

Chapter 1:

INTRODUCTION

WASHBURN – WHERE COMMUNITY MATTERS

The City of Washburn developed the slogan “Washburn – Where Community Matters” to help guide the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan. But what is “community” and why should it “matter”? The word “community” comes from two Latin words: “munus”, which means gift, and “cum”, which means with or together. Consequently, the Latin meaning of “community” suggests that there are gifts, or benefits, in working together. The adage: “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts” is another way of looking at community.

This Comprehensive Plan broadly classifies Washburn’s gifts as natural, social, and economic capital. Washburn’s natural capital includes its woodlands, wetlands, soils, waters, and other natural resources. Washburn’s social capital includes its residents, government, social organizations, cultural activities, and health and human services. Its economic capital includes jobs, goods, services, and infrastructure. In stating that “*community matters*”, Washburn is sending a clear message that strengthening and bringing together Washburn’s natural, social, and economic capital through this Comprehensive Plan, benefits all. This Plan envisions that the “*community*” of Washburn makes a positive difference in the everyday life of all Washburn residents.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

Washburn’s Comprehensive Plan is a vision of what the City wants to be. It is a guide to help the City preserve what it values, enhance what needs to be improved, and create what is missing. The Comprehensive Plan is a general, long-term plan that analyzes existing conditions, provides goals, objectives, policies, and plans, and brings together various elements of Washburn into a comprehensive, “big picture” plan. It provides a basic framework to guide the City’s other detailed planning efforts. It is a dynamic Plan that the City will review and refine as Washburn continues to change.

Several parties will find this Plan useful:

1. City Staff, the Planning Commission, and the Common Council will use the Plan to assist them with the following:
 - Development and infrastructure decisions;
 - Acquisition and use of public land;
 - Budgeting capital improvements;
 - Establishing regulatory changes; and

- Communicating Washburn’s vision to residents and others.
2. Property owners and residents will use the Plan to assist them with the following tasks:
 - Determining potential property use;
 - Understanding possible land use changes in the surrounding area;
 - Understanding future infrastructure improvements; and
 - Making property improvements.
 3. Developers and entrepreneurs will use the Plan as a guide for the following:
 - Property acquisition; and
 - Coordinating development plans with City infrastructure plans.
 4. Neighboring and overlapping jurisdictions will use the Plan to help coordinate issues of mutual interest.

PLANNING PROCESS

This Comprehensive Plan updates Washburn’s 1996 Land Use and Economic Development Plans and it provides additional information to fulfill the requirements of Wisconsin’s comprehensive planning legislation. In addition to all who participated in this planning process, the City gratefully acknowledges the efforts of those who participated in the development of Washburn’s previous planning efforts. Refer to Appendix C: Additional Planning Documents, for a list of Washburn’s previous planning documents. The City also gratefully acknowledges financial assistance from the State of Wisconsin in the form of a Coastal Management Program grant.

The City of Washburn depended heavily upon public participation throughout the planning process. The following provides an overview of Washburn’s public participation plan:

1. **Steering Committee.** The City organized a broad based steering committee to represent the community’s diverse interests and to help guide the planning process. The steering committee met monthly (and often more frequently) throughout the planning process. The City publicly noticed all steering committee meetings and encouraged residents and members of the media to attend the meetings.
2. **Community Open Houses.** The City held community open houses at key times throughout the planning process to seek public input.
3. **Key Person Interviews.** Steering committee members and the City’s planning consultant met with numerous residents to discuss their concerns, issues, and ideas relating to Washburn’s future.
4. **Community Survey.** The City mailed a community survey to all registered voters in Washburn and urged those who did not receive a survey in the mail to complete the survey at City Hall. 602 people completed the survey. The survey results are referred to throughout the Comprehensive Plan and can be found in Appendix A.



5. **First Impressions Project.** The University of Wisconsin Extension Office facilitated a First Impressions Project to help the City identify positive impressions and concerns people have of Washburn. The results of this project helped guide the City in the development of this Comprehensive Plan.
6. **Business Summit.** An Economic Development Committee held a business summit to identify issues and opportunities relating to economic development.
7. **Study of the Studies.** An ad hoc committee of the Common Council and citizens conducted a study of past studies that were conducted in Washburn. Refer to Appendix C: Additional Planning Documents for a listing of pertinent past studies.
8. **Visions 2025 Art Show.** The City held a Visions 2025 Art Show that displayed the illustrated vision that children and adults have for Washburn in 2025.
9. **Local News Media.** The City contacted the local news media to ensure media coverage at key times throughout the planning process.
10. **Website.** The City put draft plans on a website for public review and comment.
11. **Community Displays.** The City displayed draft plans at key locations in the city, including City Hall and the Washburn Public Library.
12. **Public Hearing and Plan Adoption.** On April 2, 2007, the Planning Commission held a public hearing and by a unanimous vote of the Planning Commission recommended approval of the Comprehensive Plan. On April 9, 2007, the Common Council enacted an ordinance that formally adopted the Comprehensive Plan.