

A light gray background map of Appleton, Wisconsin, showing a grid of streets and a winding river. The map is centered on the city area.

CITY OF APPLETON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

April 2025

Market and Retail
Leakage Study Findings

SMITHGROUP

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METHODOLOGY

To understand the future of Appleton's economy, a market study and a leakage study were conducted.

- **A market study** compares supply and demand to determine which types of retail are undersupplied in the region and can therefore be supported by the consumers in the area.
- **A leakage study** determines if residents are spending money outside Appleton due to a lack of certain retail establishments in the City.

While these studies are a snapshot in time, they do provide a good indicator of the market. This study was compared with zoning trends, community engagement results, surrounding markets, and conversations with developers to determine which retail establishments would best thrive in Appleton, which informed the recommendations for three subareas:

- Wisconsin Ave
- S Oneida St
- Northland Ave/Richmond St

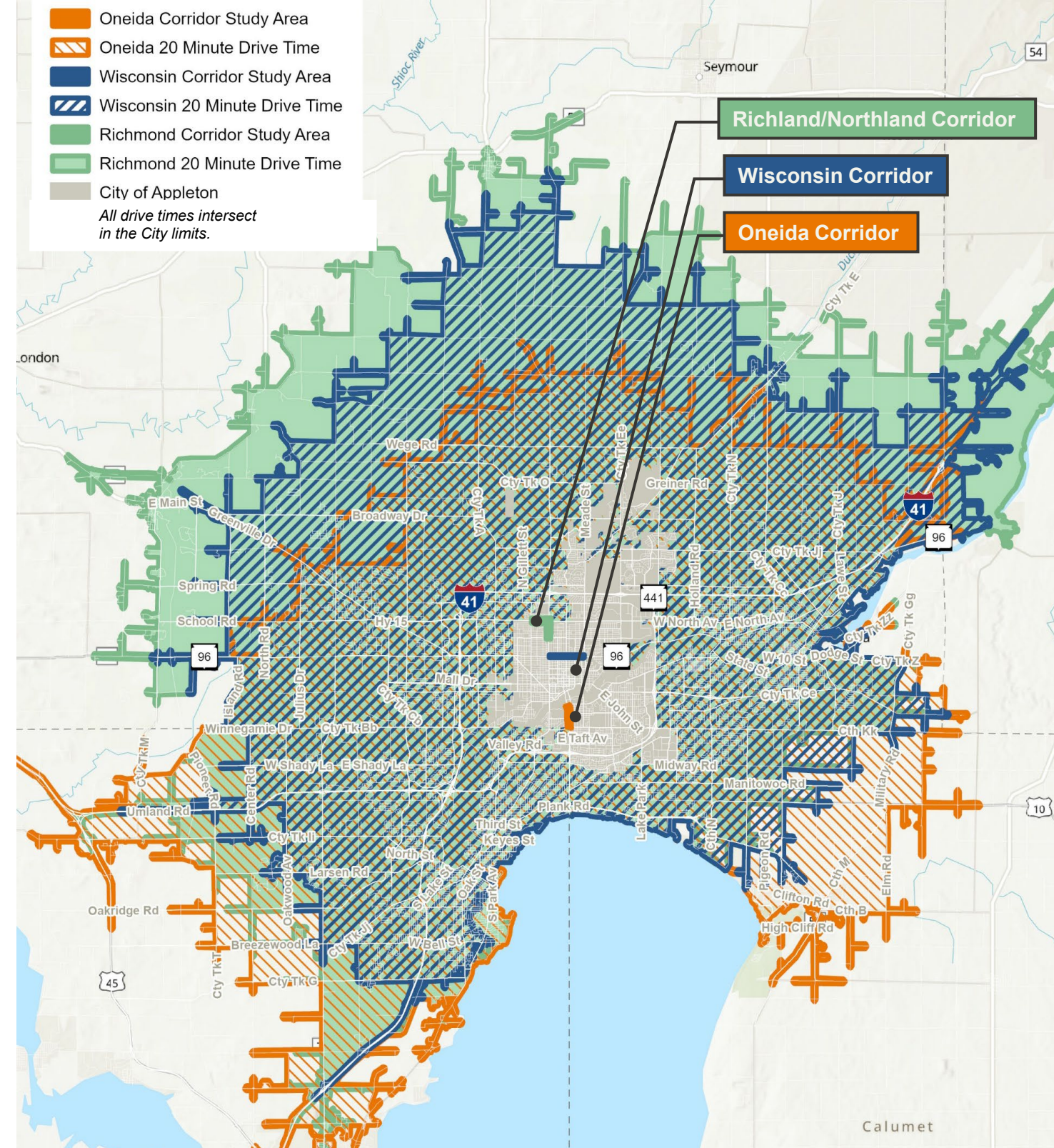
This analysis was based on 2024 data for the market within a 22-minute drive of Appleton, the typical distance Appleton community members are willing to drive for services. Data was captured using PlacerAI, which tracks cell phone and spending trends from January 01, 2024 to December 23, 2024. This program counts visits when a mobile device user spends at least 7 to 10 minutes at a specific location.



A key factor in determining the market area was the amount of overlap between market areas for the subareas.

When looking at drive times to better understand who and where people would be willing to drive from to the corridors for business, all three study areas capture the whole of the City. They then extend further into outlying areas of the counties. 78% of the market areas for the three corridors overlap. Since the areas overlap so much, one assessment was conducted for the whole of the Appleton market area to determine what retail the entire market can support and then determine which corridors best meet the character of those types of retail based on other factors such as lot size, character, and existing businesses.

