



Plan Commission Meeting Agenda

Thursday, October 08, 2026 at 6:30 PM

Columbus City Hall – 105 N. Dickason Boulevard

Call Meeting to Order

Roll Call

Notice of Open Meeting

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes

1. Approve minutes

Public Comments (3 minutes per person)

Regular Business

2. Consider and take action regarding resolution declaring current comprehensive plan housing element provides adequate housing

3. Consider and take action regarding various portions of the zoning rewrite.

4. Consider and take action regarding the update of the city's comprehensive plan

Future Agenda Items

Adjourn



Amended Plan Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 10, 2026 at 6:30 PM

Columbus City Hall – 105 N. Dickason Boulevard

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm by Monday.

Roll Call

A quorum of membership present consisted of Anfinson, Finkler, Hajewski, Meyers, Monday, and Stapelmann. Staff liaisons Kornmann and Bennett were present. There were members of the public in attendance.

Notice of Open Meeting

The meeting was noted to have been posted according to law.

Approval of Agenda

Monday motioned to approve amending the meeting agenda by moving the public comment section to follow the approval of minutes; Anfinson seconded. There was no discussion and the motion was carried by unanimous vote.

Approval of Minutes

1. Approve minutes.

Finkler motioned to approve the meeting minutes as presented from August 13, 2026; seconded by Hajewski. There was no discussion and the motion was carried by unanimous vote.

Regular Business

2. Public Comments (Limit 3 minutes per person)

Matthew Sonia provided comments regarding the safety positives of the paved driveway of the proposed 2nd driveway at the property located at 353 W School St.

Yael Sumberg provided comments supporting additional parking near the corner of the intersection of S. Main St. and W. School St.

No additional comments were made or correspondence added.

3. Consider and provide direction regarding the zoning rewrite regarding performance standards and other parts of the draft zoning code

Sonja Kruesel, Associate Planner from Vandewalle and Associates, noted the remaining timeline for the zoning code rewrite and presented additional draft chapters of the updated zoning code. The Plan Commission reviewed Chapters 6 and 8 highlighting performance standards and landscaping requirements. There were discussions about performance standards regarding standardizing second driveways and common spaces for developments.

Kornmann brought forth a citizen comment about revisiting building height for downtown buildings that noted modern floor heights. Kornmann noted that heights among floors in current buildings are

not known. The commission discussed concerns about differences in height and design standards. Staff was directed to get building heights for downtown for the next meeting.

Kornmann noted downtown permitting exceptions in the draft code highlighting the allowance of benches and sandwich boards. The current Chapter 86 code needs revisions.

4. Consider and take action regarding the housing survey and public input

Kornmann and Bennett noted 124 responses to the housing survey with most of the respondents being long-time residents and homeowners. Other notable survey responses highlighted housing affordability and support for various kinds of housing developments along with support for Columbus being actively engaged in housing but using a steady, balanced approach. Kornmann highlighted the support for the City's involvement in housing development and programs but also noted challenges.

Monday asked if the proportion of respondents matched the proportion of the different housing types in the community. It was noted the proportion was skewed toward single-family homeowners.

5. Consider and take action regarding the amendment to the housing chapter of the comprehensive plan related to chapter narrative, goals, objectives, and policies.

Kornmann presented a draft goals and policies for amending the housing chapter of the City's comprehensive plan. Kornmann noted possible partnership with the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) for program funding assistance. Kornmann planned to have a public hearing for the housing chapter update at the November Plan Commission meeting.

6. Consider and take action regarding Heather Mosher's request for reconsideration regarding the granting of a second driveway at 353 W. School Street.

Monday noted the process for the rehearing of the granting of the second driveway at 353 W. School St. There was a recap of the approval of the second driveway along with making sure to follow the current ordinance regarding passage if there's no detrimental effect of the commission's opinion on the general public. City Administrator Amundson highlighted that the Plan Commission is the first review the reconsideration and that if needed, an appeal can be made to the Council by either party.

Heather and Kyle Mosher presented various talking points highlighting various safety concerns regarding the approved second driveway. The Mosher's cited the widened primary driveway as being wide enough to host all of the neighbor's vehicles. They contended that the various vehicles would be able to fit in the 2nd driveway and the extra driveway would congest available on-street parking. Heather added that there are currently visibility issues when backing out of her own driveway. Heather claimed that Digger's Hotline wasn't contacted before work started.

Monday summarized the main talking points and noted that there's no need to demonstrate a need for a second driveway, but there would have to be a detriment to the public. Dimensional standards would only apply to the permit, and not the request for the second driveway. The commission addressed the concerns about a vehicle encroaching on the sidewalk would be addressed by other Ordinances and can be cited if reported. The commission discussed if there was a detriment about the perceived lack of off-street parking. Finkler provided another example of a similar off-street parking issue. Heather asked about the upcoming draft ordinance's driveway dimensions and had a concern about approving a driveway a month before the new code is approved. Kornmann clarified that the new code won't be approved until December and that the draft code has not been adopted yet. It was noted that the dimensional standards only applied to the driveway permit and not the Plan Commission's decision to allow a second driveway. The second driveway will have to meet current driveway standards.

Heather revisited her arguments regarding safety concerns and possible misinformation given for the driveway permit. Monday reiterated that a need for a second driveway does not need to be demonstrated. Heather wanted to revisit the driveway ordinance and claimed that what the City had on its website was misinformation.

Finkler motioned to take no action; seconded by Hajewski. There was no additional discussion. The motion was carried by voice vote with 5 ayes and 1 nay.

7. Future agenda items

Kornmann noted continuation of the update to the comprehensive plan and the zoning rewrite with discussion of the subdivision code. Staff will try to do its best to get building heights for downtown.

Adjourn

Anfinson motioned to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Finkler. There was no discussion and the meeting was approved by unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 9:03pm.

** These minutes will be approved at a future meeting and may be amended. These minutes are respectfully submitted by David Bennett, Communications and Economic Development Coordinator **



Agenda Item Report

Meeting Type: Plan Commission

Meeting Date: October 8, 2026

Item Title: Consider and take action regarding resolution declaring current comprehensive plan housing element provides adequate housing

Submitted By: Michael Kornmann, Director of Community and Economic Development

Detailed Description of Subject Matter: The WHEDA Restore Main Street loan program application deadline is November 6, 2026 has recently been released. Adopting this resolution allows developers adding housing in downtown the opportunity to qualify for a Restore Main Street loan. The housing chapter/element provides adequate housing projections for the city currently and into the future.

List all Supporting Documentation Attached:

- Resolution
- Current Comprehensive Plan

Action Requested: Recommend approval of resolution.

RESOLUTION NO. xx-26

**CITY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN HOUSING ELEMENT PROVIDES ADEQUATE
HOUSING SUPPLY**

WHEREAS, the City's Plan Commission held a public hearing and recommended approval of the current comprehensive plan in April 2021; and

WHEREAS, the City of Columbus adopted the existing comprehensive plan in May of 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Plan Commission and City Council recently reviewed the housing element of the current comprehensive plan; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the City of Columbus Common Council declares that the housing element of the City's current comprehensive plan provides for an adequate housing supply that meets existing and forecasted housing demand within the City's municipal boundary.

Dated this 20th day of October, 2026

CITY OF COLUMBUS, Columbia County,
State of Wisconsin

Joseph Hammer, Mayor

ATTEST:

Susan L. Caine, Clerk



CITY OF COLUMBUS



2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

City Council

Michael Thom	Mayor
Katie Ryan	Council President District 1
Ian Gray	District 1
Trina Reid	District 2
Paul Pyfferoen	District 2
Mike McCabe	District 3
Peter Adams	District 3

Plan Commission

Uriah Monday	Chairperson
Katie Ryan	Aldersperson
Paul Pyfferoen	Aldersperson
Brad Basten	Commission Member
Eric Lewis	Commission Member
Ed Parpart	Commission Member
Jason Theilen	Commission Member

City Staff

Matthew Schreiber, AICP	Director of Planning and Development
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Executive Summary

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan is the City of Columbus's guide to community physical, social, and economic development. This plan is not intended to serve as land use regulations in themselves; instead, it will provide a rational basis for local land use decisions with a twenty-year vision for future planning and community decisions. This plan will address the nine (9) elements all of the nine elements below as defined by Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law (s. 66.1001).

The plan will address City issues and coordinate overall growth within the City of Columbus for the planning period. The plan shall be considered by city officials when revising its ordinances, as well as when setting priorities for major investments. The plan shall also be a guide for reviewing future developments, public infrastructure improvements, and extending public services.

Public Feedback and Key Issues

The Columbus Citizen Engagement Team (CET) used a comprehensive approach to gather stakeholder input to guide the City of Columbus long range planning efforts. The CET hosted the planning and potluck event, numerous community conversations, several business leader meetings, and conducted a survey to get stakeholder feedback. The results were analyzed to identify key issues for City Stakeholders. Based on the feedback received the most critical issues were:

- Revitalization of the Downtown Columbus Area
- Investment in Transportation Infrastructure
- Maintain the "small town feel" during growth
- Maintain and Improve Quality of life for residents (recreation, library, arts, affordable housing, schools, safety, etc.)
- Support for new school facilities and partnership with School District
- Ensuring that adequate land is available for new growth

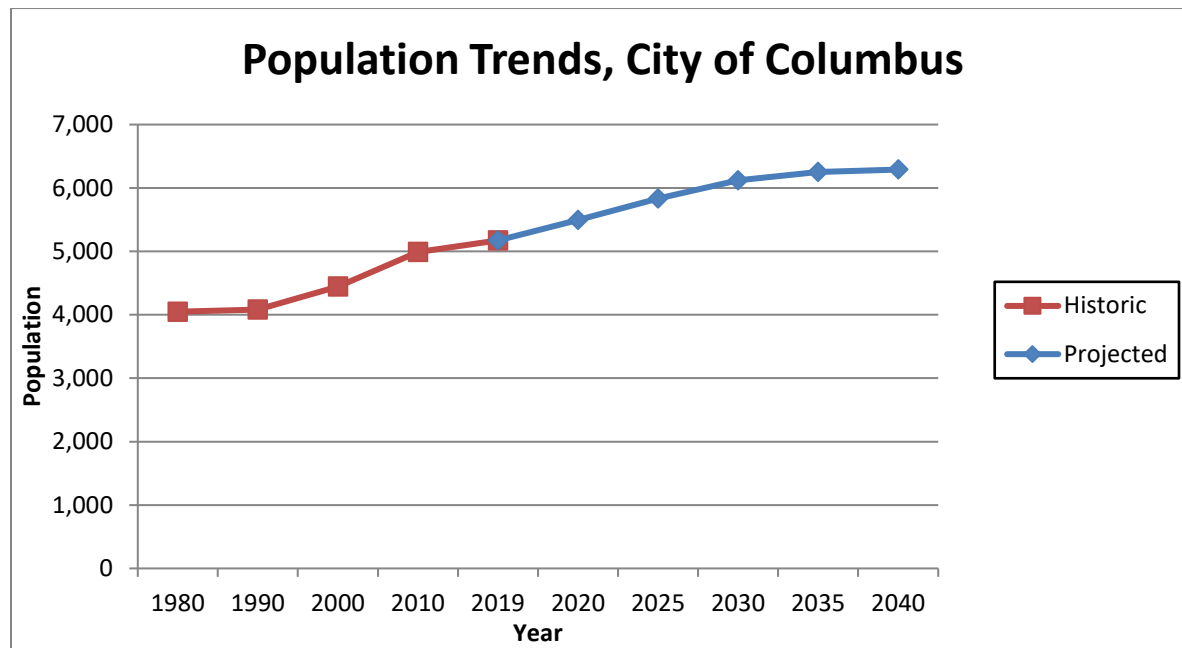
Overall Plan Recommendations

1. Create a Tax Increment Finance District in downtown Columbus to support downtown revitalization.
2. Develop and maintain a 5 year Capital Improvement Plan.
3. Develop and maintain a Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan to meet the recreational needs of the community.
4. Collaborate with private property owners to ensure that land is available to accommodate future commercial and residential growth.
5. Update and monitor the city's Zoning, Sign, Building and other codes to enhance the design of future development
6. Identify an additional source(s) of funds to complete transportation infrastructure projects.
7. Identify an additional source(s) of funds to complete storm water infrastructure projects.
8. Reserve the lands near 151 Highway interchanges for high quality development.
9. Collaborate with Federal, State and local agencies to support the preservation of historic buildings, sites and districts within Columbus.
10. Manage City Facilities in a manner consistent with the Adopted Roadmap 2050 Plan.
11. Explore options for intergovernmental cooperation that would provide a better service to residents at a lower cost.
12. Work in partnership with the Columbus School District to address issues that are mutually beneficial.

Chapter 1 - Background and Demographics

Chapter 1 provides an overview comprehensive plan, the city of Columbus and provides a thorough demographic review of the city. Figure 1 below summarize the historic and projected population growth for the City of Columbus. The chart shows that the city has experienced steady growth over that last 30 years and the DOA expects that growth to continue into the future. The demographic information provided in Chapter 1 shows continued population growth, an increase of educational attainment of Columbus residents and a decrease in the median age of residents.

Figure 1: Population Trends



Goals, Objectives and Policies

Chapter 1 provides a definition for goals, objectives and policies. Subsequent chapters of the plan will conclude with a set of goals, objectives and policies to guide the future development of Columbus. The Columbus Comprehensive Plan defines goals, objectives and policies as:

Goals: Broad statements that express general public priorities about how the community should approach development issues during the next 20 years. These goals are based on key issues identified by community stakeholders from the public outreach efforts for the plan.

Objectives: More specific than goals and are usually attainable through planning and implementation activities. The accomplishment of an objective contributes to the fulfillment of a goal.

Policies: Rules or courses of action used to ensure plan implementation and to accomplish the goals and objectives. Policies are intended to be used by decision-makers on a regular basis.

Chapter 2 - Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources

This element provides an assessment of the City of Columbus agricultural, natural, and cultural resources and contains information required under SS66.1001. Information includes: productive agricultural areas, a natural resource inventory, and a cultural resource inventory. This information provides a basis for creating goals, objectives, policies, maps, and actions to guide the future.

Goals

1. Promote efficient and orderly development to mitigate impacts to agricultural lands.
2. Protect Natural Resources within the City's Planning Area.
3. Preserve Historic structures in the City of Columbus

Objectives

1. Protect the agricultural, environmental, and cultural assets in the City of Columbus.
2. Create a storm water fund to dedicate a funding source exclusively storm water infrastructure and related improvements.

Policies

1. The City will work with the Towns of Columbus and Elba and the Village of Fall River to encourage an orderly, efficient development pattern that preserves natural and agricultural resources and minimizes conflicts between urban and rural uses, such as concerns over pesticides, erosion, noise, and air pollution.
2. The City encourages maintenance and rehabilitation of historic areas and buildings and will support community events and programs that celebrate the history and culture of Columbus. The City supports the Historic Preservation Commission and other community cultural and ethnic groups in their activities.
3. Continue to engage in water quality trading program to improve water quality in the Columbus Area.
4. The City will develop five (5) year Capital Improvement Program to establish funding for needed infrastructure projects.
5. Recommend the use of State and Federal Tax credits for the renovation of historic structures.

Chapter 3 Utilities and Community Facilities

This chapter is a to guide the future development of utilities and community facilities in the local governmental unit such as sanitary sewer service, stormwater management, water supply, solid waste disposal, on-site wastewater treatment technologies, recycling facilities, parks, telecommunications facilities, power-generating plants and transmission lines, cemeteries, health care facilities, child care facilities and other public facilities, such as police, fire and rescue facilities, libraries, schools and other governmental facilities. The element shall describe the location, use and capacity of existing public utilities and community facilities that serve the local governmental unit.

Goal

1. Maintain and improve City Facilities and Service
2. Provide safe, reliable and cost effective water, electric, sewer and stormwater facilities.
3. Support high quality educational opportunities for all City residents.
4. Provide adequate recreational facilities to enhance the health and quality of life of City residents
5. Support the development of City Facilities as identified in the Roadmap 2050 Plan.
6. Minimize the impact of flooding on city parks and facilities.

Objective

1. Create a storm water utility for a dedicated funding source for storm water infrastructure.
2. Ensure that the City of Columbus government operates in the most effective and efficient manner possible
3. Ensure that utilities and public facilities in Columbus are upgraded and maintained meet the balance between cost and level of service desired by Columbus residents and businesses.
4. Identify city facility and utility projects that are eligible for Federal and State grant programs
5. Provide a minimum of 10 acres of park land per 1,000 residents in the City of Columbus
6. Identify and create recreational areas that are not in the floodplain

Policy

1. The City will maintain a Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan with updates at least once every five (5) years.
2. The City will develop five (5) year Capital Improvement Program to establish funding for needed infrastructure projects.
3. Require that all new residential developments dedicate land for public parks or pay a fee-in-lieu of land dedication.
4. Ensure that all residents are within a ½-mile walking distance of a city owned park.
5. Support the School District in planning for either new or upgraded school facilities, as needed.
6. Continue to support efforts to provide excellent library service for city residents.
7. Construct New Facilities within the timeframe identified in the Roadmap 2050 plan.

Chapter 4 Housing

The Housing chapter provides a baseline assessment of the City of Columbus current housing stock and contains information required under the smart growth law. This includes: age and structural characteristics, housing starts, value and affordability characteristics and recent sale trends. This information provides a basis for creating goals, objectives, policies, maps, and actions to guide the future development and maintenance of housing in the City of Columbus.

Goals

1. Provide a variety housing types to meeting existing housing needs and encourage future growth within the City of Columbus

Objectives

1. Create attractive and safe neighborhoods that reinforce the existing architectural character of the City and provide a stable tax base.
2. Create mixed neighborhoods that provide a range of housing types, densities, and costs.
3. Ensure that residential developments are built and maintained according to levels deemed safe by industry standards.

Policies

1. The City will continue to allow for the development of single-family, two-family, and multi-family structures within the City limits.
2. The City encourages the integration of varied housing types and lot sizes within the community.
3. The City encourages high quality development that will attract professionals, entrepreneurs and families.
4. The City will maintain a comprehensive building code that requires inspection of new structures and repair of unsafe and unsanitary housing conditions.
5. The City supports programs that maintain or rehabilitate the local housing stock. The City encourages voluntary efforts by private homeowners to maintain, rehabilitate, update or otherwise make improvements to their homes, especially to protect architectural character and improve energy performance.
6. The City prohibits the accumulation of “junk” materials in public view anywhere in the community, and especially in residential areas.
7. Promote renovation of residential uses in the upper stories of Downtown buildings in an effort to increase affordability and enhance the vitality of the Downtown area.

Chapter 5 Transportation

A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development of the various modes of transportation, including highways, transit, transportation systems for persons with disabilities, bicycles, electric personal assistive mobility devices, walking, railroads, air transportation, trucking and water transportation. The element shall compare the local governmental unit's objectives, policies, goals and programs to state and regional transportation plans. The element shall also identify highways within the local governmental unit by function and incorporate state, regional and other applicable transportation plans, including transportation corridor plans, county highway functional and jurisdictional studies, urban area and rural area transportation plans, airport master plans and rail plans that apply in the local governmental unit.

Goals

1. Provide a safe and efficient transportation system that meets the needs of multiple users in and around the Columbus, including pedestrians, motorists, and bicyclists.
2. Maintain and improve the street network in the City of Columbus at a level of service desired by City residents and businesses
3. Maintain and improve the bicycle and pedestrian network in the City of Columbus at a level of service desired by City residents and businesses

Objectives

1. Manage the access, design, and improvements of the transportation network in order to effectively maintain the safety and functional integrity of City streets.
2. Coordinate major transportation projects with land development, neighboring communities, Columbia and Dodge Counties, and WisDOT.
3. Provide a connected system of sidewalks and trails that makes the City walkable and accessible to all users, especially around schools and shopping areas.
4. Expand the availability and use of passenger railroad service to and from Columbus.
5. Protect the capacity and increase the utilization of existing freight rail service in Columbus.
6. Encourage new development that support of range of transportation options, including biking and walking.

Policies

1. The City will develop five (5) year Capital Improvement Program to establish funding for needed infrastructure projects.
2. The City will continue to implement the state required Pavement and Surface Evaluation Report (PASER) program of street classification to identify and rank the roadway conditions on all Streets within the City.
3. The City will implement a comprehensive street program that establishes a regular schedule for street inspection, maintenance, and improvements. This will include upgrading the condition and design of substandard streets.
4. The City will implement a comprehensive sidewalk program that identifies important gaps in the pedestrian network, indicates where new sidewalks should be installed, establishes methods of funding, and sets a schedule for installation.

5. Require all new residential, commercial, institutional, and mixed-use developments to be served with sidewalks or pedestrian/bicycle paths.
6. Utilize the City's Official Map to reserve rights-of-way for future arterial and collector streets, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and other transportation facilities within the City's planning area.
7. Where feasible develop coordinated off-street parking lots in the downtown.

Chapter 6 Economic Development

A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to promote the stabilization, retention or expansion, of the economic base and quality employment opportunities in the local governmental unit, including an analysis of the labor force and economic base of the local governmental unit. The element shall assess categories or particular types of new businesses and industries that are desired by the local governmental unit. The element shall assess the local governmental unit's strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses and industries, and shall designate an adequate number of sites for such businesses and industries. The element shall also evaluate and promote the use of environmentally contaminated sites for commercial or industrial uses. The element shall also identify county, regional and state economic development programs that apply to the local governmental unit.

Goal

1. Attract and Retain businesses within the City of Columbus that complement the existing workforce and business community.
2. Revitalize Downtown Columbus as the commercial and cultural center of the community.
3. Facilitate strategic economic growth and entrepreneurial activity within the City of Columbus
4. Establish and promote a unique identity for the City of Columbus

Objective

1. The City will encourage and seek funding methods to support events, projects, and programs that improve the competitive viability of downtown buildings and businesses.
2. The City will develop a project plan to support a Downtown TID.
3. Support the continued existence and growth of existing local businesses.
4. Identify and recruit business types most likely to be successful in Columbus.
5. Direct new and growing businesses to appropriate locations within the City.
6. Leverage the City's municipal electric and water utility, as an economic development partner, in attracting commercial and residential growth to the City.
7. Establish and promote a clear identity, or "brand", that communicates the unique character and opportunities offered by Columbus.
8. Find a suitable location for the development of an business incubator to help entrepreneurial growth.

Policy

1. The City will encourage and seek funding methods to support events, projects, and programs that improve the competitive viability of downtown buildings and businesses.
2. The City will encourage projects that incorporate both commercial and residential uses.
3. The City will utilize tax incremental financing (TIF) to support business growth in Columbus.
4. The City will continue to support the success of local businesses by dedicating staff resources to communicate and coordinate with businesses.
5. The City supports efforts by the Columbus Chamber of Commerce to increase local purchasing by Columbus residents, including both marketing to local consumers on this theme and the expansion of goods and services options available in the City.
6. The City will extend city services, including electric and water, only to properties within the City limits.

7. The City will identify a succinct community identity, with input from residents and business owners.
8. The City will engage in marketing efforts to build awareness of its preferred identity and image and to attract businesses and residents to Columbus.
9. Leverage the City's leadership and achievements in the area of energy sustainability to attract industrial, commercial, and residential development to the City.
10. Reserve areas along USH 151 and areas near Exit 115 (USH 151 and STH 73 interchange) and Exit 118 (USH 151 and STH 16/60 interchange) for high-quality development.
11. Provide free educational opportunities designed to assist existing and prospective businesses.

Land-use element

A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development and redevelopment of public and private property. The element shall contain a listing of the amount, type, intensity and net density of existing uses of land in the local governmental unit, such as agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial and other public and private uses. The element shall analyze trends in the supply, demand and price of land, opportunities for redevelopment and existing and potential land-use conflicts. The element shall contain projections, based on the background information specified in par. (a), for 20 years, in 5-year increments, of future residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial land uses including the assumptions of net densities or other spatial assumptions upon which the projections are based. The element shall also include a series of maps that shows current land uses and future land uses that indicate productive agricultural soils, natural limitations for building site development, floodplains, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive lands, the boundaries of areas to which services of public utilities and community facilities, as those terms are used in par. (d), will be provided in the future, consistent with the timetable described in par. (d), and the general location of future land uses by net density or other classifications.

Land Use Classifications**Single Family Residential**

This land use category identifies existing and future single family residential neighborhoods. This land use classification is intended to accommodate single family and some duplex residential development. Municipal and institutional land uses (parks, schools, churches, and stormwater facilities) may be built within these areas without a land use amendment. This corresponds to R1, R2 and R3 Zoning.

Policies

1. New residential neighborhoods should incorporate a mix of lot sizes and types, preferably including both single-family detached and multi-family configurations, and including both owner-occupied and rental units.
2. In new development areas, higher-density housing (5 or more units per acre) should generally be located in close proximity to major roads, commercial uses, and parks. A gradation of densities is appropriate; from high-density near these features to lower-density further away.
3. New neighborhood areas should have park and open space areas that are sized and located to meet the needs of all neighborhood residents.
4. Natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, woodland and unique open spaces, will be protected to the greatest extent possible when new development is proposed.

Multifamily Residential

This land use category identifies existing and future multifamily residential properties. This land use classification is intended to accommodate areas where there properties with 3 or more dwelling units will be located. Areas designated for residential structures meant to be occupied by more than one dwelling units. This corresponds to R4 Zoning.

Policies

1. New residential neighborhoods should incorporate a mix of lot sizes and types, preferably including both single-family detached and multi-family configurations, and including both owner-occupied and rental units.
2. In new development areas, higher-density housing (5 or more units per acre) should generally be located in close proximity to major roads, commercial uses, and parks. A gradation of densities is appropriate; from high-density near these features to lower-density further away.

Mobile Home Residential

This land use category identifies existing and future locations for mobile home parks. Areas designated for the development or maintenance of mobile home parks. This land use corresponds to R5 Zoning.

Industrial

This land use category is intended to provide for indoor manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and outdoor storage usage. The intensity of industrial development is regulated by the City's zoning ordinance. This land use corresponds to I1 and I2 Zoning.

Policies

1. New heavy Industrial Uses will be located in areas that not be a nuisance to surrounding land uses.

Downtown Mixed Use

This land use category is only located in the downtown area and is intended for pedestrian-oriented commercial, office, entertainment, institutional, and residential uses. The downtown is within a designated as a historic district meaning that the area. Due to the historic nature the built environment of the downtown will continue to have minimal building setbacks and will need on-street parking. The City encourages the maintenance, rehabilitation and redevelopment of the downtown mixed-use area for commercial, civic, or mixed uses. This corresponds to CBD1 Zoning.

Policies

1. Infill, redevelopment, and rehabilitation of existing, under-utilized properties in the downtown area is strongly encouraged.

2. New development will complement and reinforce the existing downtown development format, with emphasis on multistory buildings located close to the street and side lot lines.
3. The development and/or restoration of downtown residential units is encouraged, however street-level spaces should feature non-residential uses, especially facing James and Ludington Streets. The city will promote the use of Historic Tax Credits to renovate or restore buildings.
4. Large, private off-street parking lots are discouraged. The City may consider the establishment of public parking lots to accommodate parking concerns associated with new downtown development.
5. The development will consider design elements that will enhance the small town feel of Columbus.

Neighborhood Commercial

This land use category is intended primarily for consumer-oriented retail, service uses and office uses.. Building and site design will vary depending upon the location and lot size. New development in the Neighborhood Commercial district will feature larger setbacks, off-street parking, and only commercial uses. Mixed use developments could incorporated into a redevelopment project. Areas designated for development or redevelopment as retail, sales, service, or office uses. This corresponds to B3 Zoning.

Policies

1. When located adjacent to residential uses, new commercial development should be designed to minimize negative impacts on those residential uses to excessive light, noise, or traffic.
2. New commercial development areas should be designed with a coordinated system of vehicular and pedestrian access.

Highway Commercial

This category identifies areas appropriate for a mixture of office and consumer-oriented commercial uses requiring larger tracks of land than are available within the downtown area. In addition, this area is appropriate for light manufacturing and large-scale service enterprises, which require access to the Highway system. Typically, this land use corresponds to B2 zoning district, but the I1 and I2 districts may also contribute to the Highway Commercial future land use classification.

Policies

1. The city will require high quality and coordinated site design, landscaping, signage and building materials and design are required within these areas.

Executive Summary

Recreational

This land use category includes property where recreation is the primary land use. This includes all areas that are on private or publically owned lands. The areas classified as recreational are typically available to the public and includes areas where users pay fees for recreation.

Policies

1. The City will maintain and outdoor recreation plan in order to provide sufficient parkland and recreation facilities to meet the recreation demand of City of Columbus residents.
2. The City will not require an amendment to the Future Land Use Map prior to the approval of a publicly owned park or recreational use in an area that is mapped as another future land use. However, new privately owned recreational uses will require an amendment to the Future Land Use Map to Park and Recreation or Commercial Recreation.

Institutional

This land use category includes properties owned by the City, the school district, and religious institutions. Most of these uses are expected to remain at their present locations in and near the central parts of the City. New institutional land uses s be best located on lands that are designated as residential.

Policies

1. The City will require an amendment to the Future Land Use Map prior to the approval of new institutional uses.

Conservancy Overlay

This classification is intended to function as an overlay zone, that is, the underlying future land use classification (Residential, Industrial, etc.) remains in place, but the overlay classification warns the City and property owner of the likely presence of features and buffer zones around those features that are subject to protection under City, County or State law. The primary intent of these areas is to protect resources, including wildlife, water bodies, and soils, that are vulnerable to the negative effects of development.

Rural Preservation

This land use category is intended for lands to be preserved for an agricultural use or for open space. The majority of these lands are undeveloped within the City Limits. This district corresponds with the City's RD Rural Development Zoning District.

Gateway Business

Executive Summary

This classification is strictly for lands near the Exit 115, which is the Southern Highway 73 exit on USH 151. The area will consist of high quality development and it will allow a blend of different land uses which includes: Highway Commercial, Industrial, Multifamily Residential, and Recreational. The land with frontage along Highway 73 will be best suited for retail use. Lands without highway frontage are best suited for a blend of office, light industrial space, multifamily, senior housing and recreational uses.

Policies

1. The city will require high quality and coordinated site design, landscaping, signage and building materials and design are required within these areas.
2. The development will consider design elements that will enhance the small town feel of Columbus.

Highway 16 Commercial

This classification is strictly for lands near the Exit 118, which is the Highway 16 exit on USH 151. New Development will consist of high quality development and it will allow a blend of different land uses, which includes Highway Commercial, Industrial, and Multifamily Residential.

Policies

1. The city will require high quality and coordinated site design, landscaping, signage and building materials and design are required within these areas.
2. The development will consider design elements that will enhance the small town feel of Columbus.
3. Promote the use of Infill development or redevelopment where appropriate.

Goal:

1. Guide the development and redevelopment of land in ways consistent with the City's vision and goals as indicated in this Comprehensive Plan

Objectives:

1. Maintain a future land use plan and map that ensures a desirable and compatible mix of land uses and supports the City's vision for the future, and update the plan as appropriate to make adjustments for changing conditions.
2. Develop conceptual neighborhood and corridor plans and policies for areas planned for new growth or redevelopment, addressing the preferred mix of land uses, stormwater management, open space needs, and transportation connectivity.
3. Encourage new development to areas within and immediately surrounding existing development.

4. Promote compact development that utilize existing infrastructure and utilities wherever practical.

Policies:

1. The City will ensure that zoning and land development ordinances are consistent with this Plan.
2. The City will consult and adhere to the future land use plan when considering land division and zoning amendment petitions.
3. The City will allow landowners or other stakeholders to petition for a change to the Future Land Use Map (see Section 3.4), and will consider the vision statement and other goals of the plan when evaluating any proposed change.
4. The City will consider the long-term impacts of growth on existing developed areas when crafting and updating the future land use plan and map.
5. Promote redevelopment and infill for the downtown area and on other key sites.
6. Preserve and enhance the historic character of the downtown by encouraging compatible new development and redevelopment.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs for joint planning and decision making with other jurisdictions, including school districts, drainage districts, and adjacent local governmental units, for siting and building public facilities and sharing public services. The element shall analyze the relationship of the local governmental unit to school districts, drainage districts, and adjacent local governmental units, and to the region, the state and other governmental units. The element shall consider, to the greatest extent possible, the maps and plans of any military base or installation, with at least 200 assigned military personnel or that contains at least 2,000 acres, with which the local governmental unit shares common territory. The element shall incorporate any plans or agreements to which the local governmental unit is a party under s. [66.0301](#), [66.0307](#) or [66.0309](#). The element shall identify existing or potential conflicts between the local governmental unit and other governmental units that are specified in this paragraph and describe processes to resolve such conflicts.

Goal

1. Continue to promote intergovernmental cooperation in the region

Objectives:

1. Coordinate planning for long-term City growth with Columbia and Dodge Counties, the Towns of Elba and Columbus, and the Village of Fall River.
2. Share or coordinate public services with other governmental entities to achieve cost savings and/or quality improvements for the mutual benefit of all participants.

Policies:

1. The City will seek cooperative agreements with nearby governments for the provision of public services whenever it can be demonstrated that doing so will achieve cost savings and/or quality improvements for Columbus residents.

Implementation

A compilation of programs and specific actions to be completed in a stated sequence, including proposed changes to any applicable zoning ordinances, official maps, or subdivision ordinances, to implement the objectives, policies, plans and programs contained in other plan elements. This element shall describe how each of the elements of the comprehensive plan will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive plan, and shall include a mechanism to measure the local governmental unit's progress toward achieving all aspects of the comprehensive plan. The element shall include a process for updating the comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan under this subsection shall be updated no less than once every 10 years.

There are many actions that the City may pursue to achieve the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan. Because each of these many possible actions requires the active leadership of elected officials and/or City staff, and because many of the actions will have a monetary cost to the City, it is not feasible or appropriate to chart out 20 years of specific action commitments. Instead, the City commits to using existing processes to carry out the actions necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of this plan.

- Comprehensive Plan: The City will update their Comprehensive Plan ever 5-10 years
- Roadmap 2050 Plan: The Roadmap 2050 that sets the parameters for what the City can afford to carryout capital improvements over the next 30 years.
- Capital Improvements Plan: The City will continue to prepare a Capital Improvement Plan for a five year time period. This Plan will be updated annually.
- Annual Budget: The City will continue to prepare an annual budget to ensure that the City fulfills its obligations.
- Annual Reports: The City will continue to prepare an annual report that identifies accomplishments that lead to the implementation of the comprehensive plan and roadmap 2050.

Plan Overview

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan is the City of Columbus's guide to community physical, social, and economic development. This plan is not intended to serve as land use regulations in themselves; instead, it will provide a rational basis for local land use decisions with a twenty-year vision for future planning and community decisions. This plan will address the nine (9) elements all of the nine elements below as defined by Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law (s. 66.1001).

Planning Area

The study area for the Columbus 2040 Comprehensive Plan has been selected to include all lands in which the City has short-term and long-term interest in planning and development activity. The General Planning Area includes all lands within The City of Columbus municipal limits and within the City's 1½-mile Extraterritorial Zoning jurisdiction as depicted on Map 1.

Community History

The City of Columbus lies in the far southeastern corner of Columbia County, with a small portion of the city limits crossing into Dodge County to the east. The development of the Columbus began in the 1830's as an outpost for lumber milling and agricultural support. The city has been incorporated since the 1874 City Charter. The city has been an agriculture-based community, with banking facilities, commercial endeavors, housing and educational institutions to support the surrounding farming activities.

The area now known as the City of Columbus was part of the Michigan territory until 1836 when the Wisconsin Territory was formed by act of Congress. At that time, the area of Columbus was part of Milwaukee County. Columbia County was created in 1846 when it was divided from Portage County. Columbus was initially designated as the county seat for Columbia County. However, a general election in 1851 gave the permanent status to Fort Winnebago, later renamed Portage.

Elbert Dickason is recognized as the first settler in the area of Columbus. He first arrived in 1839 as the owner of a significant tract of land along the Crawfish River. He built a log cabin not far from the current site of the railroad depot, and proceeded to dam the Crawfish River and build a sawmill. Several years later, the mill was purchased by Lewis Ludington, a lumberman based in Milwaukee.

Beginning in 1843, Lewis Ludington and his son James and nephew Harrison developed much of the original town center, and street names bear out their imprint on the community. The original street of Ludington Avenue was laid on the Madison to Fond du Lac trail.

Many of the original settlers of the area were pioneers from New England states. Early residents arrived for a variety of trades, not only the farmers, but also potters, blacksmiths, lumbermen and merchants. Several banks and commercial establishments were established early on to serve the residents and surrounding new arrivals.

Chapter 1: Background and Demographics

The first school building was erected in the city limits in 1846 at 426 Ludington Avenue, a building which still stands as a residence. The 1850 population of the City was 164 men and 124 women. The railroad connected Columbus to the outside world on May 25, 1857, with links to Watertown, Oconomowoc and Milwaukee.

The City of Columbus was chartered in 1874 and municipal improvements began almost immediately. A fire department purchased 2 extinguishers hand pumpers and a hook and ladder truck in 1877. In 1893 the City Hall building was constructed. In 1896 the City received a \$25,000 loan for the construction of a water system, and in 1899 a \$45,000 loan for the development of a direct current steam generated power plant. The main sanitary sewer system in the downtown area was constructed in 1908.

A much lengthier and thorough history of the City of Columbus is available in the Columbus Public Library. The four-volume set, written as a newspaper column over several years by Fred A. Stare provides much detail and anecdotal information on the setting, history and personality of Columbus.

Public Participation and Identification of Key Issues

The Columbus Citizen Engagement Team (CET) used a comprehensive approach to gather stakeholder input to guide the City of Columbus long range planning efforts. The CET hosted community conversations, business leader meetings, planning and potluck event and conducted a survey to get stakeholder feedback. The results were analyzed to identify key issues for City Stakeholders. Based on the feedback received the most critical issues were :

- Support for new school facilities and partnership with School District
- Revitalization of the Downtown Columbus Area
- Investment in Transportation Infrastructure
- Maintain the “small town feel” during growth
- Maintain and Improve Quality of life for residents (recreation, library, arts, affordable housing, schools, safety, etc.)
- Ensuring that adequate land is available for new growth

Other issues were identified through this process as well and are addressed in each chapter through the goals, objectives and policies.

The Comprehensive Plan will identify goals, objectives and policies, for each element that will guide the future development of Columbus. For purposes of this planning process, goals, objectives and policies are defined as:

Goals: Broad statements that express general public priorities about how the community should approach development issues during the next 20 years. These goals are based on key issues identified by community stakeholders from the public outreach efforts for the plan.

Objectives: More specific than goals and are usually attainable through planning and implementation activities. The accomplishment of an objective contributes to the fulfillment of a goal.

Policies: Rules or courses of action used to ensure plan implementation and to accomplish the goals and objectives. Policies are intended to be used by decision-makers on a regular basis.

Previous Planning Documents

Past plans were reviewed to assist with the completion of the Columbus 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The following list provides a brief summary of the local plans that were reviewed as part of the plan development. In addition to local plans, statewide plans were also reviewed as part of the planning process.

Columbus 2030 Comprehensive Plan, Adopted 2009

The comprehensive plan is the City of Columbus's guide to community physical, social, and economic development. The Comprehensive Plan provides a rational basis for local land use decisions with a twenty-year vision for future planning and community decisions. The Comprehensive plan must include, at a minimum, the nine elements as defined by the Comprehensive Planning Law (s. 66.1001).

Columbia County 2030 Comprehensive Plan, Adopted 2007, Amended 2013

The Columbia County comprehensive plan is the counties guide to community physical, social, and economic development. The Comprehensive plan must include, at a minimum, the nine elements as defined by the Comprehensive Planning Law (s. 66.1001).

Columbia County Farmland Preservation Plan

The Columbia County Farmland Preservation Plan is the County's State-certified farmland Preservation plan under Wisconsin's Working Lands Initiative (Chapter 91 of Wisconsin Statutes). The Plan focuses on Columbia County's land use planning and zoning approach to farmland preservation. This Plan identifies farmland preservation areas and also accommodates compatible growth in planned locations, forms, and densities.

2nd Ward Creek Storm Water Flooding and Alternative Analysis

Flooding events that occurred in Columbus during the late 2000's negatively impacted many properties along the 2nd Ward Creek corridor in the City of Columbus. During this time several high water events have exacerbated the storm water problems which include flooded streets and homes.

In September of 2010, the City hired Ruekert Mielke to conduct a study of the storm water concerns along 2nd Ward Creek from the upstream reach at the corporate boundary to the confluence with the Crawfish River. The study was to quantify known storm water related problems, analyze alternatives to reduce the frequency and magnitude of the problems, and develop a recommended plan.

Fireman's Park Storm Water Analysis and Recommendations

In 2017 the City of Columbus hired Ruekert Mielke to examine storm sewer infrastructure located within Fireman's Park. The need from the study arose from concerns that existing storm sewer pipe that extends from south to north across Fireman's Park had partially collapsed causing sink holes above ground and restricting pipe capacity. The purpose of this report was to identify issues with the existing storm water infrastructure and provide possible alternatives for remediation. The report considered a few alternatives to replace infrastructure and alleviate storm water concerns.

After Action Review - Flood of June 2008

The after action review documents the flood event that happened in 2008. The review documents how the city successfully responded to the flooding event and identifies ways to improve the response to a flooding disaster.

