



# City of Jefferson

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



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Vandewalle & Associates





## Acknowledgements

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# Introduction

Located in heart of Jefferson County, at the fork of the Crawfish and Rock rivers, the City of Jefferson is a unique community characterized by a strong German heritage and abundant natural amenities including rivers, forests, and vast expanses of rolling farmland. Located only nine miles south of Interstate 94, the City, also the County seat, benefits from its regional access to major economic centers such as Madison, Milwaukee, and Chicago.

Over the last fifteen years, the City's population has been increasing steadily - presenting both opportunities and challenges. Growth can provide increased tax base and a more diverse economic environment. However, as population increases so does the demand on municipal services. In this context, planned development in a controlled, orderly, and predictable manner will enhance the City's ability to retain its small-town character, avoid land use conflicts, provide housing and appropriate employment opportunities, and protect its natural, cultural, and agricultural resources.

## Purpose of this Plan

This 2008 *City of Jefferson Comprehensive Plan* is intended to help the City guide short-range and long-range growth and development. The purposes of this *Comprehensive Plan* are to:

- Identify areas appropriate for development and preservation over the next 20 years;
- Recommend appropriate types of land use for specific areas in the City;
- Preserve natural and agricultural resources in and around the City;
- Identify needed transportation and community facilities to serve future land uses;
- Direct housing and commercial investments in the City; and
- Provide detailed strategies to implement plan recommendations.

The *Plan* is organized into chapters that specifically address each of the nine elements required by the State of Wisconsin. Each chapter presents background information on the element it is addressing (e.g. *Transportation, Land Use, Economic Development*) and then presents an outline of the City's goals, objectives, and policies for that element. These documented policies are the basis for the programs and recommendations that are presented at the end of each chapter.

The final chapter of the document (*Implementation*) indicates proposed strategies and implementation timelines to ensure that the recommendations presented in this *Plan* become a reality.

### Plan Adoption Process

Preparation of a comprehensive plan is authorized under §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes. Before adoption, a Plan must go through a formal public hearing and review process. The Plan Commission adopts by resolution a public hearing draft of the Plan and recommends that the Common Council enact an ordinance adopting the Plan as the City's official *Comprehensive Plan*.

Following Plan Commission approval, the Common Council holds a public hearing to discuss the proposed ordinance adopting the *Plan*. Copies of the public hearing draft of the *Plan* are forwarded to a list of local and state governments for review. A Class 1 notice must precede the public hearing at least 30 days before the hearing. The notice must include a summary of the Plan and information concerning where the entire document may be inspected or obtained. The Council may then adopt the ordinance approving the Plan as the City's official *Comprehensive Plan*.

This formal, well-publicized process facilitates broad support of plan goals and recommendations. Consideration by both the Plan Commission and Common Council assures that both bodies understand and endorse the *Plan's* recommendations.

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## Planning Process

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This *Comprehensive Plan* is being prepared under the State of Wisconsin's comprehensive planning legislation, adopted in 1999 and contained in §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes. This *Plan* meets all of the statutory elements and requirements of the comprehensive planning law. After 2010, only those plans that containing the nine required elements and adopted under the state's prescribed procedures will have legal standing.

In order to provide sound public policy guidance, a comprehensive planning process should incorporate inclusive public participation procedures to ensure that final *Plan* recommendations reflect a broadly supported vision for the community. On February 6, 2007, at the outset of this planning process, the City Council adopted the City's public participation plan by resolution. Due to this extensive public participation process outlined by the City, the recommendations in this *Plan* are generally consistent with other adopted local and county plans, long-standing state and regional policies, and sound planning practices.

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## General Regional Context

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Map 1 shows the relationship of the City to neighboring communities in the region. The City is located in the center of Jefferson County, roughly 35 miles east of Madison and 50 miles west of Milwaukee.

The City is bordered on the south, east, and west by the Town of Jefferson and on the north by the Town of Aztalan. The Town of Farmington lies to the northeast and the Town of Hebron lies to the southeast. Nearby neighboring communities include the Village of Johnson Creek, located six miles to the north; the City of Lake Mills, located nine miles northwest; and the City of Fort Atkinson, located eight miles south. As of December, 2006, the City encompassed approximately 5.1 square miles of land.

