legend**
- Institutional
 - Office/Employment/Commercial
 - Mixed Use/Multi-Family
 - Multi-Family (20-25 du/acre)
 - Multi-Family/Town homes
 - 8, 4 Units or Alley
 - Medium Density Single Family
 - Medium & Medium/Low Density Single Family
 - Medium/Low & Low Density Single Family
 - Potential Trails





THE CITY of
Altoona East Neighborhood
Residential Development Plan
SINGLE FAMILY
Altoona, Wisconsin