Map Source: 2025 Esri 20 Minute Drive Time Analysis Tool, The light tan boundary for the City of Appleton overlaps the drive times for every corridor, meaning Appleton residents are likely to frequent each corridor for retail activities.



This market analysis helps understand retail demand which could provide key insight of which retail types can thrive in Appleton.

This market area was determined as a 22-mile distance from Appleton's subareas: Oneida, Wisconsin, and Northland/Richmond. This distance was selected because in 2024, the average person typically traveled around 20 to 22 miles for retail trips.

20 miles

average work commute from home for workers living in the study area

21.98 miles

average distance from Appleton to shop in other communities

Data Source: 2024 Placer AI data was used to inform the 2025 Retail and Market Analysis

2 FINDINGS

The study area showed Appleton has more supply than demand when it comes to retail.

Since there is a lot of retail supplied already in the region, it can be challenging to expect significantly more retail businesses to open in the City and its subareas. This means the City will need to be strategic about where and how much retail it encourages in the future, so businesses are better able to support each other and thrive. It also means that housing along the corridors will be needed to support both housing demand and future businesses.

**\$6.52
billion**

Total Demand for Retail
in the Study Area



**\$7.76
billion**

Total Supply of Retail
in the Study Area

Data Source: 2024 Placer AI data was used to inform the 2025 Retail and Market Analysis

There is still demand for five specific types of retail in the Appleton study area:

Retail Type	Number of Retail Establishments	Supported Square Footage
lawn/garden equipment & supplies stores	2-5	113,859.22
beer, wine, & liquor stores	2-3	61,893.11
gas stations	2-8	203,900.59
florists & miscellaneous store retails	5-10	15,595.67
used merchandise stores	2-6	37,015.39

Data Source: 2024 Placer AI data was used to inform the 2025 Retail and Market Analysis
The number of retail establishments is generated using the average building size of comparable businesses in the Appleton area. The range varies depending on the size of the establishment and the variety of goods sold. For example, Appleton could support 2 mega gas stations, similar to large truck stops, or 8 typically sized gas stations.

Residents are willing to travel more than the average 22 miles for these key retail services:

This means Appleton has a market that could potentially support these types of retail so long as they have quality goods and strong locations where people want to spend their time.

1.

Shops & services

464,668 visits in 2024

2.

Dining

253,750 visits in 2024

3.

Groceries

52,443 visits in 2024

4.

Leisure

44,520 visits in 2024

5.

Superstores

34,362 visits in 2024

6.

Hotels & casinos

22,311 visits in 2024

Data Source: 2024 Placer AI data was used to inform the 2025 Retail and Market Analysis

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A | DEMAND

Category	Key	Value	Sales/SF	EST. Supportable SF	# of Supported New Establishments
Lawn & Garden Equipment & Supplies Stores	Demand	\$96,923,401			
Lawn & Garden Equipment & Supplies Stores	Supply	\$28,607,872			
Lawn & Garden Equipment & Supplies Stores	Unmet Demand (Demand-Supply)	\$68,315,529	\$600.00	113,859.22	2 - 5
Beer, Wine, & Liquor Stores	Demand	\$47,511,657			
Beer, Wine, & Liquor Stores	Supply	\$19,659,757			
Beer, Wine, & Liquor Stores	Unmet Demand (Demand-Supply)	\$27,851,900	\$450.00	61,893.11	2 - 3
Gasoline Stations	Demand	\$697,447,544			
Gasoline Stations	Supply	\$578,165,700			
Gasoline Stations	Unmet Demand (Demand-Supply)	\$119,281,844	\$585.00	203,900.59	2 Mega & 8+ "normal"
Florists And Miscellaneous Store Retailers	Demand	\$7,335,576			
Florists And Miscellaneous Store Retailers	Supply	\$3,015,575			
Florists And Miscellaneous Store Retailers	Unmet Demand (Demand-Supply)	\$4,320,001	\$277.00	15,595.67	5 - 10+
Used Merchandise Stores	Demand	\$22,190,003			
Used Merchandise Stores	Supply	\$13,158,247			
Used Merchandise Stores	Unmet Demand (Demand-Supply)	\$9,031,756	\$244.00	37,015.39	2 large & 3 - 6 "normal"

Data Source: 2024 Placer AI data was used to inform the 2025 Retail and Market Analysis

Category	Number of Visits by Residents	Number of Residents
Apparel	21,123.66	8,005.00
Beauty & Spa	878.45	2,083.00
Dining	253,750.47	68,843.00
Electronics	2670.280548	868
Fitness	1,025.21	3,176.00
Groceries	52,443.29	9,329.00
Home Improvements & Furnishings	10,279.27	2,546.00
Hotels & Casinos	22,311.68	10,585.00
Industrial	3,276.28	1,244.00
Leisure	44,520.60	123,106.00
Medical & Health	14,443.77	6,956.00
Other	415.73	6,032.00
Shops & Services	464,668.50	49,171.00
Superstores	34,362.98	5,919.00

Data Source: Leakage is the amount of times residents travel outside of Appleton for retail. 2024 Placer AI data was used to inform the 2025 Retail and Market Analysis.

APPENDIX C | KEY TERMS

Leakage | Leakage occurs when consumers spend money on goods and services outside of the local market, rather than within it.

Market | The geographic area where a business operates and where it attracts customers. For the purposes of this study, the market was defined as a 22-minute travel distance of the three subareas:

- Wisconsin Ave
- S Oneida St
- Northland Ave/Richmond St

Retail | Retail is the process of selling goods and services directly to the end consumer. Retail establishments include things such as grocery stores, coffee shops, clothing stores, and department stores.