

Income Growth in the Appleton Region

Area Name	Per Capita Income					Four-Year Change
	1989	1999	2005	2010	2014	
Wisconsin	\$17,283	\$27,135	\$33,635	\$38,225	\$44,186	15.6%
Calumet County, WI	\$16,234	\$27,610	\$34,772	\$41,601	\$44,305	6.5%
Outagamie County, WI	\$17,389	\$27,243	\$34,104	\$37,046	\$43,665	17.9%
Winnebago County, WI	\$17,362	\$26,775	\$32,641	\$36,034	\$40,498	12.4%
Appleton CSA	\$17,161	\$27,317	\$34,247	\$38,034	\$42,405	11.5%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

The poverty status was determined for the City of Appleton in the 2014 American Community Survey and it concluded that 11.7 percent (8,218 persons) fell below the poverty level. From this portion of the population for whom poverty status was determined, 33.9 percent (2,789 persons) were under the age of 18. The US Census Bureau determines poverty on a family by family basis. The bureau assigns each family one of 48 poverty thresholds based on the size of the family and the age of its members. If a family falls below its appropriate poverty threshold, every member of that family is considered to be in poverty.

Overall Community Goals

The City of Appleton conducted an extensive visioning process in 2016 to gain insight into community needs and desires. This process included three community workshops and an on-line survey. The full process and its results are documented in detail in Chapter 3, and along with other City and regional plans, were the basis for the overall goals identified in this chapter. These broad goals are further explored and defined in subsequent chapters, where additional objectives, policies, and initiatives are discussed.

- Goal 1 – Community Growth (Chapter 10)**
Appleton will continue to provide opportunities for residential, commercial, and industrial growth, including appropriate redevelopment sites within the downtown and existing neighborhoods, and greenfield development sites at the City's edge.
- Goal 2 – Neighborhood Development (Chapter 10)**
Appleton will preserve and enhance existing City neighborhoods, and require quality design in newly developed areas, to continue to provide an attractive setting for living and raising a family.
- Goal 3 – Housing Quality, Variety, and Affordability (Chapter 5)**
Appleton will provide a variety of rental and ownership housing choices in a range of prices affordable to community residents, and ensure that existing housing is adequately maintained in terms of physical quality and market viability.
- Goal 4 – Transportation (Chapter 6)**
Appleton will support a comprehensive transportation network that provides viable options for pedestrian, bicycle, highway, rail, and air transportation, both locally and within the region.



- **Goal 5 – Utilities and Community Services (Chapter 7)**
Appleton will provide excellent public utility and community services at a reasonable cost, and will work with private utility companies to ensure quality service delivery.
- **Goal 6 – Education (Chapter 7)**
Appleton will collaborate with public and private schools, colleges, and other educational facilities to ensure that the community continues to provide outstanding and diverse educational opportunities for residents of all ages.
- **Goal 7 – Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources (Chapter 8)**
Appleton will continue to protect and enhance its environmental quality and important natural resources, preserve historic sites, and support cultural opportunities for community residents.
- **Goal 8 – Economic Development (Chapter 9)**
Appleton will pursue economic development that retains and attracts talented people, brings good jobs to the area, and supports the vitality of its industrial areas, downtown, and neighborhood business districts.
- **Goal 9 – Parks and Recreation (Chapter 18)**
Appleton will provide a variety of parks and recreational programs to fulfill its mission: “Building communities and enriching lives where we live, work and play.”

- Hmong-American Partnership
The Hmong-American Partnership is a non-profit organization working to provide opportunity, service and partnerships in service to help the Fox River Valley's Hmong and other refugee populations integrate themselves into society's mainstream and reach their full potential.
- World Relief – Fox Valley Refugee Resettlement Agency
Empowering the local church to serve the most vulnerable. Vision: In community with the local church, World Relief envisions the most vulnerable people transformed economically, socially and spiritually.

Objectives and Policies

In the Issues and Opportunities element (Chapter 4) of this **Comprehensive Plan**, the City established an overall goal for agricultural, natural, historic, and cultural resources that "Appleton will continue to protect and enhance its environmental quality and important natural resources, preserve historic sites, and support cultural opportunities for community residents." The objectives identified in this chapter further refine that goal, while the policies identified here provide guidance concerning some of the ways in which these objectives may be reached.

8.1 OBJECTIVE: Maintain the viability of the regional agricultural sector that provides locally-grown food for residents and raw materials for Appleton's food processing and other businesses.

