



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

In 1999, the Wisconsin Legislature enacted a comprehensive planning law which is set forth in Section 66.1001 of the *Wisconsin Statutes*. The requirements supplement earlier provisions in the *Statutes* for the preparation of county development plans (Section 59.69(3) of the *Statutes*) and local master plans (Section 62.23 of the *Statutes*). The requirements, which are often referred to as the “Smart Growth” law, provide a new framework for the development, adoption, and implementation of comprehensive plans in Wisconsin. The law includes a “consistency” requirement, whereby zoning, subdivision, and official mapping ordinances adopted and enforced by towns, villages, and cities must be consistent with the comprehensive plan adopted by the town board, village board, or common council, respectively. Zoning and subdivision ordinances adopted and enforced by a county must be consistent with the comprehensive plan adopted by the county board. The consistency requirement will take effect on January 1, 2010. To address the State comprehensive planning requirements, a multi-jurisdictional comprehensive planning process was undertaken by Kenosha County, nine local government partners, UW-Extension, and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC). As a result of the multi-jurisdictional process, comprehensive plans that satisfy the planning requirements set forth in Section 66.1001 of the *Statutes* have been developed for the County and each local government partner. The City of Kenosha has also developed a plan pertaining only to the City, which is the basis of this plan.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The multi-jurisdictional comprehensive plan presented in this report provides a long-range guide for Kenosha officials, staff, and citizens to effectively address future development and natural resource protection in the City through the year 2035, and sets forth City planning goals and objectives. The Common Council and affected committees of the Common Council should refer to the comprehensive plan as a matter of course in their deliberations on planning issues and give the plan due weight when making decisions on such matters, particularly with regard to the Statutory requirement for consistency between the City comprehensive plan and the zoning and subdivision ordinances. In addition, the comprehensive plan is intended to increase intergovernmental cooperation and the general awareness and understanding of County and local government planning goals and objectives by residents, landowners, developers, the business community, and other private interests, and among the many units, levels, and agencies of government with land use related responsibilities within the City.

Local government comprehensive plans developed as a result of this multi-jurisdictional planning process also provide long-range guides for city officials and citizens to address future development and natural resource protection. Plan commission members and members of governing bodies should refer to the comprehensive plan in the course of deliberations on city planning issues, particularly with regard to the Statutory requirement for consistency between the comprehensive plan and zoning, subdivision, and official mapping ordinances. As the County comprehensive plan is intended to increase intergovernmental cooperation, the City comprehensive plan addresses areas of mutual concern with the County and with adjacent local governments. The City's Comprehensive Plan also sets forth local planning goals and objectives.

Nine Elements of the Comprehensive Plan

The multi-jurisdictional plan documented in this report, as well as each local comprehensive plan resulting from the multi-jurisdictional planning process, contains the nine (9) elements required by Section 66.1001(2) of the *Statutes*:

1. Issues and Opportunities Element;
2. Land Use Element;
3. Housing Element;
4. Transportation Element;
5. Utilities and Community facilities Element;
6. Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Element;
7. Economic Development Element;
8. Intergovernmental Cooperation Element; and
9. Implementation Element.

Comprehensive Plan and Ordinance Consistency

To comply with the consistency requirements in Section 66.1001 (3) of the Comprehensive Planning Law, Kenosha will make the changes needed, if any, to bring the Zoning Ordinance, the zoning map, and the Subdivision Ordinance into compliance with the City Comprehensive Plan prior to January 1, 2010.

Under Section 66.1001 (3), zoning, subdivision, and official mapping ordinances adopted by the City must be consistent with the comprehensive plan adopted by the City beginning on January 1, 2010.

