

Past Planning Efforts

The 2016 Downtown Plan builds upon previous studies and plans for downtown and the riverfront, several of which are summarized below.

1995 Downtown Plan

This plan established a vision and objectives for the downtown, as well as a decision framework of initiatives and goals, and a set of strategies it proposed to attain those goals.

Following completion of the Plan, investment helped identify the West End (entertainment district) and the retail node on the eastern end of College Avenue in the downtown. Streetscape improvements and façades improvements enhanced the downtown area. Along the Fox River, several historic mill buildings were renovated.

1998 Greenprint for Downtown Appleton

A streetscape enhancement plan was prepared for College Avenue between Badger Avenue and Drew Street, including major gateways to the downtown business district. Project design elements included lighting, pavers, planting, street furniture and amenities.

Some of the opportunities focused on in the project include:

- Creation of a distinct character for different zones
- Development of a new image of Appleton as the urban center of the Fox Valley
- Improvement of traffic flow from one-way to two-way
- Improvement of the greenspace system and linkages to the Fox River
- Encouragement of residential development downtown
- Improvement of the physical setting for downtown events and programming

1999 Target Niche Analysis, Business Identification, and Implementation Plan for Downtown Appleton

This study sought identified specific retail market niches and tenant types, and strategies for general economic vitality in the downtown. Recommendations included:

- Recruitment and retention of retail and office uses including:
 - Children-oriented stores; Home furnishings stores; Gourmet food stores
 - Music and arts businesses; Specialty goods; Specialty services; Convenience and low-end retailers; Business support services
- Development of the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center
- Development of a small performance venue (400 to 800 seats) for non-mainstream acts
- Development of a central programmable public space at the center of the commercial core
- Promotion of office, hotel, residential infill
- Support to locally owned businesses
- Organized tenant recruitment efforts

2001 Focus Fox River: A Master Plan

Amended in 2003, this plan focused on redevelopment and reinvestment along the Fox River in the City of Appleton. The plan described a set of initiatives and goals, along with strategies for achieving these goals. The major initiatives and strategies included:

- Aesthetic, Historic, and Ecological Character Initiative: Maintaining the balance between urban land uses and ecological features.

- Expand on the Fox River’s role in regional plans
- Balance ecological needs with existing and future development
- Enhance the quality and reduce the ecological impact of riverfront development
- Preserve the historical significance of the riverfront
- Promote the riverfront as a destination
- Access Initiative: Define, expand, and enhance access to the riverfront.
 - Create a wayfinding system for the riverfront
 - Promote modes of transportation unique to the riverfront
 - Improve street access to the riverfront

Public Ownership of the Riverfront Initiative: Expand the publicly owned and accessible land along the riverfront

- Increase and expand multi-modal transportation opportunities around the riverfront
- Create opportunities for education about the history of Appleton and the Fox River
- Redevelopment and Economic Revitalization Initiative: Adaptive reuse and redevelopment along the riverfront
 - Designate redevelopment opportunities along the riverfront
 - Improve public parks as an integral part of the riverfront

2002 Multi-Modal Transportation and Parking Study for Appleton’s Riverfront

The purpose of this study was to determine if the types of development and redevelopment proposed in Focus Fox River: A Master Plan could be accommodated. Key recommendations included:

- East College Avenue Bridge be widened to four lanes.
- Adding a second southbound lane on Meade Street at College Avenue
- Scaling back development at the Valmet site to allow for adequate parking.
- Additional parking for Lutz Park

2004 Riverfront Trail Connection Study

The purpose of this study was to review previously adopted plans and define riverfront connections for bicyclists and pedestrians. The study made recommendations for design, management, and construction of several trail segments.

2010 Downtown Plan

The 2007 update to the City of Appleton's Downtown Plan was incorporated into the City’s 2010 Comprehensive Plan. The update recommended mixed-use and residential districts north of the core downtown, with some pockets of redevelopment south of the core.

Providing additional public spaces in the downtown, including parks, plaza, and greenways, was an important component of the plan. Additionally, the plan sought to connect these with the downtown and neighborhoods outside of the downtown through a system of trails.