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## Selection of the Planning Area

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The planning area includes all lands currently within the City of Jefferson's municipal limits, and the unincorporated areas within the City's 1.5-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). The total planning area contains about 25.6 square miles as illustrated in Map 1.

Within the ETJ, state statutes enable the City to plan for those areas that bear relation to the City's development, review subdivisions, enact extraterritorial zoning, and implement an official map. The ETJ expands automatically as annexations occur, hence the need for this *Plan* to consider and make recommendations for the area located beyond the current ETJ limits.

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## Regional Planning Effort

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This *Comprehensive Plan* was prepared concurrently with five other communities in Jefferson County as part of a state-funded, multi-jurisdictional planning process. These communities included the cities of Waterloo, Lake Mills, and Fort Atkinson; the Village of Johnson Creek; and the Town of Aztalan. The same consulting firm worked with all six communities in preparing their plans. The City of Jefferson took part in intergovernmental meetings involving all of these communities throughout the process.

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## Regional Influences

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In order to more accurately guide Jefferson's future growth and development, it was important to begin the comprehensive planning process by analyzing the numerous factors in and around Jefferson County that will impact City growth (See Map 2). Some of most significant influences include the following:

### *Proximity to Major Employment, Shopping, and Entertainment Centers*

The City of Jefferson is located within a short driving distance of several major regional employment centers, shopping, and entertainment destinations. Located roughly 40 minutes west of the City, the City of Madison hosts a number of employment options, including the Wisconsin capitol, the University of Wisconsin, several regional medical centers, and a regional bio-agriculture research center. In addition, State Street, the Farmer's Market, the Overture Center, Union Terrace, and numerous restaurants and bars are just several of the entertainment and shopping options available in Madison.

Downtown Milwaukee and the surrounding suburbs are also within an hour's drive of the City of Jefferson. The Milwaukee Metro region offers significant employment options, including the Milwaukee County Research Center, the County Regional Medical Center, and St. Luke's Medical Center. Numerous entertainment venues and shopping destinations are also available in the area, such as Miller Park, the Milwaukee County Zoo, Pier Wisconsin, and Mayfair Mall.

To the southwest, the cities of Janesville and Beloit are located within an hour from Jefferson. And for weekend excursions, downtown Chicago is less than 2 ½ hours from the City. The Fox Valley/Green Bay metropolitan areas are located 2 hours northeast of Jefferson.

### *Access to Transportation Networks*

As energy costs rise, efficiency in travel is becoming an increasingly important issue around the nation. An analysis of commuting patterns indicates that every day over 23,000 people commute between Jefferson County and the five immediately adjacent counties of Waukesha, Dodge, Dane, Rock, and Walworth. Located just south of I-94 on STH 26, the City of Jefferson is near to a direct route to Madison, Milwaukee, Janesville, and Beloit, as well as many of the Midwest's other major economic centers, including Chicago, Minneapolis, and Detroit. Jefferson County is also traversed by US Highways 12 and 18 and STHs 19 and 89, and has a direct connection with I-39/90, located west of Jefferson County.

For more distant travel, Jefferson is also within an hour's drive from both the Dane County Regional Airport in Madison and General Mitchell International Airport in Milwaukee. And as a benefit to local businesses, the County is served by three major railroads: the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad Co., Canadian Pacific Railway, and the Union Pacific Railroad, which travels directly through the City.

### *Abundance of Recreational Resources and Open Space*

Nestled between five growing metro areas, Jefferson County's natural landscape has remained relatively undisrupted by development. The County's roadways offer some of the most spectacular views of glacial drumlins in southeastern Wisconsin. Moreover, with 9 State Natural Areas and parks, 6 Land Legacy Places, access to 2 state trails, and an abundance of water resources, including wetlands, lakes, and rivers, Jefferson County is a magnificent playground for outdoor enthusiasts. Although Jefferson County communities are facing increasing growth pressures, residents and property owners are taking measures to preserve rural character and the vast expanses of farmland that still blanket the towns and surround the villages and cities. These communities recognize that it is in large part the County's natural beauty and wide open spaces that will continue to make this area of Wisconsin such a desirable place to live and visit.



Map 1: Jurisdictional Boundaries



Map 2: Jefferson County Regional Influences

