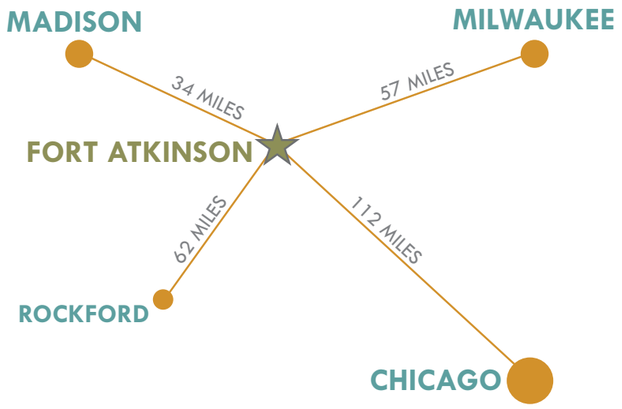
FORT ATKINSON
WISCONSIN

"Experience Beautiful"

2019 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SUMMARY



INTRODUCTION

Located in the southwest corner of Jefferson County along the banks of the Rock and Bark rivers, the City of Fort Atkinson is a Wisconsin community rich in heritage, vibrancy, and potential. The City has managed to keep its rich history alive through local attractions such as the Hoard Historical Museum, the historic shopping district, and a replica of the war fort from which the City derived its name. Yet, amidst all this history, the City also has successfully embraced and celebrated healthy growth and change by encouraging and participating in economic development, investing in the downtown, supporting the cultural arts, and enhancing the quality of life for residents by establishing new recreational trail networks and parks, building a state-of-the-art high school, and continuing to engage in long-range planning efforts.

A VISION FOR FORT ATKINSON

In the year 2040, Fort Atkinson will be a healthy, dynamic community characterized by sustainable housing, employment, entertainment, and educational opportunities. The City will have successfully integrated its unique history, culture, and values with new ideas and directions. Fort Atkinson will continue to be a distinctive community, evoking a sense of pride and belonging in those who have the fortune of living or working here.

KEY IMPLEMENTATION FOCUS AREAS



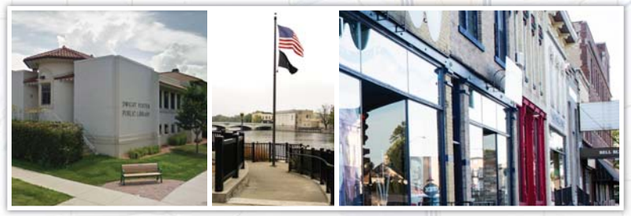
Targeted Redevelopment and New Development in Key Locations

- Klement Business Park
- Northeast and Far Northwest Side
- Janesville, Madison, Sherman, Whitewater, and Rockwell Avenues
- Fort HealthCare Campus



Increased Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Connectivity

- Finish the Wheels Park project
- Pursue the continued effort of converting rails-to-trails
- Continue to interconnect the City's network of multi-use paths and on-street bicycle facilities



Foster Downtown Revitalization

- Prioritize pivotal locations and entryways
- Explore different Town Square and parking options
- Consider the formation of a Business Improvement District



Improve Commercial Corridors

- Collaboratively explore continued planning efforts
- Work to enhance key corridors though improving road conditions, streetscaping, wayfinding, and beautification

For more information, the complete plan can be found here: fortatkinson.wi.net

Vandewalle & Associates 2019

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Agricultural Resources

- Work with others to market agricultural products, promote county-wide farmland preservation efforts, and explore opportunities to advance agricultural-based industries.
- Utilize intergovernmental agreements, County zoning, and land division review to maintain long-term agricultural use of lands in the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction.

Natural Resources

- Promote community sustainability City-wide.
- Help protect the Rock River, Bark River, and Allen Creek; groundwater quality; and other important environmental features.
- Promote the integration of recreation with natural resources, such as through more recreational trails.

Cultural Resources

- Work with property owners and the Historic Preservation Commission to ensure the long-term preservation of historically and culturally significant buildings and sites.
- Collaborate on events and attractions that celebrate the City's culture and bring visitors to the community.
- Develop a marketing strategy around the City's assets and leverage that branding to attract new residents and tourists.

Land Use

- Promote compact, mixed-use development to enhance community interaction, preserve land, and decrease infrastructure and service costs.
- Promote the redevelopment of key sites around the community, particularly around the northeast side, downtown, and other key corridors.
- Recognize that City expansion is limited by natural areas and existing development, so it is important to make the most out of remaining development corridors (i.e., northwest, southwest, etc.).
- Use the City's Future Land Use map and related policies when making day-to-day development decisions like rezoning, site plans, and annexations.
- Implement the recommendations of this plan into the new Zoning and Land Development and Division ordinances.

Transportation

- Work with WisDOT on future transportation initiatives including reconstruction on Highway 12, Highway 106 West, the Robert Street bridge rehabilitation, and other large-scale projects.
- Plan for an interconnected road network in new development areas.
- Enhance resident mobility and promote biking and walking through development of new multi-use trails and the promotion of compact, mixed-use development patterns.
- Prepare an Official Map to reserve land for future transportation facilities.

Utilities and Community Facilities

- Ensure that future land development is coordinated with the provision of utilities and City services.
- Continue to work with the School District to plan for future facilities through establishing a shared agreement with dedicated annual review meetings.
- Support Fort HealthCare as a key community facility and asset.
- Emphasize energy-efficiency, sustainability, and cost-effectiveness in all aspects of municipal government. Leverage the local success stories of these initiatives by businesses and institutions in a marketing campaign for the city.

Parks and Recreation

- Continue the City's high level of service for the provision and maintenance of parks and recreational areas.
- Provide a diversity of park types and recreational amenities to serve the needs of all City residents and visitors.
- Explore the acquisition and development of new parks on the City's northeast, southeast, and northwest sides.
- Partner with the School District on joint park/school sites and with Jefferson County on nature-based parks near the City's fringe.
- Continue to leverage a variety of funding sources to finance future parkland acquisition and improvements.

Housing & Neighborhood Development

- Support the development of a variety of housing types.
- Promote the use of Traditional Neighborhood Design for new neighborhoods/subdivisions.
- Require the preparation of detailed neighborhoods plans before new subdivision development occurs.

Economic Development

- Work with existing businesses and potential entrepreneurs to advance economic growth.
- Promote the development and expansion of the Robert Klement Business Park in a manner that allows for economic growth while preserving nearby natural features.
- Consider preparing a corridor plan for Janesville Avenue to guide redevelopment and City investments there.
- Continue to invest in downtown redevelopment and rehabilitation efforts.
- Help plan, guide, and facilitate the Fort HealthCare move, if/when it takes place.
- Encourage entrepreneurship using a variety of approaches, including a partnership with the Chamber, UW-Whitewater, THRIVE ED, MATC, and others to leverage existing programs and resources.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

- Continue to communicate with surrounding communities, such as the Town of Jefferson, City of Jefferson and Town of Koshkonong, on a variety of issues and opportunities, some of which may be addressed through formal intergovernmental agreements.
- Remain involved in regional initiatives such as THRIVE ED and the County's economic positioning initiative.
- Continue to work with Jefferson County on bicycle trail, parks, and roadway planning, in addition to affordable housing initiatives and multi-modal transportation options.
- Partner with the School District on a variety of mutually beneficial initiatives.
- Work with WisDOT on highway planning.

For more information, the complete plan can be found here: fortatkinson.wi.net