- 8.1.1 Preserve important farmlands and avoid fragmentation of agricultural areas in the region by directing new development to infill or redevelopment sites, encouraging compact development patterns that use land efficiently, and supporting county, state, and private initiatives with the goal of preserving prime agricultural land in the region.
- 8.1.2 Support programs that connect farmers and consumers to bring locally-grown food into the community, including working with the Community Garden Partnership and other organizations to provide locations for community garden education on gardening.
- 8.1.3 Pursue economic development initiatives that seek to retain and expand Appleton's existing food processing and agriculture-related businesses, and to attract new ones that provide a market for regional agricultural products.
- 8.1.4 Implement the agricultural related recommendations contained in the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan.
- 8.1.5 Support urban agriculture that also supports workforce education and promotes economic self-sufficiency, such as Riverview Gardens, Community Garden Partnership, UW Extension Master Gardeners and other organizations.
- 8.1.6 Support Appleton Downtown Inc's Downtown Farmer's Market.**
- 8.1.7 Evaluate the feasibility of a year round public market in downtown Appleton.
- 8.1.8 Evaluate the potential for an urban agriculture and locally sourced food summit to identify partnership opportunities and raise awareness of programs.

- 8.2.12 Support Appleton's application for designation as a Bird City Wisconsin community, which is a coalition of communities focused on ensuring Wisconsin's urban residents maintain healthy populations of birds and grow an appreciation for them through conservation practices and education.

8.3 OBJECTIVE: Continue and expand efforts to preserve, restore, and interpret important features of Appleton's rich history

- 8.3.1 Preserve Appleton's historic resources through the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance and actions of the Historic Preservation Commission.
- 8.3.2 Educate property owners and encourage context-sensitive restoration of Appleton's historic and potentially historic properties.
- 8.3.3 Continue to educate eligible homeowners and business owners on the tax credits available to them through the State and Federal governments for both homeowner rehabilitation and commercial property improvements.
- 8.3.4 Improve on-site marking and interpretive signage for Appleton's historic sites.
- 8.3.5 In partnership with other organizations, develop a historic walking tour or tours for the downtown, Fox River Corridor, and historic neighborhoods similar to the Fox Trot Trail Historic Walk.
- 8.3.6 Continue to maintain the City's status as a member of the Certified Local Government Program through the Wisconsin Historical Society.
- 8.3.7 Continue to recognize individual efforts for exterior restoration and maintenance of buildings and structures through the annual historic restoration and stewardship/revitalization certificate awards program.
- 8.3.8 Support development of the proposed Fox River Locks Visitor Center on the Fox River.
- 8.3.9 Promote the incorporation of Appleton's history into the planning and development of future parks, trails, and other amenities.
- 8.3.10 Encourage redevelopment in the downtown area which compliments the existing historic character of the neighborhood and promotes greater livability.

8.4 OBJECTIVE: Support the organizations, events, and venues that make Appleton the arts and cultural center of the Fox Cities.

- 8.4.1 Provide appropriate financial, technical, and other resources to ensure the continued viability and growth of cultural organizations and attractions, in partnership with organizations such as Appleton Downtown, Inc., the Appleton Public Library, and the Fox Cities Convention and Visitor's Bureau.
- 8.4.2 Partner with other agencies and organizations to ensure the availability of adequate event space and logistical services to facilitate cultural and related events within the community.
- 8.4.3 Continue to broaden education and collaboration with diverse communities.
- 8.4.4 Support development of a signature downtown amphitheater to showcase Appleton's growing music and cultural performance scene.

Threats

- Urban sprawl in the metropolitan area is spreading the population base, creating rival commercial centers, and sapping economic activity from the central city.
- Capturing the City's fair share of regional growth will continue to be a challenge as neighboring municipalities grow and incorporate, and towns now have the ability to create TIF Districts to encourage development outside of the urbanized area.
- As the Fox Cities grow, intergovernmental cooperation will become more of a challenge in an increasingly urbanized environment.
- The city's manufacturing base is threatened by changes in demand and competition from overseas, as well as the consolidation occurring within the industry.
- The housing stock in older central city neighborhoods can deteriorate over time. Maintaining a mix of incomes in healthy neighborhoods adjacent downtown is a challenge.

Economic Development Programs and Partnerships

Appleton partners with organizations in the City and region that help to promote economic development. A number of local, regional and state programs also exist which help foster economic development in the City. The Economic Development Strategic Plan lays out a framework for economic development in the City. Partners, programs, and the Economic Development Strategic Plan are described in further detail the sections below.

Economic Development Partnerships

The City of Appleton works in partnerships with many local, regional, and state organizations to promote economic development. The following are some of the City's strategic partners.