Columbia County Land and Water Resource Management Plan

The Columbia County Land and Water Resource Management Plan provides a detailed review and assessment of all Columbia County's natural resource issues. Which includes a review of the county's major surface water resources including location, description and assessment is provided. This plan also makes recommendations based on local trends and identifies methods to integrate resource protection and management effectively

Demographics

The review of the demographic trends for the City of Columbus and surrounding units of local government are critical to understanding what has occurred and what is likely to occur in the future for the Columbus Area. This section will examine population, age distribution, educational levels, and income. The data shows nearly 20 years of past trends and projections 20 years into the future. The data for this section was provided by the US Census Bureau or the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) Demographic Services Center. American Community Survey (ACS) data from the US Census was used to provide the most current estimates for this section. The estimates are derived from surveys over a 5-year period; the current estimate is from surveys completed from 2014 to 2018.

Table 1-1: Historic Population Trends

Unit of Government	Population					Percent Growth			
	1980 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census	2010 Census	2019 Estimate	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000-2010	1980-2019
City of Columbus	4,049	4,083	4,443	4,991	5,173	0.8%	8.8%	12.3%	27.8%
Town Columbus	704	838	711	646	651	19.0%	-15.2%	-9.1%	-7.5%
Town of Elba	1,028	964	1,086	996	998	-6.2%	12.7%	-8.3%	-2.9%
Village of Fall River	850	842	1,097	1,712	1,781	-0.9%	30.3%	56.1%	109.5%
Columbia County	43,222	45,088	52,468	56,833	57,282	4.3%	16.4%	8.3%	32.5%
Dodge County	75,064	76,559	85,897	88,759	90,032	2.0%	12.2%	3.3%	19.9%
Wisconsin	4,705,642	4,891,769	5,363,715	5,686,986	5,843,443	4.0%	9.6%	6.0%	24.2%

Source: US Census and DOA Estimate as of 1/1/2019

The City of Columbus has experienced population growth since 1980, since then the city has added approximately 1,047 residents. The majority of the growth during this period occurred after 1990 which coincides with Highway 151 being expanded to 4 lanes from Sun Prairie to Columbus in 1991.

The City of Columbus has experienced a similar growth rate in comparison to the State of Wisconsin. From 1980 to 2019 Columbus experienced a growth of 27.8% and the state grew at a 24.2% rate. Growth in the City of Columbus lagged behind the population growth of Columbia County since 1990. The only exception is the 2000's where Columbus had a growth of 12.3% compared to 8.3% for the county. A comparison of population growth in neighboring municipalities shows that growth in the area is primarily occurring in the City of Columbus and the Village of Fall River. The Towns of Elba and Columbus both experienced a loss in population since 1980. When comparing the growth between Fall River and Columbus you will notice that Fall River has seen a population growth of 109.5% since 1980 compared to Columbus with a 27.8% growth. However, when you look at the raw numbers it shows that Columbus has outpaced Fall River totaling 1,124 new residents compared to 931 new residents.

Table 1-2: Population Projections

Unit of Government	2010 Census	2020 Projection	2025 Projection	2030 Projection	2035 Projection	2040 Projection	% Growth 2010-2040
City of Columbus	4,991	5,495	5,835	6,120	6,250	6,290	26.0%
Town Columbus	646	650	650	645	625	595	-7.9%
Town of Elba	996	985	990	985	960	920	-7.6%
Village of Fall River	1,712	1,960	2,140	2,300	2,400	2,465	44.0%
Columbia County	56,833	61,410	64,745	67,455	68,460	68,450	20.4%
Dodge County	88,759	92,035	94,820	97,020	97,190	95,650	7.8%
Wisconsin	5,686,986	6,005,080	6,203,850	6,375,910	6,476,270	6,491,635	14.1%

Source: US Census and WI DOA

The Wisconsin Department of Administration projects that the population of the City of Columbus will grow by 26.0% by the year 2040. The projection is similar to the population growth that Columbus experienced from 1980 to present day. The projections show that population growth for the City will outpace Columbia County and the State of Wisconsin. The projections also show the surrounding Towns of Columbus and Elba will experience a decline in population over the next 20 years.

Figure 1-1 charts the historic trends and the future population projections for the City of Columbus. The figure clearly shows the historic and project growth for the City of Columbus following a linear trajectory.

Figure 1-1: Population Trends

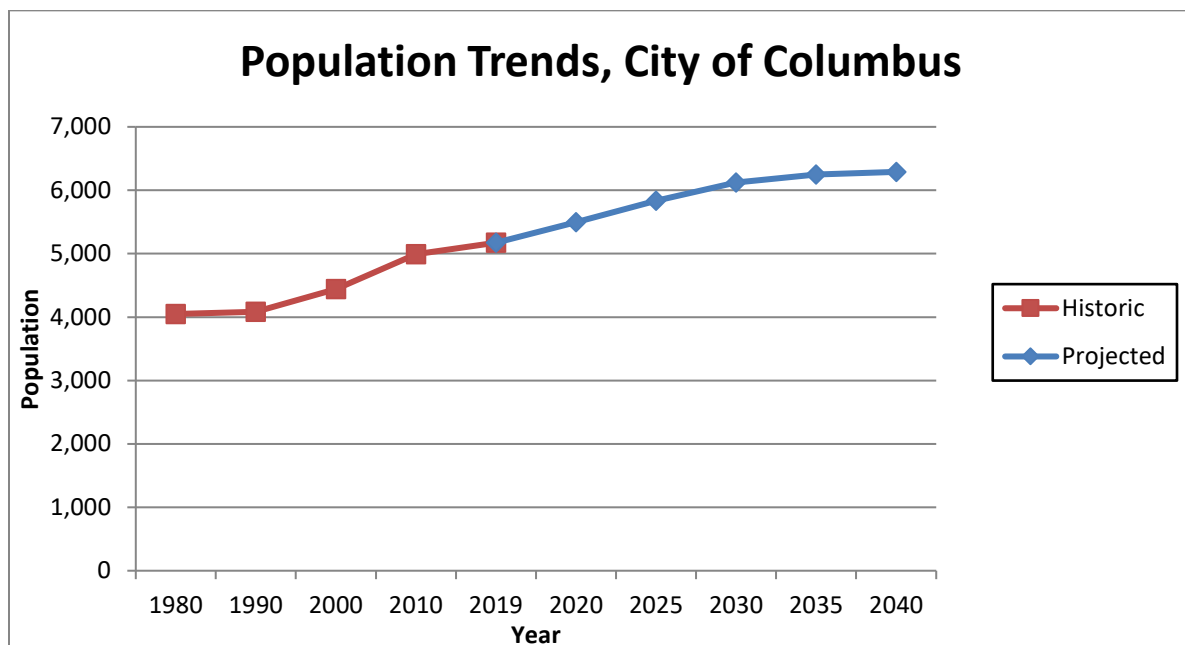


Table 1-3: Age Distribution

Age Group	2000				2018			
	City of Columbus		Wisconsin		City of Columbus		Wisconsin	
	Population	Percent	Population	Percent	Population	Percent	Population	Percent
Under 5	281	6.3%	342,340	6.4%	349	6.9%	335,920	5.8%
5 to 19 years	979	21.9%	1,189,753	22.2%	906	18.1%	1,109,349	19.2%
20 to 24 years	202	4.5%	357,292	6.7%	323	6.4%	402,236	7.0%
25 to 34 years	583	13.0%	706,168	13.2%	870	17.3%	729,904	12.6%
35 to 44 years	757	16.9%	875,522	16.3%	494	9.8%	694,344	12.0%
45 to 54 years	535	11.9%	732,306	13.7%	606	12.1%	777,676	13.5%
55 to 64 years	369	8.2%	457,741	8.5%	728	14.5%	804,270	14.0%
65 to 74 years	305	6.8%	355,307	6.6%	343	6.8%	527,368	9.1%
75 to 84 years	322	7.2%	251,621	4.7%	284	5.7%	271,312	4.7%
85 years and over	146	3.3%	95,625	1.8%	119	2.4%	126,015	2.2%
Median Age	37.5		36.0		36.5		39.3	

Source: US Census and American Community Survey 2014-2018

Table 1-3 shows the population by age group for the City of Columbus and for the State of Wisconsin in 2000 and 2018. The median age for Columbus has gotten younger decreasing from 37.5 in 2000 to 36.5 in 2018. This is stark contrast with the state of Wisconsin, which has seen the median age increase from 36.0 in 2000 to 39.3 in 2018.

The age group in Columbus that had the largest increase in terms of percent of the population was the 25 to 34 year old age bracket. In Columbus, the 25 to 34 year old age bracket increased from 13.0% of the population in 2000 to 16.5% in 2017. Wisconsin experienced a decrease in the percent of total population for the 25 to 34 age group from 2000 to 2017, going from 13.2% to 12.7% of the total population in Wisconsin.

The percent of the population over the age of 65 in Columbus has decreased from 17.3% in 2000 to 14.9% 2018. During that timeframe, the state saw an increase in the percent of the population over the age of 65 from 13.1% in 2000 to 16.0% in 2018.

Table 1-4: Education Attainment

Educational Attainment Population 25 years and over	City of Columbus			Columbia County			Wisconsin		
	2000	2010	2018	2000	2010	2018	2000	2010	2018
Less than 9th grade	5.5%	4.8%	1.2%	4.7%	3.0%	2.0%	5.4%	2.4%	2.8%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	9.9%	6.2%	3.8%	9.1%	6.4%	5.1%	9.6%	8.4%	5.3%
High school graduate or equivalency	37.8%	36.5%	30.6%	39.7%	38.7%	33.9%	34.6%	35.2%	30.9%
Some college, no degree	21.9%	20.0%	21.3%	21.7%	22.4%	22.9%	20.6%	16.3%	20.7%
Associate's degree	5.1%	8.7%	11.7%	8.0%	9.6%	13.0%	7.5%	11.4%	10.7%
Bachelor's degree	13.9%	16.5%	23.1%	11.5%	13.8%	16.3%	15.3%	15.1%	19.4%
Graduate or professional degree	5.8%	7.3%	8.4%	5.3%	6.2%	6.9%	7.2%	11.2%	10.1%
Percent high school graduate or higher	84.5%	89.0%	95.1%	86.2%	90.7%	93.0%	85.2%	89.2%	91.9%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	19.7%	23.8%	31.5%	16.8%	20.0%	23.2%	22.5%	26.2%	29.0%

Source: US Census and American Community Survey 2014-2018

Table 1-4 displays educational attainment for residents 25 years and older in the City of Columbus, Columbia County and Wisconsin. The table shows US Census data for educational attainment for each area in 2000, 2010 and 2018. The City of Columbus has seen an increase in percent high school graduate or higher from 84.5% in 2000 to 95.1 % in 2018. The increase in the percent of the population over 25 with a high school graduate or higher shows that the City of Columbus exceeds the percentage for Columbia County and Wisconsin in 2018.

The City of Columbus has also experienced substantial growth in population who have a bachelor's degree or higher. The percent of Columbus residents 25 years or older with a bachelor's degree or higher jumped from 19.7% in 2000 to 31.5% in the 2018. The county and state also had growth in those with bachelor's degrees or higher during this period. Often there is a strong correlation between income levels and educational attainment; it is noteworthy that Columbus has surpassed the state average for those with a bachelor's degree or higher.

Table 1-5: Per Capita Income

Unit of Government	2000	2010	2018
City of Columbus	\$21,435	\$26,333	\$30,908
Columbia County	\$21,014	\$26,993	\$33,012
Wisconsin	\$21,271	\$26,624	\$32,018

Source: US Census and American Community Survey 2014-2018

Table 5 shows the per capita income for the City of Columbus in comparison to Columbia County and the State of Wisconsin. Per capita income measures the average income earned per person in a given area in a specified year. The data shows that each place in Table 1-5 has experienced a similar growth of per capita income. The per capita income for the City of Columbus has lagged behind Columbia County and Wisconsin in 2010 and 2017.

Table 1-6: Median Household Income

Unit of Government	2000	2010	2018
City of Columbus	\$42,667	\$48,063	\$57,976
Columbia County	\$45,064	\$55,910	\$65,348
Wisconsin	\$43,791	\$51,598	\$59,209

Source: US Census and American Community Survey 2014-2018

Table 1-6 shows the median Household income for the City of Columbus in comparison to Columbia County and the State of Wisconsin. The data shows that the median household income for each place has increased over this period. The median household income for City of Columbus lags behind the state of Wisconsin and Columbia County during this period

Table 1-7 - Percentage of people below the Poverty Level

Unit of Government	2000	2010	2018
City of Columbus	5.4%	15.5%	8.7%
Columbia County	5.2%	8.7%	8.2%
Wisconsin	8.7%	11.6%	11.9%

Source: US Census and American Community Survey 2014-2018

Table 7 shows the percent of population whose income is below the poverty level. The US Census uses a set of annual income levels to establish poverty thresholds. The thresholds represent an estimate of the point below which a household of a given size has pre-tax cash income insufficient to meet minimal food and other basic needs. The data shows that the percentage of people living below the poverty level has increased in Columbus, Columbia County and Wisconsin. The increase is likely due to the great recession that crippled our nation's economy in the late 2010's. The City of Columbus experienced a large increase in people below the poverty level between 2000 and 2010. Columbus rebounded from this trend in 2018 with a poverty level below the state.

Impact of Highways

The development of the Federal and State Highway system has had a lasting impact on the City of Columbus. Columbus benefits from having five highways pass through its municipal limits. US Highway 151 and State Highway 16 have had the greatest impact on the growth of Columbus. The entire route of State Highway 16 through the state was once part of the route of US-16, which originally stretched from Detroit, Michigan on the east to Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming on the west.

In 1926, Highway 16 was commissioned to enter the state at La Crosse, run along an east-southeasterly course to Milwaukee where a railroad carferry was available to connect motorists with the section of Highway 16 in Michigan at Muskegon. The route ran from La Crosse through Sparta, Tomah, Mauston, Wisconsin Dells, Portage, Columbus, Watertown and Milwaukee.

US Highway 151 was originally designated as a route from Madison to Fond du Lac in 1926. The route quickly expanded over the next decade with extensions to the northeast from Fond du Lac to Manitowoc and the southwest via Dodgeville, Platteville ending at the Wisconsin Iowa border outside of Dubuque.

The US-151 corridor from Madison to Fond du Lac has experienced ongoing highway upgrade over the past three decades or so. US- 151 was predominantly a two-lane highway in 1970. Presently US-151 is made up of several extended stretches of expressway- or freeway-grade highway. The growth of US-151 from a two lane road to a four lane road has had a large impact on the City of Columbus. The chronology for the upgrades between Madison and Fond du Lac can be found in the timeline below.

Figure 1-2: US Highway 151 Timeline

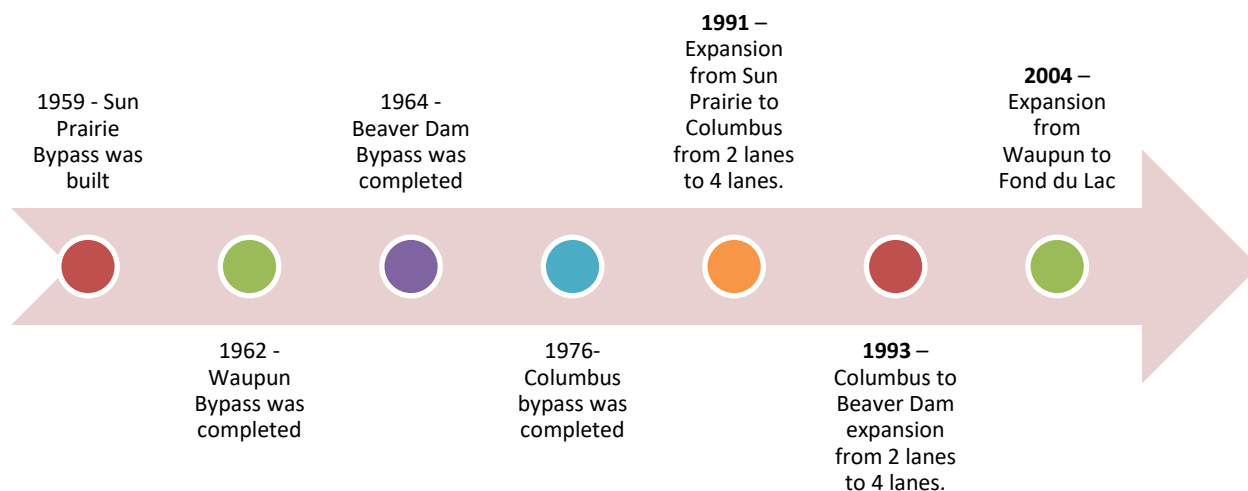


Table 1-8: Highway 151 Corridor Population Trends

Unit of Government	County	1980 Census	1990 Census	2000 Census	2010 Census	2019 Estimate	% Change 1980 to 2017	Actual Growth 1980-2017
City of Madison	Dane	170,616	190,766	208,054	233,209	255,650	36.69%	85,034
City of Sun Prairie	Dane	12,931	15,352	20,369	29,364	34,926	127.08%	21,995
Town of Bristol	Dane	1,723	1,835	2,698	3,765	4,285	118.51%	2,562
Town of York	Dane	714	649	703	652	650	-8.68%	-64
Town of Columbus	Col	704	838	711	646	651	-8.24%	-53
City of Columbus	Col/Dodge	4049	4093	4479	4991	5173	23.27%	1,124
Village of Fall River	Col	850	842	1,097	1,712	1,781	101.41%	931
Town of Elba	Dodge	1,028	964	1,086	996	998	-3.11%	-30
Town of Calamus	Dodge	1,077	1,009	1,005	1,044	1,041	-3.06%	-36
Town of Beaver Dam	Dodge	3,030	3,097	3,440	3,962	4,045	30.76%	1,015
City of Beaver Dam	Dodge	14,149	14,196	15,169	16,214	16,928	14.59%	2,779
Town of Trenton	Dodge	1,319	1,299	1,301	1,293	1,305	-1.97%	-14
Town of Chester	Dodge	981	797	960	687	692	-29.97%	-289
City of Waupun	Dodge/ FDL	8,132	8,844	10,718	11,340	11,463	39.45%	3,331
Town of Waupun	FDL	1,492	1,368	1,385	1,375	1,410	-7.84%	-82
Town of Oakfield	FDL	833	822	767	703	719	-15.61%	-114
Town of Lamartine	FDL	1,749	1,607	1,616	1,737	1,790	-0.69%	41
Town of Fond du Lac	FDL	3,001	2,310	2,027	3,015	3,899	0.47%	898
City of Fond Du Lac	FDL	35,863	37,755	42,203	43,021	44,303	19.96%	8,440
Total USH 151 Corridor		264,241	288,443	319,788	359,726	391,709	36.14%	127,468

Source: US Census and DOA Estimate as of 1/1/2019

Since 1980 there has been substantial population growth along the Highway 151 corridor from Madison to Fond du Lac. Table 1-8 shows the population growth for units of local government along the 151 Corridor. The table shows the population growth has primarily occurred in cities and villages along the corridor. The population growth along the 151 corridor has outpaced the population growth for Wisconsin since 1980. During that time span, the 151 corridor grew by 36.1% while Wisconsin only experienced a population growth of 22.9 %.

Table 1-9: Highway 151 Corridor Population Projections

Unit of Government	County	2020 Projection	2025 Projection	2030 Projection	2035 Projection	2040 Projection	% Change 2020 to 2040
City of Madison	Dane	251,550	261,500	270,350	276,450	281,150	11.77%
City of Sun Prairie	Dane	34,770	37,880	40,830	43,330	45,580	31.09%
Town of Bristol	Dane	4,455	4,855	5,240	5,555	5,845	31.20%
Town of York	Dane	645	640	635	620	605	-6.20%
Town of Columbus	Col	650	650	645	625	595	-8.46%
City of Columbus	Col/Dodge	5,495	5,835	6,120	6,250	6,290	14.47%
Village of Fall River	Col	1,960	2,140	2,300	2,400	2,465	25.77%
Town of Elba	Dodge	985	990	985	960	920	-6.60%
Town of Calamus	Dodge	1,080	1,110	1,130	1,130	1,105	2.31%
Town of Beaver Dam	Dodge	4,220	4,425	4,610	4,690	4,690	11.14%
City of Beaver Dam	Dodge	17,340	18,090	18,740	18,990	18,900	9.00%
Town of Trenton	Dodge	1,335	1,365	1,385	1,380	1,350	1.12%
Town of Chester	Dodge	690	690	685	670	640	-7.25%
City of Waupun	Dodge/ FDL	11,810	12,160	12,445	12,480	12,330	4.40%
Town of Waupun	FDL	1,405	1,425	1,435	1,425	1,400	-0.36%
Town of Oakfield	FDL	690	680	665	645	615	-10.87%
Town of Lamartine	FDL	1,820	1,870	1,915	1,930	1,920	5.49%
Town of Fond du Lac	FDL	3,720	3,965	4,185	4,345	4,455	19.76%
City of Fond Du Lac	FDL	44,510	45,540	46,300	46,370	45,920	3.17%
Total USH 151 Corridor		389,130	405,810	420,600	430,245	436,775	12.24%

Source: WI DOA

Table 1-9 shows the Wisconsin Department of Administration projections local units of government along the Highway 151 corridor. The projections expect the majority of the growth to occur in the cities and villages along the corridor. The projections show that this corridor will grow at 12.2% rate over the next 20 years. The projected growth rate for the corridor lags behind the statewide projection of 14.1% (See table 1-2). Although the projected population growth is slightly lower than the projected growth statewide, the corridor is expected to experience a significant growth in population.

Chapter Overview

This element provides an assessment of the City of Columbus agricultural, natural, and cultural resources and contains information required under SS66.1001. Information includes: productive agricultural areas, a natural resource inventory, and a cultural resource inventory. This information provides a basis for creating goals, objectives, policies, maps, and actions to guide the future.

Agricultural Resources

Agriculture in Columbus and surrounding areas remains an important component of Columbus's economy and character. According to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue property assessed as agricultural comprised 48% of the City's real property.

Agriculture is big business in Columbia County. It has an overall \$672 million dollar annual impact. Agriculture provides 5,312 jobs in Columbia County, which is 18% of the workforce. For every new dollar of agricultural income, an additional \$1.07 of county income is generated. Dairy is the largest part of Columbia County agriculture. Providing for a strong dairy future in Columbia County is not only financially important but also is important for the utilization of forages in crop rotations and resulting soil erosion implications. The eastern two-thirds of the county are dominated by a mixture of dairy, cash crop, and livestock farms. These farms sit on productive soils, enriched by ten thousand years of prairie growth on glacial deposits. The remainder of the County has more variable soil quality, less farming activity, more significant topographical changes, and more population and non-farm development.

Farm numbers within Columbia County are on the decline and remaining farms are shrinking in land base each year. Animal numbers related to dairy farms are on the decline opening the door for more cash grain operations. The face of agriculture is changing in Columbia County. Pressures related to low milk prices, tight profit margins, competition for land (agricultural, residential and recreational) and off-farm labor opportunities are contributing factors.

Columbia County has 1,526 farms with an average size of 228 Acres. There are 211 dairy farms, over 500 beef, sheep and hog farms plus everything from large cash grain operations of 500-1000 acres to 5-10 acre fresh market vegetable producers. Collectively farmers own and manage 348,396 acres of land within the county. Field crops, dairy, cattle and calves, poultry products and vegetables are primary commodities in Columbia County. Horticulture is growing in Columbia County. Sand and muck soils found in the Wisconsin and Fox River systems support commercial vegetable and mint production. High quality prairie soils in the southern and northeastern parts of the County put the area in the top 10 for corn and soybean production

LAND RESOURCES*Geography and Topography*

The entire county is underlain with Precambrian bedrock of which is igneous or metamorphic. Some bedrock outcrop through the Cambrian layer of sandstone, siltstone, shale and dolomite can also be found. Preglacial, glacial and postglacial erosion formed the bedrock topography surface. Most of the bedrock valleys were part of a preglacial drainage system.

The bedrock surface ranges from about 500 feet above sea level in some valleys, to about 1,400 feet above sea level, west of the Wisconsin River. Bedrock valleys that underlay and control present surface drainage are filled with drift that form important aquifers. The drift is largely glacial sediment laid down by the Green Bay lobe during Wisconsin Glaciation, but they also include some alluvium and marsh deposits. Distinctive landforms (end moraine, ground moraine, outwash and lake plains) resulting from glaciation are composed of sediment types determined by their mode of deposition.

The topography of Columbia County generally consists of a ground moraine with gentle slopes. The valleys of Neenah Creek and the Fox River occupy an area of glacial lake deposits characteristically broad and flat. Land surface elevations vary from the Baraboo area west of the Wisconsin River (elev. 1200-1400 feet) to the Wisconsin River at Prairie du Sac (elev. 740 feet). The divide that separates the Wisconsin River and Rock River Watershed is 1,000 feet to 1,150 feet above sea level. Source- UW Extension

Soils

The St. Charles, Ossian, Dodge Association comprises about 15 percent of the County's area, which includes the City of Columbus. It generally occurs in the southern and eastern portions of the County. The soils in this association are characterized as well drained, moderately well drained, and poorly well drained silty soils that have a silty subsoil and are underlain by sandy loam glacial till or silty sediment. These soils are well suited for crops. Generally the St. Charles and Dodge soils in this association are suitable for onsite sewage disposal and basements. The Ossian soils in this association are not suitable for onsite sewage disposal and basements because of a high water table.

Forests and Woodlands

Forest and woodlands provide a variety of beneficial functions when properly managed. They contribute to clean air and water; regulating surface water runoff; and the woodlands contribute to the maintenance of a diversity of plant and animal life in association with human life. The removal of woodlands can contribute to storm water runoff, the siltation of lakes and streams, and the destruction of wildlife habitat. Woodlands should be maintained for a variety of reasons including: scenery, wildlife habitat, education, recreation, and air and water quality protection.

According to the Columbia County Land and Water Resource Management Plan, Forested land comprises about 98,000 acres or approximately 19% of the land area of Columbia County. The major cover type in the county is oak-hickory which comprises 66,300 acres. The woodlands in Columbia

County are threatened not only by increasing development pressures, but also by insect pests, exotics, and disease. Columbia County is currently under gypsy moth quarantine for all lumber products.

Tree City USA is a national recognition program that began in 1976 and is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and National Association of State Foresters. By meeting four fundamental standards, an incorporated municipality of any size can qualify. It is a nationwide movement that provides the framework necessary for communities to manage and expand their public trees. The City of Columbus was designated as a Tree City USA Community in 2005.

Metallic and Non-Metallic Mineral Resources

Mineral resources are divided into two categories, metallic and non-metallic resources. Metallic resources include lead and zinc. Nonmetallic resources include sand, gravel, and limestone. In June of 2001, all Wisconsin counties were obliged to adopt an ordinance for nonmetallic mine reclamation. The purpose of the ordinance is to achieve acceptable final site reclamation to an approved post-mining land use in compliance with uniform reclamation standards. Uniform reclamation standards address environmental protection measures including topsoil salvage and storage, surface and groundwater protection, and concurrent reclamation to minimize acreage exposed to wind and water erosion. After reclamation, many quarries become possible sites for small lakes or landfills. Identification of quarry operations is necessary in order to minimize nuisance complaints by neighboring uses and to identify areas that may have additional transportation needs related to trucking. There is one quarry within the within the City of Columbus, which is Michael's Materials Corporation quarry that is located on Hwy 60.

WATER RESOURCES

Groundwater

Groundwater is a critical natural resource in Wisconsin. Approximately Fifteen to thirty percent of the precipitation we get in Wisconsin each year seeps into the ground and recharges our aquifers. The daily recharge is calculated at 14 billion gallons per day. It is estimated that there is enough groundwater underground to cover Wisconsin to a depth of 30 feet. Despite this seemingly inexhaustible supply, there are growing concerns about both the quality and quantity of groundwater. For example, groundwater quality may be impacted by any of a variety of activities, including leaking underground storage tanks, landfills, septic systems, over-application of pesticides and fertilizers, and spills of hazardous chemicals. The most common contaminants found in Wisconsin groundwater are nitrate-nitrogen, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and pesticides. Nitrate comes from a multitude of sources including nitrogen-based fertilizers, septic systems, animal waste storage, feedlots, municipal and industrial wastewater discharges and sludge disposal. Some examples of VOCs are gasoline and industrial solvents, paints, paint thinners, stain removers and drain cleaners. Pesticides reach groundwater from land application, spills, misuse or improper storage and disposal.

Groundwater is the only source of drinking water in Columbus. It is a critical resource, not only because it is used by residents as their source of water, but also because surface waters depend on it to 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. According to the Wisconsin DNR Groundwater Contamination Susceptibility Model, Columbus generally ranks high to high-medium for susceptibility to groundwater contamination. Susceptibility to groundwater contamination is determined based on five physical resource characteristics: Bedrock Depth, Bedrock Type, Soil Characteristics, Superficial Deposits, and Water Table Depth.

Groundwater can be contaminated through both point and non-point source pollution (NPS). The Environmental Protection Agency defines them as:

- Non-Point Source - Pollution which occurs when rainfall, snowmelt, or irrigation runs over land or through the ground, picks up pollutants, and deposits them into rivers, lakes, and coastal waters or introduces them into ground water.
- Point Source - Sources of pollution that can be traced back to a single point, such as a municipal or industrial wastewater treatment plant discharge pipe.

The National Water Quality Assessment shows that NPS pollution remains leading source of water quality problems. The most common NPS pollutants are sediment (erosion, construction) and nutrients (farming, lawn care).

Columbia County has been experiencing increasing problems with nitrate levels and atrazine. Agriculture is the primary source of these problems because nitrates are found in fertilizer and atrazine is a potent pesticide. In order to reduce levels of atrazine found in the groundwater, Columbia County has identified

six Atrazine prohibition areas, equaling about 80,000 acres. The City of Columbus does not fall within an Atrazine prohibition area.

Surface water

The City of Columbus is part of two watersheds. The northwest portion of the city is located within the Upper Crawfish River Watershed, and the southwest area lies within the Lower Crawfish River Watershed. The boundary of the watersheds generally follows Lewis Street, Charles Street and Western Avenue through Columbus. Both of these watersheds are drain into Mississippi River via the Rock River. The Crawfish River is the primary waterway in the both watersheds that cover Columbus. Other waterways within these watersheds that impact Columbus include Robbins Creek, and Second Ward Creek.

In order to protect public rights in navigable waters, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has been given authority in Chapters 30 and 31 of the Wisconsin Statutes to issue permits affecting all navigable waters of the state. Navigable waters are waterways that have a defined bed and bank (i.e., a bottom or channel) and enough water to regularly support the smallest recreational watercraft on an annual recurring basis, including periods of high runoff. Public navigable waters are distinguished by the “ordinary high water mark,” which distinguishes lands held in trust by the public from private lands. For some activities, the ordinary high water mark delineates the waterward limits of local zoning authority and the landward limits of WDNR water regulation permit authority.

Outstanding and Exceptional Waters

Wisconsin has classified the State’s highest quality waters as Outstanding Resource Waters (ORWs) or Exceptional Resource Waters (ERWs). Waters designated as ORW or ERW are surface waters that provide outstanding recreational opportunities, support valuable fisheries, have unique hydrologic or geologic features, have unique environmental settings, and are not significantly impacted by human activities. The primary difference between the two is that ORW’s typically do not have any direct point sources discharging pollutants directly to the water. An ORW or ERW designation does not include water quality criteria like a use designation. Instead, it is a label that identifies waters the State has identified that warrant additional protection from the effects of pollution. These designations are intended to meet federal Clean Water Act obligations requiring Wisconsin to adopt an “antidegradation” policy that is designed to prevent any lowering of water quality. There are no ORWs or ERWs within the City of Columbus. The Columbus Mill Pond has been designated as Priority Navigable Waterway because it is a lake that is smaller than 50 acres.

Impaired Waters

Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act requires states to develop a list of impaired waters. This list identifies waters that are not meeting water quality standards, including both water quality criteria for specific substances or the designated uses, and is used as the basis for development of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). States are required to submit a list of impaired waters to the Environmental Protection Agency for approval every two years. These waters are listed within

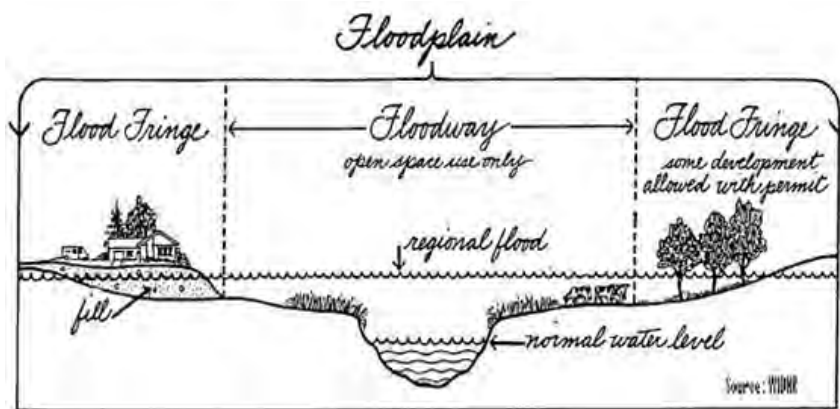
Wisconsin's 303(d) Waterbody Program and are managed by the WDNR's Bureau of Watershed Management. The Columbus Mill Pond and Crawfish River have been identified as impaired waters. The Mill Pond has a fish consumption advisory due to high levels of polychlorobiphenyls (PCBs). The segment of the Crawfish River from the Udey Dam to its headwaters is identified as impaired waters due to higher than permitted phosphorus levels in the water. (Source: WDNR)

Floodplain

Floods are the most common natural disaster in the City of Columbus. To mitigate the impact of flooding it requires sound land use planning. Floodplains serve many important functions related to flood and erosion control. For example, floodplains provide areas where floodwaters are stored, reduce flood velocities, reduce flood peaks, and reduce sedimentation. Floodplains also provide important functions related to ground water recharge, fish and wildlife habitat, and water quality. Floodplains are natural extensions of waterways and flooding is a natural physical event. When buildings are constructed in the floodplain, the floodplain's storage capacity is reduced. This causes the next flood of equal intensity to crest higher than the previous event and could inundate areas outside the historic floodplain. The other functions of floodplains can also be lost by allowing construction within a floodplain.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates floodplain areas. A flood is defined as a general and temporary condition of partial or complete inundation of normally dry land areas. The area inundated during a flood event is called the floodplain. The floodplain includes the floodway, the flood fringe, and other flood-affected areas. The floodway is the channel of a river and the adjoining land needed to carry the 100-year flood discharge.

Figure 2-1: Floodplain Diagram



Because the floodway is characterized by rapidly moving and treacherous water, development is severely restricted in a floodway. The flood fringe, which is landward of the floodway, stores excess floodwater until it can be infiltrated or discharged back into the channel. During a regional flood event, also known as the 100-year, one-percent, or base flood, the entire floodplain or Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) is inundated to a height called the regional flood elevation (RFE).

Floodplain zoning applies to counties, cities and villages. Wisconsin State Statute requires that each county, city and village shall zone, by ordinance, all lands subject to flooding. In addition, Wisconsin Administrative Code requires all communities to adopt reasonable and effective floodplain zoning ordinances within their respective jurisdictions to regulate all floodplains where serious flood damage may occur within one year after hydraulic and engineering data adequate to formulate the ordinance

becomes available. Refer to the City of Columbus Floodplain regulations, which may be found in Chapter 46 of the Municipal Code.

Floodplain areas generally contain important elements of the natural resource base such as woodlands, wetlands, and wildlife habitat; therefore, they constitute prime locations necessary for park, recreation, and open space areas. Every effort should be made to discourage incompatible urban development of floodplains and to encourage Compatible Park, recreation, and open space uses.

Wetlands

The state of Wisconsin defines a wetland as an area where water is at, near, or above the land surface long enough to be capable of supporting aquatic or hydrophytic (water-loving) vegetation and which has soils indicative of wet conditions. Wetlands generally occur in low-lying areas and near the bottom of slopes, particularly along lakeshores and stream banks, and on large land areas that are poorly drained. Wetlands are a critical natural resource that functions in several ways that are beneficial to both people and wildlife. Wetlands accomplish important natural functions, including:

- ❖ Provides habitat for a wide variety of plants, fish and wildlife
- ❖ Reduction in storm water runoff by providing areas for floodwater storage
- ❖ Function as a water filtration system by recycling nutrients and purifying the water.
- ❖ Protection of shorelines from erosion
- ❖ Provides groundwater recharge areas, includes the potential for wetland vegetation to filter storm water which would protect groundwater quality.
- ❖ Provides groundwater discharge areas which can stabilize lake levels and stream flows
- ❖ Provides ample educational and recreational activities

Wetlands are not conducive to development due to the erosive character, high compressibility and instability, low bearing capacity, and high shrink-swell potential of wetland soils, as well as the associated high water table. If wetlands are ignored in land use planning and development, those limitations may result in flooding, wet basements, unstable foundations, failing pavement, and excessive infiltration of clear water into sanitary sewers. In addition, there are significant onsite preparation and maintenance costs associated with the development of wetland soils, particularly as related to roads, foundations, and public utilities.

Recognizing the important natural functions of wetlands, continued efforts should be made to protect these areas by discouraging costly, both in monetary and environmental terms, wetland draining, filling, and urbanization. The Wisconsin DNR and the US Army Corp of Engineers require mitigation when natural wetland sites are destroyed.

Threatened or Endangered Species

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) program maintains data on the general location and status of threatened or endangered plant and animal species and natural communities and species and communities of special concern. The NHI program is part of

Chapter 2 - Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources

an international network of inventory programs. WIDNR is responsible for assessing population and occurrence status of Wisconsin's native plants and animals, natural communities and geological features, together referred to as "elements" of biodiversity.

The NHI provides data for each township identified by the Public Land Survey System. The City of Columbus is located in T10N, R12E and T10N, R13E. Table 2-1 identifies species included in the NHI for the Planning Area. The NHI identifies species that are legally designated as endangered, threatened, or special concern. WIDNR defines these designations as:

- Endangered Species (ES) - one whose continued existence is in jeopardy and may become extinct.
- Threatened Species (THR) - one that is likely, within the foreseeable future, to become endangered.
- Special Concern Species (SC) - one about which some problem of abundance or distribution is suspected but not proven.

Table 2-1: Natural Heritage Inventory

Scientific Name	Common Name	Location	WI Status	Group
<i>Hydrastis canadensis</i>	Golden-seal	T10N R13E (Elba)	SC	Plant
<i>Lythrurus umbratilis</i>	Redfin Shiner	T10N R12E(Columbus) T10N R13E (Elba)	THR	Fish
Southern dry-mesic forest	Southern Dry-mesic Forest	T10N R13E (Elba)	NA	Community
<i>Cypripedium candidum</i>	White Lady's-slipper	T10N R12E(Columbus)	THR	Plant
Wet-mesic prairie	Wet-mesic Prairie	T10N R12E(Columbus)	NA	Community

Source: WIDNR NHI Database

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Environmentally sensitive areas are usually defined by the local jurisdiction and often include many of the areas referred to in this section such as special groundwater protection areas, threatened or endangered species habitat, floodplains, wetlands and other unique or special resources where encroachment or development could have negative consequences. The City of Columbus has adopted a Wellhead Protection Overlay District. The purpose of the district is to limit development within 1200 feet of municipal wellhead(s) to uses that are compatible with protection of the public water supply.

Contaminated or potentially contaminated sites are another item that could fall under the environmentally sensitive areas designation. These are sites that have been identified by the DNR and need monitoring to prevent further environmental degradation or hazard to human life. The Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) is the DNR's on-line database that provides information about contaminated properties and other activities related to the investigation and cleanup of contaminated soil or groundwater in Wisconsin. The BRRTS database identifies six (6) open sites in Columbus in need of clean up or where cleanup is still underway. The database also identifies 103

closed sites where investigation and potential cleanup of the contamination has been completed and approved by DNR.

Cultural Resources

National Historic Landmark

A National Historic Landmark (NHL) is a building, district, object, site, or structure that is officially recognized by the United States government for its outstanding historical significance. Under 3% of the 90,000 places listed on the country's National Register of Historic Places are recognized as National Historic Landmarks.

The Farmers and Merchant's Union Bank located at 159 W James Street in Columbus is designated as a National Historic Landmark. This bank was one of the last commissions of the noted Chicago architect Louis Sullivan. The bank was the last of eight "jewel box" bank buildings designed by Sullivan. The bank was declared a National Historic Landmark in January of 1976.



Historic Markers

Wisconsin Historical Markers tell the stories about events, individuals, buildings, or sites of local, state, or national significance that contribute to our state's rich historical heritage. There are more than 580 official state markers in Wisconsin that carry approved historical inscriptions. The Wisconsin Historical Society's Historic Preservation office administers the Historical Markers program. The Governor James Taylor Lewis Mansion, located at the intersection of West James St and South Charles St., is the only Wisconsin Historical Marker within the City of Columbus.

National and State Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the Nation's official list of historic places worthy of preservation. Since its inception in 1966, the National Park Service has designated more than 80,000 listings; approximately 2400 are in Wisconsin. The register is maintained by the National Park Service in the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The State Register is Wisconsin's official list of state properties determined to be significant to Wisconsin's heritage. The State Historic Preservation Office at the Wisconsin Historical Society administers both the National Register and State Register in Wisconsin.