The update recommended a series of initiatives with associated strategies for implementation, including:

- Urban Design
- Tourism/Arts/Entertainment
- Neighborhood and Residential Development
- Business and Office Development
- Transportation and Parking
- Downtown Management

2010 Richmond Street Corridor Study

This study was incorporated into the City's 2010 update to its Comprehensive Plan. The Richmond Street Corridor is an important entry corridor into the Downtown and consists of mixed commercial and residential development.

The Study proposed redevelopment sites, including potential commercial and mixed use sites within the area bounded by Richmond St., the railroad tracks, and Packard St. Other recommendations included:

- Focus pedestrian oriented commercial development between Atlantic St. and College Ave., residential mixed use to the north, with residential mixed use north to Wisconsin Ave.
- Linking the Corridor with the Downtown Streetscape Plan
- Encouraging architectural styles and site design that reflect the Downtown environment
- Improving bike and pedestrian access, as well as public transit amenities

2015 Appleton Economic Development Strategic Plan

2015 Appleton Economic Development Strategic Plan

This comprehensive economic development plan for the City of Appleton reviews targeted industries and core focus areas for maximizing strengths for regional economic growth. Noted as one of the City's most shining strengths, the document states downtown Appleton has huge potential to be one of the most prominent attractions to business, the creative class, a tech workforce, and young professionals. The plan recommends that if the city desires to attract and keep young professionals, downtown housing and parking, should be priorities. In summary:

- Business Attraction goals such as accelerating business park land sales, developing relationships with site selectors and brokers, and marketing campaigns
- Retention visits and streamlined municipal processes
- Measuring success
- Encouraging development of the regional foodshed
- Fostering partnerships to enhance workforce development effectiveness

The Economic Development Strategic Plan provides a macro view of the City of Appleton's focus areas for economic development while calling out the strength of the downtown as an economic engine. Many of the goals of the Economic Development Strategic Plan feature the downtown, including a marketing campaign for business attraction related to retail/tourism.

Developing the regional foodshed as an economic development goal will have significant impact upon and success from a focus in downtown Appleton. The already successful Farmers Market brings visitors to downtown with numerous ancillary benefits. The most obvious location for a food incubator would be located in downtown Appleton. And a visitor attraction marketing campaign would naturally draw people into downtown Appleton, meeting economic development, community development and tourism goals simultaneously.

2015 Downtown Parking Study

A comprehensive downtown parking analysis was conducted in anticipation of new development and changes to the City's public parking program including but not limited to:

- A new public library, the Fox Cities Fox Cities Exhibition Center, and possibly relocated City Hall
- Proactively addressing upcoming parking needs and improving upon the delivery of public parking services.

Five different scenarios were evaluated based on different assumptions for existing demand, potential changes in the parking supply (for example, removal of parking ramps), and new parking demand driven by potential projects. Key findings from the study included:

- Downtown Appleton has an excess of parking available currently.
- The city-owned Blue Ramp (401 spaces) and YMCA-owned Soldier Square Ramp (450 spaces) are nearing the end of their useful lives and will likely be removed from service by 2020.

[2016 Downtown Appleton Mobility Plan](#)

The purpose of the study was to determine and evaluate strategies to improve multi-modal mobility and traffic circulation in downtown Appleton in an area bounded by Atlantic Street, Lawe Street, Richmond Street, and the Fox River.

Key recommendations from the study included:

- Restoring Appleton St. and other one-way streets to two-way traffic flow
- Elimination of the northbound right turn coming off of the Oneida Street Bridge.
- Restoring the grid system by eliminating the curved entrance to downtown
- Enhancements to crosswalks including maintenance and ADA requirements
- Additional pedestrian bump outs and raised intersections
- A comprehensive network of bike lanes

[2016 Appleton Trails Master Plan](#)

A comprehensive Trails Master Plan is being developed for the entire City, including the downtown area. The Plan includes preliminary engineering for five trail segments. Two of those segments are in and adjacent to downtown. One is a proposed trail segment from Olde Oneida Street, just south of the locks, west along the Fox River, south through Riverview Gardens connecting to W. River Rd and W. Seymour St. The other proposed trail segment runs from Peabody Park east along the Fox River through the Riverside Cemetery connecting to Ballard Road. In addition to these segments the Trails Plan carries forward several trail planning initiatives which appeared in previous plans, including development of a trail from Lutz Park to Vulcan Heritage Park as well as new trestle trail segments.