Fourteen Comprehensive Planning Goals

The City's comprehensive plan also addresses the 14 planning goals set forth in Section 16.965(4)(b) of the *Wisconsin Statutes*. The 14 planning goals are:

1. Promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial, and industrial structures.
2. Encouragement of neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices.
3. Protection of natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes, woodlands, open spaces, and groundwater resources.
4. Protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and forests.
5. Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state government, and utility costs.
6. Preservation of cultural, historic, and archaeological sites.
7. Encouragement of coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government.
8. Building of community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards.
9. Providing an adequate supply of affordable housing for individuals of all income levels throughout the City.
10. Providing adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial, and industrial uses.
11. Promoting the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional, and local level.
12. Balancing individual property rights with community interests and goals.
13. Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities.
14. Providing an integrated, efficient, and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience, and safety and that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit-dependent and disabled citizens.

The 14 planning goals listed in Section 16.965 must only be addressed in comprehensive plans that have received State of Wisconsin grant funding, such as the Kenosha County Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan and local plans prepared as part of the multi-jurisdictional process.

Public Participation Plan

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

distributed, and opportunities must be provided for written comments to be submitted by the public to the governing body. A procedure for the governing body to respond to those comments must also be identified.

A public participation plan (PPP) has been developed by the multi-jurisdictional advisory committee for adoption by the Kenosha County Board and the governing bodies of participating local governments. The PPP will enhance public awareness of the planning effort and its importance; educate citizens about planning issues; and provide opportunities for citizens to help identify key community issues. Public participation activities included a “Kenosha County Café” countywide visioning session; issue forums; public meetings; planning-related programs on cable TV; bus tours for County and local officials to view various types of urban and rural development; newsletters; newspaper articles; and a comprehensive planning website. A summary of the draft comprehensive plan was distributed for review and comment prior to holding public hearings for plan adoption, and copies of the draft plan were available for review on the project website, at County offices, and at all municipal halls and libraries.

The full public participation plan, including adoption dates, is included in Appendix 15-3 in Chapter 15, and is also available for review in the office of the Kenosha County Planning and Development Department and the comprehensive planning website (www.co.kenosha.wi.us/plandev/smart_growth/).

Plan Review and Adoption

Section 66.1001 (4) of the *Statutes* requires that a comprehensive plan or an amendment to the comprehensive plan be adopted by an ordinance enacted by the County Board, for adoption of the Multi-Jurisdictional County Comprehensive Plan. Comprehensive plans for cities, villages, and towns must be adopted by an ordinance of the common council. The law further requires that all nine (9) elements be adopted simultaneously, and that at least one (1) public hearing be held prior to adopting the City Comprehensive Plan. The *Statutes* require that an adopted comprehensive plan, or an amendment to a plan, be sent to all governmental units within and adjacent to the local government preparing a plan; the Wisconsin Department of Administration; the regional planning commission (SEWRPC); and the Kenosha public library that serves the area.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNTY AND LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

Multi-Jurisdictional Partnership

In the fall of 2004, the Kenosha County Board, the City of Kenosha Common Council, the Village Boards of the Villages of Pleasant Prairie and Silver Lake, and the Town Boards of the Towns of Brighton, Bristol, Paris, Salem, Somers, and Wheatland each adopted a resolution agreeing to participate in a multi-jurisdictional planning process and agreeing to submit an application to the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) for a comprehensive planning grant to help fund preparation of the plan.

A grant was awarded in March 2006, and a grant agreement between Kenosha County and the DOA was signed on June 9, 2006. Prior to accepting the grant, Kenosha County and SEWRPC signed a three-party Cooperative Agreement with each of the nine (9) local government partners including the City of Kenosha. Each agreement is a formal commitment among the local governments, Kenosha County, and SEWRPC to participate in a coordinated, multi-jurisdictional comprehensive planning effort. The City of Kenosha also decided to prepare its own Comprehensive Plan, based upon the multi-jurisdictional plan.