- **Appleton Downtown, Inc.**
Appleton Downtown, Inc. (ADI) is a not-for-profit community coalition dedicated to an economically strong, safe, attractive, and exciting downtown. ADI works with the City of Appleton to recruit new businesses and retain existing businesses in the downtown. The organization conducts programming (such as the farmers markets and downtown concerts), conducts marketing, and provides on-on-one assistance to business. It maintains an economic development committee to administer its façade grant program, recruit new businesses, conduct business retention efforts, and address issues affecting the economic growth and stability of the downtown.
- **Calumet County**
The county economic development program assists existing businesses and new businesses through low interest loans, grants, technical assistance, workforce training, and other types of assistance needed.
- **Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce**
The Chamber represents the cities of Appleton, Kaukauna, Menasha and Neenah; the towns of Buchanan, Clayton, Grand Chute, Greenville, Harrison, Kaukauna, Menasha, Neenah and Vandenbroek, and the villages of Combined Locks, Hortonville, Kimberly, Little Chute and Sherwood. The Fox Cities Chamber plays a leadership role in regional economic development efforts in Northeastern Wisconsin, through partnerships with local units of government, private industry, and State and regional agencies.

Objectives and Policies

The overall goal for economic development stated in Chapter 4 is that Appleton will pursue economic development that retains and attracts talented people, brings good jobs to the area, and supports the vitality of its industrial areas, downtown, and neighborhood business districts.” The following objectives and policies are intended to achieve that overall goal.

9.1 **OBJECTIVE: Implement the Appleton Economic Development Strategic Plan (AEDSP)**

9.1.1 Plan for and implement the key actions and measures identified in the AEDSP.

9.2 **OBJECTIVE: Grow Appleton’s business community through recruitment, expansion, and retention programs that ensure a diverse business mix and jobs that pay well.**

9.2.1 Together with partners, prepare and implement a business recruitment program that targets site selectors and suitable businesses in manufacturing, business and professional services, retail, and other industries.

9.2.2 Work with the existing business community to help identify and tap opportunities for expansion.

9.2.3 Implement business retention program including regular business visits and monitoring of business conditions within key industry groups.

9.2.4 Develop a business attraction marketing campaign.

9.2.5 In partnership with other organizations, conduct regional retail attraction and promote neighborhood retail development.

9.3 **OBJECTIVE: Create the resources and culture in which entrepreneurial development is encouraged.**

9.3.1 Support/partner with organizations pursuing programs for entrepreneurial development comprised of networking, financial assistance, training, and supportive services for all types of entrepreneurs.

9.4 **OBJECTIVE: Ensure the continued vitality of downtown and the City’s neighborhood commercial districts.**

9.4.1 Implement the recommendations found in the Downtown Plan.

9.4.2 Implement the recommendations adopted in the corridor plans for South Oneida Street, Richmond Street, and Wisconsin Avenue. Consider updates to these corridor plans and/or creating plans for other key corridors, as needed.

9.4.3 Monitor business activity and physical conditions within Appleton’s business districts on a regular basis to provide early identification of issues that may need to be addressed.

9.5 **OBJECTIVE: Encourage new development and redevelopment activities that create vital and attractive neighborhoods and business districts.**

9.5.1 Ensure a continued adequate supply of industrial and commercial land to sustain new business development.



- 9.5.2 Proactively acquire property targeted for redevelopment and develop a land bank to assist in property assembly with a focus on corridors, the downtown, and areas identified as business/industrial on the Future Land Use Map.
- 9.5.3 Ensure quality development by requiring that all new construction meets or exceeds the minimum design criteria determined appropriate for the area in which the site/building is located.

9.6 OBJECTIVE: Create a vibrant environment that is conducive to attracting and retaining talented people.

- 9.6.1 Continue the City’s efforts to expand and improve its amenities such as trails, parks and recreation, the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, the Appleton Public Library, Fox Cities Exhibition Center, sporting facilities, and other cultural or civic offerings.

9.6.2 Encourage the creation of vibrant mixed-use urban areas in the downtown and along the Fox River that are both walkable and bicycle-friendly.

- 9.6.3 Support efforts to retain graduating Lawrence University students within the community.

9.7 OBJECTIVE: Work collaboratively with other municipalities, organizations, and private entities to advance the economic development of the entire region.