Both registers include buildings, sites, districts, structures, and objects that are significant in national, state or local history. In addition, both registers include resources related to architecture, archaeology, engineering or culture.

Table 2-1 below identifies properties all properties included on the National or State Register of Historic Places in the City of Columbus. The list shows that 17 properties have been listed on the national or historic register since 1972.

Table 2-2: National and State Register of Historic Places- Columbus

Property Name	Property Address	National Register Listing Date	State Register Listing Date
Farmers and Merchants Union Bank	159 W James St	10/18/1972	1/1/1989
Columbus City Hall	105 N Dickason Blvd	9/4/1979	1/1/1989
Governor Lewis Mansion	711 W James Street	4/9/1982	1/1/1989
Columbus Public Library	112 S Dickason Blvd	11/15/1990	
Chadbourn House	314 S Charles St	12/28/1990	11/19/1990
Kurth, John H., and Company Office Building	729--733 Park Ave	12/2/1993	1/22/1998
Columbus Post Office	211 S Dickason Blvd	10/24/2000	
Columbus Fireman's Park Complex	1049 Park Ave	2/25/2004	10/17/2003
Arnold House	954 Dix St	4/12/2007	10/13/2006
Griswold House	146 S Dickason Blvd	7/1/2009	1/16/2009
Ingalsbe House	546 Park Ave	7/1/2009	1/16/2009
Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church and Parsonage	236 & 254 W Mill St	7/18/2009	1/16/2009
Farnham House	533 W James St	7/30/2009	4/17/2009
Jones House	307 N Ludington St	7/30/2009	4/17/2009
Bellack House	628 W James St	6/7/2010	10/23/2009
Schendel House	211 N Ludington St	6/7/2010	10/23/2009
Sharrow House	841 Park Ave	7/8/2010	10/23/2009

Source: Wisconsin Historical Society
[Historic Districts](#)

Historic districts recognize a group of buildings, properties, or sites by one of several entities on different levels as historically or architecturally significant. Buildings, structures, objects and sites within a historic district are normally divided into two categories, contributing and non-contributing.

The federal government designates historic districts through the National Park Service. Federally designated historic districts are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but listing usually imposes no restrictions on what property owners may do with a designated property. The Wisconsin Historical Society oversees the designation of districts on the Wisconsin Register of Historic Places.

The City of Columbus is home to four historic districts that on the National and State Register of Historic places.

Downtown Historic Commercial District

The Columbus Historic Commercial District was listed on the National Register of Historic Place on March 5, 1992. There are 77 structures in the district, 63 of these contribute to its historic status. The

business district was formed due to the proximity to fertile farmland, proximity to critical high and the railroad which came to Columbus in 1857.

These historic buildings are mostly cream brick with and of Italianate or Commercial Vernacular style. The unified impression is in part attributable to two builders; a master carpenter, Richard VanAken, and a master mason, Henry Boelte.

Dickason Boulevard Historic District

The Dickason Boulevard Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999 and it was included on the Wisconsin Register of Historic Places in 1998. The district is generally located along . Dickason Blvd., from W. School St. to W. Harrison, also along S. Ludington St. The Dickason Boulevard district has 18 buildings that contribute to the historic nature of the district.

Prairie Street Historic District

The Prairie Street Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999 and it was included on the Wisconsin Register of Historic Places in 1998. The district is generally located along W. Prairie St., including parts of S. Lewis St. and S. Charles St. The Prairie Street district has 36 buildings that contribute to the historic nature of the district.

Dix/Warner Street District – Mid Century District only other district is in Milwaukee

The Dix Street-Warner Street was listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Wisconsin Register of Historic Places in 2017. The district is generally located along Dix and Warner streets from Maple Avenue to Fuller Street. The district has 26 buildings that contribute to the historic nature of the district.

The Dix Street-Warner Street Historic District is on of the few mid century modern districts in Wisconsin and it is generally located on the west side of the city of Columbus. It contains Columbus' most significant and concentrated collection of single family, post-World War II residences.

Local Historic Places

The Columbus Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission (HLPC) has the authority to designate local historic places within Columbus. These historic places consist of historic structures, sites, and districts within the city limits. In addition to the national and state register of historic places, which include the historic districts, the following are designated as local historic places.

- 729-733 Park Avenue - Kurth Brewery
- 704 Chapel Street - Water Tower
- 251 W. James Street - Derring House/Library Annex
- 154 S. Spring Street - Church

Goals

1. Promote efficient and orderly development to mitigate impacts to agricultural lands.
2. Protect Natural Resources within the City's Planning Area.
3. Preserve Historic structures in the City of Columbus

Objectives

1. Protect the agricultural, environmental, and cultural assets in the City of Columbus.
2. Create a storm water fund to dedicate a funding source exclusively storm water infrastructure and related improvements.

Policies

1. The City will work with the Towns of Columbus and Elba and the Village of Fall River to encourage an orderly, efficient development pattern that preserves natural and agricultural resources and minimizes conflicts between urban and rural uses, such as concerns over pesticides, erosion, noise, and air pollution.
2. The City encourages maintenance and rehabilitation of historic areas and buildings and will support community events and programs that celebrate the history and culture of Columbus. The City supports the Historic Preservation Commission and other community cultural and ethnic groups in their activities.
3. Continue to engage in water quality trading program to improve water quality in the Columbus Area.
4. The City will develop five (5) year Capital Improvement Program to establish funding for needed infrastructure projects.
5. Recommend the use of State and Federal Tax credits for the renovation of historic structures.

Utilities and community facilities element

This chapter is a to guide the future development of utilities and community facilities in the local governmental unit such as sanitary sewer service, stormwater management, water supply, solid waste disposal, on-site wastewater treatment technologies, recycling facilities, parks, telecommunications facilities, power-generating plants and transmission lines, cemeteries, health care facilities, child care facilities and other public facilities, such as police, fire and rescue facilities, libraries, schools and other governmental facilities. The element shall describe the location, use and capacity of existing public utilities and community facilities that serve the local governmental unit.

Sanitary Sewer System

All wastewater generated in the City of Columbus is pumped to and treated at the Columbus Wastewater Treatment Facility, located at 537 River Road, and eventually discharged into the Crawfish River. The Columbus Wastewater Treatment Facility currently serves 2,260 customers. Residential customers comprise 89.7 percent of the customers for the Columbus Wastewater Treatment Facility. The Facility was built in 1983 with a design flow of 1.265 Million Gallons Per Day (MGD). Currently the Facility is operating at 85% of the design flow.

The Columbus Wastewater Treatment Facility also handles waste water from Elba Sanitary District No 1 and the Village of Fall River. The city has intergovernmental agreements with each entity that identifies the responsibilities of each entity in regards to the Columbus Wastewater Treatment Facility.

The sewer system consists of 33 miles of pipe ranging from 8 to 27 inches. The various collector and interceptor sewer lines are made of Clay, Concrete, PVC and Iron. The city owns ten lift stations that contributes to the sewer system and the city monitors one lift station that is operated and maintained by the Town of Elba.

In 2019, the Columbus Wastewater Treatment Facility earned a perfect 4.0 rating on the Compliance Maintenance Annual Report (CMAR) annual report. The CMAR is an annual self-evaluation-reporting requirement for publicly and privately owned domestic wastewater treatment works. The State of Wisconsin requires an annual submittal of an electronic CMAR form (eCMAR) no later than June 30. The purpose of the eCMAR is to evaluate the wastewater treatment system for problems or deficiencies

There are also several private septic systems within the City of Columbus. There are three homes and one business connected to a private septic system on N. Spring St; there is one home connected to a private septic system on N. Ludington St; and there is a facility on N. Lewis St, that is connected to City sewer but still utilizes a mound system.

Stormwater Management Infrastructure

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines stormwater management as the effort to reduce runoff of rainwater or melted snow into streets, lawns and other sites and the improvement of water quality. Detaining stormwater and removing pollutants is the primary purpose of stormwater management. When storm water is absorbed into the soil, it is filtered and ultimately replenishes aquifers or flows into streams and rivers

Stormwater management typically includes the collection, cleansing, and controlled release of storm runoff to natural receiving systems, typically through detention and/or retention facilities. The City of Columbus uses a complex system of culverts, pipes, and drains in order to store and channel water to specific areas, diminishing the impact of non-point source pollution. After moving through the system the catch basin discharges it into the Crawfish River. The City maintains their system by cleaning catch basins and using a street sweeper to collect contaminants.

Two chapters of the Columbus Municipal Code deal explicitly with stormwater management regulations: CH 90.289 and CH 114.158-169. The City may require a variety of different stormwater drainage facilities, including sump pump laterals, curbs and gutters, catch basins and inlets, storm sewers, road ditches, and others; however, the necessity of these facilities is determined on a case- by-case basis.

Water

The Columbus Water and Light Department operates a public potable water supply system. The system relies entirely on groundwater, and consists of three operating wells, 2 reservoirs, an elevated storage tower, water mains, and 342 public fire hydrants. The system is approximately 34 miles of water mains range in size from 4 inch to 16 inches. In 2018, the system served 1,973 residences, 215 commercial customers, 8 industrial customers and 26 Public Facilities.

Approximately 139 million gallons of water was used in year 2018. The total capacity for the system is 790,000 gallons with a pumping capacity of 1.44 Million gallons per day. The water tower has a capacity of 250,000 gallons. The capacity of the water system is able to accommodate the existing and future development needs of the community.

There are several private wells within the City of Columbus. Properties within the planning area that are located outside of the City limits rely on private wells for all of their water needs. Wells are regulated by NR 812, Wisconsin's Administrative Code for Well Construction and Pump Installation, and is administered by the DNR. The Well Code is based on the premise that if a well and water system is properly located, constructed, installed, and maintained, the well should provide safe water continuously without a need for treatment. Refer to the Wisconsin DNR or the Columbia County Zoning Department for more information on water quality and well regulations.

Chapter 3 – Utility and Community Facilities

Solid Waste and Recycling

The city has a contract with Columbia County Recycling and Solid Waste Department for recycling and solid waste pickup. This service provides weekly trash and curbside recycling pick-up for residential properties of 4 or less units. In 2017 the city implemented an automated garbage collection system. For collection residents must place all garbage and recyclables in the provided carts and place them on the tree border as early as dusk the night before scheduled pickup.

The City of Columbus Recycling Center, located at N3642 River Road, will accept leaves, grass clippings, brush, yard waste, oil, and vehicle batteries at no cost to residents. In addition, the center will accept washers, dryers, stoves, dishwashers, refrigerators, freezers, dehumidifiers and air conditioners provided that residents pay all applicable fees in advance of disposing of said item.

Telecommunications

There are a variety of methods which internet service is provided within the planning area. Spectrum and AT&T provide wireline access for internet service. Netwurx provides fixed wireless access in the planning area. Satellite access is provided by ViaSat Inc., Skycasters and HughesNet in the planning area.

The primary provider of cable and internet service in the Columbus planning area is Spectrum Brands. Satellite TV service is also available within the planning area. In addition, some internet services are fast enough to allow for internet streaming tv providers within the city.

There is one cellular tower within the city limits located at 455 S Ludington Street. Wisconsin Department of Transportation also maintains tower at 402 Industrial Drive but it is not a public cell tower. There are several cell towers within the planning area along US 151, so service is adequate. Several telephone service providers supply telephone service for the City with AT&T being the primary provider for landline phone services.

Power Plants and Electric Service

The City of Columbus owns its own electrical utility, the Columbus Water and Light Department. Natural gas power is available to residents through WE Energies. There are three substations with the City, located on River Rd, Hwy 89, and Maple Ave. The Public Service Commission (PSC) is the branch of Wisconsin State government with the overall responsibility of regulating electric utilities.

The Columbus Water and Light Department currently serves 2,881 electrical customers. Over 84% of the total number of customers were residential customers. All of the customers consumed 77,709,034 kWh; however, only 25% of the total consumption was from residential customers.

Chapter 3 – Utility and Community Facilities

Parks

Parks and recreational resources are important components of a community's public facilities. These resources provide residents with areas to exercise, socialize, enjoy wildlife viewing or provide opportunities for environmental education for adults and children. Increasingly, parks and recreational resources can contribute to a community's local economy through eco-tourism. In addition, these resources are important for wildlife habitat and movement. Taken together, it is clear that the protection, enhancement, and creation of parks and recreational resources are important to the quality of life and character of a community. Below is a listing of City Parks.

- o Fireman's Park is a 32 acre park that has many active and passive facilities, including ball fields, tennis courts, shelters, grills, walking baths, playgrounds, a concession stand, and the grand historic Fireman's Park Pavilion.
- o Kiwanis Park is a 13.4-acre park located on the Creek south of Park Avenue. It has six (6) baseball fields, plus an enclosed batting cage. There is also a walking path, a shelter, playground, and bathroom facilities.
- o Meister Park is a 7 acres park that boasts soccer fields, softball fields, playgrounds, and a concession stand.
- o Rotary Park is located on the eastern edge of the City along the Crawfish River. The park is 1.4 Acres and has a canoe/kayak launch, playground equipment, and picnic tables.
- o Meadow Lane Park is a 1.2-acre park located on the Creek in the south central portion of the City with a picnic table, and benches.
- o Avalon Park is located on Avalon Road in the southern portion of Columbus. The park is approximately 1.8 acres and has a basketball court, a sand volleyball court, playground equipment, picnic shelter, gazebo, and bathroom facilities.
- o Park at Enerpac playground is located off Warner Street on the west side of the city. The park is approximately 3 acres and has an open field and playground equipment.
- o Washington Park is located on the corner of Park Ave. and Fuller St. This 0.7 acre park has an open play field and playground equipment.
- o Davies Park is located north of Ludington St. This 0.2 acre park has a shelter and 2 picnic tables.
- o Butterfly Trails Volunteer Park is approximately 5 acres and located along River Road on the Southeast side of the city. The park will be completed in 2021 and will include pedestrian trails, butterfly garden, and a canoe/kayak launch on the crawfish river.

Figure 3-1 shows the total city owned parkland in acres per population. The City of Columbus has 12.7 acres of park space per 1,000 people. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends that municipalities provide 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 people. In addition, the NRPA field report from 2016 shows the average community provides 9.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 people. The City of Columbus exceeds the recommended and average parkland per 1,000 people ratios from the NRPA.

An analysis of the city parks in comparison to the FEMA Floodplain was completed for this plan. The analysis shows that approximately 52.1 acres of the 65.7 acres of parkland is located in the FEMA floodplain. Which means approximately 79.3% of city owned parkland is in the flood plain.

Figure 3-1- Park Area Compared to Population

Total Park Land (Acres)	65.7
Columbus 2019 Population Estimate	5,173
Park Space (Acres) per 1,000 people	12.70
Source: Columbia County GIS and WI DOA	

The Columbus Area Aquatic Center is located within Fireman's park and has a capacity of 792 swimmers. The outdoor, heated pool has a water surface area of 12,731 square feet and a volume of 389,110 gallons. Its beach style "zero-depth" entry is 124 feet wide and leads to a 12 feet 6 inches diving area. It contains a one-meter diving board, a drop Vortex Slide, six lane lap area, and plunge area for the water slide. The body water slide has a length of 135 feet, a drop of 17.2 feet and an average grade of 13.89%. The interactive water activities include and SCS Arch Jet, SCS Bar Jet and an SCS Pipe Fall each with individual moveable valves. The aquatic center also provides a large Tot Slide and the individual grouped geysers designed for toddlers. The aquatic center also provides many lounge chairs with and without umbrellas for visitors to relax poolside.

In addition to the city owned parks, there is playground equipment at the Columbus Elementary School and Columbus Middle School that is open to the public to use. The schools also provide open spaces that can be used for recreational purposes.

Kestrel Ridge Golf Course and the Columbus Country Club both provide recreational opportunities within the City of Columbus. Both courses are open to public provided they pay applicable fees or membership costs.

Cemeteries

There are two cemeteries in the City: Hillside Cemetery and St. Jerome's Cemetery. Hillside Cemetery, located on N. Lewis St, is a municipally owned and operated cemetery. There is currently vacant land to which the cemetery may expand should it become necessary. St. Jerome's Cemetery, also located on N. Lewis St., is owned and operated by St Jeromes Catholic Church. Columbus Municipal Code regulates cemeteries.

Health Care Facilities

There are several health care facilities within the City of Columbus that provide a wide range of services. Prairie Ridge Hospital is a 25 bed acute care hospital located at 1515 Park Avenue. In the fall of 2019 the hospital will be rebranded as Prairie Ridge Health due the growth of the hospital and associated clinics. In addition to the hospital, there are many clinics within the City: Poser Clinic, Prairie Ridge Clinic, Parkside Clinic, the UW Health-Physicians Plus, and the Columbus Chiropractic Care Facility. Also, Columbus has several assisted living facilities that provide a wide array of services.

Chapter 3 – Utility and Community Facilities

Child Care Facilities

Under Wisconsin law, no person may be compensated for providing care and supervision for 4 or more children under the age of 7 for less than 24 hours a day unless that person obtains a license to operate a child care center from the Department of Children and Families. There are two primary categories of state licensed child care. The categories are based upon the number of children in care. Licensed Family Child Care Centers provide care for up to eight children. This care is usually in the provider's home, but it is not required to be located in a residence. Licensed Group Child Care Centers provide for nine or more children.

There are eight (8) licensed child care facilities within the City of Columbus, consisting of three (3) licensed family centers and five(5) group child care centers. The City of Columbus does not initiate the development or expansion of childcare facilities.

Police and Emergency Services

Law enforcement in the City is provided by the Columbus Police Department. The City also maintains mutual aid agreement with surrounding counties. Currently, there are nine (9) sworn officers, one full-time and two part-time clerical professionals, and 6 crossing guards in the Department. The Police Department headquarters are located at 151 S. Ludington St., and staffed 24-hours a day.

The Columbus Fire Department, located at 123 West Harrison St. provides fire protection service for the City. In addition, the Columbus Fire Department serves rural areas outside of the city through the Columbus Rural Fire Group agreement. Currently the fire department serves Town of Columbus in Columbia County; and parts of the Towns of Elba, Calamus, Portland in Dodge County; Hampden in Columbia County; and York in Dane County. The agreement details responsibilities for members of the rural fire group, which includes cost sharing for the purchase, use and maintenance of equipment. There are 40 paid on-call firefighters when the department is fully staffed.

For emergency medical service, the City contracts with Lifestar Ambulance. Lifestar provides service for the Columbus Area Emergency Medical Service District which includes the City of Columbus; Village of Fall River; and Towns of Calamus, Columbus, Elba, Fountain Prairie, Hampden, Otsego, Portland and Town York

Libraries

The Columbus Public Library, located at 223 West James Street, provides a wide array of educational and informational materials, computer/internet access, and a wide variety of programs for children. The 6,200 square foot building is in good condition, and is currently included on the National Register of Historic Places. The library houses more than 43,000 books, and has more than 96,000 items available for circulation.



Photo 3-1: Columbus Public Library

Chapter 3 – Utility and Community Facilities

In addition, residents can access items from over 50 area libraries through the South Central Library System. In 1971, the Wisconsin State Legislature passed a law creating seventeen Library Systems in Wisconsin. The purpose of the library systems is to provide free and equitable access to public libraries for all residents in Wisconsin even if their community has no library. The library systems also serve to take on projects too costly or complex for individual community libraries. The funding for the Public Library Systems comes from a set percentage of the budgets of all the public libraries in Wisconsin. The South Central Library System serves libraries in Adams, Columbia, Dane, Green, Portage, Sauk, and Wood Counties. For more information, visit the South Central Library System at <http://www.scls.info/index.html>.

Schools

The City of Columbus is served by the Columbus School District. The District operates two elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school, serving a total of 1,307 students in the fall of 2018 according to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. There were 629 students enrolled in the elementary schools, 277 students enrolled in the middle school and 401 students enrolled in high school. One of the elementary schools is the Discovery Charter School, which serves grades 1, 2, 3 and kindergarten, and was opened in 2008.

This is an increase from 2005 when 1,143 students were enrolled in the Columbus School District. The total enrollment was comprised of 312 students in elementary school, 396 students in middle school and 435 students in the high school.

In addition to public schools, there are three parochial schools within the Plan Area: St. Jerome's Catholic School, Zion Lutheran School, and the New Testament Baptist School. All three are elementary schools. There is also a Seventh Day Adventist elementary school located outside of the City within the Plan Area.

Columbia County is served by the Madison Area Technical College (MATC), which has campuses in Madison, Fort Atkinson, Portage, Reedsburg, and Watertown. MATC provides training for more than 100 different careers, and is one of only three technical colleges in the state to offer a wide selection of liberal studies classes which transfer to four-year universities. The nearest four-year university or college is the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

City Facilities

Columbus City Hall was built in 1892 and is located at 105 N. Dickason Blvd. City Hall provides offices for city administration and hosts official city meetings. In 1995, the city built an addition to city hall to provide a handicapped accessible entrance, install elevators and provide new restrooms. Columbus City Hall was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.



Photo 3-2: Columbus City Hall

Chapter 3 – Utility and Community Facilities

The Columbus Department of Public Works (DPW) is located at 229 E School Street. The DPW facility consists over several buildings on a 1.7-acre site. The facility is located within the Floodplain and has a history of seasonal flooding.

The Community Center is a former bank building that was purchased and moved to the site in 2009. The Community Center is located at 161 N Dickason Boulevard. The city uses the facility as extra space for community gatherings or meetings. The community center can also be rented for private events.



Photo 3- 3: Columbus Area Senior Center

The Columbus Area Senior Center is located at 125 N Dickason Blvd. The multi-purpose facility opened in 1979 and it serves the diverse needs of area seniors by providing educational activities, information, resources, programming, advocacy, health services and agency referrals. The Senior Center encourages participation and strives to create a sense of well-being for all users. The building is an adaptive reuse of a former automotive service garage and is approximately 6,150 square feet.

Goal

1. Maintain and improve City Facilities and Service
2. Provide safe, reliable and cost effective water, electric, sewer and stormwater facilities.
3. Support high quality educational opportunities for all City residents.
4. Provide adequate recreational facilities to enhance the health and quality of life of City residents
5. Support the development of City Facilities as identified in the Roadmap 2050 Plan.
6. Minimize the impact of flooding on city parks and facilities.

Objective

1. Create a storm water utility for a dedicated funding source for storm water infrastructure.
2. Ensure that the City of Columbus government operates in the most effective and efficient manner possible
3. Ensure that utilities and public facilities in Columbus are upgraded and maintained meet the balance between cost and level of service desired by Columbus residents and businesses.
4. Identify city facility and utility projects that are eligible for Federal and State grant programs
5. Provide a minimum of 10 acres of park land per 1,000 residents in the City of Columbus
6. Identify and create recreational areas that are not in the floodplain

Policy

1. The City will maintain a Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan with updates at least once every five (5) years.
2. The City will develop five (5) year Capital Improvement Program to establish funding for needed infrastructure projects.
3. Require that all new residential developments dedicate land for public parks or pay a fee-in-lieu of land dedication.
4. Ensure that all residents are within a ½-mile walking distance of a city owned park.
5. Support the School District in planning for either new or upgraded school facilities, as needed.
6. Continue to support efforts to provide excellent library service for city residents.
7. Construct New Facilities within the timeframe identified in the Roadmap 2050 plan.

Chapter 4 –Housing

This Chapter provides a baseline assessment of the City of Columbus current housing stock and contains information required under the smart growth law. This includes: age and structural characteristics, housing starts, value and affordability characteristics and recent sale trends. This information provides a basis for creating goals, objectives, policies, maps, and actions to guide the future development and maintenance of housing in the City of Columbus.

Previous Planning Efforts

Columbia County 2030 Comprehensive Plan, Adopted 2009 - The housing chapter of this plan inventories and analyzes characteristics of the housing in Columbia County. This plan includes four housing related goals, including:

- Provide for planned and orderly housing development
- A cooperative approach involving the towns, county, state and private entities to meet current and future housing needs
- A full range of housing opportunities available for Columbia County’s current and future residents
- Appropriate regulations to implement the Comprehensive Plan

Columbus 2030 Comprehensive Plan, Adopted 2009 – The housing chapter of this plan inventories and analyzes characteristics of the housing in Columbus. The plan identified one goal related to housing:

- Provide housing types to meet existing housing needs and encourage future growth within the City of Columbus.

Housing Programs

The programs listed in this section consist of housing related efforts that are available to Columbus Residents. The list should not be considered a comprehensive list of all housing programs in Columbus. All of the listed programs help in some way to accomplish the goals and objectives of this chapter.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) - WHEDA was created by the State of Wisconsin to make construction, rehabilitation, and permanent mortgage loans to eligible sponsors of housing projects for low and moderate income households. WHEDA provides a variety of services for housing like: low interest mortgages, down payment assistance, home improvement and rehabilitation loans and loans for affordable rental housing. WHEDA also has partnership programs with the USDA Rural Development that provide additional loan funding for qualified applicants that live in communities with populations less than 20,000. For more information please visit WHEDA’s website.

Renewal Unlimited, Inc.- Renewal Unlimited, Inc was established 1977 with a vision of rehabilitating “houses and people”, Renewal Unlimited has retained much of that original vision and yet has extended the core of services to encompass a broader range of needs of the local citizens. Renewal Unlimited serves Adams, Columbia, Dodge, Juneau and Sauk Counties. For more information on housing programs provided by Renewal Unlimited, please visit their website.

Central Wisconsin Community Action Council (CWCAC) – Central Wisconsin Community Action Council (CWCAC) is a private nonprofit organization that administers a variety of State and Federal housing Programs to assist low-income families in becoming self-sufficient and help communities grow and prosper. Housing related programs administered by CWCAC deal with a number of issues such as energy assistance, home weatherization, home purchase assistance, home rehabilitation, and housing development for low-income renters. For more information on housing programs provided by CWCAC please visit their website.

SOUTHERN HOUSING REGION (SHR) PROGRAM

The Southern Housing Region has a Community Development Block Grant for Housing Rehabilitation. The funds are loaned at 0% interest to income eligible households for home repairs. Applications are accepted on a first come first serve basis. There is no cost to fill out an application and all information submitted is strictly confidential.

Table 4-1: Total Housing Units

	2000	2010	2018	2000 - 2018 Percent Change	2000 - 2018 Net Change
Columbus	1927	2287	2392	24.1%	465
Columbia County	22,685	26,137	26,621	17.4%	3,936
Wisconsin	2,321,144	2,624,358	2,681,232	15.5%	360,088

Source: US Census and American Community Survey 2014-2018

Table 4-1 shows the total housing units for Columbus, Columbia County and Wisconsin from 2000 to 2018. The growth in housing units for Columbus outpaced the growth for the County and State during this time period. During this timeframe Columbus experienced a 24.6% growth in housing units.

Table 4-2: Housing Units by Year Built

	Columbus		Columbia County		Wisconsin	
Year Built	Units Built	Percent	Units Built	Percent	Units Built	Percent
Built 1939 or earlier	823	35.2%	6,563	24.6%	522,925	19.5%
Built 1940 to 1949	99	4.2%	1,041	3.9%	151,579	5.6%
Built 1950 to 1959	202	8.6%	1,683	6.3%	297,380	11.1%
Built 1960 to 1969	269	11.5%	2,008	7.5%	261,254	9.7%
Built 1970 to 1979	284	12.2%	3,924	14.7%	393,850	14.7%
Built 1980 to 1989	131	5.6%	2,472	9.3%	265,382	9.9%
Built 1990 to 1999	150	6.4%	4,379	16.4%	371,125	13.8%
Built 2000 to 2009	295	12.6%	3,943	14.8%	344,660	12.8%
Built 2010 to 2018	84	3.6%	644	2.4%	78,992	2.9%

Source: US Census and American Community Survey 2014-2018

Table 4-2 shows Housing Units by the year which they were built. The City of Columbus has 35.2% of the housing units built before 1939; this percentage is much higher than Columbia County or the State of Wisconsin. This data reflects the historic nature of the City of Columbus, which boasts three residential historic districts. Since 1939 the City of Columbus has experienced the largest growth in housing units during the 1960's, 1970's and 2000's.

Table 4-3: Housing Units in Structure

	Columbus		Columbia County		Wisconsin	
Units in Structure	# of Units	Percent	# of Units	Percent	# of Units	Percent
1-unit, detached	1,332	57.3%	19,922	75.3%	1,785,339	66.9%
1-unit, attached	213	9.2%	1,106	4.2%	113,291	4.2%
2 units	271	11.7%	912	3.4%	172,688	6.5%
3 or 4 units	89	3.8%	982	3.7%	99,630	3.7%
5 to 9 units	200	8.6%	1020	3.9%	132,237	5.0%
10 to 19 units	202	8.7%	818	3.1%	91,675	3.4%
20 or more units	70	3.0%	963	3.6%	192,648	7.2%
Mobile home	15	0.6%	893	3.4%	93,043	3.5%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0.0%	5	0.0%	681	0.0%

Source: American Community Survey 2014-2018

Table 4-3 above shows that 66.5% of housing units in Columbus are one-unit structures. Wisconsin (70.7%) and Columbia County (78.5%) have higher percentage of one-unit structures compared to the City of Columbus. Columbus does offer a wider variety of housing types in comparison to the state and county. The city has a higher percentage of duplex and multi-unit structures than the state and county.

The US Census identifies single-family structures as fully detached, semi-detached (semi-attached, side-by-side), row houses, duplexes, quadplexes, and townhouses. In order for attached units to be classified as single-family structures, each unit must: Be separated by a ground-to roof wall, have a separate heating system, have individual meters for public utilities, and have no units located above or below.

Table 4-4: Housing Starts

Year	SF Homes Built	MF Units Built
2004	13	-
2005	23	-
2006	21	-
2007	23	-
2008	11	-
2009	12	-
2010	11	24
2011	1	0
2012	1	0
2013	0	0
2014	3	10
2015	17	6
2016	16	4
2017	23	0
2018	23	0
2019	11	0
2020	4	0
Total	213	44
Average	12.5	4

Source: Columbus Comprehensive Plan 2030 and GEC
Columbus Building Permit Reports

Table 4-4 above shows the number housing starts per year since 2004. The data shows that the City of Columbus had 198 new single family homes and 44 multifamily units built over this time period. The table shows that Columbus underwent growth in the mid 2000's and had a period where few single family homes were built after the recession in the late 2000's. The past 4 years new home construction in Columbus has picked up and returned to pre-recession levels with 23 single family homes built in 2017 and 2018. The permit data for multifamily units show that 44 units have been built in Columbus since 2010.

According to the building permit reports from 2010 to 2020 the city had 110 new single family homes built compared to 44 multifamily units. This means that 71.4% of the housing units built during this time frame were single family homes with the remaining 28.6% of housing units being multifamily. The recent trend for housing starts generally follows past trends, which are shown in Table 4-3.

Table 4-5 : Median Home Value of Owner Occupied Housing

	2000	2010	2018
Columbus	\$113,000	\$165,100	\$148,500
Columbia County	\$115,000	\$177,500	\$187,000
Dane County	\$146,900	\$230,800	\$252,300
Wisconsin	\$112,000	\$169,000	\$173,600

Source: US Census and American Community Survey 2014-2018

Table 4-5 shows the Median Home Value for owner occupied housing for Columbus compared to the state and county. The data shows that the 2018 median home values lagged behind Columbia County, Dane County and Wisconsin. The data shows that the median home value for Columbus was comparable to the Columbia County and Wisconsin in 2000. Since then the median home value in Columbus has grown at a slower rate than the county and state. The Dane County boarder is approximately 5 miles southwest of the downtown Columbus. The growth of the Dane County housing market has a substantial impact on the Columbus housing market. Table 4-5 shows that the Median home values for Dane County have increased by almost \$105,400 or 72% during this time frame. During the same timeframe Columbus saw an increase of \$35,500 or 31%.

Table 4-6: Median Rent

	2000	2010	2018
Columbus	\$534	\$699	\$816
Columbia County	\$507	\$695	\$793
Dane County	\$641	\$832	\$1,031
Wisconsin	\$540	\$713	\$837

Source: US Census and American Community Survey 2014-2018

Table 4-6 shows the Median Rent for Columbus compared to Columbia County and the State from 2000 to 2018. The median rents for Columbus have are similar to Columbia County and Wisconsin median rents over this time period. In comparison to Columbus, the median rent in Dane County has been at least \$100 higher.

Tables 4-5 and 4-6 show that median home values and median rents for Columbus are lower than the state. In comparison with Columbia County Columbus has slightly higher median rent and lower median home values. These numbers indicate that Columbus has a lower cost of housing compared to Columbia County and Wisconsin. In comparison with Columbus, Dane County has a much higher cost of living with Median Home Values of \$252,300 and Median Rents of \$1,031 in 2018.

HUD generally defines Affordable housing as “housing for which the occupant(s) is/are paying no more than 30 percent of his or her income for gross housing costs, including utilities”. US Census American Community Survey data was utilized to evaluate to the affordability for Columbus. Tables 4-7 through 4-

9 show Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income (SMOCAP) and Gross rent as a percentage of household income (GRAPHI) data for the City of Columbus, Columbia County and Wisconsin. The census is collecting this data to measure affordability for units of local government throughout the United States.

Many factors influence the affordability data from the US Census American Community Survey. Some of these factors include interest rates, utility expenses, property tax, occupant employment, income levels, consumer choice and supply of housing options.

SMOCAP costs are calculated from the sum of payment for mortgages, real estate taxes, various insurances, utilities, fuels, mobile home costs, and condominium fees. Comparing these costs to the household income is how the SMOCAP is calculated. GRAPHI is a computed ratio of monthly gross rent to monthly household income. The ratio is computed separately for each unit and is rounded to the nearest tenth.

Table 4-7 : 2018 SMOCAP for Owner Occupied Housing Units with Mortgage

2018 SMOCAP	Columbus	Columbia County	Wisconsin
Less than 20.0 percent	37.30%	45.30%	47.90%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	17.50%	19.60%	17.20%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	14.80%	11.00%	10.70%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	10.00%	6.60%	6.50%
35.0 percent or more	20.40%	17.60%	17.70%
Over 30 percent	30.40%	24.20%	24.20%
Housing units with a mortgage(excluding units where SMOCAP cannot be computed)			
Source: US Census American Community Survey			

Table 4-7 shows the SMOCAP for owner occupied units with a mortgage. Columbus has a larger percentage of Owner Occupied Housing Units with Mortgage where SMOCAP is higher than 30% than Columbia County and Wisconsin. Approximately 24.6% of owner occupied housing units with a mortgage in Columbia County exceeds 30% of SMOCAP.

Table 4-8 : 2018 SMOCAPI for Owner Occupied Housing Units without a Mortgage

2018 SMOCAPI	Columbus	Columbia County	Wisconsin
Less than 10.0 percent	44.00%	36.50%	38.10%
10.0 to 14.9 percent	22.20%	24.40%	22.00%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	12.20%	13.20%	12.80%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	3.00%	6.70%	7.90%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	6.20%	4.80%	5.10%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	2.80%	2.50%	3.30%
35.0 percent or more	9.60%	12.00%	10.80%
Over 30 percent	12.40%	14.50%	14.10%

Housing units with a mortgage(excluding units where SMOCAPI cannot be computed)

Source: US Census American Community Survey

Table 4-8 above shows the SMOCAPI for owner occupied units without a mortgage. For owner occupied units without a mortgage Columbus has a larger percentage housing units where the SMOCAPI is higher than 30% than Columbia County and Wisconsin

Table 4-9 : Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income

2018 GRAPHI	Columbus	Columbia County	Wisconsin
Less than 15.0 percent	14.80%	18.20%	15.70%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	23.10%	15.60%	14.60%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	3.70%	15.60%	13.30%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	18.80%	13.00%	11.40%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	15.50%	8.80%	8.70%
35.0 percent or more	24.10%	28.80%	36.30%
Over 30 percent	39.60%	37.60%	45.00%

*Excluding units where GRAPI cannot be computed

Source: US Census American Community Survey

Table 4-9 shows the GRAPHI for Columbus compared to Columbia County and Wisconsin. The table shows that Columbus has a smaller percentage of renters where the gross rent is more than 30% of income in comparison to Columbia County or Wisconsin.

According to the US Census Bureau, GRAPHI is a computed ratio of monthly gross rent to monthly household income (total household income divided by 12). The ratio is computed separately for each unit and is rounded to the nearest tenth. Units for which no rent is paid and units occupied by households that reported no income or a net loss comprise the category “Not computed.” GRAPHI provides information on the monthly housing cost expenses for renters. The information offers an excellent measure of housing affordability and excessive shelter costs. The data also serve to aid in the

development of housing programs to meet the needs of people at different economic levels and to provide assistance to agencies in determining policies on fair rent.

Table 4-10 - Housing Sales

	Columbia County		Dane County		Wisconsin	
Year	Number of Homes Sold	Median Price	Number of Homes Sold	Median Price	Number of Homes Sold	Median Price
2007	717	\$159,790	6,797	\$217,500	58,305	\$168,000
2008	431	\$155,000	5,373	\$215,000	43,606	\$160,000
2009	567	\$141,900	5,545	\$201,000	44,111	\$148,500
2010	496	\$140,000	5,068	\$207,000	46,323	\$142,700
2011	524	\$128,000	4,833	\$206,000	51,631	\$131,737
2012	684	\$125,000	6,160	\$200,000	62,810	\$133,500
2013	694	\$132,000	7,646	\$211,000	69,958	\$143,000
2014	717	\$147,500	7,214	\$220,000	69,183	\$147,750
2015	841	\$156,500	8,308	\$231,000	78,193	\$155,000
2016	881	\$169,000	8,470	\$245,000	83,110	\$163,500
2017	869	\$185,000	8,455	\$264,500	84,613	\$172,000
2018	805	\$198,180	8,332	\$279,900	77,533	\$184,000
2019	766	\$207,000	8,226	\$297,500	82,703	\$197,000
Source: Wisconsin Realtors Association						

Table 4-10 shows data for housing sales in Columbia County, Dane County and Wisconsin. The trend shows a drop in the number of sales and the median sale price between 2008 and 2012 for each location, this is due the great recession, which negatively influenced the housing market during this period. Since the great recession, housing prices and number of homes sold have risen past pre-recession numbers.

Figure 4-1 below shows the Median Sale Price of Homes for Columbia County, Dane County and Wisconsin.

Figure 4-1: Median Sale Prices

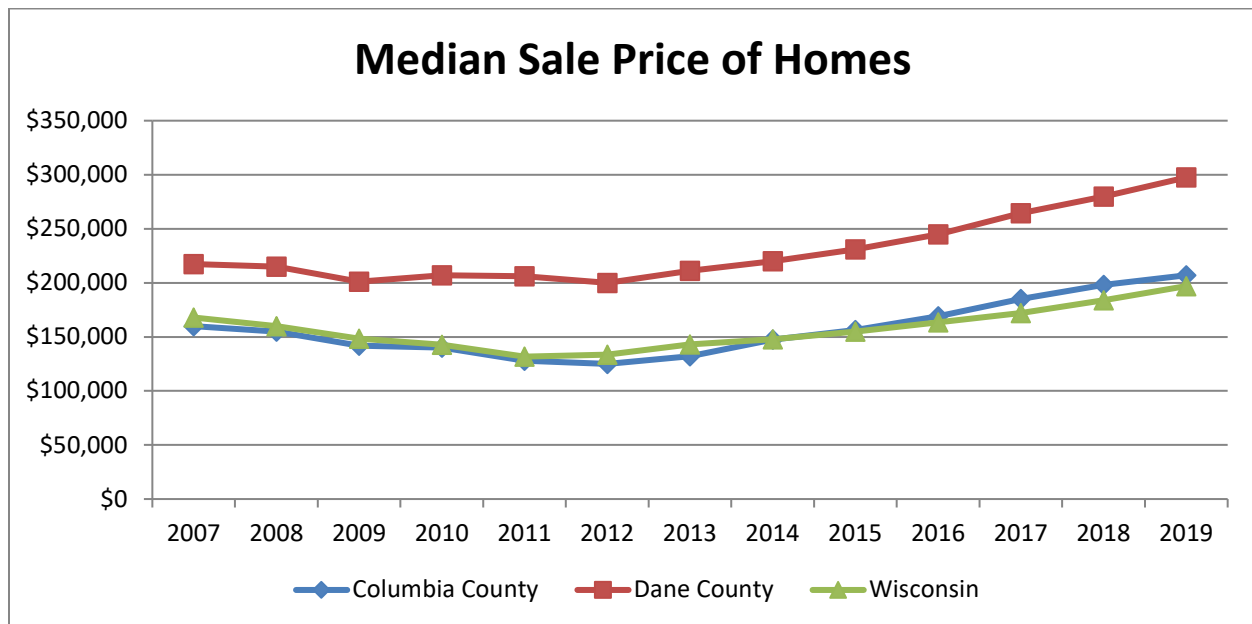


Table 4-11: Columbus Home Sales

Year	Number of Homes Sold	Average Sale Price
2015	66	\$151,000
2016	82	\$165,000
2017	78	\$186,000
2018	115	\$187,000
2019	81	\$214,000
2020*	54	\$215,000

Source: MLS

* Through 8/1/2020

Table 4-11 shows Multiple Listing Service data for home sales in the City of Columbus. The data shows that average sales price for the City of Columbus has increased by 42% since 2015. This is not surprising because the housing market in South Central Wisconsin has been on the upswing over the past 5 years. The median sales price in Table 4-10 reaffirms the trends shown in Table 4-11.