Committee Structure

The Kenosha County Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (MJAC) was established by the Land Use Committee of the Kenosha County Board to guide preparation of the County plan, including development of planning goals and objectives and a vision for the future, review of draft plan chapters and other plan materials, and development of a recommended plan for consideration by the Land Use Committee and the Plan Commissions of local government partners. The Advisory Committee is comprised of one (1) representative and one (1) alternate appointed by each local government partner and one (1) member and one (1) alternate appointed by the Kenosha County Executive and confirmed by the County Board. The Committee also includes a representative from each of the three (3) non-partnering local governments as non-voting members, and 10 citizen and interest group representatives, who are also non-voting members.

City of Kenosha Comprehensive Plan

This City of Kenosha comprehensive planning effort is built upon the master, land use, and comprehensive plans and components thereof, adopted prior to the start of this comprehensive planning process. The City of Kenosha Comprehensive Plan was prepared by the Department of City Development with assistance from the City Plan Commission. Table 1-1, page 5, lists the plans adopted by the City of Kenosha as of May 2007. Existing plans were updated to reflect new inventory data and development conditions and supplemented as needed to include all of the nine (9) elements required under the State Comprehensive Planning Law. The preparation and adoption of local land use plans as part of the process also met the procedural requirements set forth in State law, which require adoption and implementation of a public participation plan, adoption of a local comprehensive plan by an ordinance of the governing body, a public hearing prior to adoption, and distribution of the draft and final plan to adjacent communities, State and regional agencies, and the local library.

THE PLANNING AREA

As of December 1, 2008, the planning area includes the City of Kenosha, which encompasses a total of 16,909.274 acres or about 26 square miles. The City is bordered on the north by the Towns of Somers and Paris, on the west by the Towns of Somers, Paris and Bristol and the Village of Pleasant Prairie, on the south by the Village of Pleasant Prairie and the Town of Bristol, and on the east by Lake Michigan.

REPORT FORMAT

This planning report consists of 15 chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapters 2 through 6 present inventory data. Inventory chapters include: Population, Household, and Employment Trends; Agricultural, Cultural, and Natural Resources; Existing Land Uses and Transportation Facilities and Services; Utilities and Community Facilities; and Existing Local Plans and Ordinances. Chapters 7 through 15 constitute the multi-jurisdictional comprehensive plan. Comprehensive plan element chapters include: Issues and Opportunities (7); Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources (8); Land Use (9), Housing (10); Transportation (11); Utilities and Community Facilities (12); Economic Development (13); Intergovernmental Cooperation (14); and Implementation (15) elements.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Kenosha is a City within Kenosha County, one of the seven (7) counties that together make up the Southeastern Wisconsin Region. Several significant urban centers are within 100 miles of the Region including the Chicago area; Madison area; and the Janesville, Beloit, and Rockford area. Most important to Kenosha County is its location directly along the corridor between the Cities of Milwaukee and Chicago. The Southeastern Wisconsin Region encompasses 2,689 square miles; includes the Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha urbanized areas; and in 2000 had a population of over 1.9 million residents. Kenosha County is in the southeast portion of the Region, and contains a mix of urban areas, small villages, and extensive areas of farmland and natural resources. Kenosha County is considered part of the Chicago metropolitan area by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Pursuant to Statutory requirements, SEWRPC has prepared and adopted a series of regional plan elements, including a regional land use plan, regional transportation system plan, regional water quality and water supply plans, a regional natural areas plan, and a regional park and open space plan (comprised of the seven (7) individual park and open space plans for each County), which provided a framework for development of the Kenosha County plan. The regional plan elements were refined and detailed through the preparation of the Kenosha County Comprehensive Plan.