- 9.7.1 Continue the City’s involvement and support for regional economic development organizations such as Fox Cities Regional Partnership and New North.
- 9.7.2 Continue to collaborate with neighboring communities on economic development issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries, such as commercial vacancies along College Avenue.
- 9.7.3 Support the I-41 Initiative in order to fully leverage regional assets and promote Appleton’s position as an important transportation hub with easy access local and regional markets.
- 9.7.4 In partnership with the Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau, continue to support local and regional tourism development efforts.

9.8 OBJECTIVE: Continue supporting educational partnerships and workforce development

- 9.8.1 Support existing and new education-workforce partnerships. Encourage partners to engage in career awareness and organize target business programs.
- 9.8.2 Assist in promotion of business alliances in high school and Fox Valley Technical College around key regional clusters.

9.9 OBJECTIVE: Enhance Appleton’s brand as a location to do business

- 9.9.1 Consider undertaking a full branding strategy to refine the Appleton brand.



1.4 Install sculpture, murals, and other art in public locations throughout the downtown

City of Appleton, ADI, Creative Downtown Appleton Inc. and its partners should continue to install public art and implement creative placemaking projects throughout the downtown area. Recent successful projects include pocket parks, murals, and traffic control boxes wrapped in original works of art created by local middle school and high school students.



Figure 58 Movable shrub boxes create a buffer from traffic and noise in Madrid

1.5 Continue to encourage quality urban design throughout the downtown through voluntary measures

Building and site design on private property impact the aesthetics and experience of downtown. High-quality buildings contribute to downtown's sense of place.

- A. Continue to support ADI's façade grant program with BID funds and research additional funding sources to enhance the program.
- B. Promote a set of best practices for business and property owners to have available as a resource to help inform exterior physical improvements.

1.6 Add additional flexible outdoor space throughout the downtown area

- A. Identify specific locations and arrangements of outdoor seating and supportive outdoor furnishings which enhance the pedestrian experience.
- B. Review policies in place, identify barriers, and plan to adjust/remove barriers to encourage private businesses to add additional outdoor spaces including but not limited to outdoor seating, decks, patios, rooftop space, and sidewalk cafés.



Figure 59 Experiential activities such as group drawing attract visitors downtown, including to the Art Alley during Mile of Music No. 4

4 Downtown Development and Business Retention Initiative

More and more businesses are finding downtowns highly attractive for both their business and to employees. Younger employees find the downtown setting to be particularly appealing, and all employees enjoy the access to restaurants, services, and entertainment in the downtown. This environment is the unique selling point for downtown. It can be equally appealing to home-grown businesses and to corporations seeking branch sites. Downtown Appleton should be among the top business locations pitched by local and regional economic development agencies.

4.1 Sustain and grow the retail niches which have formed downtown

Niche development strategies typically identify marketing and business clustering as high priorities. The efforts of ADI, the City and other organizations should tout the strength of Appleton's downtown retail niches, where shoppers can explore a wide variety of related goods and services. Taking this strategy to the next level, events developed around these clusters can further build the city's reputation and market recognition within one or more related retail categories.

- A. Develop strategies for growing existing niches including aggressively marketing current business clusters. As part of this study several target industries were identified. ADI, the City and its partners should regularly re-evaluate those target industries in order to stay abreast of important trends related to the formation and decline of market niches. .
 - A.1 Identify target retail stores from surrounding areas and create an opportunity for them to "try on" a commercial space for a period of three months by negotiating with the landlord to facilitate this possibility when it is cost effective for both parties.
 - A.2 Create a comprehensive multi-media business recruitment packet and process.
- B. Visit with retailers in space surrounding the vacant space asking those retailers for ideas for complementary or natural fit-type neighbors.
- C. Target the following specialty categories as identified in the Appleton Downtown Market Analysis and Economic Development Strategic Plan:
 - C.1 Art related businesses: music, painting, sculpture, ceramics, dance, photography, and others where customers can get involved in the process of creating, art-related incubator (stained glass, printmaking, candles, sculpture, etc.).
 - C.2 Crafts and craft supplies (quilting store, knitting/yarn store).
 - C.3 Organic grocery, small specialty food store.
- D. Promote continuity of hours among similar business categories.
- E. Proactively seek to concentrate new businesses in areas of downtown where similar and complimentary businesses already exist. Examples from the market study include specialty retail, home furnishings, art-related retail and services.

6 Downtown Management Initiative

Strategies related to ongoing management of the downtown and the revitalization process are grouped within this initiative. While not necessarily as tangible as some of the other strategies in the plan, they are vital to the process of creating a vibrant downtown.