Goals

1. Provide a variety housing types to meeting existing housing needs and encourage future growth within the City of Columbus

Objectives

1. Create attractive and safe neighborhoods that reinforce the existing architectural character of the City and provide a stable tax base.
2. Create mixed neighborhoods that provide a range of housing types, densities, and costs.
3. Ensure that residential developments are built and maintained according to levels deemed safe by industry standards.

Policies

1. The City will continue to allow for the development of single-family, two-family, and multi-family structures within the City limits.
2. The City encourages the integration of varied housing types and lot sizes within the community.
3. The City encourages high quality development that will attract professionals, entrepreneurs and families.
4. The City will maintain a comprehensive building code that requires inspection of new structures and repair of unsafe and unsanitary housing conditions.
5. The City supports programs that maintain or rehabilitate the local housing stock. The City encourages voluntary efforts by private homeowners to maintain, rehabilitate, update or otherwise make improvements to their homes, especially to protect architectural character and improve energy performance.
6. The City prohibits the accumulation of “junk” materials in public view anywhere in the community, and especially in residential areas.
7. Promote renovation of residential uses in the upper stories of Downtown buildings in an effort to increase affordability and enhance the vitality of the Downtown area.

A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development of the various modes of transportation, including highways, transit, transportation systems for persons with disabilities, bicycles, electric personal assistive mobility devices, walking, railroads, air transportation, trucking and water transportation. The element shall compare the local governmental unit's objectives, policies, goals and programs to state and regional transportation plans. The element shall also identify highways within the local governmental unit by function and incorporate state, regional and other applicable transportation plans, including transportation corridor plans, county highway functional and jurisdictional studies, urban area and rural area transportation plans, airport master plans and rail plans that apply in the local governmental unit.

Highway and Streets Network

The City of Columbus has an extensive transportation network that is comprised of federal, state, county and local roads. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation classifies each road in the state under the Functional Classification System. Functional classification is the process by which highways are grouped into classes according to the character of service they are intended to provide, ranging from a high degree of travel mobility to land access functions.

The City of Columbus is designated as an Urban Area for Functional Classification because the city has population greater than 5,000. The functional classification process of urban streets and highways organizes routes according to the character of service provided, ranging from travel mobility to land access. The functional class system also sub-classifies routes by facility type and by their rural relationship (connecting links of the rural functional class system). Urban functions are as follows:

- **Principal Arterial:** Principal arterials serve major economic activity centers of an urban area, the highest ADT corridors, and regional and intra-urban trip length desires. In every urban area, the longest trip lengths and highest ADT are characteristic of the main entrance and exit routes. Because they have the longest trip lengths, highest ADTs, and are generally extensions of the highest rural functional routes, such routes should be principal arterials. Principal arterial trip lengths are indicative of the rural-oriented traffic entering and exiting the urban area on the rural arterial system, as well as the longest trans-urban area travel demands. According to the current function classification of the Columbus Fall River Urbanized Area USH 151 is designated as a Principal Arterial.
- **Minor Arterial:** Urban minor arterials serve important economic activity centers, have moderate ADT, and serve intercommunity trip length desires interconnecting and augmenting the principal arterial system. Trip lengths are characteristic of the rural-oriented traffic entering and exiting the urban area on the rural collector system. In conjunction with principal arterials, minor arterials should provide an urban extension of the rural collector system to the urban area CBD and connect satellite community CBD's with the main CBD. According to the current function classification of the Columbus Fall River Urbanized Area STH 16/60 (James Street) and STH 73 (Park Avenue/Ludington Avenue) is designated as a Minor Arterial.

- **Collector:** Collectors provide direct access to residential neighborhoods, commercial, and industrial areas, and serve moderate to low ADT and inter-neighborhood trips. As the name implies, these routes collect and distribute traffic between local streets and arterials. In the CBD and areas of similar development and traffic density, the collector system may include the street grid, which forms the logical entity for traffic circulation. According to the current function classification of the Columbus Fall River Urbanized Area STH 60 from STH 16 to municipal limits, STH 89 from STH 73 to municipal limits, Dix Street from James Street to Fuller Street, Lewis Street from Mill Street to Fuller Street, Mill Street from Lewis Street to Ludington Avenue, Dickason Boulevard from Mill Street to Fuller Street, and Tower Drive from Fuller Street to Park Avenue are designated as a Collector.
- **Local Street:** Urban local streets predominantly serve to access adjacent land uses. They serve the ends of most trips. All streets not classified as arterials or collectors are local function streets. According to the current function classification of the Columbus Fall River Urbanized Area every other street that has not been identified is considered a local street.

Vehicles

Table 5-1 shows the number of vehicles are available per occupied household. The US Census defines a vehicle as an automobile, van or trucks under one ton capacity. This data is critical to understand how people are traveling in the course of a normal day. The data shows that Columbus has a lower percentage of occupied households with no vehicles or two vehicles available in comparison with the state. In addition, Columbus has a higher percentage of occupied households than the state for one vehicle and three vehicle or more households.

Table 5-1: Vehicles Available for Occupied Households

Vehicles Available	Columbus		Wisconsin	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
No vehicles available	25	1.2%	158,139	6.7%
1 vehicle available	819	38.3%	746,275	31.8%
2 vehicles available	799	37.4%	941,302	40.2%
3 or more vehicles available	493	23.1%	497,413	21.2%

Source: US Census American Community Survey 2014-2018

Commuting Patterns

Table 5-2 displays how Columbus residents over the age of 16 commute to work. The table shows that the overwhelming majority of workers use a personal vehicle to travel to work. Approximately 84.3% of Columbus workers 16 years or older car drove alone to work, carpooling at 8.1% of the workers was the second most popular way to travel to work and 5.6% of Columbus workers worked from home. All other commuting methods totaled 2.1%.

The data shows that mean travel time to work for Columbus workers in 2018 is 24.5 minutes. This is higher than the state average of 22.0 minutes and is below the Columbia County mean travel time of 25.6 minutes.

Table 5-2 : Commuting Methods Workers 16 Years of older

Mode of Transportation	Number	Percent
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	2,329	84.3%
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	223	8.1%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	12	0.4%
Walked	10	0.4%
Other means	36	1.3%
Worked at home	154	5.6%
Total Workers (16 Years or Older)	2,764	
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	24.5	

Source: US Census American Community Survey 2014-2018

Vanpool Program

The Wisconsin Department of Administration offers a Vanpool program to encourage carpooling into Madison. The City of Columbus has two vanpools that travel to Madison, one leaves from St Jerome's School at 1550 Farnham Street and the other leaves from the Pick'N Save located at 210 Dix Street. For more information on the Vanpool program please visit the WIDOA website.

Transit

There is no local transit service within the City of Columbus. Lamers Connect offers an intercity bus route from Madison to Green Bay that provides service to the Columbus Amtrak station twice a day.

Facilities for Elderly and Disabled

Columbia County Commission on Aging provides transportation services for disabled and seniors residents of Columbia County. Transportation is provided to and from appointments throughout Columbia County as well as surrounding Counties. Medical appointments are given priority and all other transportation needs are considered depending on availability.

To schedule a ride a resident must contact the Columbia County Commission on Aging at least 24 hours in advance of the trip. The minimum charge for a 10-mile roundtrip or less is \$5.00. All other trips outside the city limits are \$.50 a mile, with a limit of 125 miles per round trip.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation

Pedestrians and Bikers use existing trails, sidewalks and roads to travel throughout Columbus. Currently sidewalks are not available in some portions of town. To enhance pedestrian safety sidewalks have been installed with recent street projects and new development within Columbus.

The bike and pedestrian trail network is currently being developed. As development occurs throughout the city the trail network should be considered to make key connections. The city should explore a trail system near waterways throughout the city. This will provide a stronger connection with nature and potentially mitigate the impact of flooding.

Columbia County has developed bicycling routes throughout the county. The City of Columbus is located along loop 8 which travels through the SE portion of Columbia County.

Rail Service

Railroads are an important component of the transportation system in Wisconsin. A strong freight rail system is a key factor in supporting and growing the state's economy. Approximately 3,300 miles of track are currently in service in Wisconsin. Of that total, 625 miles are owned by the state and leased to railroad companies. The City of Columbus is served by Canadian Pacific which is a class 1 railroad. The line which serves Columbus extends from Chicago to Milwaukee through the Twin Cities and eventually ends in Vancouver British Columbia.

Amtrak Service

The City of Columbus Amtrak Station is located at 359 N Ludington Avenue. The Amtrak Empire Builder route goes from Chicago to Seattle and has two stops daily at the Columbus Station. The Columbus station is the closest Amtrak station to Madison. Table 5-3 shows the ridership for Wisconsin stations located along the empire builder route. Ridership data is recorded for the federal fiscal year, which runs from October 1 to Sept 30. The Columbus station has experienced consistent ridership over the past five years averaging 12,881 riders per year. The tables below show ridership and revenues for stations along the Empire Builder. The Milwaukee Intermodal Station was excluded because it also serves the Hiawatha line to Chicago.

Table 5-3: Amtrak Ridership Empire Builder Stations

Station	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19
Columbus	12,906	14,005	13,545	11,414	12,537
La Crosse	23,861	26,619	27,368	25,622	25,587
Portage	6,116	7,786	9,077	7,266	7,061
Tomah	10,179	13,083	13,792	11,914	11,394
Wisconsin Dells	13,009	14,149	14,606	13,631	14,722
Total	66,071	75,642	78,388	69,847	71,301

Source: Amtrak and Rail Passengers Association

Table 5-4 looks at revenues for Amtrak stations in Wisconsin along the Empire Builder Route. The Columbus Station has generated the second most revenue compared to other stations on the route. Columbus ranks first when you look at revenue per rider. This is attributed to longer trips originating from the Columbus Station compared to other stations.

Table 5-4: Amtrak Revenues Empire Builder Stations

Station	FY 17 Revenue	Per Rider	FY 18 Revenue	Per Rider	FY 19 Revenue	Per Rider
Columbus	\$1,313,762	\$96.99	\$1,221,497	\$107.02	\$1,265,153	\$100.91
La Crosse	\$1,810,596	\$66.16	\$1,839,654	\$71.80	\$1,756,631	\$68.65
Portage	\$584,332	\$64.38	\$465,021	\$64.00	\$470,404	\$66.62
Tomah	\$779,779	\$56.54	\$668,319	\$56.10	\$659,757	\$57.90
Wisconsin Dells	\$827,366	\$56.65	\$813,101	\$59.65	\$828,709	\$56.29
Total	\$5,315,835	\$67.81	\$5,007,592	\$71.69	\$4,980,654	\$69.85

Source : Amtrak

The Twin Cities Milwaukee Chicago (TCMC) Intercity Passenger Rail Service seeks to implement a second daily round trip passenger train on this route to improve mobility and increase reliable travel options between Minnesota and Illinois. The proposed service would follow Amtrak's existing long distance Empire Builder route with termini at Chicago Union Station and Union Depot in Saint Paul — serving all existing stations on the Empire Builder route plus the Milwaukee Airport Rail Station.

The creation of regional service that would provide a two more stops at the Columbus Station would have a large impact on Columbus. The addition of the second stop would bring increased ridership to the Columbus Station. Also the regional TCMC route will provide better on-time performance for Amtrak riders.

Aviation

The closest public airport is the Dane County Regional Airport located in the City of Madison. The Dane County Regional Airport is classified as a Commercial service airport, which means the Madison airport supports regularly-scheduled year-round commercial airline service and supports the full range of general aviation activity and international destinations. There is also a medium general aviation airport in Portage. Medium general aviation airports support most single and multi-engine GA aircraft, including those aircraft commonly used by businesses. These airports support regional and instate air transportation needs. The Wisconsin State Airport System Plan 2030 does not identify a change in classification for the Dane County Regional Airport or the Portage Municipal Airport by the year 2030.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) 5-Year Airport Improvement Program indicates there are numerous projects planned for the Dane County Regional Airport including a large Terminal Improvement Project in 2021. The Improvement Program identifies \$5.2 million in projects for the Portage Municipal Airport, which includes a reconstruction of the primary runway in 2022.

Freight

Wisconsin Department of Transportation Developed the State Freight Plan to provide a vision for multimodal freight transportation and position the state to remain competitive in the global marketplace. The State Freight Plan develops a cohesive plan that provides direction and actionable goals throughout the state. The plan identifies USH 151 and a portion of STH 60 within Columbus as an OSOW route. Also portions of STH 16/60, STH 73 and STH 89 are on the OSOW high clearance route.

The City of Columbus is served by USH 151, STH 16, STH 60, STH 73 and STH 89 which connects Columbus to the freight network. Also, Rail service is available through Canadian Pacific connects Columbus to the freight network.

Water Transport

The City of Columbus does not have access to a port or other form of water transportation.

Goals

1. Provide a safe and efficient transportation system that meets the needs of multiple users in and around the Columbus, including pedestrians, motorists, and bicyclists.
2. Maintain and improve the street network in the City of Columbus at a level of service desired by City residents and businesses
3. Maintain and improve the bicycle and pedestrian network in the City of Columbus at a level of service desired by City residents and businesses

Objectives

1. Manage the access, design, and improvements of the transportation network in order to effectively maintain the safety and functional integrity of City streets.
2. Coordinate major transportation projects with land development, neighboring communities, Columbia and Dodge Counties, and WisDOT.
3. Provide a connected system of sidewalks and trails that makes the City walkable and accessible to all users, especially around schools and shopping areas.
4. Expand the availability and use of passenger railroad service to and from Columbus.
5. Protect the capacity and increase the utilization of existing freight rail service in Columbus.
6. Encourage new development that support of range of transportation options, including biking and walking.

Policies

1. The City will develop five (5) year Capital Improvement Program to establish funding for needed infrastructure projects.
2. The City will continue to implement the state required Pavement and Surface Evaluation Report (PASER) program of street classification to identify and rank the roadway conditions on all Streets within the City.
3. The City will implement a comprehensive street program that establishes a regular schedule for street inspection, maintenance, and improvements. This will include upgrading the condition and design of substandard streets.
4. The City will implement a comprehensive sidewalk program that identifies important gaps in the pedestrian network, indicates where new sidewalks should be installed, establishes methods of funding, and sets a schedule for installation.
5. Require all new residential, commercial, institutional, and mixed-use developments to be served with sidewalks or pedestrian/bicycle paths.
6. Utilize the City's Official Map to reserve rights-of-way for future arterial and collector streets, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and other transportation facilities within the City's planning area.
7. Where feasible develop coordinated off-street parking lots in the downtown.

Economic Development

A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to promote the stabilization, retention or expansion, of the economic base and quality employment opportunities in the local governmental unit, including an analysis of the labor force and economic base of the local governmental unit. The element shall assess categories or particular types of new businesses and industries that are desired by the local governmental unit. The element shall assess the local governmental unit's strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses and industries, and shall designate an adequate number of sites for such businesses and industries. The element shall also evaluate and promote the use of environmentally contaminated sites for commercial or industrial uses. The element shall also identify county, regional and state economic development programs that apply to the local governmental unit.

Table 6-1: Employment Status Population 16 years and older

Year	Data	Columbus	Columbia County	Wisconsin
2000	Labor Force	2,456	28,369	2,996,091
	Unemployment Rate	2.6%	4.3%	4.3%
2010	Labor Force	2,367	31,230	3,078,465
	Unemployment Rate	1.9%	3.4%	4.6%
2018	Labor Force	2,782	31,626	3,092,330
	Unemployment Rate	2.0%	3.40%	4.0%
Labor Force Change 2000-2018		326	3,257	96,239
Labor Force % Change 2000-2018		13.3%	11.48%	3.21%

Source: US Census, American Community Survey 2014-2018

Table 6-1 shows the employment status for workers in the City of Columbus compared to Columbia County and the state from 2000 to 2018. The table shows the unemployment levels in Columbus are lower than Columbia County and the State over this period. The data shows that the labor force has increased in Columbus, Columbia County and Wisconsin since 2000. In comparison with the State and County Columbus experienced the largest percent growth in the labor force.

Comparing the total population, found in Table 1-1, to the labor force will calculate the participation rate for the labor force. The Bureau of Labor Statistics defines the participation rate as the percentage of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years and older that is working or actively looking for work. In 2000, 55.3% of Columbus residents participated in the labor force compared to 53.8% in 2018. During the same period, the state of Wisconsin experienced a slight decline in the participation rate from 55.8% in 2000 to 52.9% in 2018 while Columbia County held steady near 55%.

Table 6-2: Columbus Residents Workplace Location

2002			2017		
Location	Count	Share	Location	Count	Share
Columbus city (Columbia, WI)	625	29.9%	Madison city (Dane, WI)	731	26.0%
Madison city (Dane, WI)	390	18.7%	Columbus city (Columbia, WI)	499	17.8%
Sun Prairie city (Dane, WI)	104	5.0%	Sun Prairie city (Dane, WI)	187	6.7%
Fall River village (Columbia, WI)	66	3.2%	Fall River village (Columbia, WI)	93	3.3%
Beaver Dam city (Dodge, WI)	61	2.9%	Beaver Dam city (Dodge, WI)	79	2.8%
Burke town (Dane, WI)	46	2.2%	Milwaukee city (Milwaukee, WI)	45	1.6%
Waterloo city (Jefferson, WI)	40	1.9%	Madison town (Dane, WI)	43	1.5%
Milwaukee city (Milwaukee, WI)	38	1.8%	Columbus town (Columbia, WI)	38	1.4%
Monona city (Dane, WI)	32	1.5%	Middleton city (Dane, WI)	36	1.3%
Columbus town (Columbia, WI)	31	1.5%	DeForest village (Dane, WI)	33	1.2%
All Other Locations	657	31.4%	All Other Locations	1,024	36.5%
Total Primary Jobs	2,090		Total Primary Jobs	2,808	

Source: US Census, On the Map

Table 6-2 shows the most common workplace locations, by unit of local government, for Columbus Residents. In 2017, 26 % of employed Columbus residents traveled to Madison for their primary job. The US Census defines a primary job as a public or private sector jobs that is the highest paying job for an individual. The data also shows a decrease in those who live and work in the City of Columbus dropping from 29.9% in 2002 to 17.8% in 2017. Other popular workplace locations in 2017 include Sun Prairie, Beaver Dam and Fall River.

The US Census on the map data also identified the primary areas where people who live in the city are employed by county. In 2018, 78.9% of Columbus residents who were employed in Dane County (45.4%), Columbia County (25.8%), or Dodge County (7.7%).

Table 6-3: Columbus Workers Residence Location

2002			2017		
Location	Jobs	Percent	Location	Jobs	Percent
Columbus city (Columbia)	625	27.9%	Columbus city (Columbia)	499	19.5%
Beaver Dam city (Dodge)	186	8.3%	Beaver Dam city (Dodge)	184	7.2%
Fall River village (Columbia)	81	3.6%	Fall River village (Columbia)	114	4.5%
Columbus town (Columbia)	71	3.2%	Madison city (Dane)	100	3.9%
Sun Prairie city (Dane)	71	3.2%	Sun Prairie city (Dane)	96	3.8%
Fountain Prairie town (Columbia)	66	3.0%	Fountain Prairie town (Columbia)	59	2.3%
Madison city (Dane)	59	2.6%	Beaver Dam town (Dodge)	45	1.8%
Portland town (Dodge)	58	2.6%	Columbus town (Columbia)	39	1.5%
Hampden town (Columbia)	50	2.2%	Westford town (Dodge)	36	1.4%
Lowell town (Dodge)	50	2.2%	Elba town (Dodge)	31	1.2%
All Other Locations	920	41.1%	All Other Locations	1,355	53.0%
Total Primary Jobs	2,237		Total Primary Jobs	2,558	
Source: US Census On the Map					

Table 6-3 shows the most common location of residence, by unit of local government, for Columbus workers. The data shows that Columbus Residents worked 19.5% of all primary jobs within the City of Columbus in 2017. The US Census defines a primary job as a public or private sector jobs that is the highest paying job for an individual. This figure is down from 2002 when Columbus residents comprised 27.9% of the primary jobs in the city.

The US Census on the map data also identified the primary areas where people who are employed in the city come from. In 2015, approximately 76% of all people employed in the city came from Columbia County (37.8%), Dodge County (22.5%), or Dane County (15.8%).

Table 6-4: Class of Worker 2018

	Columbus		Columbia County		Wisconsin	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Private wage and salary workers	2,207	79.2%	23,981	78.7%	2,450,447	82.7%
Government workers	428	15.4%	4,491	14.7%	358,325	12.1%
Self-employed	151	5.4%	1,898	6.2%	150,130	5.1%
Unpaid family workers	0	0.0%	88	0.3%	5,638	0.2%
Total	2,786		30,458		2,964,540	
Source: US Census, American Community Survey 2014-2018						

Table 6-4 shows the number of workers by class for residents of the City of Columbus, Columbia County and the State in 2018. According to the US Census the class of worker data categorizes people according to the type of ownership of the employing organization. Most classes are similar to the county or state.

Table 6-5: Employment by Occupation

Occupation Type	Columbus		Columbia County		Wisconsin	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Management, business, science, and arts	992	35.6%	10,152	33.3%	1,068,930	36.1%
Service	391	14.0%	4,863	16.0%	494,858	16.7%
Sales and office	672	24.1%	6,292	20.7%	622,193	21.0%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	268	9.6%	3,551	11.7%	253,223	8.5%
Production, transportation, and material moving	463	16.6%	5,600	18.4%	525,336	17.7%
Total	2,786		30,458		2,964,540	
Source: US Census, American Community Survey 2014-2018						

Table 6-5 shows the workforce by occupation for residents of the City of Columbus, Columbia County and the State of Wisconsin. Occupation describes the kind of work the person does on the job regardless of the industry type. The largest number of Columbus residents are employed in the Management, business, science and arts. This group is also the most common occupation group for the county and state.

Table 6-6: Employment by Industry

Industry	Columbus		Columbia County		Wisconsin	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	39	1.4%	1077	3.5%	69,034	2.3%
Construction	175	6.3%	2,398	7.9%	167,256	5.6%
Manufacturing	457	16.4%	5,431	17.8%	541,654	18.3%
Wholesale trade	46	1.7%	682	2.2%	79,385	2.7%
Retail trade	345	12.4%	3,146	10.3%	328,771	11.1%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	203	7.3%	1,668	5.5%	133,175	4.5%
Information	14	0.5%	454	1.5%	48,214	1.6%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	239	8.6%	1,633	5.4%	178,252	6.0%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	113	4.1%	2,068	6.8%	247,109	8.3%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	590	21.2%	6,214	20.4%	693,627	23.4%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	200	7.2%	2,841	9.3%	253,278	8.5%
Other services, except public administration	194	7.0%	1,201	3.9%	122,460	4.1%
Public administration	171	6.1%	1,645	5.4%	102,325	3.5%
Total	2,786		30,458		2,964,540	
Source: US Census, American Community Survey 2014-2018						

Table 6-6 shows the employment of city residents by Industry for Columbus, Columbia County and the State of Wisconsin. Employment data by Industry examines the number of jobs based on the type of business. The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is the standard used by Federal statistical agencies in classifying business establishments for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the U.S. business economy. The table shows that has a similar breakdown of employment by industry compared to the county and the state.

Table 6-7: Jobs by NAICS Industry Sector 2017

NAICS Industry Sector	Jobs in Columbus		Jobs held by Columbus Residents	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0	0.0%	32	1.4%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	4	0.2%	0	0.0%
Utilities	0	0.0%	7	0.3%
Construction	38	1.7%	131	5.5%
Manufacturing	941	41.0%	454	19.2%
Wholesale Trade	91	4.0%	142	6.0%
Retail Trade	291	12.7%	302	12.8%
Transportation and Warehousing	44	1.9%	97	4.1%
Information	1	0.0%	41	1.7%
Finance and Insurance	75	3.3%	135	5.7%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	4	0.2%	21	0.9%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	23	1.0%	123	5.2%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	4	0.2%	98	4.1%
Administration & Support, Waste Management & Remediation	6	0.3%	111	4.7%
Educational Services	1	0.0%	12	0.5%
Health Care and Social Assistance	549	23.9%	383	16.2%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	18	0.8%	21	0.9%
Accommodation and Food Services	173	7.5%	180	7.6%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	32	1.4%	78	3.3%
Public Administration	0	0.0%	0	0
Total	2295		2368	
Source: US Census on the Map				

Table 6-7 shows jobs by NAICS Industry sectors for jobs worked within Columbus and for jobs worked by Columbus residents. The purpose of the table is to identify gaps in the local workforce. The sector that immediately stands out are those employed in manufacturing. There are a total of 941 jobs at manufacturing firms in Columbus and Columbus residents only have 454 residents working for a manufacturing business.

Table 6-8: Largest Employers in the Columbus Planning Area

Business Name	Industry	Employee Range
American Packaging Corp	31-33 Manufacturing	250-499
ENERPAC	31-33 Manufacturing	100-249
Prairie Ridge Hospital	62 Health Care and Social Assistance	100-249
Lyco Manufacturing Inc	31-33 Manufacturing	100-249
Rhodes Bake-N-Serv	31-33 Manufacturing	100-249
Columbus High School	61 Educational Services	50-99
GD Roberts	31-33 Manufacturing	50-99
Columbus Nursing & Rehab Ctr	62 Health Care and Social Assistance	50-99
Midstate Power & Equipment	42 Wholesale Trade	50-99
Columbus Middle School	61 Educational Services	50-99
Pick'n Save	44-45 Retail Trade	50-99
Columbus Elementary School	61 Educational Services	20-49
St Jerome School	61 Educational Services	20-49
Discovery Charter School	61 Educational Services	20-49
Estes Express Lines	48-49 Transportation and Warehousing	20-49
Larson House Inc	62 Health Care and Social Assistance	20-49
Columbus Aquatic Center	71 Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	20-49
Kestrel Ridge Golf Club	71 Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	20-49
Columbus Countryside Vet Clinic	54 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	20-49
GAR Plastics Inc	31-33 Manufacturing	20-49
Officesupply.com	44-45 Retail Trade	20-49
Countryside Ford	44-45 Retail Trade	20-49
Napleton Chevrolet Buick	44-45 Retail Trade	20-49
Farmers & Merchants Union Bank	52 Finance and Insurance	20-49
Duffy Grain Inc	54 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	20-49
Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development; Infogroup National Database		

Table 6-8 above lists the largest employers in the Columbus Planning Area. The list is provided by data from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development and it includes each employer that has more than 20 employees. The top five largest employers consist of four manufacturing firms and Prairie Ridge Hospital. The top employers is a good blend of public and private employers for a rural community.

Table 6-9: Average Annual Wage by Industry

NAICS	Industry	Columbia County	Wisconsin
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	NA	\$35,771
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	NA	\$65,630
22	Utilities	\$98,335	\$95,326
23	Construction	\$50,904	\$61,909
31-33	Manufacturing	\$53,809	\$58,048
42	Wholesale Trade	\$49,230	\$68,313
44-45	Retail Trade	\$27,077	\$27,730
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	\$39,252	\$45,030
51	Information	\$42,276	\$73,577
52	Finance and Insurance	\$53,018	\$77,725
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	\$30,413	\$43,338
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	\$44,234	\$74,088
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	\$49,017	\$101,105
56	Administrative and Support, Waste Management, Remediation Services	\$39,200	\$32,191
61	Educational Services	\$37,677	\$48,277
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	\$41,644	\$49,643
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	\$15,498	\$31,663
72	Accommodation and Food Services	\$14,297	\$16,050
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	\$30,427	\$30,674
92	Public Administration	\$41,244	\$47,859
99	Unclassified (99)	NA	\$73,663
Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development			

Table 6-9 provides the average annual wage for each NAICS Industry. In Columbia County, employees working in the Utility Industry earn the highest average annual wage. Employees working in accommodation and food services earn the lowest average wage, partly because many of these are part-time employees, and many receive tips, which are often unaccounted for in wage data. On average, the average wage per industry is lower in Columbia County than the State averages for the same industries. Statistics on wages by industry are not available for the City of Columbus

Table 6-10: Wisconsin Industry Employment Projections, 2016 - 2026

Industry	2016 Employment	2026 Projected Employment	Change (2016-2026)	Percent Change (2016-2026)
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	44,587	48,163	3,576	8.0%
Mining	3,259	2,932	(327)	-10.0%
Construction	112,059	122,729	10,670	9.5%
Manufacturing	462,743	470,708	7,965	1.7%
Utilities	9,680	8,003	(1,677)	-17.3%
Wholesale Trade	123,293	140,580	17,287	14.0%
Retail Trade	308,229	310,574	2,345	0.8%
Transportation and Warehousing	108,372	115,307	6,935	6.4%
Information	48,870	47,858	(1,012)	-2.1%
Finance and Insurance	126,127	132,919	6,792	5.4%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	25,415	26,936	1,521	6.0%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	107,079	120,318	13,239	12.4%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	68,402	86,483	18,081	26.4%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	145,796	152,201	6,405	4.4%
Educational Services	254,810	262,756	7,946	3.1%
Health Care and Social Assistance	401,300	446,707	45,407	11.3%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	45,251	50,667	5,416	12.0%
Accommodation and Food Services	235,319	260,134	24,815	10.5%
Other Services (except Government)	153,517	162,200	8,683	5.7%
Government	173,776	178,149	4,373	2.5%
Self Employed Workers, All Jobs	152,592	174,330	21,738	14.2%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Table 6-10 shows employment projections by industry from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. The projections show that Wisconsin will experience growth in employment for most industries through 2026. The raw numbers show that Health Care and Social Assistance will gain the most jobs in Wisconsin by 2026. Management of Companies and Enterprises will have the largest percent growth by industry in Wisconsin by 2026.

Table 11: BRRTS Sites

Activity Number	Activity Type	Site Name	Address	Status
02-11-000837	ERP	American Packaging Corp	850 W James St	Open
02-11-000823	ERP	American Packaging Corp	850 W James St	Open
02-11-577240	ERP	Enerpac Former Facility	720 W James St	Open
03-11-002423	LUST	Reuter Farm Property	N1976 Columbus Fall River Rd	Open
02-11-001651	ERP	Yohn Bulk Plt Property	Lewis and Chapel Sts	Open
03-11-245029	LUST	Poznanski Property	454 S Birdsey St	Open
02-14-272622	ERP	CFR Coop Bulk Plt	N12362 STH 16	Open
02-11-543532	ERP	Derr Property	241 E James St	Open
Source: WI DNR BRRTS Database				

The Bureau of Remediation and Redevelopment within the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources oversees the investigation and cleanup of environmental contamination and the redevelopment of contaminated properties. The Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) provides access to information on incidents (“Activities”) that contaminated soil or groundwater. These activities include spills, leaks, other cleanups and sites where no action was needed. Table 6-11 provides BRRTS data for open BRRTS sites within the Planning Area. Open sites are those in need of clean up or where clean up is underway.

The Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) on the Web (BOTW) is the DNR's on-line database that provides information about contaminated properties and other activities related to the investigation and cleanup of contaminated soil or groundwater in Wisconsin. The database is part of the DNR's [Wisconsin Remediation and Redevelopment Database \(WRRD\)](#), an inter-linked system tracking information on different contaminated land activities. The database includes (but is not limited to) the following contamination data: investigations and cleanups of contaminated soil and/or groundwater; spills; Superfund sites; and DNR funding assistance.

Goal

1. Attract and Retain businesses within the City of Columbus that complement the existing workforce and business community.
2. Revitalize Downtown Columbus as the commercial and cultural center of the community.
3. Facilitate strategic economic growth and entrepreneurial activity within the City of Columbus
4. Establish and promote a unique identity for the City of Columbus

Objective

1. The City will encourage and seek funding methods to support events, projects, and programs that improve the competitive viability of downtown buildings and businesses.

2. The City will develop a project plan to support a Downtown TID.
3. Support the continued existence and growth of existing local businesses.
4. Identify and recruit business types most likely to be successful in Columbus.
5. Direct new and growing businesses to appropriate locations within the City.
6. Leverage the City's municipal electric and water utility, as an economic development partner, in attracting commercial and residential growth to the City.
7. Establish and promote a clear identity, or "brand", that communicates the unique character and opportunities offered by Columbus.
8. Find a suitable location for the development of an business incubator to help entrepreneurial growth.

Policy

1. The City will encourage and seek funding methods to support events, projects, and programs that improve the competitive viability of downtown buildings and businesses.
2. The City will encourage projects that incorporate both commercial and residential uses.
3. The City will utilize tax incremental financing (TIF) to support business growth in Columbus.
4. The City will continue to support the success of local businesses by dedicating staff resources to communicate and coordinate with businesses.
5. The City supports efforts by the Columbus Chamber of Commerce to increase local purchasing by Columbus residents, including both marketing to local consumers on this theme and the expansion of goods and services options available in the City.
6. The City will extend city services, including electric and water, only to properties within the City limits.
7. The City will identify a succinct community identity, with input from residents and business owners.
8. The City will engage in marketing efforts to build awareness of its preferred identity and image and to attract businesses and residents to Columbus.
9. Leverage the City's leadership and achievements in the area of energy sustainability to attract industrial, commercial, and residential development to the City.
10. Reserve areas along USH 151 and areas near Exit 115 (USH 151 and STH 73 interchange) and Exit 118 (USH 151 and STH 16/60 interchange) for high-quality development.
11. Provide free educational opportunities designed to assist existing and prospective businesses.

Land-use element

A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development and redevelopment of public and private property. The element shall contain a listing of the amount, type, intensity and net density of existing uses of land in the local governmental unit, such as agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial and other public and private uses. The element shall analyze trends in the supply, demand and price of land, opportunities for redevelopment and existing and potential land-use conflicts. The element shall contain projections, based on the background information specified in par. (a), for 20 years, in 5-year increments, of future residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial land uses including the assumptions of net densities or other spatial assumptions upon which the projections are based. The element shall also include a series of maps that shows current land uses and future land uses that indicate productive agricultural soils, natural limitations for building site development, floodplains, wetlands and other environmentally sensitive lands, the boundaries of areas to which services of public utilities and community facilities, as those terms are used in par. (d), will be provided in the future, consistent with the timetable described in par. (d), and the general location of future land uses by net density or other classifications.

Development Patterns

Table 7-1 shows the subdivisions that have been platted within the City of Columbus since 1999. Eight subdivisions were platted in this timeframe and they have resulted in the creation of 347 single family lots for new development. In total 210.387 acres have been divided, however not all of the lots have been converted to a residential land use. Approximately 74 % of the total land in the subdivision is actually used for development. The remaining portion is dedicated for Right of Way or is platted as outlots which can be dedicated to the city. The average lot size for single family lots in these subdivisions is .289 acres per lot.

Table 7-1: Recently Platted Subdivisions

Name	Year	Number of SFR Lots	Total Acres of Subdivision	Total Acres of SRF Lots	Percent of Land Used*	Avg Lot Size
Kestrel Ridge 1st Addition	1999	11	4.052	3.626	89.49%	0.3296
Kestrel Ridge	1999	60	31.408	21.57	68.68%	0.3595
Highland Ridge	2005	45	21.026	16.046	76.32%	0.3566
Kestrel Ridge 2nd Addition	2005	58	20.209	15.7258	77.82%	0.2711
Cardinal Estates **	2006	35	21.290	9.116	NA	0.2605
Community Trails**	2008	98	100.842	26.201	NA	0.2674
Highland Ridge Add No 1	2014	13	5.47	4.034	73.75%	0.3103
Woods at Highland Ridge	2016	27	6.09	3.926	64.47%	0.1454
Total		347	210.387	100.245	73.57%	0.289
* Percent of Total size of the subdivision compared to total size used for single-family lots.						
** Cardinal Estates and Community trails has mixed uses and were not included in the percent of land used calculations						

Table 7-2 shows new single family and multifamily construction in Columbus over the past decade. In total 106 new single family dwelling units were built. The first half of the past decade there were 16 homes built due to the downturn in the economy. Alternatively, the second half of the past decade experienced strong growth for construction of single family homes. During this time period 91 single family homes were built, including a high of 23 homes built in both 2017 and 2018. The single family homes built over the decade consumed 26.33 acres of land.

From 2010 to 2019 there were 44 new units of multifamily housing built in Columbus. The new units were built in two- or four-unit structures. The new multifamily construction over this time period utilized 5.7 acres.

Table 7-2: New Residential Construction

Year	Single Family Housing				Multi-Family Housing			
	# Lots	Acres	Average Lot Size	Lots Per Acre	# Lots	# of Units	Acres	Units Per Acre
2010	11	2.96	0.27	3.72	2	24	3.60	6.67
2011	1	0.248	0.25	4.03	0	0	0	0.00
2012	1	0.48	0.48	2.07	0	0	0	0.00
2013	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0	0	0.00
2014	3	0.84	0.28	3.57	3	10	1.10	9.12
2015	17	5.00	0.29	3.40	2	6	0.70	8.61
2016	16	4.31	0.27	3.71	1	4	0.31	12.90
2017	23	5.53	0.24	4.16	0	0	0	0.00
2018	23	5.72	0.249	4.02	0	0	0	0.00
2019	11	1.24	0.138	8.87	0	0	0	0.00
TOTAL	106	26.33	0.248	4.03	8	44	5.70	7.72
Average	10.6	2.63			0.8	4.4	0.57	

Source: City of Columbus and GEC Inspection Reports

Figure 7-1 below provides an estimate of land supply for new housing development. Undeveloped areas that were identified residential land uses by the 2030 Columbus Comprehensive plan were identified to estimate the total area. The City GIS system provided the ability to calculate the size of wetlands and floodplain for residential land uses. The total land area covered by floodplain or wetlands were removed from the residential land use to estimate the total buildable area. The total buildable residential land was then reduced by an estimate of Right of Way and other public lands needed for development. As a result, the estimated amount of buildable residential land is approximately 231 acres. Based on the average growth shown in table 7-2 the estimated supply of housing for residential development would last approximately 72 years.

Figure 7- 1: Estimated Supply for Residential Development

Item	Acres
Residential Designation 2030 Future Land Use Map	456.611
FEMA/Wetlands Estimate	144.300
Total Buildable Residential Land	312.311
Estimated for ROW and other Dedicated Lands	81.201
Acres for future Residential Development	231.11
Source: Columbus Comprehensive Plan 2030 and GIS	

Table 7-3 shows commercial and industrial construction over the past decade. During this time frame 11 commercial lots and 2 industrial lots were developed. The new development consumed 100.90 acres of land during the last decade. Both of the Industrial projects in the last decade did not utilize the entire 52 acres and both projects have space for future expansions.

Table 7-3: New Commercial or Industrial Construction in Columbus

Year	Commercial		Industrial	
	# Lots	Acres	# Lots	Acres
2010	0	0	0	0
2011	0	0	0	0
2012	2	5.84	0	0
2013	0	0.00	1	28.05
2014	3	10.56	0	0
2015	2	2.57	0	0
2016	3	16.42	0	0
2017	1	13.18	1	24.29
2018	0	0	0	0
2019	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	11	48.56	2	52.34
Average per Year	1.1	4.9	0.2	5.2

Source: City of Columbus and GEC Inspection Reports

Figure 7-2 provides an estimate of the land available for Commercial and Industrial Land Uses in the 2030 Future Land Use Map. Undeveloped areas that were identified as Commercial or Industrial land uses by 2030 Columbus Comprehensive plan were identified to estimate the total area. The result of the analysis estimates that 171 acres are available for commercial or industrial uses. However, 32.6 acres of the estimate is the Michels Corporation quarry on Highway 60 and it is not likely to be developed during the next 20 years. Based on the average land developed per year in table 7-3 the estimated supply of commercial or industrial land is approximately 17 years.

Figure 7-2: Estimated Supply for Commercial and Industrial Development

Item	Acres
Commercial/Industrial Designation 2030 Future Land Use Map	278.46
FEMA/Wetlands Estimate	60.65
Total Buildable Commercial-Industrial Land	217.81
Estimated for ROW and other Dedicated Lands*	46.72
Acres for future Commercial- Industrial Development	171.09
*Lands with existing infrastructure was excluded from this calculation	
Source: Columbus Comprehensive Plan 2030 and GIS	

The analysis shows that there is an adequate supply of land for new residential development over the next 20 years. They also show that there may be a shortage of commercial or industrial land for development during the next 20 years. However, there is greater variation in the primary data collected for commercial and industrial land development, which means there is a greater margin of error for the estimated supply.

Land Use Classifications

Single Family Residential

This land use category identifies existing and future single family residential neighborhoods. This land use classification is intended to accommodate single family and some duplex residential development. Municipal and institutional land uses (parks, schools, churches, and stormwater facilities) may be built within these areas without a land use amendment. This corresponds to R1, R2 and R3 Zoning.

Policies

1. New residential neighborhoods should incorporate a mix of lot sizes and types, preferably including both single-family detached and multi-family configurations, and including both owner-occupied and rental units.
2. In new development areas, higher-density housing (5 or more units per acre) should generally be located in close proximity to major roads, commercial uses, and parks. A gradation of densities is appropriate; from high-density near these features to lower-density further away.
3. New neighborhood areas should have park and open space areas that are sized and located to meet the needs of all neighborhood residents.
4. Natural areas, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, woodland and unique open spaces, will be protected to the greatest extent possible when new development is proposed.