NEED FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Kenosha has experienced growth and increased urbanization in recent decades, which has been accompanied by a variety of development issues. Some of the development issues that have surfaced during past decades include: the rate and location of new urban development; the need to construct and expand utilities, schools, stormwater management facilities, transportation facilities, and other essential urban services and, in some cases, to coordinate

TABLE 1-1

MASTER, LAND USE, AND COMPREHENSIVE PLANS PREPARED BY THE CITY OF KENOSHA: 2007

Plan	Prepared By	Adoption Date ^{a,b}	
		Plan Commission	Governing Body
SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 212, A Comprehensive Plan for the Kenosha Urban Planning District, December 1995	SEWRPC	03/05/98	03/16/98 ^{c,d}
The City of Kenosha and Town of Bristol Cooperative Land Use Plan, July 1999	Planning and Design Institute Inc.	09/23/99	10/04/99 ^{d,e}
SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 200, A Land Use and Transportation System Development Plan for the IH 94 South Freeway Corridor	SEWRPC	05/07/92	05/18/92
Hillcrest Neighborhood Plan	City of Kenosha	11/19/92	12/21/92 ^{d,e}
St. Peter's Neighborhood Plan	City of Kenosha	02/25/93	03/01/93 ^{d,e}
South Sheridan Neighborhood Plan (Recommended)	City of Kenosha	09/09/93	11/15/93 ^{e,f}
Gateway Neighborhood Plan	City of Kenosha	04/07/94	04/18/94 ^d
CTH HH Corridor Land Use & Platting Plan	City of Kenosha	05/07/92	05/18/92 ^d
Washington Park Neighborhood Revitalization Plan	Trkla, Pettigrew, Allen, and Payne	09/24/92	10/05/92 ^d
Wilson Heights Neighborhood Revitalization Plan	Trkla, Pettigrew, Allen, and Payne	09/24/92	10/05/92 ^d
Columbus Park Neighborhood Revitalization Plan	Trkla, Pettigrew, Allen, and Payne	09/24/92	10/05/92 ^d
Kenosha Downtown Plan, A Guide for Urban Design and Development	Planning and Design Institute Inc.	05/09/91	05/20/91 ^{e,f}
Neighborhood Revitalization Study	Trkla, Pettigrew, Allen, and Payne	09/24/92	10/15/92
Lincoln Neighborhood Plan	City of Kenosha	08/08/96	08/19/96 ^d
Highway Access and Development Plan for STH 50 between IH 94 and 60 th Avenue	WisDOT, Kenosha County, City of Kenosha, Town of Pleasant Prairie	05/08/86	05/19/86 ^{e,f}
Downtown Land Use and Transportation Strategy	City of Kenosha	12/04/86	12/15/86 ^d
Kenosha Regional Airport Area Land Use Study	City of Kenosha	06/03/93	06/21/93 ^d
Green Bay Road/60 th Street Development Plan	City of Kenosha	11/06/03	11/17/03 ^d
Kenosha Corridor Land Use Plan	City of Kenosha	05/07/92	05/18/92 ^{e,f}
Columbus Neighborhood Plan	City of Kenosha	08/08/02	08/19/02 ^d
Pike Creek Neighborhood Plan	City of Kenosha	11/02/98	11/16/98 ^d
Library Park Preservation Plan	Landscape Architects	11/09/00	--
Wilson Neighborhood Plan	City of Kenosha	11/04/04	11/15/04 ^{d,e}
SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 231, Kenosha Area Transit System Development Plan: 1998-2002	SEWRPC	03/04/99	03/15/99
Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan	Landscape Architects	04/05/01	04/16/01
City of Kenosha Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities Plan	City of Kenosha	12/08/05	12/19/05
McKinley-Roosevelt Railroad Corridor Neighborhood Plan	City of Kenosha	12/4/08	12/15/08

a No record of adoption provided to SEWRPC if no date listed.

b Under the master planning statute (Section 62.23 of the Wisconsin Statutes), the Plan Commission has the authority to adopt by resolution a master plan or elements thereof. SEWRPC has traditionally recommended that master plans also be adopted by the governing body to show support for the plan and help assure its implementation. Under the State comprehensive planning law (Section 66.1001 of the Statutes), comprehensive plans must be approved by a resolution of the Plan Commission and adopted by an ordinance of the governing body. Plans for the Village of Paddock Lake, Village of Twin Lakes, and Town of Randall were adopted as comprehensive plans under Section 66.1001 of the Statutes.

c The City of Kenosha had since adopted a stand alone park and open space plan (April 2001).

d Plan was adopted by the City of Kenosha Plan Commission and certified by the Common Council.

e Plan was adopted by both the City of Kenosha Plan Commission and the Common Council.

f Amendments have been made to the plan since original date of adoption.