6.1 Update the Downtown Plan as initiatives are completed or new opportunities arise

In planning for the future it is impossible to recognize every possible outcome or opportunity. Plans, then, are general guidelines and should be continually re-evaluated in the light of present circumstances. Appleton's organizations with a role in downtown revitalization should continue conducting an annual review to measure progress in implementing the plan, to assess priorities for investment of their resources, and to consider changes which respond to current situations. The entire plan should be completely updated on a ten-year cycle.

- A. Establish a process for reviewing and updating the downtown plan.
- B. Host a "State of the Downtown" session open to the public on an annual basis. Use as an opportunity to grow volunteer base, as well as share information on downtown successes, challenges, and upcoming events and programs. Encourage underrepresented groups which have a stake in downtown to participate and contribute their own ideas.

6.2 Uphold support for Appleton Downtown, Inc. and the Business Improvement District

These organizations have been critical to restoring vitality to the downtown. With broad support from property owners, businesses, community organizations, and city government, these organizations have been effective in coordinating the interests of all of these stakeholders. ADI has further served as a leader in implementing the initiatives of the Downtown Plan. These organizations should continue to be recognized for their role in creating a vibrant downtown.

- A. Continue support for ADI and the BID.
- B. Consider amending the City's special events policy to make the process easier for organizations to host events downtown.
- C. Continue to support a cooperative branding process with the City and ADI, and explore collaborative opportunities with other partners, such as the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitor's Bureau, to strengthen the message of downtown being a destination for business and leisure.

6.3 Ensure the cleanliness and safety of the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods

Downtown Appleton is perceived by residents to be a clean and safe place. Still, there are areas of concern. Several comments pertained to trash and cigarette butts in a few places in the downtown. Others expressed perceived safety concerns in Jones Park and in downtown neighborhoods. With the construction of the Fox Cities Exhibition Center it will be even more important to maintain a clean, safe environment downtown in order to attract and retain visitors.

- A. Implement plans for Jones Park and the railroad corridor path to address safety concerns.



- B. Continue to enhance the plan aimed at keeping the downtown clean and well maintained.
- C. Develop a neighborhood solid waste collection plan to improve livability for downtown residents.
- D. Continue to support efforts such as the Downtown C.A.R.E collaboration with Riverview Gardens. Identify funding options to expand the daily program to provide more comprehensive maintenance. This innovative collaboration links ServiceWorks job-training participants with opportunities to beautify the downtown.
- E. Continue support for creative ideas to maintain a clean downtown environment, including but not limited to the recently implemented “vote with your butt” containers which encourage smokers to deposit their cigarette butts in the trash.
- F. Continue working cooperatively with Project Rush initiative to address homelessness and explore the need for a downtown drop in center.

6.4 Continue to explore potential for formation of a Riverfront Business Improvement District (BID)

- A. Exploration of a BID or other funding mechanism should be done in conjunction with development of an overall plan to address riverfront opportunities.

Section 6: Implementation

The Downtown Plan provides a long-term vision for success. The initiatives and related strategies create an overarching framework for plan implementation. This section of the report provides more detail in terms of how those strategies can be implemented. It includes the following subsections:

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Implementation Matrix
- Funding Options
- Performance Benchmarks

Roles and Responsibilities

Plan implementation will require continued collaboration among the City, the Appleton Redevelopment Authority (ARA), Appleton Downtown Inc. (ADI), the Business Improvement District (BID), property owners, business owners, downtown residents, and volunteers. The primary roles and responsibilities of the City and ADI are described below.

The City of Appleton (including the ARA)

- Coordinate major redevelopment efforts.
- Plan, design, and construct major infrastructure improvements.
- Provide financial incentives for larger redevelopment and rehabilitation projects.
- Work with ADI to identify barriers to downtown business development and public realm enhancements, as well as strategies to overcome them.
- Continue to coordinate regular business retention and expansion visits with large downtown employers.
- Continue to identify funding sources for projects.

Appleton Downtown Inc., Creative Downtown Appleton Inc., and the Business Improvement District

- Coordinate downtown programming, promotions, and events.
- Create and distribute downtown marketing materials to support vibrant programming and attract desirable businesses.
- Plan, design, and construct low-cost placemaking improvements (such as parklets, pop-ups, murals, etc...).
- Provide façade enhancement and other smaller grant programs to stimulate private investment to enhance existing buildings.
- Work with the City to identify barriers to downtown business development and public realm enhancements, as well as strategies to overcome them.
- Prepare grant applications and solicit private funding to support the mission of ADI.
- Advocate for downtown businesses and projects which support them.
- Conduct business recruitment calls to assist property owners in tenant attraction. Support with business recruitment grant funding.