Multifamily Residential

This land use category identifies existing and future multifamily residential properties. This land use classification is intended to accommodate areas where there properties with 3 or more dwelling units will be located. Areas designated for residential structures meant to be occupied by more than one dwelling units. This corresponds to R4 Zoning.

Policies

1. New residential neighborhoods should incorporate a mix of lot sizes and types, preferably including both single-family detached and multi-family configurations, and including both owner-occupied and rental units.
2. In new development areas, higher-density housing (5 or more units per acre) should generally be located in close proximity to major roads, commercial uses, and parks. A gradation of densities is appropriate; from high-density near these features to lower-density further away.

Mobile Home Residential

This land use category identifies existing and future locations for mobile home parks. Areas designated for the development or maintenance of mobile home parks. This land use corresponds to R5 Zoning.

Industrial

This land use category is intended to provide for indoor manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and outdoor storage usage. The intensity of industrial development is regulated by the City's zoning ordinance. This land use corresponds to I1 and I2 Zoning.

Policies

1. New heavy Industrial Uses will be located in areas that not be a nuisance to surrounding land uses.

Downtown Mixed Use

This land use category is only located in the downtown area and is intended for pedestrian-oriented commercial, office, entertainment, institutional, and residential uses. The downtown is within a designated as a historic district meaning that the area. Due to the historic nature the built environment of the downtown will continue to have minimal building setbacks and will need on-street parking. The City encourages the maintenance, rehabilitation and redevelopment of the downtown mixed-use area for commercial, civic, or mixed uses. This corresponds to CBD1 Zoning.

Policies

1. Infill, redevelopment, and rehabilitation of existing, under-utilized properties in the downtown area is strongly encouraged.

2. New development will complement and reinforce the existing downtown development format, with emphasis on multistory buildings located close to the street and side lot lines.
3. The development and/or restoration of downtown residential units is encouraged, however street-level spaces should feature non-residential uses, especially facing James and Ludington Streets. The city will promote the use of Historic Tax Credits to renovate or restore buildings.
4. Large, private off-street parking lots are discouraged. The City may consider the establishment of public parking lots to accommodate parking concerns associated with new downtown development.
5. The development will consider design elements that will enhance the small town feel of Columbus.

Neighborhood Commercial

This land use category is intended primarily for consumer-oriented retail, service uses and office uses.. Building and site design will vary depending upon the location and lot size. New development in the Neighborhood Commercial district will feature larger setbacks, off-street parking, and only commercial uses. Mixed use developments could be incorporated into a redevelopment project. Areas designated for development or redevelopment as retail, sales, service, or office uses. This corresponds to B3 Zoning.

Policies

1. When located adjacent to residential uses, new commercial development should be designed to minimize negative impacts on those residential uses to excessive light, noise, or traffic.
2. New commercial development areas should be designed with a coordinated system of vehicular and pedestrian access.

Highway Commercial

This category identifies areas appropriate for a mixture of office and consumer-oriented commercial uses requiring larger tracks of land than are available within the downtown area. In addition, this area is appropriate for light manufacturing and large-scale service enterprises, which require access to the Highway system. Typically, this land use corresponds to B2 zoning district, but the I1 and I2 districts may also contribute to the Highway Commercial future land use classification.

Policies

1. The city will require high quality and coordinated site design, landscaping, signage and building materials and design are required within these areas.

Recreational

This land use category includes property where recreation is the primary land use. This includes all areas that are on private or publically owned lands. The areas classified as recreational are typically available to the public and includes areas where users pay fees for recreation.

Policies

1. The City will maintain and outdoor recreation plan in order to provide sufficient parkland and recreation facilities to meet the recreation demand of City of Columbus residents.
2. The City will not require an amendment to the Future Land Use Map prior to the approval of a publicly owned park or recreational use in an area that is mapped as another future land use. However, new privately owned recreational uses will require an amendment to the Future Land Use Map to Park and Recreation or Commercial Recreation.

Institutional

This land use category includes properties owned by the City, the school district, and religious institutions. Most of these uses are expected to remain at their present locations in and near the central parts of the City. New institutional land uses s be best located on lands that are designated as residential.

Policies

1. The City will require an amendment to the Future Land Use Map prior to the approval of new institutional uses.

Conservancy Overlay

This classification is intended to function as an overlay zone, that is, the underlying future land use classification (Residential, Industrial, etc.) remains in place, but the overlay classification warns the City and property owner of the likely presence of features and buffer zones around those features that are subject to protection under City, County or State law. The primary intent of these areas is to protect resources, including wildlife, water bodies, and soils, that are vulnerable to the negative effects of development.

Rural Preservation

This land use category is intended for lands to be preserved for an agricultural use or for open space. The majority of these lands are undeveloped within the City Limits. This district corresponds with the City's RD Rural Development Zoning District.

Gateway Business

This classification is strictly for lands near the Exit 115, which is the Southern Highway 73 exit on USH 151. The area will consist of high quality development and it will allow a blend of different land uses which includes: Highway Commercial, Industrial, Multifamily Residential, and Recreational. The land with frontage along Highway 73 will be best suited for retail use. Lands without highway frontage are best suited for a blend of office, light industrial space, multifamily, senior housing and recreational uses.

Policies

1. The city will require high quality and coordinated site design, landscaping, signage and building materials and design are required within these areas.
2. The development will consider design elements that will enhance the small town feel of Columbus.

Highway 16 Commercial

This classification is strictly for lands near the Exit 118, which is the Highway 16 exit on USH 151. New Development will consist of high quality development and it will allow a blend of different land uses, which includes Highway Commercial, Industrial, and Multifamily Residential.

Policies

1. The city will require high quality and coordinated site design, landscaping, signage and building materials and design are required within these areas.
2. The development will consider design elements that will enhance the small town feel of Columbus.
3. Promote the use of Infill development or redevelopment where appropriate.

Goal:

1. Guide the development and redevelopment of land in ways consistent with the City's vision and goals as indicated in this Comprehensive Plan

Objectives:

1. Maintain a future land use plan and map that ensures a desirable and compatible mix of land uses and supports the City's vision for the future, and update the plan as appropriate to make adjustments for changing conditions.
2. Develop conceptual neighborhood and corridor plans and policies for areas planned for new growth or redevelopment, addressing the preferred mix of land uses, stormwater management, open space needs, and transportation connectivity.
3. Encourage new development to areas within and immediately surrounding existing development.

4. Promote compact development that utilize existing infrastructure and utilities wherever practical.

Policies:

1. The City will ensure that zoning and land development ordinances are consistent with this Plan.
2. The City will consult and adhere to the future land use plan when considering land division and zoning amendment petitions.
3. The City will allow landowners or other stakeholders to petition for a change to the Future Land Use Map (see Section 3.4), and will consider the vision statement and other goals of the plan when evaluating any proposed change.
4. The City will consider the long-term impacts of growth on existing developed areas when crafting and updating the future land use plan and map.
5. Promote redevelopment and infill for the downtown area and on other key sites.
6. Preserve and enhance the historic character of the downtown by encouraging compatible new development and redevelopment.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs for joint planning and decision making with other jurisdictions, including school districts, drainage districts, and adjacent local governmental units, for siting and building public facilities and sharing public services. The element shall analyze the relationship of the local governmental unit to school districts, drainage districts, and adjacent local governmental units, and to the region, the state and other governmental units. The element shall consider, to the greatest extent possible, the maps and plans of any military base or installation, with at least 200 assigned military personnel or that contains at least 2,000 acres, with which the local governmental unit shares common territory. The element shall incorporate any plans or agreements to which the local governmental unit is a party under s. [66.0301](#), [66.0307](#) or [66.0309](#). The element shall identify existing or potential conflicts between the local governmental unit and other governmental units that are specified in this paragraph and describe processes to resolve such conflicts.

The issue of intergovernmental cooperation is critical to address numerous issues that cross over political boundaries. Issues like watersheds, labor force, transportation, housing, natural disasters and many others do not conform to political boundaries. To provide quality and efficient services to residents the City of Columbus the city needs to explore sharing services where practical.

Existing Areas of Cooperation – County

Columbia County – Most of the City of Columbus lies in Columbia County. Columbia County provides a wide range of services for Columbus residents. Most of these services are statutorily required and typically are not offered at the local level. Some of these services include Emergency Management, Health and Human Services, Transportation, Land Information, Register of Deeds, and Veterans Services. Below is a listing of current agreements between the City of Columbus and Columbia County:

- HAZ-MAT agreement for Hazardous Materials response services offered by Columbia County.
- Senior Nutrition Program agreement to allow the Columbia County Aging and Disability Resource Center to use the senior center to conduct the Senior Nutrition Program.
- Radio Tower Agreement for maintenance of the public Radio Tower which serves the city's police, fire and emergency medical services
- Mutual Aid Agreements for emergency and fire services

Dodge County – A small portion of the City of Columbus located within Dodge County, which provides a wide range of services. The city has the following agreements in place with Dodge County:

- Stray Animal Contract with Dodge County Humane Society
- 911 Joint Powers Agreement with Dodge County Sheriff's Department

Mutual Aid Agreements – The City has mutual aid agreements with Columbia, Dane and Dodge Counties to provide additional Police, Fire or Emergency Medical Services outside of our service area to assist with in the case of a large event. The aid is reciprocated if there were an event in Columbus that needed additional Police, Fire or Emergency Medical Services.

Existing Areas of Cooperation – Local Government

Town of Elba – The Town of Elba is located in Dodge County just to the east of the City of Columbus. The city has an agreement in place to provide sanitary sewer to the Elba Sanitary District.

Village of Fall River – The village of Fall River is located approximately two miles to the northwest of the City of Columbus. In 2010 an Intergovernmental Agreement allowed the Village of Fall River to connect to the Columbus Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Existing Areas of Cooperation – Education

Columbus School District – The City of Columbus is within the Columbus School District. The city and school district have executed shared use agreements for:

- Athletic Fields and Bleachers
- Use of Council Chambers to televise School Board Meetings

Existing Areas of Cooperation – Services

Columbus Public Library – The Columbus public library serves the greater Columbus Area. In addition to serving residents of Columbus, the Library provides services to residents in the Village of Fall River, Town of Elba Town of Fountain Prairie and other surrounding communities.

Emergency Medical Services – Columbus is part of the Columbus Area Emergency Medical Services Group. The group was formed by an intergovernmental agreement between the City of Columbus, Town of Calamus, Town of Columbus, Town of Elba, Town of Fountain Prairie, Town of Hampden, Town of Portland and Town of York. The Columbus Area Emergency Medical Services Group contracts with lifestar to provide services for these areas.

Fire Services – Columbus is part of the Columbus Rural Fire Group. The group was created by an intergovernmental agreement between the City of Columbus, town of Elba, Town of Calamus, Town of Portland, Town of Columbus, Town of Hampden, and the Town of York. The agreement details the sharing of fire services and costs associated with the purchase and maintenance of Equipment.

State Agencies - The Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources and Transportation are the primary agencies the Columbus might deal with regarding development activities. Many of the goals and objectives of this plan will require continued cooperation and coordination with these agencies.

Tools for Intergovermetnal Cooperation

- Shared Service Agreements Per 66.0301
Wisconsin Statute s.66.0301 entitled "Intergovernmental Cooperation" enables local governments to jointly do together whatever one can do alone. Intergovernmental agreements prepared uder this statute, are the most common form of agreement and have been used by communities for years. The most common use has been for the sharing public services such as police, fire, or rescue.

- **Boundary Agreement**

Under Section 66.0307, Wisconsin Statutes, municipalities may prepare cooperative boundary plans or agreements. Each city, village, or town that intends to participate in the preparation of a cooperative plan must adopt a resolution authorizing its participation in the planning process

Cooperative boundary plans or agreements involve decisions regarding the maintenance or change of municipal boundaries for a period of 10 years or more. The cooperative plan must include: a plan for the physical development of the territory covered by the plan. It must also include; a schedule for changes to the boundary; plans for the delivery of services; an evaluation of environmental features and a description of any adverse environmental consequences that may result from the implementation of the plan; and it must address the need for safe and affordable housing. The participating communities must hold a public hearing prior to its adoption.

Once adopted, the plan must be submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Administration for state approval. Upon approval, the cooperative plan has the force and effect of a contract. Working with the towns, the city could use this tool to establish boundaries in certain areas where it is logical and in the best interest to do so from a planning and service delivery standpoint.

- **Municipal Revenue Sharing**

Wisconsin Statute, 66.0305, Municipal Revenue Sharing, gives authority to cities, villages and towns to enter into agreements to share revenue from taxes and special charges with each other. The agreements may also address other matters, including agreements regarding services to be provided or the location of municipal boundaries.

Boundaries of the shared revenue area must be specified in the agreement and the term of the agreement must be for at least 10 years. The formula or other means for sharing revenue, the date of payment of revenues, and the means by which the agreement may be invalidated after the minimum 10 year period.

Goal

1. Continue to promote intergovernmental cooperation in the region

Objectives:

1. Coordinate planning for long-term City growth with Columbia and Dodge Counties, the Towns of Elba and Columbus, and the Village of Fall River.
2. Share or coordinate public services with other governmental entities to achieve cost savings and/or quality improvements for the mutual benefit of all participants.

Policies:

1. The City will seek cooperative agreements with nearby governments for the provision of public services whenever it can be demonstrated that doing so will achieve cost savings and/or quality improvements for Columbus residents.

Implementation

A compilation of programs and specific actions to be completed in a stated sequence, including proposed changes to any applicable zoning ordinances, official maps, or subdivision ordinances, to implement the objectives, policies, plans and programs contained in other plan elements. This element shall describe how each of the elements of the comprehensive plan will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the comprehensive plan, and shall include a mechanism to measure the local governmental unit's progress toward achieving all aspects of the comprehensive plan. The element shall include a process for updating the comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan under this subsection shall be updated no less than once every 10 years.

Implementation Tools

Columbus Municipal Codes and Ordinances are an important means of implementing the policies of a comprehensive plan. The zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations comprise the principal regulatory devices used to protect existing development and guide future growth as prescribed by the comprehensive plan. The City Council is responsible for amending and adopting these local ordinances. The City of Columbus utilizes the following tools, which help implement the comprehensive plan.

- Zoning Ordinance – The zoning code is established by chapter 114 of the Columbus Municipal Code. The city will use the comprehensive plan along with the zoning code to guide development.
- Official Map - The City currently utilizes an official map as authorized to do so by state statute 62.23(6).
- Sign Regulations - The City of Columbus regulates signs through Division 6 of Article V of the zoning code.
- Erosion Control Ordinance – The City regulates erosion through Division 7 of Article V of the zoning code.
- Stormwater Management Ordinance - The City regulates stormwater management facilities through Division 8 of Article V of the zoning code.
- Historic Preservation Ordinance - The City regulates historic sites and structures through Division 9 of Article V of the zoning code.
- Site Plan Regulations – The city regulates site plan requirements under section 78.15 of the Columbus Municipal Code.
- Building Codes - The City regulates the building codes through chapter 18 of the Columbus Municipal Code
- Land Division - The division of land in the City is governed by Wisconsin Statutes, the City's Subdivision Regulations, and, within 1.5 miles of the City of Columbus, by the City's extraterritorial plat review authority.

Adoption and Amendment Procedures

The procedures for comprehensive plan adoption or amendment are established by Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law (66.1001, Stats.). This comprehensive plan and any future amendments must be adopted by the City Council in the form of an adoption ordinance approved by a majority vote. Two important steps must occur before the City Council may adopt or amend the plan: the Plan Commission must recommend adoption and the City must hold an official public hearing.

Plan Commission Recommendation

The Plan Commission recommends adoption or amendment by passing a resolution that very briefly summarizes the plan and its various components. The resolution should also reference the reasons for creating plan and the public involvement process used during the planning process. The resolution must pass by a majority vote of the entire Commission, and the approved resolution should be included in the adopted plan document

Public Hearing

Prior to adopting the Plan, the plan commission must hold at least one public hearing to discuss the proposed plan. At least 30 days prior to the hearing a Class 1 notice must be published that contains, at minimum, the following:

- The date, time and location of the hearing,
- A summary of the proposed plan or plan amendment,
- The local government staff who may be contacted for additional information,
- Where to inspect and how to obtain a copy of the proposed plan or amendment before the hearing.

The notice should also provide a method for submitting written comments, and those comments should be read or summarized at the public hearing

Draft Distribution and Public Hearing Notifications

The City is required to provide direct notice of the public hearing to any owner, leaseholder or operator of a nonmetallic mineral deposit (i.e. a gravel pit). The City should send a copy of the public hearing notice at least 30 days prior to the hearing to any known mining operations in the City and to anyone that has submitted a written request for such notification.

The City is also required to maintain a list of any individuals who request, in writing, notification of the proposed comprehensive plan. Each such individual must be sent a notice of the public hearing and a copy of the plan at least 30 days prior to the public hearing. The City may charge a fee equal to the cost of providing such notice and copy.

Finally, the City should send the notice and a copy of the proposed plan to each of the following:

1. Every governmental body that is located in whole or in part within the boundaries of the City, including any school district, sanitary district, or other special district.
2. The clerk of every town, city, village, and county that borders the City.
3. The regional planning commission in which the City is located.
4. The public library that serves the area in which the City is located.

These draft distributions are not required by statute prior to adoption, but are strongly recommended as a matter of courtesy and good planning practice. The City should coordinate directly with the public library to make a hard copy of the proposed plan available for viewing by any interested party.

Plan Adoption/Amendment

This plan and any future amendments become official City policy when the City Council passes, by a majority vote of all elected members, an adoption ordinance. The Council may choose to revise the plan after it has been recommended by the Plan Commission and after the public hearing. It is not a legal requirement to consult with the Plan Commission on such changes prior to adoption, but, depending on the significance of the revision, such consultation may be advisable.

Adopted Plan Distribution

Following final adoption of this plan, and again following any amendments to the plan, a copy of the plan or amendment must be sent to each of the following:

1. Every governmental body that is located in whole or in part within the boundaries of the City, including any school district, sanitary district, or other special district.
2. The clerk of every town, city, village, and county that borders the City.
3. The regional planning commission in which the City is located.
4. The public library that serves the area in which the City is located.
5. The Comprehensive Planning Program at the Department of Administration.

Consistency Requirements

Once formally adopted, the Plan becomes a tool for communicating the community's land use policy and for coordinating legislative decisions. Per the requirements of Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law, because the City of Columbus engages in the actions listed below, those actions shall be consistent with its comprehensive plan:

- Official mapping established or amended under s. 62.23 (6)
- Local subdivision regulations under s. 236.45 or 236.46
- City zoning ordinances enacted or amended under s. 60.61, 60.62, 60.23 (7)

- Zoning of shorelands or wetlands in shorelands under s. 59.692, 61.351 or 62.231 An action shall be deemed consistent if:
 1. It furthers, or at least does not interfere with, the goals, objectives, and policies of this plan,
 2. It is compatible with the proposed future land uses and densities/intensities contained in this plan,
 3. It carries out, as applicable, any specific proposals for community facilities, including transportation facilities, other specific public actions, or actions proposed by nonprofit and for-profit organizations that are contained in the plan.

The State of Wisconsin planning legislation requires that the implementation element describe how each of the nine-elements will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements of the plan. Prior to adoption of the plan the City of Columbus reviewed, updated, and completed all elements of this plan together, and no inconsistencies were found.

Amendments

Although this Plan is intended to guide decisions and action by the City over a 20-year time frame, it is impossible to predict future conditions in the City. Amendments may be appropriate following original adoption, particularly if emerging issues or trends render aspects of the plan irrelevant or inappropriate. To monitor consistency with the Comprehensive Plan the City will review its content prior to any important decisions, especially those that will affect land use. From time to time the City may be faced with an opportunity, such as a development proposal, that does not fit the plan but is widely viewed to be appropriate for the City. Should the City wish to approve such an opportunity, it must first amend the plan so that the decision is consistent with the plan. Such amendments should be carefully considered and should not become the standard response to proposals that do not fit the plan. Frequent amendments to meet individual development proposals threaten the integrity of the plan and the planning process and should be avoided.

Any change to the plan text or maps constitutes an amendment to the plan and must follow the adoption/amendment process described in Section 4.3. Amendments may be proposed by either the City Council or the Plan Commission, and each will need to approve the change per the statutory process. Amendments may be made at any time using this process, however in most cases the City should not amend the plan more than once per year. A common and recommended approach is to establish a annual schedule for consideration of amendments. This process can begin with a joint meeting of the Plan Commission and City Council (January), followed by Plan Commission recommendation (February), then the 30-day public notice procedures leading to a public hearing and vote on adoption by City Council (March or April).

Wisconsin's comprehensive planning statute (66.1001) requires that this plan be updated at least once every 10 years. Unlike an amendment, the plan update is a major re-write of the plan document and

supporting maps. The purpose of the update is to incorporate new data and ensure that the plan remains relevant to current conditions and decisions. The availability of new Census or mapping data and/or a series of significant changes in the community may justify an update after less than 10 years. Frequent requests for amendments to the plan should signal the need for a comprehensive update.

Severability

If any provision of this Comprehensive Plan shall be found to be invalid or unconstitutional, or if the application of this Comprehensive Plan to any person or circumstances is found to be invalid or unconstitutional, such invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect the other provisions or applications of this Comprehensive Plan, which can be given effect without the invalid or unconstitutional provision or application.

Implementation

There are many actions that the City may pursue to achieve the goals and objectives of this plan. Because each of these many possible actions requires the active leadership of elected officials and/or City staff, and because many of the actions will have a monetary cost to the City, it is not feasible or appropriate to chart out 20 years of specific action commitments. Instead, the City commits to using existing processes to carry out the actions necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of this plan.

- Comprehensive Plan: The City will update their Comprehensive Plan ever 5-10 years
- Roadmap 2050 Plan: The Roadmap 2050 that sets the parameters for what the City can afford to carryout capital improvements over the next 30 years.
- Capital Improvements Plan: The City will continue to prepare a Capital Improvement Plan for a five year time period. This Plan will be updated annually.
- Annual Budget: The City will continue to prepare an annual budget to ensure that the City fulfills its obligations.
- Annual Reports: The City will continue to prepare an annual report that identifies accomplishments that lead to the implementation of the comprehensive plan and roadmap 2050.

Overall Plan Recommendations

1. Create a Tax Increment Finance District in downtown Columbus to support downtown revitalization.
2. Develop and maintain a 5 year Capital Improvement Plan.
3. Develop and maintain a Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan to meet the recreational needs of the community.
4. Collaborate with private property owners to ensure that land is available to accommodate future commercial and residential growth.

5. Update and monitor the city's Zoning, Sign, Building and other codes to enhance the design of future development
6. Identify an additional source(s) of funds to complete transportation infrastructure projects.
7. Identify an additional source(s) of funds to complete storm water infrastructure projects.
8. Reserve the lands near 151 Highway interchanges for high quality development.
9. Collaborate with Federal, State and local agencies to support the preservation of historic buildings, sites and districts within Columbus.
10. Manage City Facilities in a manner consistent with the Adopted Roadmap 2050 Plan.
11. Explore options for intergovernmental cooperation that would provide a better service to residents at a lower cost.
12. Work in partnership with the Columbus School District to address matters that are mutually beneficial.

City of Columbus

Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance Rewrite

Plan Commission
October 8, 2026

**Exterior Building Design Standards and
Administration/Procedures**



Today's Discussion & Project Schedule Overview

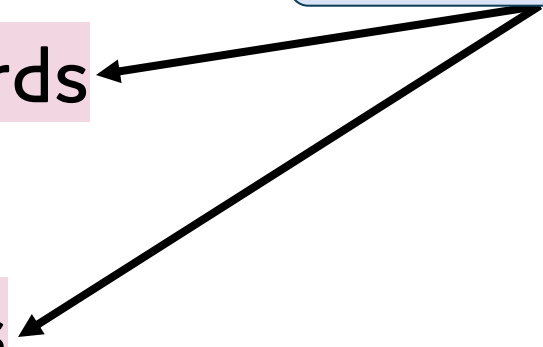
Item #3.

- Last Meeting – September 10
 - Performance standards
 - Landscaping standards
- Today – October 8
 - Building design
 - Admin and procedures
- Next
 - Final staff review
 - Prepare for Public Hearing

Zoning Code Outline

- Article 1: Introduction
- Article 2: Establishment of Zoning Districts
- Article 3: Land Use Regulations
- Article 4: Bulk Regulations
- Article 5: Nonconforming Situations
- Article 6: Performance Standards
- Article 7: Exterior Building Design Standards
- Article 8: Landscaping Requirements
- Article 9: Signage
- Article 10: Administration and Procedures
- Article 11: Definitions

Today's Review



Administration and Procedures

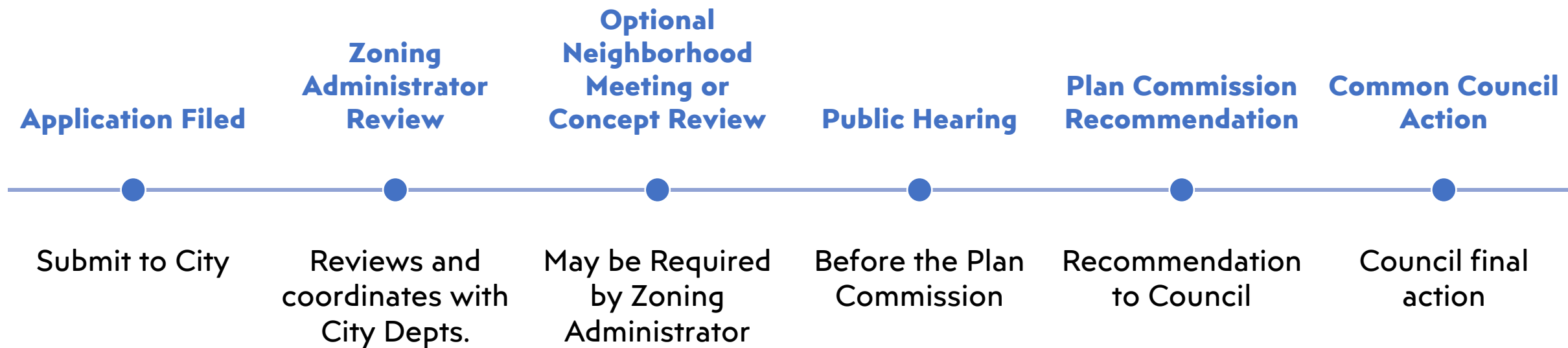
ADMINISTRATION & ENFORCEMENT

- Defines responsibilities for administering the Chapter
- Establishes enforcement procedures and penalties for non-compliance

PROCEDURES

- Establishes procedures for:
 - Zoning Text or Map Amendment
 - Conditional Use Permit
 - Site Plan Review
 - Planned Development
 - Variances
- Optional procedures:
 - Concept Review
 - Neighborhood Meeting

Zoning Text and Zoning Map Amendment



No major change from existing practice

Conditional Use Permit

Item #3.



Key Updates/Notes

- Addresses 2017 Act 67 (regarding substantial evidence)
- Conditional Use Permits “run with the land” unless limited by conditions, or if the use ceases for 365 days
- Plan Commission has final authority

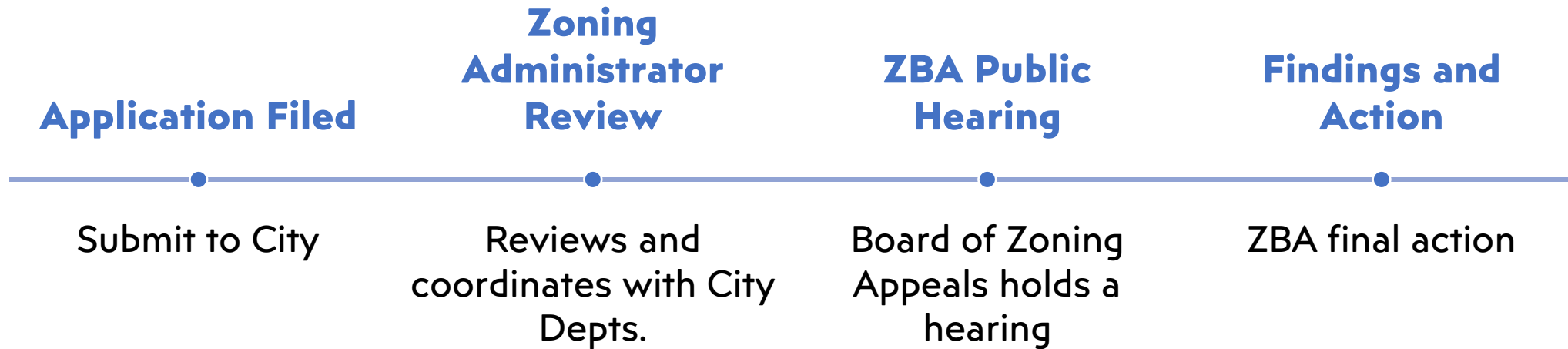
Planned Development Review

- Negotiated zoning district applied in two formal approval steps:
 - General Development Plan
 - Precise Implementation Plan
- Public hearings occur with the GDP and PIP
 - Held by the Plan Commission
- GDP and PIP may be submitted together
- Policy question:
 - Do you want expiration/sunsets on PDs if not developed within a certain time frame?



Variances

Item #3.



- Variances and ZBA authority are defined in State Law.
- Variances may only be approved upon findings of fact such as: applicant demonstrates that compliance is not possible due to unique physical condition, circumstances not created by the applicant

Item #3.

- [illegible]

Summary of Key Policy Questions

Item #3.

- How should Site Plan approval be handled?
 - Administrative
 - Plan Commission
 - Or Hybrid Approach
- Where should appeals go?
 - ZBA
 - Common Council
- Should Planned Developments expire if not developed within a certain timeframe?

Next Steps & Questions

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ARTICLE X: ADMINISTRATION AND PROCEDURES

Section 114.10.01: Purpose

The purpose of this Article is to establish responsibilities for the administration of this Chapter, and the enforcement procedures and penalties for non-compliance with the provisions of this Zoning Ordinance. The purpose of this Article is also to establish procedural requirements for zoning text amendments, zoning map amendments, and various development approvals under this Chapter, including but not limited to conditional use permits, temporary use permits, variances, certificates of occupancy, and site plan review and approval.

Section 114.10.02: Exempt Activities

The following activities do not require review or approval by the City under this Chapter.

- (1) Official public information installed by or at the direction of a governmental unit.
- (2) The maintenance or improvement of a public road, sidewalk, or railroad track within the boundaries of the right-of-way.
- (3) Work by any utility not involving substantial engineering redesign for the purpose of inspection, repair, renewal, or construction on established rights-of-way of any sewer and water mains and laterals, pipes, cables, utility tunnels, power lines, towers, tracks, or the like.

Sections 114.10.03 to 114.10.09: Reserved

Section 114.10.10: Zoning Administrator

The Zoning Administrator is hereby designated as the administration and enforcement officer for the provisions of this Chapter. The general duty of the Zoning Administrator is to interpret and administer this Chapter. Examples of duties include:

- (1) Maintain records of this Chapter, including, but not limited to, all maps, amendments, conditional uses, temporary uses, site plans, planned developments, occupancy permits, variances, appeals, interpretations, and applications thereof.
- (2) Receive, review, analyze, and develop written reports on all applications for amendments to this Chapter, zoning map amendments, conditional use permits, temporary use permits, land use permits, site plans, special area design review, planned developments, interpretations, variances, appeals, violations and penalties, or other development matters.
- (3) Serve as staff to the Plan Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and other boards and commissions as assigned.
- (4) Issue land use permits when the requirements of the Chapter have been met, and make and maintain records thereof.
- (5) Coordinate official development review processes among government offices to the extent feasible.
- (6) Investigate all complaints made relating to the location of structures and the use of structures, lands, and waters.
- (7) Conduct inspections to determine compliance with the terms of this Chapter and to take remedial action when required. Issue citations for the enforcement of this Chapter.
- (8) Make interpretations regarding the provisions of this Chapter per **Section 114.10.50.**

Commented [SK1]: Attorney review - Police chief may issue citation instead. Use different language about issuing legal compliance but not issuing citation.

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Section 114.10.11: Plan Commission

- (1) The Plan Commission, together with its other statutory duties, shall make recommendations relating to the planning and development of the City to the Common Council, other public officials, and other interested organizations and residents.
- (2) General Duties and Responsibilities. The Plan Commission shall:
 - (a) Approve a recommended annual budget for the Plan Commission; when requested, review and comment on the budgets of agencies or functions that pertain to planning.
 - (b) Develop, adopt, and review the City Comprehensive Plan and elements thereof, including elements applicable to extraterritorial areas.
 - (c) Make reports and recommendations relative to the planning and development of the City and its environs to public officials and agencies; utility companies; civic, educational, professional, and other organizations; and residents and other community stakeholders.
 - (d) Receive referrals pursuant to Wis. Stats. § 62.23(5) and (6), or otherwise, and make reports upon the following matters: the location and architectural design of public buildings; the location of statues or memorials; the location, acceptance, extension, alteration, vacation, abandonment, change of use, sale, acquisition of land for or lease of land for any street, alley or other public way, park, playground, airport, parking areas, or memorials or public grounds; the location, extension, abandonment or authorization for any public utility; plats of land or certified survey maps within the City limits or within the extraterritorial plat review jurisdiction; location, character and extent of acquisition, leasing or sale of lands for public or semi-public housing, redevelopment, and the amendment or repeal of any zoning or official map ordinance. Referrals and reports under this section are in addition to zoning/design reviews under other provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.
 - (e) Additional Duties and Responsibilities. The Plan Commission shall have such powers under Wisconsin Statutes, or City Ordinances as may be necessary to enable it to perform its functions and promote municipal planning.
- (3) Except where they are the final step in the review process as established by this Chapter, the functions of the Plan Commission are recommendatory to the Common Council pursuant to guidelines set forth in this Chapter as to various matters, and always being mindful of the intent and purposes of this Chapter.
- (4) See **Figure 114.10.20a** for a summary of the Plan Commission's role in administering this Chapter.

Section 114.10.12: Common Council

- (1) The Common Council, the governing body of the City, subject to recommendations by the Plan Commission, has ultimate authority to adopt changes and amendments to this Zoning Ordinance and the Official Zoning Map and other functions as determined by this Chapter. The Common Council is established in **Chapter 2** of the City of Columbus Municipal Code.
- (2) See **Figure 114.10.20a** for a summary of the Common Council's role in administering this Chapter.

Section 114.10.13: Zoning Board of Appeals

A Zoning Board of Appeals is established to provide an appeal procedure for persons who deem themselves aggrieved by decisions of administrative officers in the enforcement of this Chapter.

- (1) Appointments, Terms, Rules, and Procedures. The Zoning Board of Appeals shall be appointed and shall be governed as to terms, vacancies, removals, and as to rules and procedures by Wis. Stats. § 62.23(7)(e).

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- (2) Public Hearings. The Zoning Board of Appeals shall conduct a public hearing on all administrative appeals, variances and other decision matters before it and shall cause a Class 1 Notice under Wis. Stats. Chapter 985 to be published and shall give due notice of the hearing to all parties in interest.
- (3) Procedure and Record. Any party may appear in person or by agent at such hearing. The Chair may administer oaths to parties testifying and may compel attendance of witnesses. All testimony before the Board by persons other than Board members and all documentary evidence or material pertaining to matters before the Board shall be received at hearings conducted by the Board, provided that the content of relevant ordinance or statutory materials shall be deemed to be before the Board in all cases and need not be entered into the record. All parties in interest shall be afforded reasonable opportunity to comment on all materials or information so received. Board members who are in possession of facts that may have a bearing on the matter before the Board shall enter the same into the record of the hearing and opportunity shall be allowed for comment on such entries.
- (4) Deliberations and Decisions. The Board shall deliberate on matters before it. The concurring vote of a majority of the members of the Board present shall be necessary to approve any appeal, variance, or other decision by the Board. The vote of each matter decided by the Board shall be recorded in the minutes. If a member is absent or if a member fails to vote, such facts shall similarly be recorded. The minutes of the Board shall show the Board's decisions and votes of members thereon. Each decision of the Board shall be accompanied by written reasons in support of the decision. All decisions shall be made in strict accordance with the standards of the Ordinance and the Board shall decide all matters before it within a reasonable time.
- (5) Powers. The Board of Appeals shall have the powers established in Wis. Stats. § 62.23(7)(c). Examples of such powers include:
 - (a) Hear Appeals. To hear and decide appeals where it is alleged there is an error in any order, ruling, requirement, decision, or determination made by the Zoning Administrator.
 - (b) Authorize Variances. To authorize upon appeal in specific cases such variance from the terms of this Chapter as will not be contrary to the public interest where, owing to special conditions, a literal enforcement of the provisions of this Chapter will result in practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship, so that the spirit of the Chapter shall be observed, public safety and welfare secured, and substantial justice done.
 - (c) Extend Districts. To permit the extension of a district where the boundary line of a district divides a lot held in single ownership at the time of adoption of this Chapter.
 - (d) Interpret Ordinances. Interpret the provisions of this Chapter in such a way as to carry out the intent and purpose of this Chapter as shown on the Official Zoning Map where the actual street layout on the ground varies from the street layout on the aforesaid map.
 - (e) Vary Height and Area Regulations. To vary height and area regulations where there is an exceptional or unusual physical condition of the lot, which condition is not generally prevalent in the neighborhood and which condition when related to the height and area regulations of this Chapter would present a reasonable or sensible arrangement of structures on the lot.
 - (f) Vary Parking Regulations. To vary the parking regulations where an applicant demonstrates conclusively that the specific use of a structure would make unnecessary the parking spaces required by this Chapter.
- (6) See [Figure 114.10.20a](#) for a summary of the role of the Zoning Board of Appeals in administering this Chapter.

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Section 114.10.14: Historic Landmarks and Preservation Commission

- (1) The Historic Landmarks and Preservation Commission purpose, powers, and duties are established within Section 114.02.22, Section 114.07.51, and Chapter 2 of the City of Columbus Municipal Code.

Section 114.10.15 to 114.10.19: Reserved

Section 114.10.20: Review and Approval Required

- (1) Review procedures vary depending on the type of request; however, procedures within this Article generally adhere to three common elements:
 - (a) Submittal of a complete application, including fee payment and appropriate supplemental information.
 - (b) Review by appropriate City staff or officials.
 - (c) Action by appropriate City officials or staff to approve, conditionally approve, or deny the request.
- (2) Figure 114.10.20a summarizes the procedures, agencies, and personnel involved in the various procedures authorized by this Chapter. Detailed zoning procedures are discussed in Section 114.10.30 through 114.10.53 of this Article. Figure 114.10.20a is provided as a convenience for the City and general public.

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Figure 114.10.20a: Review and Approval Activities and Bodies

Commented [SK2]: We will need to come back to this section once everything is reviewed to make sure it reflects any changes made.

Application Process	Staff	Plan Commission	Common Council	Zoning Board of Appeals	Historic Landmarks and Preservation
RE = Review and Evaluate, IP = Issues Permit, RR = Review and Recommend, PH = Public Hearing, PM = Public Meeting, A = Final Action					
Annexation (Wis. Stats. §66.0217)	RE	RR	A		
Appeal (§114.10.52)	RR			PH, RE, A	
Building Permit	RE, IP		See Chapter 18 of the Municipal Code		
Certificate of Occupancy (§7.10.42)	RE, IP				
Concept Plan Review (§114.10.23)	RR	RE			See Section 114.07.51
Conditional Use Permit (§114.10.32)	PM*, RR	PH, RE, A		Appeal	
Design Standard Exception/Waiver (Article VII)	RR	RE, A			See Section 114.07.51
Easement Acceptance/Release (Wis. Stats. §62.23)	RE, A		RE, A		
Group Development (§114.06.02)	PM*, RR	PH, RE, A		Appeal	
Interpretation (§114.10.50)	RE, A			Appeal	
Land Division-CSM (Chapter 90)	RE	RR	A		
Land Division-Preliminary Plat (Chapter 90)	RE	RR	A		
Land Division-Final Plat (Chapter 90)	RE	RR	A		
Official Map (§Wis. Stats. §62.23(6))	PM, RE	PH, RR	A		
Planned Development (§114.10.45)	PM*, RE	PH, RR	A		
Sign Permit		Refer to Article IX			See Section 114.07.51
Site Plan (§114.10.43)	RE, RR	A			See Section 114.07.51
DMU Design Review (§114.07.51)			See Section 114.07.51		
Street Vacation/Discontinuance (Wis. Stats. §66.1003)	RE	RR	PH, A		
Temporary Use (§114.03.30)	RE, IP				
Variance (§114.10.51)	RE			PH, A	
Violations and Penalties (§114.10.60)	RE, A				
Zoning Map Amendment (§114.10.30)	PM*, RE	PH, RR	A		
Zoning Ordinance Amendment (§114.10.30)	RE	PH, RR	A		
Zoning Permit (§114.10.41)	RE, IP				

Note: This table is not exhaustive. Some procedures may not be covered within this table.

** If determined to be necessary or appropriate by the Zoning Administrator.*

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Section 114.10.21: Notice of Public Hearings

In order to allow owners of property and other legitimately interested parties to have a fair opportunity to be heard, adequate notice shall be given of any public hearing required by the provisions of this Chapter.