Source: Local Governments and SEWRPC.

efforts in multiple jurisdictions; the availability of affordable housing; protection of the natural resource base, including the preservation of open space; and conflicts between the City and towns relating to annexations and exercise of extraterritorial authorities. These development issues, coupled with Wisconsin's comprehensive planning law, a projected increase in population and employment, a projected increase in the average age of the County population, and the continued trend of planning and development issues crossing jurisdictional boundaries,

resulted in the County, participating local governments, UW-Extension, and SEWRPC joining together to develop a multi-jurisdictional comprehensive plan, in addition to the City Plan.

BENEFITS OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

In addition to development, timing, and growth issues specific to Kenosha, there are general positive results of thoughtful comprehensive planning from which Kenosha may benefit, including the following:

Planning Helps Define the Future Character of a Community

The physical design, setting, and arrangement of land uses can make it possible for people to carry out their daily lives and activities in an attractive and safe community environment. Land use planning and design can foster a distinctive sense of place. Planning allows a community to identify, preserve, and build upon the defining features of the community.

Planning Helps Protect Natural and Cultural Resources

Planning can help protect environmental features like wetlands, floodplains, woodlands, and stream corridors which provide important public benefits, such as stormwater storage and groundwater recharge areas and recreational opportunities. Such resources would be difficult and expensive to replace if lost or damaged. Planning can also help identify and preserve historic, archaeological, and other important cultural structures and sites.

Planning Can Provide a Rational Basis for Local Decisions

Plans provide a factual and objective guide that can be used by City officials and citizens to make informed decisions about land use and development. Planning is a process that can help the City prepare for change rather than react to it.

Planning Can Provide Certainty Regarding Future Development

Plans and related maps show landowners and developers the location and type of development desired by the City, which can save them time and money in developing plans for future land uses. Planning can help increase the consistency and fairness of the development review and approval process while protecting the established property interests of existing residents.

Planning Can Save Money

Well-planned, orderly, and phased development patterns are less expensive for the City to provide public services and infrastructure than low density and scattered development patterns.

Planning Can Promote Economic Development

Planning can provide information about existing businesses and industries and help determine desirable types of new businesses. Planning can also help determine if the existing work force is sufficient to staff particular employment sectors and whether local services and housing are adequate to handle the impacts of new economic development.

Planning Can Promote Public Health

Finally, well planned development patterns and transportation options can make recreational, educational, and commercial facilities accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists. The ability to safely walk or bike to these facilities promotes physical health and community interaction.

While planning provides many important public benefits, it is important to recognize that an adopted plan is not an “end result,” but rather provides recommendations for future action. Plan recommendations will be fulfilled over time in generally small, incremental steps. A comprehensive plan provides a foundation and guide for many implementing tools, which may include zoning ordinances and maps, subdivision ordinances, capital improvements programming, detailed facilities planning, and other local ordinances, programs, and policies.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

The comprehensive plan presented in this report was developed through a multi-year planning process consisting of the following steps:

1. start-up tasks
2. inventory
3. issue identification
4. preparation of forecasts and analysis
5. preparation of planning elements
6. plan review, refinement, and adoption

Another key step in the comprehensive planning process will be the implementation of the plan by the City. Throughout the planning process, the active participation of citizens, landowners, government officials, and interest groups was essential for identifying important issues and preparing a plan with realistic goals for the City.

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