- (1) Notice of any public hearing which the Common Council, Plan Commission, or Zoning Board of Appeals is required to hold under the terms of this Chapter shall specify the date, time, and place of hearing, and the matter to be presented at the hearing.
- (2) The notice for variances shall be published as a Class 1 notice. The notice for zoning ordinance amendments, zoning map amendments, and conditional use permits shall be published as a Class 2 notice.
- (3) The notice of public hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the City before the public hearing, as prescribed by Wis. Statutes or local ordinances.
- (4) Notice of the public hearing shall be mailed to the last known address of all parties-in-interest at least ten (10) days before the hearing. Parties-in-interest shall be defined as the petitioner; the Clerk of any municipality whose boundaries are within 1,000 feet of any lands included in the petition; the owners of record of all lots or parcels adjacent extending 300 feet therefrom, or directly opposite thereto extending 300 feet from the street frontage of such; the owners of all lands included in the petition; and the owner or operator of an airport lying within 1 mile of lands included in the petition.

Commented [SK3]: Are you comfortable with 300 feet notice distance? This is the number I am most familiar with in other communities

Section 114.10.22: Neighborhood Meetings

- (1) For proposals that are likely to generate a lot of public interest, the Zoning Administrator has the discretion to require the applicant to hold a neighborhood meeting. Such meetings shall provide an opportunity for interested parties to examine the proposal and allows the applicant to provide a thorough explanation of the proposal, answer questions from the public and City, and potentially amend the proposal based on public input.
- (2) Where a neighborhood meeting is required by the Zoning Administrator, within 90 days of filing of a complete application, the applicant shall hold a public meeting to introduce and inform property owners within 300 feet of the subject property of the proposal to solicit comments and address concerns. The City shall supply a list of property owners to the applicant upon request.
 - (a) The neighborhood meeting shall be held at a time and location that an average member of the public can reasonably attend, as determined by the Zoning Administrator.
 - (b) The Zoning Administrator shall be notified of and invited to the meeting in order to assist the applicant and public on the topic. Attendance by the Zoning Administrator or other City staff shall not be required. If in attendance, City staff may provide information regarding applicable City requirements and procedures.
 - (c) The neighborhood meeting shall be noticed in a manner consistent with City requirements.
 - (d) Meeting minutes and attendance shall be recorded. The meeting invitation list, meeting minutes, attendance records, documents distributed at the meeting, and presentation materials shall be provided to the City.
 - (e) The neighborhood meeting shall be held prior to review and action by the Plan Commission.
 - (f) Alternative to a Neighborhood Meeting. Instead of a neighborhood meeting, notification by mail introducing and informing property owners within 300 feet of the subject property of the proposal may substitute for a public meeting, if deemed appropriate by the Zoning Administrator.

Commented [SK4]: This is an optional procedural step but could be useful in some cases and this would provide guidance in those instances. It would be hosted and arranged by the developer/applicant.

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Section 114.10.23: Concept Plan Review

Commented [SK5]: Optional but provides guidance in cases where this makes sense.

- (1) The Zoning Administrator has the discretion to require a concept plan review of the project by the Plan Commission, or an applicant may request a concept plan review prior to submitting a formal application. Such a review is at the concept level and is not binding.
- (2) The preferred procedure is for one or more iterations of Plan Commission review of the concept plan to occur prior to introduction of a formal application. The purpose of this meeting, or meetings, is to allow the Plan Commission to discuss the possible application; general statistics on the project; the environmental, economic, social and other benefits of design to be obtained from the proposal; and whether there is a need for planned development district zoning (why a standard zoning district will not suffice). No formal action will be taken by the Commission. After this meeting or meetings, the applicant may then submit a formal application pursuant to the procedures pertaining to applicable process in [Article X](#).
- (3) Application. An application for concept plan review shall include the following items, if applicable (digital files shall be submitted whenever possible).
 - (a) Contextual information such as a location map, photos of the site and surrounding properties, and topography.
 - (b) A general written description of the proposed project, including:
 1. General project themes and design.
 2. The general mix of dwelling unit types and/or land uses.
 3. Approximate residential densities and nonresidential intensities as described by dwelling units per acre, landscaping surface ratio, and/or other appropriate measures of density and intensity.
 4. General treatment of natural features.
 5. Relationship to nearby properties and public streets.
 6. Relationship of the project to the Comprehensive Plan.
 7. Description of any potential exceptions/base standard modifications from the requirements of this Chapter. The purpose of this information shall be to provide the Plan Commission with information necessary to determine the relative merits of the project with respect to private versus public benefit, and to evaluate the potential adverse impacts created by potentially making exceptions to standard zoning district requirements.
 - (c) A conceptual drawing of the site plan layout, including the general locations of public streets and/or private drives.
- (4) Without taking formal action, the Plan Commission shall comment on the concept plan to help inform the applicant's decision whether to proceed with the project. The Commission may request that additional materials be submitted to assist in communicating the nature of the site and its context.
- (5) To facilitate their review of the concept plan, the Plan Commission may determine that there is a need for a public meeting following the procedures of [Section 114.10.22](#).

Section 114.10.24 to 114.10.29: Reserved

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Section 114.10.30: Zoning Ordinance or Zoning Map Amendment

- (1) Purpose. The purpose of this Section is to provide regulations which govern the procedure and requirements for the review and approval, or denial, of proposed amendments to the provisions of this Chapter or the Official Zoning Map. Refer also to the requirements of Wis. Stats. § 62.23(7)(d).
- (2) Initiation of Request for Amendment. Proceedings for an amendment of this Chapter or the Official Zoning Map may be initiated by one of the following methods:
 - (a) An application by any member of the general public (only applicable to amendments of this Chapter).
 - (b) An application of the owner(s) of the subject property or authorized agent of the owner(s) of the subject property (only applicable to amendments of the Official Zoning Map).
 - (c) A recommendation by the Plan Commission to the Common Council.
 - (d) Action of the Common Council.
 - (e) A recommendation by City staff.
- (3) Application Requirements. See the City of Columbus Zoning Amendment application.
- (4) Review by the Zoning Administrator.
 - (a) The Zoning Administrator shall determine whether the application is complete and fulfills the requirements of this Chapter. If the application is determined to be incomplete, the Zoning Administrator shall notify the applicant and the application will not be forwarded.
 - (b) Findings of Fact. The Zoning Administrator shall review the complete application and evaluate whether the proposed amendment:
 1. Advances the purposes of this Chapter as outlined in **Section 114.01.03.**
 2. Advances the purposes of the general Article and specific Section in which the amendment is proposed to be located.
 3. Is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. If the proposed amendment is not consistent, and amendment to the Comprehensive Plan is required prior to rezoning.
 4. Maintains the desired overall consistency of land uses, land use intensities, and land use impacts within the pertinent zoning districts.
 5. For Zoning Ordinance Amendments, addresses any of the following factors that may not be addressed in the current zoning text:
 - a. A change in the land market, or other factors which require a new form of development, a new type of land use, or a new procedure to meet said change(s).
 - b. New methods of development or types of infrastructure.
 - c. Changing governmental finances to meet the needs of the government in terms of providing and affording public services.
 - d. Any other factor deemed appropriate by the City.
 6. For Zoning Map Amendments, addresses any of the following factors that are not properly addressed on the current Official Zoning Map:
 - a. The designations of the Official Zoning Map are not in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.
 - b. A mapping mistake was made, including the omission on the Official Zoning Map of an approved zoning map amendment.

Commented [SK6]: In this new draft code, application requirements will live in an application form (outside of the ordinance). This makes maintaining the requirements easier over time (no ordinance amendment necessary) and can make them more accessible to customers (they have to read an application form which is usually in plain language as opposed to an ordinance). We can help with the forms at the end of the project if interested.

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- c. Factors have changed (such as new data, infrastructure, market conditions, development, annexation, or other zoning changes), making the subject property more appropriate for a different zoning district.
 - d. Growth patterns or rates have changed, creating the need for an amendment to the Official Zoning Map.
- (c) The Zoning Administrator shall prepare a written report addressing items in Subsection (4)(b), above, and forward said report to the Plan Commission for the Commission's review and use in making its recommendation to the Common Council. If the Zoning Administrator determines that the proposal may be in conflict with the provisions of this Chapter or the Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Administrator shall note this determination in the report.
- (d) The findings of fact required by this section are directory to the Zoning Administrator. No deficiency in the findings or failure to make any or all findings shall affect the power of the Plan Commission to make a recommendation or the Common Council to adopt or reject the proposed amendment.
- (5) Neighborhood Meeting. If proposed amendment to the Official Zoning Map is expected to have significant impact on other properties, the Zoning Administrator, may require a meeting in compliance with [Section 114.10.22](#).
- (6) Public Hearing. Within 90 days of filing of a complete application, the Plan Commission shall hold a public hearing in compliance with [Section 114.10.21](#) to consider the request. A public hearing may be held more than 90 days from the filing of the complete application when requested by the applicant in writing.
- (7) Review and Recommendation by the Plan Commission.
 - (a) Within 60 days after the public hearing, the Plan Commission shall make its recommendations regarding the application. Said recommendation shall include issuance of formal finding of facts developed and approved by the Plan Commission concerning the requirements of Subsection (4)(b), above, and whether the public benefits outweigh the potential adverse impacts of the proposed amendment.
 - (b) If the Plan Commission fails to make a recommendation within 60 days of the public hearing, the Common Council may hold a public hearing within 30 days after the expiration of said 60-day period. Failure to receive said recommendation from the Plan Commission shall not preclude the Common Council from taking final action nor shall any deficiency in the findings of fact or failure to make any findings affect the power of the Common Council to adopt or reject the amendment. If a public hearing is necessary, the Common Council shall provide notice in compliance with the requirements of [Section 114.10.21](#).
- (8) Review and Action by the Common Council.
 - (a) The Common Council shall consider the recommendation of the Plan Commission regarding the proposed amendment. The Common Council may request further information and/or additional reports from the Plan Commission, Zoning Administrator, the applicant, and/or any other entity as it sees fit.
 - (b) The Common Council may refer the matter back to the Plan Commission. In such cases, the Common Council shall specify the issue(s) to be addressed in further detail.
 - (c) The Common Council may take final action (by ordinance) on the application at the time of its initial meeting or may continue the proceedings by its own decision or the applicant's request. The Common Council may approve the amendment as originally proposed, may approve the proposed amendment with modifications, or may deny approval of the proposed amendment.

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- (d) If the Common Council wishes to make significant changes to the proposed amendment, as recommended by the Plan Commission, the procedure set forth in Wis. Stats. § 62.23(7)(d) shall be followed prior to Common Council action.

Section 114.10.31: Reserved**Section 114.10.32: Conditional Use Permit Procedures**

- (1) Purpose. The purpose of this Section is to provide regulations which govern the procedure and requirements for the review and approval, or denial, of proposed conditional uses.
- (2) Applicability. There are certain uses, which because of their unique characteristics, may have specific standards, regulations, or conditions established.
- (3) Initiation of Request. Proceedings for approval of a conditional use may be initiated by an application of the owner(s) or authorized agent of the owner(s) of the subject property.
- (4) Application. See the City of Columbus Conditional Use Permit application.
- (5) Review by Zoning Administrator.
 - (a) The Zoning Administrator shall determine whether the application is complete. If the application is determined to be incomplete, the Zoning Administrator shall return the application to the applicant for submission of a complete application.
 - (b) The Zoning Administrator may coordinate review with other City Departments.
 - (c) The Zoning Administrator shall review the complete application and evaluate the proposed conditional use against the findings listed in Subsection (8), below.
 - (d) The Zoning Administrator shall prepare a written report addressing the items under Subsection (8), below, to be forwarded to the Plan Commission for the Commission's review. If the Zoning Administrator determines that the proposal may be in conflict with the provisions of the Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Administrator shall note this determination in the report.
- (6) Public Hearing. Within 60 days of filing of a complete application, the Plan Commission shall hold a public hearing in compliance with **Section 114.10.21** to consider the request. A public hearing may be held more than 60 days from the filing of the complete application when requested by the applicant in writing.
 - (a) Statements of personal preferences or speculation not based on **substantial evidence** (see definition in Section **114.11.01**) shall be disregarded by the Plan Commission.
- (7) Review and Action by the Plan Commission.
 - (a) The Plan Commission may request further information or additional reports from the Zoning Administrator, applicant, or from any other source.
 - 1. Third Party Consultation. If necessary, expertise is not available from City Staff, public academic institutions, or from appropriate regional, state, or federal agencies, the Plan Commission may consult with a third party to effectively evaluate a conditional use permit application. The Zoning Administrator, or his/her designee, will select the consultant. The applicant for the conditional use permit shall bear all reasonable costs and expenses associated with such consultation. Applicants retain the right to withdraw a pending conditional use permit application if they choose not to pay consultant fees.
 - (b) Final Action on Conditional Use Permits.
 - 1. The Plan Commission shall hear all substantial evidence per Subsection (6) above.

Commented [SK7]: This is an updated based on 2017 WI Act 67 along with other language in this section

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2. Following the public hearing, staff shall compile all materials presented to be documented in a Report of Preliminary Recommended Findings. The report shall contain, at a minimum, all substantial evidence presented in the public hearing, the recommended findings, and the recommended motion to either approve the use as originally proposed, approve the proposed conditional use with modifications or conditions, or deny approval of the proposed conditional use.
 3. In the same or a subsequent meeting, the Plan Commission shall discuss The Report of Preliminary Recommended Findings and any conditions or changes with the applicant. At that time, the Plan Commission may take final action by resolution on the application to either approve the conditional use as originally proposed, approve the proposed conditional use with modifications or conditions, or deny approval of the proposed conditional use. See Subsection (7)(b)8. below.
 4. The Plan Commission's decision to approve or deny the permit shall be supported by substantial evidence. Any condition imposed by the City shall be related to the purpose of the ordinance and be based on substantial evidence as defined in Wis. Stats. §62.23(7)(de)1.b.
 5. The conditions described under Subsection (9), shall be reasonable and, to the extent practicable, measurable and may include conditions such as the permit's duration, transfer, or renewal.
 6. The applicant shall demonstrate whether the application and all requirements and conditions established by the Plan Commission relating to the conditional use are or will be satisfied, both of which shall be supported by substantial evidence.
 - a. All other statements pertaining to the review of the Condition Use Permit shall be based on substantial evidence.
 7. If an applicant for a conditional use permit meets or agrees to meet all of the requirements and conditions specified in this Chapter or those imposed by the Plan Commission, the Plan Commission shall grant the conditional use permit.
 8. Final action by the Plan Commission shall consist of all of the following:
 - a. The formal finding of facts related to the findings listed in Subsection (8), below, approved by the Plan Commission concerning the request.
 - b. Description(s) of the substantial evidence that supports the Plan Commission's overall decision to approve, approve with conditions, or deny the request.
 - c. Description(s) of the substantial evidence that supports all of the condition(s) imposed by the City.
 - d. The City shall document these proceedings by any of the following means: written minutes, video or audio recordings, or written reports.
- (8) Findings of Fact. In reviewing and taking final action on a proposed conditional use permit, the Plan Commission shall consider whether the proposed conditional use:
- (a) Is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
 - (b) Would not result in a substantial or undue adverse impact on nearby property, the character of the neighborhood, environmental factors, traffic factors, parking, public improvements, public property or rights-of-way, or other matters affecting the public health, safety, or general welfare.
 - (c) Maintains the desired consistency of land uses, land use densities and intensities, and land use impacts as related to the environs of the subject property.

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- (d) Is located in an area that will be adequately served by, and will not impose an undue burden on, any of the improvements, facilities, utilities or services provided by public or private agencies serving the subject property.
- (e) Complies with all other regulations or standards in this Chapter applicable to the use.
- (9) Conditions. The Plan Commission shall impose, at a minimum, the following conditions on any conditional use permit:
 - (a) Any conditions required for specific uses listed under **Article III**.
 - (b) The physical development and operation of the conditional use shall conform, in all respects, to the approved site plan, operational plan and phasing plan.
 - (c) All vehicles and equipment shall access the site only at approved locations identified in the site plan and operations plan.
 - (d) Other Conditions. In addition to the conditions listed above, the Plan Commission may, at their discretion, impose any other conditions as necessary to meet the findings above:
 1. Expiration dates on conditional use permits, except for permits for communication towers under **Section 114.03.20**. Continuation or extension of an expired conditional use requires re-application and approval by the Plan Commission.
 2. Limits on hours and days of operation, or number of events each year.
 3. Limits on numbers of employees.
 4. Limits on numbers of total people, vehicles or animals on the premises at any one time.
 5. Limits on total quantity or volume of product on the premises at any one time.
 6. Limits on square footage of buildings or outdoor areas devoted to the proposed use.
 - (e) If the County Highway Department, City Public Works Department, or City Engineer determines that road intersection improvements and any recommended improvements of a Traffic Impact Analysis report are necessary to safely accommodate the conditional use, the cost of such improvements shall be borne by the landowner.
 - (f) If the Public Works Department or City Engineer determine that off-site improvements to the sanitary sewer, storm sewer, and/or water infrastructure are necessary to accommodate the conditional use, the cost of such improvements shall be borne by the landowner.
 - (g) The Zoning Administrator or designee may enter the premises of the operation in order to inspect those premises and to ascertain compliance with these conditions or to investigate an alleged violation. Zoning staff conducting inspections or investigations will comply with any applicable workplace safety rules or standards for the site.
 - (h) Failure to comply with any imposed conditions, or to pay reasonable City costs of investigation or enforcement of sustained violations, may be grounds for revocation of the conditional use permit. The holder of a conditional use permit shall be given a reasonable opportunity to correct any violations prior to revocation.
- (10) Limited Effect of Approval. A ruling by the Plan Commission finding a particular land use to be conditionally permitted in a specified zoning district shall be deemed to authorize only that particular use at that particular location for the period of time for which the ruling was issued. The ruling shall not be deemed to authorize any allegedly similar use for which a separate ruling has not been issued. A favorable ruling shall automatically expire and cease to be of any force or effect if the particular use for which it was issued shall, for any reason, be discontinued for a period of 365 consecutive days or more per section (15) of this Chapter.

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- (a) If the Plan Commission wishes to approve significant changes to the proposed conditional use, then the procedure set forth in Wis. Stats. § 62.23(7)(d) shall be followed prior to Plan Commission action.
- (11) Effects of Denial. No application which has been denied (either wholly or in part) shall be resubmitted for a period of 365 days from the date of said order of denial, except on grounds of new evidence or material change of circumstances. A change is “material” if it could reasonably be expected to lead to a different conclusion in light of the reasons for denial of the prior application.
- (12) Appeals of a Plan Commission Decision shall be made to the **Zoning Board of Appeals**.
 - (a) Initiation of Request for Appeal. Proceedings for an appeal to the Zoning Board of Appeals of a Plan Commission denial of a conditional use permit, modification of a conditional use permit, or conditions added to a conditional use permit may be initiated by any person or by any officer, department, or board of the City affected by said Plan Commission decision.
 - (b) Enforcement Actions. All enforcement actions related to the subject property shall be held in abeyance upon appeal action of the Zoning Board of Appeals.
 - (c) Time Limit for Filing an Appeal. Any appeal to the Zoning Board of Appeals under the provisions of this Section shall be made per the requirements of Subsection (12)(d), below, within a period not exceeding 45 days from the date of issuance of Plan Commission’s decision regarding the conditional use permit. Failure to initiate this appeal procedure within this 45-day period shall constitute a final and binding waiver of the right to appeal the Plan Commission’s decision.
 - (d) Application Requirements. An application for an appeal of a Plan Commission decision shall contain the following (digital files should be submitted whenever possible):
 - 1. A written statement from the applicant indicating the reasons why an appeal is justified, with specific reference to the findings of the Plan Commission. This statement shall be dated and signed by the applicant.
 - 2. All information that was supplied in the complete application described in Subsection (4), above.
 - 3. Application filed with the City Clerk.
 - (e) Review by the Zoning Administrator.
 - 1. The Zoning Administrator shall determine whether the application is complete and fulfills the requirements of this Title. If the application is determined to be incomplete, the Zoning Administrator shall notify the applicant.
 - 2. The Zoning Administrator shall review the application and evaluate and comment on the written justification for the requested appeal to the Zoning Board of Appeals as submitted by the applicant.
 - 3. The Zoning Administrator shall forward a report to the Zoning Board of Appeals for review and action. If the Zoning Administrator determines that the proposal may be in conflict with the provisions this Title or the Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Administrator shall note this determination in the report.
 - (f) Review and Action by the Zoning Board of Appeals.
 - 1. Within 60 days after the filing of the appeal, the Zoning Board of Appeals shall make its findings. Such findings shall be based on the findings of Subsection (8), above, and shall be based on substantial evidence. The Zoning Board of Appeals may request further information and/or additional reports from the Plan Commission, Zoning Administrator, the applicant, and/or any other entity as it sees fit.

Commented [SK8]: Some prefer appeal by Common Council. Plan Commission policy question.

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2. If the Zoning Board of Appeals fails to make a determination within 60 days after the appeal, then the request for the appeal shall be deemed denied.
- (g) Effects of Denial. No application for an appeal which has been denied (either wholly or in part) shall be resubmitted for a period of 365 days from the date of said order of denial, except on grounds of new evidence or material change of circumstances. A change is “material” if it could reasonably be expected to lead to a different conclusion in light of the reasons for denial of the prior application. Denial decisions may be appealed to the circuit court under Wis. Stats. § 62.23(7)(e)10.
- (h) Limited Effect on a Favorable Ruling on an Appeal.
 1. No ruling by the Zoning Board of Appeals on an appeal finding a particular land use to be conditionally permitted in a specified zoning district shall be valid for a period of more than 365 days from the date of issuance of the ruling on the appeal, unless a building permit is issued and development commenced within that period, and is thereafter diligently pursued to completion, or a certificate of occupancy is obtained and a use commenced within that period.
 2. A ruling by the Zoning Board of Appeals on an appeal finding a particular land use to be conditionally permitted in a specified zoning district shall be deemed to authorize only that particular use at that particular location for which the ruling was issued. The ruling shall not be deemed to authorize any allegedly similar use for which a separate ruling has not been issued. A favorable ruling shall automatically expire and cease to be of any force or effect if the time limits in (h)(1) above lapse or the particular use for which it was issued shall, for any reason, be discontinued for a period of 365 consecutive days or more per Section (15) of this Chapter. The burden of proof shall be on the property owner to conclusively demonstrate that the subject conditional use was operational during this 365 day period of time.
- (13) Revocation of an Approved Conditional Use.
 - (a) Upon approval, the applicant shall demonstrate that the proposed conditional use meets all general and specific conditional use requirements in the site plan required for initiation of development activity on the subject property per Section 114.10.43. Once a conditional use is granted, no erosion control permit, site plan, certificate of occupancy, or building permit shall be issued for any development which does not comply with all requirements of this Title.
 - (b) Any conditional use found not to be in compliance with the terms of this shall be considered in violation of this Title and shall be subject to all applicable procedures and penalties. A conditional use may be revoked for such a violation by majority vote of the Plan Commission, following the procedures outlined in Subsections (4) through (9), above. The City shall provide the property owner with appropriately served notice to consider revocation. City staff shall provide written findings of fact in relation to the factors listed in Subsection (8).
- (14) Time Limits on the Development of Conditional Use.
 - (a) Unless extended as a condition of approval, the start of construction of any and all conditional uses shall be initiated within 365 days of their approval by the Plan Commission and shall be operational within 730 days of said approval. For the purposes of this Section, “operational” shall be defined as the granting of a certificate of occupancy for the conditional use.
 - (b) Failure to initiate development within this period shall automatically constitute a revocation of the conditional use.
 - (c) Prior to such a revocation, the applicant may request an extension of this period. Said request shall require formal approval by the Zoning Administrator and shall be based upon a showing of acceptable justification, as determined by the Plan Commission. However, as a condition of

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approval, the 365-day or 730-day time limits may be extended for any specific period to accommodate phased or multi-stage development.

- (15) **Discontinuing an Approved Conditional Use.** Any and all conditional uses which have been discontinued for a period exceeding 365 days shall have their conditional use invalidated automatically. The burden of proof shall be on the property owner to conclusively demonstrate that the subject conditional use was operational during this period.
- (16) **Change of Ownership.** All requirements and conditions of the approved regular conditional use shall be continued regardless of ownership of the subject property.
- (17) **Modification, Alteration, or Expansion.** Modification, alteration, or expansion of any conditional use without approval per the process in this subsection shall be considered in violation of this Title and shall be grounds for revocation of said conditional use approval in accordance with Subsection (13), above.
- (18) **Recording of Conditional Use Requirements.** A certified copy of the authorizing resolution, containing identifiable description and any specific requirements of approval, shall be recorded by the City.
- (19) **Formerly Approved Conditional Uses.** A use now regulated as a conditional use which was approved as a permitted land use, either permitted by right or as a conditional use, prior to the effective date of this Chapter, shall be considered as a legal, conforming land use so long as the previously approved conditions of use and previously approved site plan are followed. Any modification of the previously approved conditions of use or site plan shall require application and City consideration under this Section.

Sections 114.10.33 to 114.10.40: Reserved**Section 114.10.41: Zoning Permit Review and Approval Procedures**

- (1) **Purpose.** The purpose of this Section is to determine compliance with this Chapter for any new land use, any change in land use, and any development or land disturbing activity (e.g., structure, paving, grading). The purpose of this Section is also to determine if other procedures are needed per the requirements of this Article. A Zoning Permit may be waived if other application processes are necessary, including some instances of building permits, site plans, and conditional use permits.
- (2) **Applicability.** A Zoning Permit shall be required for any of the following activities:
 - (a) The establishment of a new principal use of a structure or land.
 - (b) A change in type of principal use of a structure or land.
 - (c) A material increase in the intensity of use of land, such as an increase in the number of businesses, manufacturing establishments, offices or dwelling units (including accessory dwelling units) in a structure or on land.
 - (d) The addition of a new structure that increases impervious surface area.
 - (e) Any site alteration that alters grades or site drainage patterns within 5 feet of the lot line.
 - (f) Installation of a new or replacement fence.
 - (g) Commencement of mining or excavation on a parcel of land.
- (3) **Application.** See the City of Columbus Zoning Permit application.
- (4) **Action by Zoning Administrator or Building Inspector.** A Zoning Permit shall be granted or denied by the Zoning Administrator or Building Inspector, in writing within 30 days of the application, unless

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other approvals are required by this Chapter, and the applicant shall post such permit in a conspicuous place at the site. Any permit issued in conflict with the provisions of the Chapter shall be null and void.

- (5) Time Limits on Zoning Permits. The work shall begin within 365 days of approval and be completed within 730 days. Time limits for Conditional Use Permits and Variances may be established at the time of approval. All other permits shall meet the timelines required at the time of issuance as listed elsewhere in this Chapter.

Section 114.10.42: Certificate of Occupancy

- (1) Purpose: A written statement issued by the Building/Zoning Inspector which permits the use of a building or lot or a portion of a building or lot and which certifies compliance with the provisions of this chapter for the specified use and occupancy.
- (2) No vacant land shall be occupied or used, except for agricultural purposes, and no buildings hereafter erected or structurally altered shall be occupied or used until a certificate of occupancy shall have been issued by the Building/Zoning Inspector. A certificate of occupancy is required for a change of type of occupancy or use of any building or land.
- (3) Application for a certificate of occupancy. Application for a certificate of occupancy shall be made coincident with the application for a zoning permit. The application shall state the intended use of the land or building.
- (4) Issuance. A certificate of occupancy shall be granted within 10 days after notification by the owner of completion of buildings or structural alterations indicated in the land use permit, in accordance with the plans submitted with the permit application and applicable provisions of this chapter and the health and building laws and ordinances.
- (5) No fees shall be charged for a certificate of occupancy.

Commented [SK9]: This is meant as a check after improvements are made in accordance with a building permit as described in sub 4

Section 114.10.43: Site Plan Review and Approval Procedures

- (1) Purpose. The purpose of this Section is to specify the requirements and procedures for the review and approval of site plan applications. The provisions of this Section are designed to ensure that proposed land uses and development activity complies with the requirements of this Chapter.
- (2) Applicability. Site plan review and approval shall be required for changes to site characteristics in Subsections (5)(c) through (i), below, including redevelopment, expansion, and new nonresidential development, and residential development containing 3 or more units, except for the following:
 - (a) Accessory buildings, decks, fences, and landscape features that do not affect site drainage patterns.
 - (b) Signage, unless otherwise specified in **Article IX**.
 - (c) Otherwise specified as not required within this Chapter.
- (3) For reference purposes, the following table includes various standards that may be applicable within the Site Plan review. This list is not exhaustive and there may be other standards applied to Site Plan review beyond those listed below in reflection of other standards listed within this Chapter.

Figure 114.10.43a: Site Plan Review References

Review Element/Standard Type	Zoning Ordinance Reference
Site Plan Review Required	Section 114.10.43(2)
Administration	Section 114.10.43(2)
Approval Sunset Clause	Section 114.10.43(9)
Site Grading	Section 114.10.43(4)
Existing Site Vegetation	Section 114.08.30

Commented [SK10]: This is added as information guidance. It's optional but can help point out places to look/consider for applicants.

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Review Element/Standard Type	Zoning Ordinance Reference
Building Setbacks	Sections 114.04.11-114.04.14 Sections 114.06.06
Building Height	Sections 114.04.11-114.04.14 Section 114.07.02
Building Mass	Article VII
Building Facade	Article VII
Exterior Materials	Article VII
Exterior Building Colors	Article VII
Exterior Doors	Article VII
Windows	Article VII
Roofs	Article VII
Exterior Building Apparatus	Article VII
Awning/Canopy	Section 114.03.28(7) Article VII
Trash Containment Structure	Section 114.06.21
Exterior Lighting	Section 114.06.20
Signage	Article IX
Outdoor Display and Storage	Section 114.03.10(19)
Pavement Materials	Section 114.06.06
Pedestrian Facilities	Section 114.06.06
Traffic Circulation	Section 114.06.06
Parking	Section 114.06.06
Landscaping	Section 114.08.30

- (4) Site restrictions.
- (a) Establishment of grades. Every building hereafter erected, structurally altered, or relocated shall be at a grade demonstrated by the applicant to be in satisfactory relationship with the established grades, or with the existing street grades where none are established, with particular consideration for proper drainage and safe access.
 - (b) Preservation of topography.
 1. In order to protect any property owner from possible damage due to change in the existing grade of adjoining lands, and to aid in preserving and protecting the natural beauty and character of the landscape, no change in the existing topography of any land shall be made which would:
 - a. Alter the existing drainage or topography in any way as to adversely affect the adjoining property.
 - b. Except as authorized by City staff, the topography within five feet of any property line at the commencement of any development shall remain unchanged.
 - i. When land disturbing activities associated with development occur within five feet of any property line, finished grades in that area shall be restored to the topography in existence before the land disturbing activity began. A positive slope of one half inch per one foot horizontal within five feet of the property line is allowed to provide proper drainage away from a one or two family residence.

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- ii. The established grade of the adjoining property shall determine the finished grade at the property line for any development. The owner of the property under development bears the burden of proof as to the established grade at the property line and the topography within five feet of the property line.
 - iii. The City Engineer shall be consulted prior to the approval of plans that result in changes to the existing topography at and within five feet of any property line if that plan would promote the purposes of this Chapter.
- (c) Unsuitable land. No land shall be used for structures erected where the land is held by the Plan Commission to be unsuitable for such use or structure by reason of flooding, concentrated runoff, inadequate drainage, adverse soil or rock formation, unfavorable topography, low percolation rate or bearing strength, erosion susceptibility or any other feature likely to be harmful to the health, safety, prosperity, aesthetics and general welfare of the community. The Plan Commission, in applying the provisions of this section, shall, in writing, recite the particular facts upon which it bases its conclusion that the land is not suitable for certain uses. The applicant shall have an opportunity to present evidence at a Plan Commission meeting contesting such unsuitability if the applicant so desires. Thereafter, the Plan Commission may affirm, modify or withdraw its determination of unsuitability.
- (d) Lot regulations.
 - 1. All lots shall abut upon a public street, and each lot shall have a minimum frontage and area as set forth in **Article II.**
- (e) Private sewer and water. In any district where public sewerage service is not available, the width and area of all lots shall be sufficient to permit the use of an on-site sewage disposal system designed in accordance with Wis. Admin. Code §Ch. SPS 383.
- (5) Pre-Application Conference. Prior to formal submittal of a site plan application, the applicant shall confer with the Zoning Administrator, in order to establish mutual understanding as to the basic concept proposed and to ensure proper compliance with the technical requirements and procedures for processing the site plan application. A timetable for project review may also be discussed.
- (6) Application. See the City of Columbus Site Plan application.
- (7) Review and Approval.
 - (a) The Zoning Administrator shall determine whether the site plan application is complete and fulfills the requirements of this Chapter. If the application is determined to be incomplete, the Zoning Administrator shall notify the applicant.
 - (b) The Zoning Administrator or designee shall coordinate review of completed applications with City Departments.
 - (c) The Zoning Administrator shall review and recommend the site plan to the Plan Commission. For any adjustment to an approved Site Plan, see Subsection (7), below.
- (8) Adjustments to Approved Site Plans.
 - (a) The following adjustments may be approved administratively by City staff and no additional process is necessary:
 - 1. A proposed adjustment that would add to or relocate amenity site elements which are not required such as additional non-required landscaping.
 - 2. A proposed adjustment that would erase approved site development components which are not required such as a building, a portion of a building, an area of non-required landscaping, or a non-required paved area.

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- (b) The following adjustments that alter the required components of the approved site plan require a full site plan review process before the Plan Commission:
 1. A proposed adjustment that would erase or relocate approved site development components which are required such as a stormwater management feature, required landscaping, or required paved areas.
 2. A proposed adjustment that would expand or add any areas of development (building or paving) similar to the definition of Design Alternation Review or Project Review (Section 114.07.51).
- (c) If a new site plan is required, and the site plan is a required component of a Conditional Use Permit or a Specific Implementation Plan, an amended (in essence, a new) Conditional Use Permit or Specific Implementation Plan is required.
- (d) If the proposed development involves adding one or more land use categories which are not permitted by right in the zoning district or under the list of permitted by right uses in a Conditional Use Permit or General Development Plan, a new Conditional Use Permit or General Development Plan is required.
- (9) An approved site plan application shall be valid for a three-year period from the date of approval. A building permit for the improvement or change approved by the design review application must be issued before the three-year period has expired. After the period has expired, the applicant must start the approval process over and resubmit a new application.

Section 114.10.44: Reserved.

**Figure 114.10.45a: Procedure for
Planned Development Review***

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Section 114.10.45: Planned Development Review and Approval Procedures

- (1) Purpose. The purpose of this Section is to provide regulations which govern the procedures for the review and approval or denial of proposed Planned Developments.
- (2) Initiation of Request. Proceedings for approval of a Planned Development may be initiated by any of the following:
 - (a) An application by the owner(s) of the subject property or authorized agent of the owner(s) of the subject property;
 - (b) A recommendation of the Plan Commission and action by the Common Council, relative to City-owned property.
- (3) Procedure for Planned Development Review. The procedure for zoning to a Planned Development (PD) district shall follow the Zoning Map Amendment procedure included in [Section 114.10.30](#), except that the Planned Development procedure shall be subject to the following additional requirements.
 - (a) Pre-Application Conference. Prior to formal petition for zoning to a PD district, the applicant shall confer with appropriate City staff in order to establish mutual understanding as to the basic concept proposed and to ensure proper compliance with the requirements for processing. Points of discussion and conclusions reached in this stage of the process shall in no way be binding upon the applicant or the City, but should be considered as the informal, non-binding basis for proceeding to the next step.
 - (b) Concept Plan Review. Upon completion of the pre-application conference, described above, the applicant shall prepare a conceptual plan for review with the Plan Commission, pursuant to [Section 114.10.23](#). Points of discussion and conclusions reached at this stage of the process shall be in no way binding upon the applicant or the City, but should be considered as the informal, non-binding basis for proceeding to the next step. The preferred procedure is for one or more iterations of Plan Commission review of the concept plan to occur prior to introduction of the formal application for rezoning, which accompanies the General Development Plan application (see Subsection (3)(c), below).
 - (c) General Development Plan Review. The applicant shall submit a General Development Plan (GDP) to the Zoning Administrator, for determination of completeness. Upon determination of completeness by the Zoning Administrator, the GDP shall be placed on the Plan Commission agenda for review. Adoption of the GDP establishes the new zoning classification for the property.
 1. The GDP submittal shall include the following items (digital files should be submitted whenever possible):
 - a. General location map of the subject site depicting:



**Concept Plan Review and Neighborhood Meeting may be required by the Zoning Administrator.*

Commented [BR11]: This section still lists all required application elements, but for consistency, it could be removed.

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- i. All lands for which the Planned Development is proposed and all other lands within 100 feet of the boundaries of the subject site.
 - ii. Current zoning of the subject site and abutting properties, and the jurisdiction(s) in which the properties are located.
 - iii. A graphic scale and a north arrow.
- b. Generalized site plan showing the pattern or proposed land uses, including:
 - i. General size, shape, and arrangement of lots and specific use areas.
 - ii. Basic street pattern and pattern of internal drives.
 - iii. General site grading plan showing preliminary road grades.
 - iv. Basic storm drainage pattern, including proposed on-site stormwater detention.
 - v. General location of recreational and open space areas, including designation of any such areas to be classified as common or public open space.
- c. Statistical data, including:
 - i. Minimum lot sizes in the development.
 - ii. Approximate areas of all lots.
 - iii. Density/intensity of various parts of the development.
 - iv. Building coverage.
 - v. Landscaping surface area ratio of all land uses.
 - vi. Expected staging.
- d. Conceptual landscaping plan, noting approximate locations of foundation, street, yard, and paving landscaping, and comparing the proposed landscaping plan to the standard landscaping requirements in [Article VIII](#) of this ordinance.
- e. General signage plan, including all project identification signs and concepts for public fixtures and signs (such as street light fixtures and/or poles or street sign faces and/or poles) which may or may not be proposed to vary from City standards.
- f. General outline of property owner's association, covenants, easements, and deed restrictions.
- g. A written description of the proposed Planned Development, including:
 - i. General project themes and images.
 - ii. The general mix of dwelling unit types and/or land uses.
 - iii. Approximate residential densities and nonresidential intensities as described by dwelling units per acre and/or landscaping surface area ratio.
 - iv. General treatment of natural features.
 - v. General relationship to nearby properties and public streets.
 - vi. General relationship of the project to the Comprehensive Plan and any applicable neighborhood or corridor plans.
 - vii. A statement of rationale as to why PD zoning is proposed. This statement shall list the standard zoning requirements that, in the applicant's opinion, would inhibit the development project and the opportunities for community betterment that are available through the proposed PD project.

Commented [BR12]: Middleton added this post-adoption and I thought it was a good one to keep

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- viii. A complete list of zoning standards that would not be met by the proposed GDP or SIP and the location(s) in which such exceptions/base standard modifications would occur.
 - ix. Proposed exceptions from the requirements of this Chapter.
- h. Traffic Impact Analysis. The City may require that a traffic impact analysis (TIA) be completed.
- i. A utility study to determine adequacy of water and sewer services.
- 2. The Plan Commission may waive submittal information listed above, or may likewise require additional information beyond that listed above.
- 3. If all required application materials are provided, the GDP and SIP may be submitted and reviewed concurrently.
- 4. Review and Approval; Findings of Fact: In its review and action on an application for a Planned Development district, the Plan Commission shall make findings of fact with respect to the following criteria:
 - a. The proposed Planned Development project advances the purposes of this Chapter as outlined in [Section 114.01.03](#).
 - b. The proposed Planned Development project is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and other area plans.
 - c. The proposed Planned Development project will maintain the desired relationships between land uses, land use densities and intensities, and land use impacts in the environs of the subject site.
 - d. Adequate public infrastructure is or will be available to accommodate the range of uses being proposed for the Planned Development project, including but not limited to public sewer and water and public roads.
 - e. The proposed Planned Development project will incorporate appropriate and adequate buffers and transitions between areas of difference land uses and development densities/intensities.
 - f. The proposed Planned Development project design does not detract from areas of natural beauty surrounding the site.
 - g. The proposed architecture and character of the proposed Planned Development project is compatible with adjacent/nearby development.
 - h. The proposed Planned Development project will positively contribute to and not detract from the physical appearance and functional arrangement of development in the area.
 - i. The proposed Planned Development project will produce significant benefits in terms of environmental design and significant alternative approaches to addressing development performance that relate to and more than compensate for any requested exceptions/base standard modifications variation of any standard or regulation of this Chapter.
 - j. For Planned Development projects that are proposed to be developed in phases, the applicant shall provide a timeline for development and shall demonstrate that the project would be successful even if all phases were not or could not be completed.
- 5. Rezoning to PD on the basis of an approved General Development Plan shall be rezoned to prior zoning, a different standard zoning district, or a zoning district most equivalent to the PD, as recommended by the Zoning Administrator, if the Specific Implementation Plan is not approved within three years from date of filing. Extensions may be granted for cause

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by the Plan Commission. Records of extensions shall be recorded in the City file on the PD District.

- (d) **Specific Implementation Plan.** Upon completion of the GDP review process, described above, the applicant shall submit a Specific Implementation Plan (SIP) to the Zoning Administrator, for determination of completeness. Upon determination of completeness by the Zoning Administrator, the SIP shall be placed on the Plan Commission agenda for SIP review. The SIP is the detailed development review step of the Planned Development process. The approved SIP submittal establishes the final design of the project. Any proposal to vary from an approved SIP requires the approval of an amended SIP in accordance with all of the requirements of this Subsection (3)(d) and (3)(f) below.
1. The SIP submittal shall include the following items. Note that the area included in a SIP may be only a portion of the area included in a previously approved GDP (digital files should be submitted whenever possible).
 - a. An existing conditions map of the subject site depicting the following:
 - i. All lands for which the Planned Development is proposed and all other lands within 100 feet of the boundaries of the subject site.
 - ii. Current zoning of the subject property and all abutting properties, and the jurisdiction(s) that maintains that control.
 - iii. Existing utilities and recorded easements.
 - iv. All lot dimensions of the subject site.
 - v. A graphic scale and a north arrow.
 - b. A SIP map of the proposed site showing at least the following:
 - i. Lot layout and the arrangements of buildings.
 - ii. Public and private roads, driveways, walkways, and parking facilities.
 - iii. Specific treatment and location of recreational and open space areas, including designation of any such areas to be classified as common or public open space.
 - c. Proposed grading plan.
 - d. Specific landscaping plan for the subject site, specifying the location, species, and installation size of all plantings. The landscaping plans shall include a table summarizing all proposed species.
 - e. Architectural plans for any nonresidential buildings, multi-family structures, or group development, other than conventional single-family or two-family homes on individual lots, in sufficient detail to indicate the floor area, bulk, and visual character of such buildings.
 - f. Engineering plans for all water and sewer systems, stormwater systems, roads, parking areas, and walkways.
 - i. Traffic Impact Analysis. The City may require that a traffic impact analysis (TIA) be completed.
 - ii. The City may require a utility study to determine adequacy of water and sewer services.
 - g. Signage plan for the project, including all project identification signs and concepts for public fixtures and signs (such as street light fixtures or poles or street sign faces or poles) that may vary from City standards or common practices.

Commented [SK13]: Do you want PDs to expire if not implemented? As shown is one option. Here is another version:

All portions of an approved GDP not fully developed within five years of final Common Council approval shall lapse, and no additional PD-based development shall be permitted. Prior to the end of the five-year period, the property owner may request reapproval of the GDP for up to five additional years or shall request amendment of the GDP. Reapproval or amendment requests shall obtain a recommendation from the Plan Commission and approval from the Common Council following a public hearing held before the Plan Commission. If an application for renewal or amendment is not submitted, the zoning administrator may propose rezoning to the underlying zoning district or another standard zoning district. In the case of an expired PD, the base zoning district shall remain in effect and no development under the prior PD approvals may proceed.

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- h. Specific written description of the proposed SIP including:
 - i. Specific project themes and images.
 - ii. Specific mix of dwelling unit types and/or land uses.
 - iii. Specific residential densities and nonresidential intensities as described by dwelling units per acre, and landscaping surface area ratio and/or other appropriate measures of density and intensity.
 - iv. Specific treatment of natural features, including parkland.
 - v. Specific relationship to nearby properties and public streets.
 - vi. Statistical data on minimum lot sizes in the development, the precise areas of all development lots and pads; density/intensity of various parts of the development; building coverage, and landscaping surface area ratio of all land uses; proposed staging; and any other plans required by the Plan Commission.
 - vii. Phasing schedule, if more than one development phase is intended.
 - i. Agreements, bylaws, covenants, and other documents relative to the operational regulations of the development and particularly providing for the permanent preservation and maintenance of common open areas and amenities.
 - j. A written description that demonstrates how the SIP is consistent with the approved GDP and any and all differences between the requirements of the approved GDP and the proposed SIP.
2. The Zoning Administrator or by majority vote of the Plan Commission may waive submittal information listed above, or may likewise require additional information beyond that listed above.
 3. The process for review and approval of the SIP shall be identical to that for Site Plan Review per **Section 114.10.43**.
 4. Specific Implementation Plan approval lapses five years after its effective date if substantial development progress has not occurred. The Plan Commission may grant extensions for good cause.
- (e) Changes or Alterations. Any change of the PD plans subsequent to approval of the SIP shall be submitted to the Zoning Administrator.
1. If the Zoning Administrator, determines that the change constitutes a substantial modification, the developer will be required to amend the SIP, and if necessary, the GDP, following the procedures set forth in this Section for review and approvals. A substantial modification includes but may not be limited to an increase in the site's impervious surface ratio, a change to the building elevation that is distinctly noticeable from surrounding properties, or a deviation from standards applicable to the most equivalent zoning district pertaining to the land use.
 2. If, in the opinion of the Zoning Administrator, such changes do not constitute a substantial alteration of either the GDP or SIP, the change may be accomplished by approval of the Zoning Administrator. Such approved changes or modifications shall be documented and recorded in the official file of the City on the PD.

Commented [SK14]: See comment above on expiration

Sections 114.10.46 to 114.10.50: Reserved

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Section 114.10.51: Variances

- (1) Purpose. The purpose of this Section is to provide regulations which enable the City to hear and decide requests for permitted variation from the terms of this Chapter as will not be contrary to the public interest; where owing to special factors, a literal enforcement of the provisions of this Chapter would result in practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship, so that the spirit of this Chapter shall be observed, public safety and welfare secured, and substantial justice done; as provided for by Wis. Stats. § 62.23(7)(e)(7).
- (2) Variance Types. Variances from the regulations of this title shall be granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals only in accordance with the standards established in this section. Variances may be granted only if the existing use of the building or property is a permitted use in the district where the requested variance is located or a conditional use for the activity has been approved by the Plan Commission or Common Council. Variances may be granted only in the following instances and in no others:
 - (a) Area Variances: For an area variance, that strict compliance with a zoning ordinance would unreasonably prevent the property owner from using the property owner's property for a permitted purpose, or that strict compliance would render conformity with the zoning ordinance unnecessarily burdensome.
 - (b) Use Variance: For a use variance, that strict compliance with a zoning ordinance would leave the property owner with no reasonable use of the property in absence of a variance.
 1. To allow a principal land use not listed within the Zoning District for the subject property where none of the allowed principal land uses can be reasonably established.
- (3) Initiation of Request for Approval of a Variance. Proceedings for approval of a requested variance shall be initiated by an application of the owner(s) of the subject property or authorized agent of the owner(s) of the subject property.
- (4) Application Requirements. Variance applications shall contain the following (digital files should be submitted whenever possible, if applicable):
 - (a) A map of the subject property depicting:
 1. All lands for which the variance is proposed and all other lands within 100 feet of the boundaries of the subject property.
 2. Current zoning of the subject property and its environs, and the jurisdiction(s) which maintains that control.
 3. All lot dimensions of the subject property.
 4. A graphic scale and a north arrow.
 - (b) A site plan of the subject property as proposed for development. Said site plan shall conform to the requirements of Section 114.10.43.
 - (c) Written description of the proposed variance, including evidence that the application is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
- (5) Review by the Zoning Administrator.
 - (a) The Zoning Administrator shall determine whether the application is complete and fulfills the requirements of this Chapter. If the application is determined to be incomplete, the Zoning Administrator shall notify the applicant.
- (6) Public Hearing. Within 60 days of filing of a complete application, the Board of Zoning Appeals shall hold a public hearing in compliance with Section 114.10.21 consider the request.

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- (7) Review and Action by the Board of Zoning Appeals.
- (a) Within 60 days after the holding of the public hearing, the Zoning Board of Appeals shall make its findings in accordance with the following based on Wis. Stats. § 62.23(7)(e)7:
 1. The variance will not be contrary to the public interest.
 2. Substantial justice will be done by granting the variance.
 3. The variance is needed so that the spirit of the ordinance is observed.
 4. Due to special conditions, literal enforcement of the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance will result in unnecessary hardship.
 5. The variance will not allow any alteration of an historic structure, including its use, which would preclude its continued designation as an historic structure.
 6. Additional standards:
 - a. Parcel-as-a-whole. The entire parcel, not just a portion of the parcel, must be considered when applying the unnecessary hardship test.
 - b. Self-imposed hardship. An applicant may not claim hardship because of conditions which are self-imposed.
 - c. Circumstances of applicant. Circumstances of an applicant such as growing family or desire for a larger garage are not a factor in deciding variances.
 - d. Financial hardship. Economic loss or financial hardship do not justify a variance.
 - e. Nearby violations. Nearby ordinance violations, even if similar to the requested variance, do not provide grounds for granting a variance.
 - f. Objections from neighbors. A lack of objections from neighbors does not provide a basis for granting a variance.
 - (b) The Board of Zoning Appeals may request further information or additional reports from the Zoning Administrator, or the applicant. The Board of Zoning Appeals may take final action on said request for approval of the requested variance at time of its initial meeting, or said proceedings may be continued from time-to-time for further consideration.
 - (c) If the Board of Zoning Appeals fails to make a determination within 60 days after said public hearing, then the request for the variance shall be considered denied.
- (8) Effect of Denial. No application for a variance which has been denied (either wholly or in part) shall be resubmitted for a period of 365 days from the date of said order of denial, except on grounds of new evidence or material change of circumstances found valid by the Zoning Administrator.
- (9) Limited Effect of a Variance. Where the Zoning Board of Appeals has granted a variance, such approval shall neither change the use classification of the building or premises, nor give it any status as a nonconforming use other than that which it has as a result of the variance. Granting of a variance shall be considered as unique to the variance granted, and shall not be construed as precedent for any other proposed variance. Once granted, variances shall run in perpetuity, and shall remain in effect regardless of any future amendments to the Zoning Ordinance or Official Zoning Map.
- (10) Stay of Proceedings. See Wis. Stats. § 62.23(7)(e)5.
- (11) See Sections 114.02.21-114.02.22 for variance requirements applicable to Overlay Zoning Districts.

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Section 114.10.52: Appeals of Zoning Interpretations

- (1) Purpose. The purpose of this Section is to provide regulations which enable the City to hear and decide requests for appeals from the interpretations of the Zoning Administrator, per [Section 114.10.50](#) as provided for by Wis. Stats. § 62.23(7)(e)(7).
- (2) Any person aggrieved by a decision of the Zoning Administrator shall be entitled to an appeal in accordance with the process as described in [Section 114.10.52](#).

Section 114.10.53: Administration and Enforcement of Performance Standards

Determinations necessary for administration and enforcement of performance standards set forth in this Article range from those which can be made with satisfactory accuracy by a reasonable person using normal senses and no mechanical equipment, to those requiring great technical competence and complex equipment for precise measurement. It is the intent of this Chapter that:

- (1) Where determinations can be made by the Zoning Administrator, using equipment available to the City, such determinations shall be so made before notice of violations is issued (see [Article VI](#) for technical standards).

Sections 114.10.54 to 114.10.59: Reserved

Section 114.10.60: Violations and Penalties

- (1) Unlawful acts and enforcement. It shall be unlawful to construct or use any structure, land, or water in violation of any of the provisions of this chapter. In case of any violation, the Common Council, the Plan Commission, City Administrator, his/her designee, or any person who would be specifically damaged by such violation may institute appropriate action or proceeding to enjoin a violation of this chapter.
 - (a) See [Chapter 66](#) of the City of Columbus Municipal Ordinance for Code Enforcement.
 - (b) See [Chapter 1](#) of the City of Columbus Municipal Ordinance for Violations and Penalties.

Section 114.10.61: Fees

- (1) Fees. Fees for all approvals, appeals or permits under this Chapter, unless otherwise specified, shall be as set forth in the City of Columbus Fee Schedule.
 - (a) Professional fees. Each applicant under this Chapter shall reimburse the City for all professional fees, including reasonable engineering, planning consultant, and legal review fees, incurred by the City in connection with such application.
 - (b) Reimbursement agreement. The City may require a reimbursement agreement of any amount deemed appropriate by City staff prior to consideration of any application.

Sections 114.10.62 to 114.10.99: Reserved

ARTICLE VII: EXTERIOR BUILDING DESIGN STANDARDS

Section 114.07.01: Purpose and Applicability

- (1) Purpose. The purpose of this Section is to regulate the design and materials used for the exterior of buildings and structures within the City so as to maintain and enhance the attractiveness and values of property in the community. This Article is further intended to support the creation of a pedestrian-oriented urban environment that emphasizes architectural and urban design principles of human scale and visual interest. Additionally, this Article is intended to ensure the development of structures that maintain a long-lasting appearance; withstand the effects of time and exposure to the elements; resist damage in areas with high vehicular and pedestrian traffic and in areas where larger equipment that could cause damage is commonly used; that maintain a consistent character of development based on land use and zoning district particular to each development; and that contribute to the long-term economic and social vitality of the City of Columbus.
- (2) Applicability. Telecommunication, Extraction and Disposal, Energy Production, and Agricultural land uses are exempt from the exterior design standards in Sections 114.07.10 to 114.07.50 below.
 - (a) New Construction. The requirements of this Section shall apply to all structures and buildings within the City constructed after the effective date of this Chapter.
 - (b) Additions. Additions to buildings constructed after the effective date of this Chapter shall comply with the standards of this Section and, as determined by the Plan Commission, shall match or be substantially similar to the design and materials of the existing building.
 - (c) Alterations. For buildings constructed prior to the effective date of this Chapter, alterations that do not impact the floor area of the building shall comply with the standards of this Section, or shall match or be substantially similar to the existing building design and materials. Ordinary repairs and maintenance are not considered alterations.
 - (d) Exceptions and Appeals.
 1. Exceptions. Exceptions to the building design standards set forth in this Section may be granted by the Zoning Administrator, to permit substitute building materials or construction of comparable quality or design when it can be demonstrated that the provisions of this Section are infeasible and that the granting of such exception is in keeping with the purpose of this Section. Decisions rendered by the Zoning Administrator may be appealed to the Plan Commission.
 2. Appeals. Any person affected by a decision of the Zoning Administrator may petition for a hearing before the Plan Commission.
 3. Waivers. The Plan Commission is authorized to grant one or more waivers for specific design requirements in this Section when the Plan Commission finds the design to constitute an exemption as described above in subsection (1) or finds an alternative design standard also achieves the Purpose of this Section.
 - a. Granting of waivers by the Plan Commission shall be identified within the conditions of approval as part of the design review component of any Site Plan review (Section 114.10.43).
 - (e) Beyond the rules in this Section, additional building design standards may apply to:
 1. Conditional Use Permits (see Section 114.10.32)
 2. Planned Development Districts (see Section 114.0.2.11)

Commented [SK1]: Allows for flexibility that seems inherently necessary in design review but formalizes it with waivers approvable by the plan commission

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- (3) Review and Approval. Through the site plan review and building permit processes, the Zoning Administrator shall be responsible and have authority to hear, review, and act upon all proposed exterior architectural plans for all proposed development.
- (4) Exterior Building Materials. The 4 classes of building materials referenced in this Chapter have the following meanings:
- (a) Class I materials include brick, brick veneer, stone, stone veneer, and glass (curtain/storefront).
 - (b) Class II materials include split face or decorative block, and stucco.
 - (c) Class III materials include architectural/decorative metal panels, EIFS, residential aluminum siding, and siding made of wood, wood composite, vinyl, or fiber cement.
 - (d) Class IV materials include smooth face or non-decorative block; concrete panels (tilt-up or precast); asphaltic, fiberglass, metal, or poly-roofing siding; non-decorative metal panels; corrugated metal; and plywood, chipboard, or other non-decorative wood. Also includes any material not listed in (a) through (c) above.

Figure 114.07.01a: Exterior Building Material Requirements by Use*

Type of Construction	Land Use (see Article III)	Exterior Building Materials Permitted
New Construction of Any Kind	Single Family, Two-Family, Manufactured Homes	See Section 114.07.10
New Construction of Any Kind	Townhouse, Multiplex, Apartment	See Section 114.07.20
New Construction of Any Kind	Within the Business Park Zoning District and Commercial, Mixed-Use, and Institutional Uses	See Section 114.07.30
New Construction of Any Kind	Industrial, Storage, Transportation,	See Section 114.07.40
Any Exterior Change	Within the Downtown Mixed Use Zoning District	See Section 114.07.50

*Telecommunication, Extraction and Disposal, Energy Production, and Agricultural land uses are exempt from the exterior design requirements of this Article.

Commented [SK2]: Flag - City is still reviewing whether to keep the business park zoning district

Sections 114.07.02 to 114.07.09: Reserved

Section 114.07.10: Single- and Two-Family Uses

These standards apply to all single-family, duplex, twin house, two-flat, and manufactured home land uses, buildings, and structures constructed after the effective date of this Chapter.

- (1) Except for (1)(a) below, all single-family, duplex, twin house, two-flat, and manufactured home land uses are exempt from the exterior design standards of this Article. See applicable land use requirements in **Section 114.03.06** and the base zoning district's bulk dimensional standards in Article IV.
- (a) Exterior building colors. High gloss paints and exterior finishes and primary colors, including red, blue, green, yellow, black, and fluorescent colors, shall not be permitted. Where an integral part of site design or used as accents, muted versions of these colors may be used as determined by the Zoning Administrator.

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Sections 114.07.11 to 114.07.19: Reserved

Section 114.07.20: Multi-Family Uses

These standards apply to all townhouse, multiplex, and apartment land uses, buildings, and structures constructed after the effective date of this Chapter. See an example exterior design diagram in Figure 114.07.20a.

- (1) Exterior Materials. Multi-family buildings shall be clad in Class I, II or **III** materials. Class IV materials are prohibited.
 - (a) Materials of comparable quality may be substituted for any class of material or be used as a decorative element if the material can be removed or replaced with a permitted exterior material, as determined by the Zoning Administrator.
 - (b) Exterior building materials in conjunction with façade articulations listed below in **Section 114.07.20(3)** shall be used to create the building's distinct horizontal base, middle, and top.
- (2) Building Entrance.
 - (a) The primary entrance shall be on the front façade facing the street and decorative doors shall be used on this façade.
 - (b) The primary entrance shall be covered a minimum of 3 feet from the door. Recessed 3-foot entries shall be deemed to meet this requirement.
 - (c) Exterior entry doors for individual units shall be residential in style and shall include frame and panel (real or decorative).
 - (d) Exterior entry doors for multiple units may be residential (as described in Subsection (c) above) or commercial in style (glass).
- (3) Façade Articulation.
 - (a) Façade lengths shall not be greater than **40 feet** without articulation such as:
 1. Recesses or projections that step back or project a portion of the main façade plane.
 2. Recesses or projections of upper floors from the ground floor façade plane.
 3. Vertical division using different textures or materials.
 4. Division of the façade into individual units through the use of windows, entrances, arcades, porches, decks, balconies, lighting, etc.
 5. Roof form variation such as the inclusion of dormers, change in roof lines, or change in roof type.
 6. Public art installations located directly on a façade, such as murals.
 - (b) On façades facing the street, windows or doors shall be required in order to promote a visual connection to the street.
 1. The total area of windows and doors, including trim, shall comprise a minimum of 20 percent of the total façade area, excluding gables.
 2. Structured in-building vehicle parking or access is permitted on the ground floor of a structure in accordance with the standards below:
 - a. Vehicle access is permitted from any façade of the structure to the right-of-way.

Commented [SK3]: For example, Class III materials includes decorative metal panels. If you are comfortable with metal panels on residential design, you would leave this as is. Or, for example, you could cap Class III materials at a percentage.

Commented [SK4]: This figure could vary. 40' is the most strict. In Middleton we created a requirement that super long facades weren't permitted for large buildings. For example if the façade was greater than like 100 or 150' long, then you had to recess or otherwise break up the façade to make it look like smaller buildings vs. one long building.

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- b. Structured in-building parking shall be fully enclosed on all sides within the structure. Vehicle parking is permitted within the ground floor of the structure as long as the nonresidential land use requirements for ground floors of Mixed-Use Buildings are met (see [Section 114.03.08. and 114.03.28\(19\)](#)).
 - (c) On any façade facing a public street or parking area, hard and durable materials such as decorative block, brick, stone, or a comparable material shall be required within 40 inches of the adjacent grade.
- (4) Colors.
 - (a) Primary colors including red, blue, green, yellow, and fluorescent colors are prohibited on all exterior facades.
 - (b) Color patterns shall be used consistently throughout the property.
- (5) Roofs.
 - (a) As determined by the Plan Commission, decorative and articulated metal roofs and exterior metal wall panels shall be permitted if all fasteners are fully shielded from view.
 - (b) Roof forms and materials shall be compatible and harmonious with those of existing buildings in the immediate area which conform to this Section.
 - (c) See (8) below for roof-top mechanical screening requirements.
- (6) Wall Details, Trim, and Windows.
 - (a) Exterior windows shall match the architectural character of the building. Spandrel, mirrored, or tinted glass is prohibited.
 - (b) All façade openings shall be articulated or appropriately trimmed through the use of materials such as lintels, sills, surrounds, shutters, etc.
 - (c) Natural wood shall be painted or stained unless it is cedar, redwood or other naturally weather-resistant species intended to be exposed.
 - (d) Pressure-treated lumber shall be painted or stained after a curing period of no greater than 18 months.
 - (e) Exterior building apparatus such as brackets, wiring, antennas, gutters, downspouts, and other similar feature shall blend in with the color and design of the structure's exterior façade.
- (7) Patios, Decks, and Balconies.
 - (a) Ground-level patios and decks facing the street shall be bordered with landscape treatments, in accordance with [Article VIII](#) as depicted and approved on the Site Plan ([Section 114.10.43](#)).
 - 1. Covered porches are exempt from this requirement.
 - (b) Exterior stairs leading to a deck or balcony are not permitted on the front or street side of a building.
 - 1. On corner lots, exterior stairs shall be permitted on the interior side façade.
 - (c) Exterior corridors shall be covered by the building roof, shall be located within the footprint of the building foundation, and shall not be visible from the street.
 - (d) Upper-story decks and balconies shall be cantilevered, supported by vertical columns, or supported from above.
- (8) Mechanical and Exterior Building Systems.

Commented [SK5]: These standards could be deleted if you don't want as much regulation over multi-family design. Leaving them in for a starting point.

Commented [SK6]: Many communities may not want this level of detail. Metal roofs have improved their general appearance in recent years. This could be deleted if that is preferred.

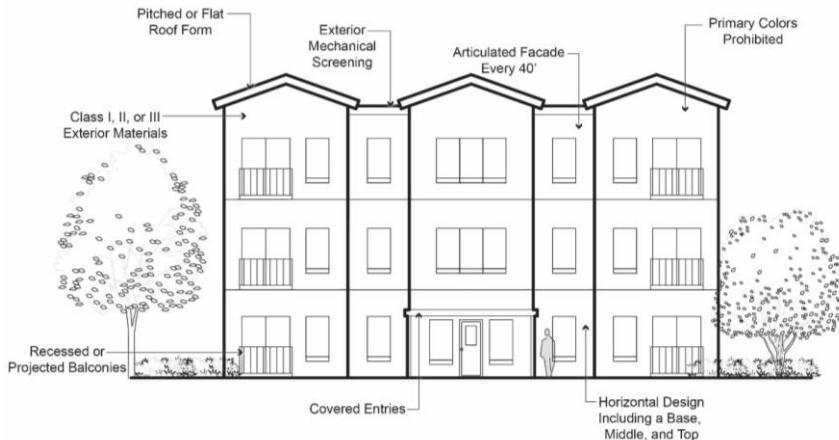
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- (a) Drainage pipes and air intakes and exhaust vents for high-energy gas applications and meters on exterior walls shall match or be complementary to the color of the roof and wall onto which they are mounted.
- (b) Facade-mounted Equipment.
 - 1. Window-mounted air conditioning units shall not be permitted in any window that faces a public street and shall not encroach into exterior balconies, porches, decks, or patios.
 - a. When no alternative is available, units shall be masked (painted, encased, etc.) in order to blend into the building's exterior finish and shall be flush-mounted so as not to project beyond the main plane of the façade more than necessary.
 - 2. Building-mounted equipment installed on the façade visible from an adjacent public right-of-way or residential district shall not encroach into exterior balconies, porches, decks, or patios and shall be screened in a manner that is:
 - a. Architecturally compatible with the primary structure to which the equipment is attached. Screening materials shall be identical to or substantially similar to the materials used on the building façade to which the equipment is attached.
 - b. Incorporated as part of the building wall or flush-mounted so as not to project beyond the main plane of the façade.
 - c. Consistent with the color of the structure to which the equipment is attached.
- (c) Roof-mounted Equipment. Roof-mounted equipment shall be screened, preferably by parapet walls. Other acceptable screen types shall be:
 - 1. Architecturally compatible with the primary structure to which the equipment is attached. Screening materials shall be identical to or substantially similar to the materials used on the building façade to which the equipment is attached.
 - 2. Consistent with the color of the structure to which the equipment is attached.
 - 3. Designed to be an integral part of the building's architectural design and give the impression that it is something other than a mechanical screen.
- (d) See [Section 114.06.21](#) for screening requirements for ground-mounted mechanical systems and refuse enclosure requirements.
- (9) Wall or Roof-Mounted Lighting. See [Section 114.06.20](#).

Figure 114.07.20a: Multi-Family Exterior Design Standards Example

Commented [SK7]: probably need to adjust this graphic depending on where we land with the requirements above.

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Sections 114.07.21 to 114.07.29: Reserved

Section 114.07.30: Business Park Zoning District and Commercial, Mixed-Use, and Institutional Uses

These standards apply to all mixed-use, commercial, and institutional land uses, buildings, and structures constructed after the effective date of this Chapter. These standards also apply to any land use within the Business Park zoning district. See Article VIII for landscaping standards. See an example exterior design diagram in [Figure 114.07.30a](#).

- (1) Building Entrance and Orientation.
 - (a) The main entrance shall be clearly defined and accentuated through the use of detailing, distinctive materials, or colors, projections or recesses, porticos, covered entrances, stoops, or other features as deemed appropriate by the Zoning Administrator.
 - (b) Buildings shall be oriented so that the front façade faces the road with the highest traffic volumes.
 - (a) All façades facing a public right-of-way shall be designed to have the appearance of a front façade and shall incorporate decorative doors, meaning each shall include windows, doors or other architectural components typically associated with front façades, as approved by the Zoning Administrator.
 - (c) Service or loading areas shall not be permitted between the building and the public street.
 - (d) Drive-through windows shall not be located between the principal building and the street right-of-way.
- (2) Exterior Materials. Commercial buildings shall be predominately clad in Class I materials. Class II and Class III materials may be used as accents and trim not to exceed 50 percent of the total building façade. Class IV materials are prohibited.
 - (a) Decorative metal wall panels (Class III materials) may be used up to 30% of any façade.
 - (b) Rear building elevations not facing a public street or public parking lot shall be exempt from this requirement.

Commented [BR8]: Typically, this is only Commercial, Mixed-Use, and Institutional. All industrial is handled the same. Mount Horeb is unique because the BP zoning district is the front door to the community and so we added that district into this section, even though everything else is by land use.

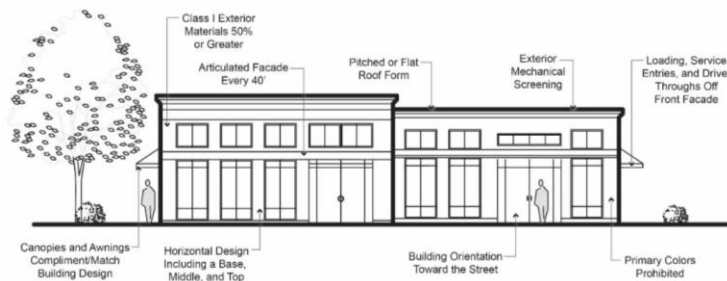
Commented [SK9]: May want to add flexibility to be approved by the plan commission when a lot has more than one street frontage

Commented [SK10]: If this is too detailed/restrictive it could be deleted

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- (c) Materials of comparable quality may be substituted for any class of material or be used as a decorative element if the material can be removed or replaced with a permitted exterior material, as determined by the Zoning Administrator.
- (d) Exterior building materials in conjunction with façade articulations listed below in Section 114.07.30(3) shall be used to create the building's distinct horizontal base, middle, and top.
- (3) Façade Articulation. See Section 114.07.20(3).
- (4) Colors. See Section 114.07.20(4).
- (5) Roofs. See Section 114.07.20(5).
- (6) Wall Details, Trim, and Windows. See Section 114.07.20(6).
- (7) Patios, Decks, and Balconies. See Section 114.07.20(7).
- (8) Mechanical and Exterior Building Systems. See Section 114.07.20(8).
- (9) Wall or Roof-Mounted Lighting. See Section 114.07.20(9).

Figure 114.07.30a: Business Park, Commercial, Mixed-Use, and Institutional Exterior Design Standards Example



Commented [SK11]: References are provided to reduce redundant text - everything is just cross referenced to the MF section above. However, you could have all of that text here and further customize it to be more or less stringent than MF standards.

Sections 114.07.31 to 114.07.39: Reserved

Section 114.07.40: Industrial Uses

These standards apply to all industrial, storage, and transportation land uses, buildings, and structures constructed after the effective date of this Chapter. See [Article VIII](#) for landscaping standards. See an example exterior design diagram in [Figure 114.07.40a](#).

- (1) Architectural Design.
 - (a) Buildings shall be designed to include façade articulation; flat, unadorned walls shall be avoided.
 - (b) Buildings shall be oriented so as to face the road with the highest traffic volumes. This requirement shall not apply to buildings with frontage on state or federal highways, unless there is direct access from the development to the highway.
 - 1. If a visitor, office, or customer entrance component is included in the building, such space(s) shall be clearly defined and accentuated through the use of detailing, windows, distinctive materials and/or colors, projections or recesses, or other architectural features as deemed appropriate by the Plan Commission.
- (2) Exterior Materials. Industrial buildings shall be clad in Class I, II or III materials. Certain Class IV materials are also acceptable as noted.

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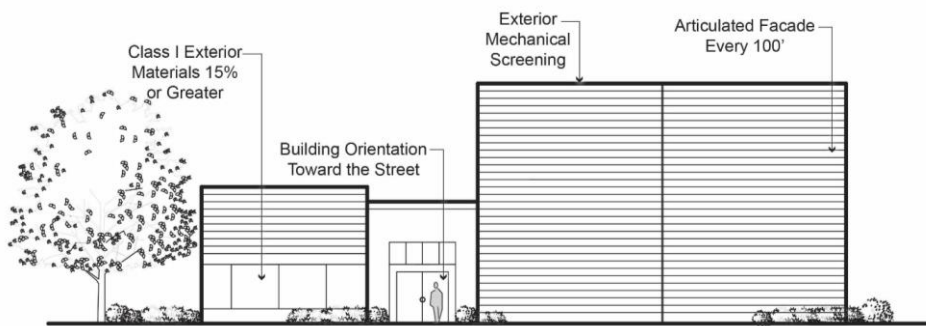
- (a) For all façades facing a public street, a minimum of 15 percent of the façade shall be composed of Class I building materials.
 - 1. This requirement may be reduced to 10 percent of the façade provided that other elements are incorporated into the building and site design, such as façade articulation, increased landscaping, or other improvements approved by the Plan Commission.
 - (b) Smooth faced/non-decorative block or concrete panels (tilt-up/precast) (Class IV materials) may be used if they are part of a palette of permitted materials or if they incorporate horizontal and vertical articulation including, but not limited to, changes in color or texture, as deemed appropriate by the Plan Commission.
 - (c) Non-decorative metal panels (Class IV materials) may be used as deemed appropriate by the Plan Commission.
 - 1. In the AG, LI, HI, and IOA zoning districts, visible exterior fasteners shall be the same color as the attached wall for any principal or accessory building visible from a public street.
 - 2. In all other zoning districts, exterior wall fasteners shall be fully concealed from view.
 - (d) Materials of comparable quality may be substituted for any class of material or be used as a decorative element if the material can be removed or replaced with a permitted exterior material, as determined by the Plan Commission.
- (3) Façade Articulation.
- (a) Façade lengths shall not be greater than 100 feet without articulation such as:
 - 1. Recesses or projections that step back or project a portion of the main façade plane.
 - 2. Recesses or projections of upper floors from the ground floor façade plane.
 - 3. Vertical division using different textures or materials.
 - 4. Division of the façade into individual components (i.e., storefronts, distinct uses) through the use of architectural elements such as porches, balconies, windows, covered entrances, arcades, awnings, marquees, lighting, signage, etc.
 - 5. Roof form variation such as the inclusion of dormers, change in roof lines, or change in roof type.
 - 6. Public art installations located directly on a facade, such as murals.
- (4) Mechanical and Exterior Building Systems.
- (a) Applicability. See Section 114.06.21 to determine whether screening is required.
 - (b) Drainage pipes on exterior walls shall match or be complementary to the color of the roof and wall onto which they are mounted.
 - (c) Building-mounted Equipment.
 - 1. Building-mounted equipment installed on the façade visible from an adjacent public right-of-way or residential district shall be disguised or screened in one of the following ways:
 - a. Architecturally compatible with the primary structure to which the equipment is attached. Screening materials shall be identical to or substantially similar to the materials used on the building façade to which the equipment is attached.
 - b. Incorporated as part of the building wall and/or flush-mounted so as not to project beyond the main plane of the façade.
 - c. Consistent with the color of the structure to which the equipment is attached.

Commented [SK12]: This is my most common approach for industrial. It basically says you need to make the front façade look a little nicer with glass, stone, or brick up to 15%, the rest of the building can be pretty much whatever you want.

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- (d) Roof-mounted Equipment. Roof-mounted equipment visible from an adjacent public right-of-way or residential district shall be screened, preferably by parapet walls. Other acceptable screen types shall be:
- Architecturally compatible with the primary structure to which the equipment is attached. Screening materials shall be identical to or substantially similar to the materials used on the building façade to which the equipment is attached.
 - Consistent with the color of the structure to which the equipment is attached.
 - Designed to be an integral part of the building's architectural design and give the impression that it is something other than a mechanical screen.

Figure 114.07.40a: Industrial Exterior Design Standards Example



Sections 114.07.41 to 114.07.49: Reserved

Section 114.07.50: DMU Zoning District Design Standards

These standards apply to any land use, building, and structure within the Downtown Mixed Use zoning district constructed or altered after the effective date of this Chapter.

- Purpose.** This district is intended to preserve and enhance the special characteristics of downtown and shall promote the historic and architectural qualities of the area to preserve its original distinctive character by ensuring compatibility of design and architectural features and consistency with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. Standards shall apply to the mapped boundaries of the Downtown Mixed Use zoning district.
- Applicability.** The regulations of this Section shall apply to new development and changes to the exterior of any building within the mapped boundaries of the Downtown Mixed Use zoning district.
- Review and Approval.**
 - There are three categories of review in this district:
 - Renovation Review** (renovation of the exterior appearance of a property such as repainting, re-roofing, residing or replacing with identical colors, finishes, and materials)
 - Design Alteration Review** (change only in the exterior appearance of a nonresidential or multi-family property such as painting, roofing, siding, architectural component substitution, fencing, paving, or signage)

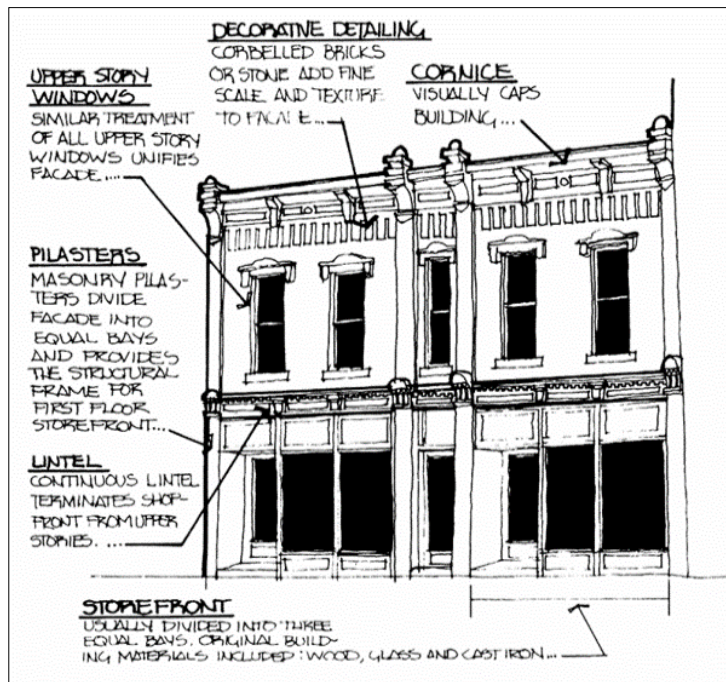
Commented [SK13]: This was reviewed in May when we discussed historic preservation standards and the DMU district

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3. **Project Review** (modification to the physical configuration of a property such as the erection of a new building, the demolition of an existing building, or the addition or removal of bulk to an existing building)
 - (b) Plan Commission and Historic Landmarks and Preservation Commission review and approval may be required. The three categories and procedural requirements for review and approval are described fully in [Section 114.07.51](#).
 - (c) Design standards for changes meeting the criteria for Project Review are found in [Section 114.07.50\(5\)](#), below. Design standards for changes meeting the criteria for Design Alteration Review or Renovation Review are found in [Section 114.07.50\(6\)](#), below.
 - (d) Designated Historic Structures. These regulations are separate and in addition to requirements related to changes to Local, State, and National Landmarks and properties as regulated by the City of Columbus Historic Landmarks and Preservation Commission (see [Section 114.02.22](#)). Prior to taking action, [Section 114.02.22](#) shall be followed for all locally-designated historic properties.
- (4) Design Theme: The design theme for the Downtown Mixed Use Zoning District is based on its historical, pedestrian-oriented development pattern that incorporates retail, residential, and institutional uses. Building orientation and character includes minimum setbacks at the edge of the sidewalk, use of alleys for access (if possible), and on-street or other off-site parking. The design theme is characterized by a variety of architectural styles popular at the time, including Italianate, Romanesque, and Neoclassical, in formats with office, storage, or residential located over commercial. The façades of these buildings have a traditional main street storefront appearance that can vary in scale depending on location and surroundings, have street yard and side yard setbacks of zero feet, have prominent horizontal and vertical patterns formed by regularly spaced window and door openings, detailed cornice designs, rich detailing in masonry coursing, window detailing and ornamentation, and are predominately brick, stone, or wood. Exterior building materials are of high quality. Exterior appurtenances are minimal. Exterior colors are harmonious, simple, and muted. Exterior signage blends, rather than contrasts, with buildings in terms of coloring (complementary to building), location (on-building), size (small), and number (few).

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Figure 114.07.50a: Architectural Components



- (5) Design Standards for Project Review (New Construction, Building Additions, and Building Alterations).
- (a) The design standards contained in this Subsection shall apply to all changes meeting the criteria for Project Review (including all new buildings, building additions, and new building appurtenances). Such activities shall correspond to the following:
 1. The following requirements for building setback; height; building mass; horizontal rhythms (created by the placement and design of façade openings and related elements such as piers, columns); vertical rhythms (created by the placement and design of façade details such as sills, transoms, cornices and sign bands); roof forms; exterior materials; exterior surface features and appurtenances; exterior colors; exterior signage; on-site landscaping; exterior lighting; parking and loading area design; and the use of screening.
 - (b) Building Setback. Throughout the district, the setback of buildings from street yard and side yard property lines shall conform to the design theme described in Subsection (4) above, as determined by the Plan Commission.
 1. No parking areas shall be located along any street frontage within the DMU district, unless an exception is granted through the conditional use process ([Section 114.10.32](#)).
 - (c) Building Height.
 1. See [Sections 114.04.11 to 114.04.14](#) for zoning district maximum height requirements.

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- (d) Building Mass.
 1. Throughout the district, the massing of buildings may vary depending on location and surrounds, but shall conform to the design theme described in Subsection (4) above, as determined by the Plan Commission.
 2. The characteristic proportion (relationship between façade height and width) of the design theme shall be maintained.
 3. Building mass for large structures (with a façade area exceeding 5,000 square feet) shall integrate façade articulations to conform to the design theme described in Subsection (4), as determined by the Plan Commission.
- (e) Façade Articulation. As determined by the Plan Commission, façade lengths shall not be greater than 40 feet without articulation such as:
 1. Recesses or projections that step back or project a portion of the main façade plane.
 2. Recesses or projections of upper floors from the ground floor façade plane.
 3. Vertical division using different textures or materials.
 4. Division of the façade into individual units through the use of windows, entrances, arcades, porches, decks, balconies, lighting, or the incorporation of traditional storefront design along the ground floor per [Section 114.07.50\(6\)\(e\)](#).
 5. Roof form variation such as the inclusion of dormers, change in roof lines, or change in roof type.
 6. Public art installations located directly on a facade, such as murals.
- (f) Horizontal Rhythms. The horizontal pattern of exterior building elements formed by patterns of building openings for windows and doors, and related elements such as piers and columns shall be spaced at regular intervals across all visible façades of the building, and shall conform to the design theme described in Subsection (4) above, as determined by the Plan Commission.
- (g) Vertical Rhythms. The floor heights shall conform to the minimum and maximum height requirements of the DMU zoning district ([Section 114.04.12](#)). The rhythm of the ground floor shall harmonize with the rhythm of upper floors. The vertical pattern of exterior building elements formed by patterns of building openings for windows and doors, and related elements such as sills, headers, transoms, cornices and sign bands shall conform to the design theme described in Subsection (4) above, as determined by the Plan Commission.
- (h) Roof Forms. Flat or gently sloping roofs which are not visible from the street shall be used. Mansards or other roof shapes not characteristic of the design theme described in Subsection (4) above, as determined by the Plan Commission, shall not be used. See [Figure 114.07.50b](#).

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Figure 114.07.50b: Roof Forms



- (i) Exterior Materials. Selected building materials conform to the design theme described in Subsection (4) above, as determined by the Plan Commission.
1. Masonry. Stone or brick facing shall be of even coloration and consistent size. Cinder block, concrete block, concrete slab, or concrete panel shall not be permitted.
 2. Siding.
 - a. Wood, fiber cement, textured metal clapboard siding, or an alternative appropriate high-quality siding material may be appropriate, particularly if the proposed non-masonry exterior was used on a building which conforms to the design theme described in Subsection (4) above, as determined by the Plan Commission.
 - b. Clapboard or board and batten may be appropriate in certain instances where used on the existing structure within the same block-face which conforms to the design theme described in Subsection (4) above, as determined by the Plan Commission.
 - c. Class IV materials are prohibited.
 3. Glazing. Clear, or slightly tinted glass or related glazing material shall be used. Mirrored glass, smoked glass, or heavily tinted glass shall not be permitted, unless needed in a special situation as determined by the Plan Commission.
 4. Colors. Paint colors used on exterior materials shall reflect the building's era of original construction, target era of restoration/renovation, and/or era of historical significance. Applicants may choose their paint color choice within one of these contexts. New construction paint colors should complement surrounding structures.
 - a. Period-appropriate color palette examples include the Sherwin Williams historic exterior collections.
- (j) Exterior Surface. Exterior surface appurtenances shall conform to the design theme described in Subsection (4) above, as determined by the Plan Commission.

Commented [SK14]: There could be different opinions on this. For example, if you have buildings that use all siding in a downtown and if that was agreed to be out of character, you could put a max like 50%.

Commented [SK15]: We talked about colors previously. This could be deleted if the City is not interested in regulating.

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1. The traditional storefront design theme (characterized by strong horizontal and vertical rhythms formed by building openings, windows, and transom windows) shall be employed for all new nonresidential buildings.
2. Throughout the district, avoid cluttering building façades with brackets, wiring, meter boxes, antennae, gutters, downspouts and other appurtenances. Unnecessary signs shall also be avoided. Where necessary, such features shall be colored so as to blend in, rather than contrast, with the immediately adjacent building exterior. Extraneous ornamentation which is inconsistent with the design theme described in Subsection (4) above, as determined by the Plan Commission, is also prohibited.
- (k) Awnings and Marquees. Awning and marquee size, color and placement shall complement the architectural character of the building, as determined by the Plan Commission.
 1. Soft, weather-treated canvas or vinyl materials which allow for flexible or fixed installation shall be used for awnings.
 2. Aluminum or suspended metal canopies shall be permitted.
 3. Signage applied to awnings shall be simple and durable.
 4. Backlit awnings are prohibited.
- (l) Exterior Lighting. On-building exterior lighting shall be compatible and harmonious with the design theme described in Subsection (4) above and **Section 114.06.20**, as determined by the Plan Commission.
 1. On-Building Lighting. The design, color, height, location, and light quality of all on-building light fixtures shall be consistent for all light fixtures.
 2. Ground-Mounted Lighting. The design, color, height, location and light quality of ground-mounted lighting shall be consistent with the design theme described in Subsection (4) above, as determined by the Plan Commission.
- (m) Signage. See **Article IX** for all signage requirements.
- (n) **Cleaning. Structural components and exterior materials shall be cleaned when necessary, and with only the gentlest possible methods.**
 1. **Low-pressure water, steam cleaning, and soft natural bristle brushes are permitted.**
 2. **Sandblasting and power washing (more than 400 psi) are prohibited.**
 3. **Other methods shall be pre-approved by the Plan Commission.**
- (6) Design Standards for Design Alteration Review and Renovation Review (Changes to the Exterior Appearance of a Property).
 - (a) Applicability. The design standards contained in this Subsection shall apply for the following changes to the exterior of a property:
 1. All changes meeting the criteria for Design Alteration Review (including painting, roofing, siding, architectural component substitution, fencing, paving, and signage)
 2. All changes meeting the criteria for Renovation Review (including repainting, re-roofing, residing, or replacing with identical colors, finishes, and materials)
 3. Any other instance in which existing construction is proposed for rehabilitation and/or restoration. (New projects, building additions, and new appurtenances and features shall comply with the Design Standards of Subsection (5), above.)

Commented [SK16]: I believe this is meant to preserve historic materials like brick that needs special treatment.

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- (b) In General. Buildings shall be restored relying on physical evidence (such as photographs, original drawings, and existing architectural details) as much as possible, in keeping with the design theme described in Subsection (4) above, as determined by the Plan Commission.
- (c) Exterior Materials and Surface Features. Materials and features shall be replaced with exterior materials and surface features that create the same type of appearance as the original. If replacement is not possible, other features and materials may be used, provided they are compatible with the design and style of the building, as determined by the Plan Commission.
 - 1. Where such knowledge is lacking, materials and features in common use at the time of building erection shall be used.
 - 2. Significant architectural features, including cornices, moldings and coursings shall be preserved or replaced with identical features and materials where possible.
- (d) Windows and Doors. The size, proportion, shape, and rhythm of original windows and doors shall not be altered.
 - 1. Original window and door openings shall not be blocked. Where now blocked, blocked window and door openings shall be restored where possible.
 - 2. Window and door features, including lintels, sills, architraves, shutters, pediments, hoods and hardware, shall be preserved where possible.
 - a. If preservation is not possible, as determined by the Plan Commission, window and door features shall be replaced with identical features and materials. If replacement with identical features and materials is not possible, other features and materials may be used, provided they are compatible with the design and style of the building, as determined by the Plan Commission.
 - b. Dark frames (i.e. anodized bronze) shall be used to replace storefront and upper story windows.
 - c. Clear aluminum finishes and mill finish aluminum storm windows are prohibited.
 - d. If shutters are proposed, real, functional shutters or shutters that are the same dimensions as real, functional shutters (as opposed to purely decorative shutters) shall be used.
- (e) Storefronts. Storefronts shall fit inside the original shop front in terms of all 3 dimensions (vertical, horizontal and front to back articulation). See Figure 114.07.50c.
 - 1. Display windows shall be restored to their original appearance.

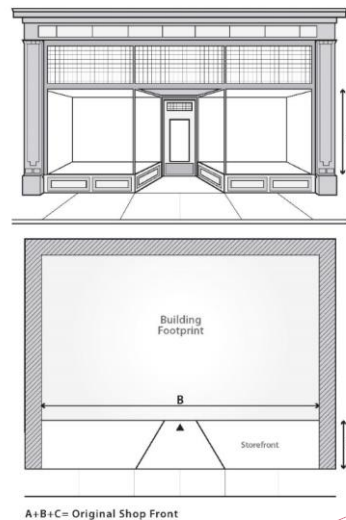
Commented [SK17]: Example of providing flexibility, but encouraging general keeping with the theme

Commented [SK18]: Avoids something like white vinyl

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2. The configuration of display windows shall be substantially similar to the original configuration. This provision shall be construed to prohibit garage doors and bay windows when they were not part of the original building design.
- (f) Entrances, Porticos, and Porches. Original porches, and steps shall be retained, except as required to meet accessibility standards. Porches, porticos, steps, and related enclosures which do not comply with the architectural design theme, as determined by the Plan Commission, shall be removed. See [Section 114.04.40](#) for ramp requirements.
- (g) Roofs. The original roof shape and character of visible materials shall be retained. Original architectural features which give the roof its essential character, including dormer windows, cupolas, cornices, brackets, chimneys and weathervanes, shall be preserved if in keeping with the architectural design theme described in Subsection (4) above, as determined by the Plan Commission.

Figure 114.07.50c: Storefronts



Section 114.07.51: DMU District Design Review

- (1) Purpose and Scope. The design standards of this Chapter are intended to preserve and enhance the aesthetic qualities of the community and attain a consistent visually pleasing image for the City. DMU District Design Review is designed to enhance both aesthetic and economic objectives of the City by controlling the site design and exterior appearance of development within the district in a manner which is consistent with sound land use, urban design, and economic revitalization principles. The application of these standards will ensure the long-term progress and broad participation toward these principles.
- (2) Procedure for Review and Approval. There are three categories of review: Renovation Review, Design Alteration Review, and Project Review. These procedures do not apply to any modifications to the interior of a building or structure. See [Figure 114.07.51a](#) below for a summary of the processes.

Figure 114.07.51a: Process for DMU District Design Review

Procedure	Type of Proposal		
	Renovation ¹	Design ²	Project ³
1. Consultation with Zoning Administrator, to confirm type of proposal	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Submit Proposed and Existing Building Elevations	No	Yes	Yes
3. Submit Site Plan Application	No	No	Yes
4. Submit Conditional Use Permit Application	No	No	Yes
5. Review and action by Zoning Administrator	No	Yes	Yes
6. Review and comment by the Historic Landmarks and Preservation Commission ⁴	No	Yes	Yes
7. Review and action by Plan Commission	No	Yes	Yes

KEY: **Yes** = Step is required. **No** = Step is not required.

¹Only a replacement to or maintenance of the exterior of a property.

²Only a change in the appearance of a property.

³Modification to the physical configuration of a property, i.e. new building, addition, or demolition

⁴See [Section 114.07.51\(3\)\(c\) and \(d\)](#).

Commented [SK19]: This section could instead go with Article 10 with other admin and procedures. Some think it was easier to use the code if the requirements and procedures were adjacent to one another in the text.

Commented [SK20]: Review. See subsection 3C(D)

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- (a) **Renovation Review.** Applications which involve only a renovation of the exterior appearance of a property (such as repainting, re-roofing, residing or replacing with identical colors, finishes, and materials), as determined by the Zoning Administrator, are considered a Renovation Review and may proceed with the project; no additional processes are required other than a building permit.
- (b) **Design Alteration Review.** Applications which involve a change only in the exterior appearance (such as painting, roofing, siding, architectural component substitution, fencing, or paving), but no modification to the physical configuration of a property are considered Design Alteration Review and are subject to review and approval by the Zoning Administrator and the Plan Commission. The Zoning Administrator shall serve as the liaison between the applicant and the Plan Commission in facilitating the review of an application and shall ensure that the technical and procedural requirements of the Zoning Ordinance are met. The Plan Commission shall serve as the final discretionary review body on aesthetics, building design, and site design, and shall focus its review on the application's compliance with sound aesthetic, land use, site design and economic revitalization practices. In part, this effort shall be guided by the Comprehensive Plan and other area plans.
 - 1. Procedure. Design Alteration Review proposals are subject to the following procedures:
 - a. The Zoning Administrator shall determine whether the Design Alteration Review application is complete and fulfills the requirements of this Chapter. If the application is determined to be incomplete, the Zoning Administrator shall notify the applicant.
 - b. The Zoning Administrator shall coordinate review with the City's Departments.
 - c. The Zoning Administrator shall review and approve or deny the application.
 - 2. Application requirements. In addition to the application requirements for site plan review, all applications for Design Alteration Review shall be made to the Zoning Administrator, and shall be accompanied by the building permit application, and, in addition, shall be accompanied by all of the following, unless specifically waived in writing by the Zoning Administrator:
 - a. A depiction of the existing appearance of the property. Clear color photographs are recommended for this purpose. Scaled and dimensioned drawings of existing components such as windows, doors, railings, fencing or other site components, and/or detailed building elevations which are proposed for alteration or replacement may be required by the City.
 - b. A depiction of the proposed appearance of the property. Paint charts, promotional brochures, and/or clear color photographs of replacement architectural components are recommended for this purpose. Scaled and dimensioned drawings of proposed components such as windows, doors, railings, fencing or other site components, and/or detailed building elevations which are proposed for alteration or replacement may be required by the City.
 - c. A written description of the proposed modification, including a complete listing of proposed components, materials, and colors.
 - d. Written justification for the proposed alteration consisting of the reasons why the applicant believes the requested alteration is in harmony with the building design standards of the Downtown Mixed-Use Zoning District ([Section 114.07.50](#)), if applicable.
 - 3. The Zoning Administrator shall forward the Design Alteration Review application to the Plan Commission for review and final determination.

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- (c) **Project Review.** Applications which involve modification to the physical configuration of a property (such as the erection of a new building, the demolition of an existing building, or the addition or removal of bulk to an existing building) are subject to Project Review by the Zoning Administrator and the Plan Commission. The Zoning Administrator shall serve as the liaison between the applicant and the Plan Commission in facilitating the review of an application and shall ensure that the technical and procedural requirements of the Zoning Ordinance are met. The Plan Commission shall serve as the final discretionary review body on aesthetics, building design, and site design, and shall focus its review on the application's compliance with sound aesthetic, land use, site design and economic revitalization practices. In part, this effort shall be guided by the Comprehensive Plan and other area plans.
1. Procedure. Project review proposals shall follow procedures for Site Plan Review per [Section 114.10.43](#).
 2. Application requirements. In addition to the application requirements for conditional use permits, all applications for Project Review shall be made to the Zoning Administrator, and shall be accompanied by the building permit application, and, in addition, shall be accompanied by all of the following, unless specifically waived in writing by the Zoning Administrator:
 - a. A depiction of the existing appearance of the property. Color photographs are recommended for this purpose. Scaled and dimensioned drawings of existing components such as windows, doors, railings, fencing or other site components, and/or detailed building elevations which are proposed for alteration or replacement may be required by the City.
 - b. A depiction of the proposed appearance of the property. Paint charts, promotional brochures, and/or clear color photographs of replacement architectural components are recommended for this purpose. Scaled and dimensioned drawings of proposed components such as windows, doors, railings, fencing or other site components, and/or detailed building elevations which are proposed for alteration or replacement may be required by the City.
 - c. For all projects involving a new building, or an addition exceeding 100 square feet of gross floor area that reduces or extends a building's footprint or height, a detailed, scaled site plan shall be provided meeting all required elements of [Section 114.10.43](#).
 - d. Written justification for the proposed alteration or new construction consisting of the reasons why the applicant believes the requested alteration or new construction is in harmony with the applicable building design standards for Special Areas in [Section 114.07.50](#).
- (3) Additional Recommendations Permitted Under the Special Area Design Review Process.
- (a) The Zoning Administrator is hereby authorized to make recommendations for, or require modifications to, a proposed application for Renovation Review, Design Alteration Review, or Project Review.
 - (b) The Plan Commission is hereby authorized to make recommendations for, or require modifications to, a proposed application for Design Alteration Review and Project Review.
 - (c) The Historic Landmarks and Preservation Commission (see [Section 114.02.22](#)) is hereby authorized to make recommendations relative to a proposed application for Design Alteration Review and Project Review for all locally-designated historic properties.
 - (d) The Historic Landmarks and Preservation Commission may also review and provide feedback prior to Plan Commission action on a proposed application for Design Alteration, Project

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Review, Zoning Map Amendment (Section 114.10.30), or Planned Development (Section 114.10.45) for any non-locally-designated historic property within the Downtown Mixed Use zoning district.

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- (4) Appeals. Appeals from the decisions of the Zoning Administrator and Plan Commission may be made to the Common Council in accordance with the provisions of [Section 114.10.52](#).

Sections 114.07.52 to 114.07.99: Reserved

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Agenda Item Report

Meeting Type: Plan Commission

Meeting Date: October 8, 2026

Item Title: Consider and take action regarding the update of the city's comprehensive plan

Submitted By: Mike Kornmann, Director of Community and Economic Development

Detailed Description of Subject Matter: Attached is the draft of the housing chapter. The goals/objectives/policies presented last meeting need to be combined into one document. The data and text have been updated. Graphs and housing projection scenarios have been added.

While we could pursue adoption in 2026, we could also extend our work on the update to include the land use chapter and possible other sections also. A new law requires we update the land use chapter by December 31, 2027. We could use this time to complete other updates and adopt all of the changes with one approval.

List all Supporting Documentation Attached:

- Housing chapter narrative
- Goals/policies/objectives

Action Requested: Direction on adoption timeline and consideration of rolling this chapter update with the land use chapter and others.

This Chapter provides a baseline assessment of the City of Columbus current housing stock and contains information required under state statutes. This includes: age and structural characteristics, housing starts, value and affordability characteristics and recent sale trends. This information provides a basis for creating goals, objectives, policies, maps, and actions to guide the future development and maintenance of housing in the City of Columbus.

Housing Programs

The programs listed in this section consist of housing related efforts that are available to Columbus Residents. The list should not be considered a comprehensive list of all housing programs in Columbus. All of the listed programs help in some way to accomplish the goals and objectives of this chapter.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) - WHEDA was created by the State of Wisconsin to make construction, rehabilitation, and permanent mortgage loans to eligible sponsors of housing projects for low and moderate income households. WHEDA provides a variety of services for housing like: low interest mortgages, down payment assistance, home improvement and rehabilitation loans and loans for affordable rental housing. WHEDA also has partnership programs with the USDA Rural Development that provide additional loan funding for qualified applicants that live in communities with populations less than 20,000. For more information please visit WHEDA's website.

Renewal Unlimited, Inc.- Renewal Unlimited, Inc was established 1977 with a vision of rehabilitating "houses and people", Renewal Unlimited has retained much of that original vision and yet has extended the core of services to encompass a broader range of needs of the local citizens. Renewal Unlimited serves Adams, Columbia, Dodge, Juneau and Sauk Counties. For more information on housing programs provided by Renewal Unlimited, please visit their website.

Central Wisconsin Community Action Council (CWCAC) – Central Wisconsin Community Action Council (CWCAC) is a private nonprofit organization that administers a variety of State and Federal housing Programs to assist low-income families in becoming self-sufficient and help communities grow and prosper. Housing related programs administered by CWCAC deal with a number of issues such as energy assistance, home weatherization, home purchase assistance, home rehabilitation, and housing development for low-income renters. For more information on housing programs provided by CWCAC please visit their website.

SOUTHERN HOUSING REGION (SHR) PROGRAM

The Southern Housing Region has a Community Development Block Grant for Housing Rehabilitation. The funds are loaned at 0% interest to income eligible households for home repairs. Applications are accepted on a first come first serve basis. There is no cost to fill out an application and all information submitted is strictly confidential.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Habitat for Humanity operates as a partnership between the organization, community volunteers, and low-income families to build or renovate affordable homes. The program is not a giveaway; instead, it

offers a "hand up, not a hand out" by requiring homebuyers to buy their homes through an affordable mortgage and invest their own labor.

Here is a step-by-step breakdown of how the program works:

1. The Selection Process

Local Habitat affiliates choose partner families based on three core criteria:

- **Need for Better Shelter:** The applicant's current housing must be unsafe, overcrowded, unaffordable, or poorly insulated.
- **Ability to Pay:** Applicants must have a stable income source to cover a monthly mortgage, property taxes, and insurance.
- **Willingness to Partner:** Families must agree to complete all program requirements, including educational classes and manual labor.

2. "Sweat Equity" (The Labor Investment)

Once accepted, future homeowners do not make a financial down payment. Instead, they invest 250 to 500 hours of "sweat equity". This hands-on labor includes:

- Helping build or renovate their own home.
- Helping build homes for other families in the program.
- Working in a local Habitat ReStore.
- Completing mandatory financial literacy, budgeting, and home maintenance classes.

3. Construction and Community Voluntarism

Habitat homes are built using modest, durable, and energy-efficient designs to keep long-term costs low.

- **Volunteers:** The majority of the construction labor is provided by community volunteers, corporate groups, and faith organizations.
- **Donations:** Corporate partners often donate building materials, appliances, and land, which dramatically lowers the cost of construction.
- **Professionals:** Licensed contractors handle specialized work like plumbing, roofing, and electrical wiring to ensure everything meets local building codes.

4. The Affordable Mortgage

When the home is finished, it is sold to the partner family. The program keeps housing affordable through unique financing terms:

- **No-Profit Pricing:** The home is sold for its actual construction or appraised value, with no profit added for Habitat.
- **Affordable Loans:** The monthly mortgage payments (including principal, interest, taxes, and insurance) are capped so they do not exceed 30% of the family's gross monthly income.
- **The Revolving Fund:** Every monthly mortgage payment made by a homeowner goes into a local "Fund for Humanity." This money is directly recycled to fund the construction of the next family's home in that community.

5. Post-Purchase Support

Habitat continues to support families after they move in. They provide ongoing resources for home maintenance, neighborhood association participation, and financial mentoring to ensure long-term homeownership stability.

Table 4-1: Total Housing Units

Geography	2000 Count	2010 Count	2020 Actual Census	Recent Count (Latest ACS)	Net Change (2020 to Present)
 Columbus, WI (City)	1,927	2,287	2,444 [20]	2,499 [1]	 +2.25% (+55 units)
 Columbia County, WI	22,685	26,137	26,565 [14]	26,880 [2]	 +1.18% (+315 units)
 State of Wisconsin	2,321,144	2,624,358	2,703,248	2,820,538	 +4.33% (+117,290 units)

Source: US Census and American Community Survey

Table 4-1 shows the total housing units for Columbus, Columbia County and Wisconsin from 2000 to present. The growth in housing units for Columbus (29.6%) outpaced the growth for the County (18.5%) and the State; (21.5%) during this time period.

Table 4-2: Housing Units by Year Built **Housing Stock Distribution by Decade Built**

Era / Decade Built	Columbus, WI (City)	Columbia County, WI	State of Wisconsin
Pre-1950 (Historic Core)	41.0%	28.5%	25.2%
1950 to 1959	5.1%	6.4%	11.1%
1960 to 1969	7.9%	7.6%	9.8%
1970 to 1979	11.2%	14.8%	14.8%
1980 to 1989	6.5%	9.3%	9.9%
1990 to 1999	12.0%	16.6%	13.9%
2000 to 2009 (Pre-Recession Boom)	11.5%	12.9%	11.0%
2010 to 2019	3.2%	2.7%	3.1%
2020 to 2025 (Recent Construction)	1.6%	1.2%	1.2%

Table 4-2 shows Housing Units by the year which they were built. The City of Columbus has 41% of the housing units built before 1950; this percentage is much higher than Columbia County or the State of Wisconsin. This data reflects the older nature of the City of Columbus, which boasts incorporation in 1852. Since 1939 the City of Columbus has experienced the largest growth in housing units during the 1960's, 1970's and 2000's.

Table 4-3: Housing Units in Structure

 Housing Units by Structure Type

Units in Structure	Columbus, WI (City)	Columbia County, WI	State of Wisconsin
Total Housing Units	2,499	26,880	2,820,538
1-Unit, Detached (<i>Single-Family</i>)	63.5%	74.9%	66.4%
1-Unit, Attached (<i>Townhouse/Rowhouse</i>)	3.0%	3.6%	4.3%
2 Units (<i>Duplex / Twin Home</i>)	10.1%	3.9%	6.1%
3 to 19 Units (<i>Small Multi-Family Apartments</i>)	13.8%	7.5%	10.5%
20+ Units (<i>Large Apartment Buildings</i>)	9.0%	6.7%	9.2%
Mobile Home / Manufactured Housing	0.6%	3.4%	3.5%

Source: American Community Survey

Table 4-3 above shows that 66.5% of housing units in Columbus are one-unit structures. Wisconsin (70.7%) and Columbia County (78.5%) have higher percentage of one-unit structures compared to the City of Columbus. Columbus does offer a wider variety of housing types in comparison to the state and county. The city has a higher percentage of duplex and multi-unit structures than the state and county. It should be noted that Columbus is the second largest city in Columbia County (Portage first).

The US Census identifies single-family structures as fully detached, semi-detached (semi-attached, side-by-side), row houses, duplexes, quadplexes, and townhouses. In order for attached units to be classified as single-family structures, each unit must: Be separated by a ground-to roof wall, have a separate heating system, have individual meters for public utilities, and have no units located above or below.

Table 4-4: Housing Starts

Year	SF Homes Built	MF Units Built
2011	1	0
2012	1	0
2013	0	0
2014	3	10
2015	17	6
2016	16	4
2017	23	0
2018	23	0
2019	11	0
2020	4	0
2021	6	0
2022	3	0
2023	1	0
2024	1	0
2025	0	45
2026	18	0
Total	128	65
Average	8	6.5

Source: City of Columbus Building Permits

Table 4-4 above shows the number housing starts per year since 2011. The data shows that the City of Columbus had 128 new single family homes and 65 multifamily units built over this time period. The table shows that Columbus underwent growth in the mid 2010's and had 3 year period where few single family homes were built. Cardinal Heights is responsible for multi-family and single family homes in both 2025 and 2026.

Table 4-5 : Median Home Value of Owner Occupied Housing

Median Owner-Occupied Home Values

Geography / Region	Census ACS Median Value (<i>Historical Base</i>)	Current 2026 Median Home Value (<i>Market Metrics</i>)	Current Market Status / Note
 Columbus, WI	\$228,400	\$316,800	Steady 4.3% YoY appreciation.
 Columbia County	\$258,700	\$362,800	Commuter pressure from Madison driving up values.
 Dane County	\$378,300	\$489,900	High-demand metro region pushing toward \$500k median listings.
 State of Wisconsin	\$231,300	\$339,900	Baseline statewide median for single-family homes.

Source: US Census and American Community Survey

Table 4-5 shows the Median Home Value for owner occupied housing for Columbus compared to the state and county. The data shows that the 2018 median home values lagged behind Columbia County, Dane County and Wisconsin. The data shows that the median home value for Columbus was comparable to the Columbia County and Wisconsin in 2000. Since then the median home value in Columbus has grown at a slower rate than the county and state. The Dane County boarder is approximately 5 miles southwest of the downtown Columbus. The growth of the Dane County housing market has a substantial impact on the Columbus housing market. Table 4-5 shows that the Median home values for Dane County have increased by almost \$105,400 or 72% during this time frame. During the same timeframe Columbus saw an increase of \$35,500 or 31%.

Table 4-6: Median Rent

Median Gross Rent Comparison (2015, 2020, & 2025)

Region	2015 Median Rent	2020 Median Rent	2025 Median Rent
City of Columbus	\$795	\$890	\$1,206
Columbia County	\$776	\$833	\$1,045
Dodge County	\$761	\$830	\$1,200
Dane County	\$925	\$1,083	\$1,398
State of Wisconsin	\$773	\$856	\$1,087

Table 4-6 shows the Median Rent for Columbus compared to Columbia County and the State from 2015 to 2025. The median rents for Columbus are greater than Columbia County and Wisconsin median

rents over this time period. In comparison to Columbus, the median rent in Dane County has been at least \$200 higher.

Tables 4-5 and 4-6 show that median home values and median rents for Columbus are higher than the state. These numbers indicate that Columbus has a cost of housing compared to Columbia County and Wisconsin. In comparison with Columbus, Dane County has a much higher cost of living with Median Home Values of \$252,300 and Median Rents of \$1,031 in 2018.

HUD generally defines Affordable housing as “housing for which the occupant(s) is/are paying no more than 30 percent of his or her income for gross housing costs, including utilities”. US Census American Community Survey data was utilized to evaluate the affordability for Columbus. Tables 4-7 through 4-9 show Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income and Gross rent as a percentage of household income data for the City of Columbus, Columbia County and Wisconsin. The census is collecting this data to measure affordability for units of local government throughout the United States.

Many factors influence the affordability data from the US Census American Community Survey. Some of these factors include interest rates, utility expenses, property tax, occupant employment, income levels, consumer choice and supply of housing options.

Costs are calculated from the sum of payment for mortgages, real estate taxes, various insurances, utilities, fuels, mobile home costs, and condominium fees. The ratio is computed separately for each unit and is rounded to the nearest tenth.

Table 4-8 : 2018 SMOCAP for Owner Occupied Housing Units with and without a Mortgage

Owner-Occupied Mortgage Status Comparison

Geography	Owner-Occupied Housing Rate	Homeowners With a Mortgage	Homeowners Without a Mortgage (Free & Clear)	Median Monthly Owner Costs (No Mortgage)
<u>Columbus, WI</u>	63.4%	60.4%	39.6%	\$692
<u>Columbia County, WI</u>	71.8%	61.1%	38.9%	\$638
<u>State of Wisconsin</u>	67.8%	60.6%	39.4%	\$659

Housing units with a mortgage(excluding units where SMOCAP cannot be computed)

Source: US Census American Community Survey

Table 4-8 above shows the SMOCAPI for owner occupied units without a mortgage. For owner occupied units without a mortgage Columbus has a larger percentage housing units where the SMOCAPI is higher than 30% than Columbia County and Wisconsin

Table 4-9 : Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income

 Rental Burden Category Distribution

Geography	Less than 20% (Affordable Housing)	20% to 30% (Moderate Cost)	Over 30% (Cost-Burdened)
Columbus, WI	42.8%	25.5%	39.6%
Columbia County, WI	36.2%	27.1%	37.6%
State of Wisconsin	29.4%	24.9%	45.0%

**Excluding units where GRAPI cannot be computed*

Source: US Census American Community Survey

Table 4-9 shows the GRAPI for Columbus compared to Columbia County and Wisconsin. The table shows that Columbus has a larger percentage of renters where the gross rent is more than 30% of income in comparison to Columbia County or Wisconsin.

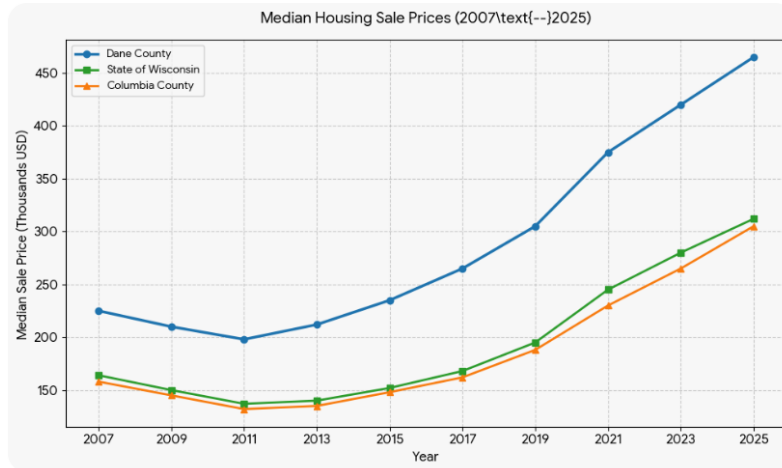
According to the US Census Bureau, GRAPI is a computed ratio of monthly gross rent to monthly household income (total household income divided by 12). The ratio is computed separately for each unit and is rounded to the nearest tenth. Units for which no rent is paid and units occupied by households that reported no income or a net loss comprise the category "Not computed." GRAPI provides information on the monthly housing cost expenses for renters. The information offers an excellent measure of housing affordability and excessive shelter costs. The data also serve to aid in the development of housing programs to meet the needs of people at different economic levels and to provide assistance to agencies in determining policies on fair rent.

Table 4-10 - Housing Sales

	Columbia County		Dane County		Wisconsin	
Year	Number of Homes Sold	Median Price	Number of Homes Sold	Median Price	Number of Homes Sold	Median Price
2009	567	\$141,900	5,545	\$201,000	44,111	\$148,500
2010	496	\$140,000	5,068	\$207,000	46,323	\$142,700
2011	524	\$128,000	4,833	\$206,000	51,631	\$131,737
2012	684	\$125,000	6,160	\$200,000	62,810	\$133,500
2013	694	\$132,000	7,646	\$211,000	69,958	\$143,000
2014	717	\$147,500	7,214	\$220,000	69,183	\$147,750
2015	841	\$156,500	8,308	\$231,000	78,193	\$155,000
2016	881	\$169,000	8,470	\$245,000	83,110	\$163,500
2017	869	\$185,000	8,455	\$264,500	84,613	\$172,000
2018	805	\$198,180	8,332	\$279,900	77,533	\$184,000
2019	766	\$207,000	8,226	\$297,500	82,703	\$197,000
2020	1110	239900	8240	348000	88710	220000
2021	1155	265000	8435	385000	89328	240000
2022	975	300000	7120	415000	77550	264600
2023	810	335000	5800	440000	64330	287000
2024	840	348000	6100	450000	67784	310000
2025	850	336000	6250	450000	71000	29125
Source: Wisconsin Realtors Association						

Table 4-10 shows data for housing sales in Columbia County, Dane County and Wisconsin

Figure 4-10 below shows the Median Sale Price of Homes for Columbia County, Dane County and Wisconsin.



Market Trajectory Insights

- The Bottoming Out (2007–2012):** Prices dipped statewide following the Great Recession. Dane County proved more resilient due to stable government and university employment bases, while Columbia County and the state took longer to find their pricing floors. [Wisconsin REALTORS® A...](#)
- The Velocity Phase (2020–2025):** The pandemic triggered a paradigm shift. Due to critically low inventory levels, Columbia County's median price pulled significantly ahead of the statewide average, driven by remote work expansions and buyers looking for value just outside of Madison. [Wisconsin REALTORS® ... +1](#)

Table 4-11: Columbus Home Sales

Year	Number of Homes Sold	Average Sale Price
2015	66	\$151,000
2016	82	\$165,000
2017	78	\$186,000
2018	115	\$187,000
2019	81	\$214,000
2020	98	\$215,000
2021	94	\$212,000
2022	85	\$222,000
2023	68	\$225,700
2024	74	\$230,000
2025	71	\$318,500

Table 4-11 shows Multiple Listing Service data for home sales in the City of Columbus. The data shows that average sales price for the City of Columbus has since 2015. This is not surprising because the

housing market in South Central Wisconsin has been on the upswing. However, recent supply challenges and interest rates have slowed sales.

Existing Housing Stock and Composition

The City of Columbus maintains a housing inventory heavily weighted toward low-density residential development. According to recent housing data, **76.5 percent** of the city's current housing stock consists of **single-family detached homes**.

The remaining inventory is split almost evenly between mid-density options and higher-density complexes. **Missing Middle housing**—which includes duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhomes, and courtyard apartments—comprises **13.5 percent** of the local inventory. **Large multifamily housing** (structures featuring 12 or more units) accounts for the final **10 percent** of Columbus's total housing infrastructure.

Columbus Housing Stock Mix



Analysis and Planning Implications

This highly skewed breakdown highlights several structural housing challenges and opportunities that Columbus must navigate over the 20-year planning horizon:

- **The "Missing Middle" Gap:** While historical building permit trends from the past decade show a slight bump in multifamily construction, the 13.5% Middle Housing baseline suggests a lack of transitional housing choices. Expanding these types of units provides critical, naturally affordable options for young professionals, down-sizing seniors, and moderate-income families who want a yard or neighborhood feel without the cost of a large detached home.
- **Infrastructure and Workforce Alignment:** With regional economic growth putting pressure on local inventories, a housing stock dominated by three-quarters single-family homes risks pricing out the local workforce. Strategically introducing missing middle and multi-family developments along key transit and municipal service corridors ensures efficient infrastructure utilization while diversifying the tax base.
- **Balancing Demographics and Preferences:** Community surveys indicate evolving preferences regarding future density. Future land-use policies must balance the strong historical legacy of single-family neighborhoods with targeted zoning updates. Allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs), small-scale multi-family options, and senior living cottages in appropriate districts will be vital to creating a resilient housing market.

Projections of Housing Needs

Communities can shape housing type mixes and growth rates by various policies. Determining housing demand for the next twenty years is essential to the City of Columbus overall resiliency.

Future housing needs based only on past development data:

According to Columbus building permit records, local development trends have historically moved in cycles:

- The 10-Year Average: From 2010 to 2020, Columbus added 154 total units (110 single-family and 44 multifamily units), averaging roughly 15.4 units per year.
- The Market Split: Units built during that decade were split 71.4% single-family and 28.6% multi-family/middle housing.
- Supply challenges and interest rates continue to impact home sales, prices, and rents.
- 20-Year Projection: Multiplying 15.4 units per year by the 20-year planning horizon results in 308 total units

Overview of Growth Scenarios (20-Year Horizon)*

Metric / Housing Type	Low Growth (Stabilization)	Medium Growth (Recommended Trend)	Fast Growth (High-Density Corridor)
Annual Growth Rate	0.3% / year	0.95% / year	1.5% / year
Total 20-Year Unit Demand	185 Total Units	600 Total Units	1,000 Total Units
 Single-Family (Current: 76.5%)	133 Units (72%)	330 Units (55%)	450 Units (45%)
 Middle Housing (Current: 13.5%)	33 Units (18%)	150 Units (25%)	300 Units (30%)
 Large Multifamily (Current: 10.0%)	19 Units (10%)	120 Units (20%)	250 Units (25%)

*Various factors can impact growth and development including proximity to Madison, Hwy 151, land availability, interest rates, employment, and total household income.

< insert goals and objectives here >

Draft Goals and Policies

Goal 1: Create a Variety of Housing Options

Goal: Promote a diverse and balanced housing supply

Objectives

- **Objective 1.1:** Expand “Middle” housing options (e.g., duplexes, townhomes, courtyard apartments, and Accessory Dwelling Units) within existing neighborhoods and new subdivisions.
- **Objective 1.2:** Maintain a balanced ratio of owner-occupied to renter-occupied housing units to support a diverse workforce.
- **Objective 1.3:** Direct high-density residential developments toward urban corridors with existing utility capacity and proximity to parks and commercial centers.
- **Objective 1.4:** Continue revitalization of housing in downtown

Policies

- **Policy 1.A (Zoning Flexibility):** Update the local zoning code to permit Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) by-right on single-family lots, provided they meet clear design guidelines.
- **Policy 1.B (Infrastructure Alignment):** Direct large-scale residential subdivisions to areas within the current municipal boundary, adjacent lands to the city’s municipal boundary, or identified service areas where public water, electric and sewer can be efficiently extended.
- **Policy 1.C (Mixed-Use Integration):** Encourage upper-story residential units above commercial storefronts in the downtown business district.
-

Goal 2: Preserve Historic Character & Neighborhood Integrity

Goal: Protect and maintain the architectural character and structural integrity of Columbus’s older residential neighborhoods, including its established historic districts, while ensuring they remain functional for modern living.

Objectives

- **Objective 2.1:** Reduce the degradation of the city's older housing stock by promoting proactive maintenance and neighborhood rehabilitation.
- **Objective 2.2:** Ensure that new infill development matches the scale, setbacks, and architectural rhythm of adjacent historic structures.
- **Objective 2.3:** Increase community awareness and utilization of historic preservation tax credits and housing repair programs.

Policies

- **Policy 2.A (Infill Design Guidelines):** Implement clear architectural and design guidelines for context-sensitive infill development in the city's historic neighborhoods through a neighborhood resource guidebook.
- **Policy 2.b (Downtown Revitalization):** Promote and partner with developers on upper story redevelopment utilizing financial tools like the Community Development Investment grant and Restore Main Street loan program

Goal 3: Improve Housing Affordability & Workforce Accessibility

Goal: Support the creation and retention of housing options that are affordable to the local workforce, young professionals, families, and seniors on fixed incomes.

Objectives

- **Objective 3.1:** Reduce the number of Columbus households that are "cost-burdened" (spending more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs).
- **Objective 3.2:** Provide diverse housing alternatives that allow older residents to "age in place" or downsize without leaving the Columbus community.
- **Objective 3.3:** Leverage state, federal, and private public-private partnerships to incentivize affordable housing creation.

Policies

- **Policy 3.A (Dimensional Modifications):** Modernize zoning standards to lower baseline minimum lot sizes, widths, and street width requirements, directly reducing infrastructure costs per housing unit.
- **Policy 3.B (WHEDA Partnership):** Partner with the *Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)* and private developers to utilize Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) for mixed-income developments.
- **Policy 3.C (Program Promotion):** Actively promote the *Southern Housing Region Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)* to help low-to-moderate-income homeowners fund critical structural repairs.

- **Policy 3.D (Program Creation):** Explore opportunities to fund and implement a Columbus Housing betterment fund to support rehabilitation of housing for low to moderate incomes and older housing stock.

Goal 4: Optimize Parking & Sustainable Neighborhood Design

Goal: Promote modern neighborhood layouts that reduce excessive infrastructure costs, emphasize walkability, and prioritize green spaces over surface parking.

Objectives

- **Objective 4.1:** Right-size residential parking requirements to prevent over-building pavement and excess stormwater runoff.
- **Objective 4.2:** Design new neighborhoods with highly interconnected street networks, sidewalks, and trail systems that link to schools and downtown.

Policies

- **Policy 4.A (Parking Maximums):** Transition from rigid parking minimums to flexible parking standards and maximum thresholds to optimize residential parcel layouts.
- **Policy 4.B (Subdivision Multi-modal Standards):** Require all new residential development plats to feature complete sidewalk infrastructure, street trees, and, where applicable, dedicated bike lane connections.
- **Policy 4.C (Code enforcement):** Actively enforce the property maintenance code to discourage housing and property decline.

Goal 5: Housing Growth and Redevelopment

Goal: Maintain the existing housing type mix for the next 20 years

Objectives

- **Objective 5.1:** Coordinate the future land use map to reflect the current housing type mix
- **Objective 5.2:** Support communication and implementation of the uniform dwelling code

Policies

- **Policy 5.A (Growth):** Use a balanced approach of both infill, redevelopment, and outward expansion

- **Policy 5.B (Timing):** Implement tools for steady phased growth throughout the next 20 years