

NOTE: Charts, figures, and tables in this draft may differ from those in subsequent drafts. These variations, intended to facilitate effective visual communication, are solely graphic in nature and do not indicate changes in the data used to prepare this report.

DRAFT

SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. CA-737-280

CITY OF WAUKESHA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This comprehensive plan report is a policy document intended to help guide and shape the growth of the City—from both development and redevelopment perspectives as well as social and economic perspectives—to meet the present and anticipated future needs of City residents and businesses.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING FOR THE CITY OF WAUKESHA

The City of Waukesha’s first land use plan was published in 1993.¹ To develop the plan, the City received assistance from the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC),² which provides basic information and planning services needed to help solve problems that transcend city, village, town, and county boundaries. The 1993 plan contained land use development objectives and supporting principles, standards, and urban design criteria that were to be used as a guide and shape land use development and redevelopment in the study area, which, as shown in Figure 1.1, extended beyond the City’s corporate boundaries, to meet the existing and anticipated future needs of the area and its residents.

¹ *SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report (CAPR) No. 169, A Land Use Plan for the City of Waukesha and Environs: 2010, September 1993.*

² *The metropolitan planning organization and regional planning commission for local governments within the seven-county Southeastern Wisconsin Region, including Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha Counties.*

Figure 1.1: Study area from Map 1 (page 20), SEWRPC CAPR No. 169



In 1999, the Wisconsin Legislature enacted a comprehensive planning and smart growth law, set forth in Section 66.1001 of the *Wisconsin Statutes*. The law requires that the local governing body of a county, city, village, or town with zoning, subdivision, or official mapping ordinances adopt a complementary comprehensive plan in order to enforce those ordinances.³ State law requires a comprehensive plan to include the following nine elements:

³ *The comprehensive planning law supplements Section 62.23 of the Statutes, which establishes provisions for city planning.*

- Trends, Issues, and Opportunities
- Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources
- Community Facilities and Utilities
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Implementation and Intergovernmental Cooperation

To develop a plan to meet the new requirements, the City again coordinated with the Commission, which was developing a similar plan for the County.⁴ The City's resulting comprehensive plan was adopted in September 2009. This report was prepared by the City and Commission staff as an update to the City's 2009 comprehensive plan.⁵

Wisconsin's comprehensive planning law recognizes the uniqueness of individual communities and provides flexibility for how municipalities address statutory requirements. Comprehensive plans are required to identify overall objectives, policies, goals and programs for each of the nine elements. For the purposes of this report, *objectives* and *goals* are considered to be synonymous and are used interchangeably. Specific programs that relate to each element are anticipated to change over the span of this comprehensive plan update. Therefore, this plan presents goals and policies for each element that serve as a framework for devising and implementing programs to address the City's broader objectives. Programs that were available or being evaluated by the City at this time this report was being prepared are described in Chapter 9 of this report.

⁴ *Waukesha County Department of Parks and Land Use, Waukesha County University of Wisconsin-Extension, and Waukesha County municipalities, A Comprehensive Development Plan for Waukesha County, February 2009.*

⁵ *This comprehensive plan update does not address agriculture in the same manner as other comprehensive planning elements. This is due to expectations that lands within the City will be developed at an urban density in accordance with the regional land use and transportation plan, VISION 2050, which recommends focusing urban development within planned urban service areas like those that encompass the City. Doing so can moderate the conversion of agricultural lands and other open space lands to accommodate urban growth in the County and Region. Some agricultural data are included in the land use chapter of this report (Chapter 2).*

PLAN UPDATE FRAMEWORK AND PROCESS

The first phase of the plan update process was the inventory or data collection phase. This phase involved gathering the information on existing conditions and trends in the County that is required as a basis for developing the comprehensive plan. Much of the inventory data in this report is presented in individual element chapters, whereas the economic development chapter, for example, contains data on existing employment and employment trends.

Given the relevance of socioeconomic and demographic data to multiple, interrelated comprehensive plan elements, this chapter contains a summary of population and household inventory data, trends, and projections, which establish 2050 as the design year for this report.⁶ This means of organization is intended to enable users to easily access and reference information for planning and regulatory efforts, including implementing this plan, creating design guidelines, conducting park and open space planning, enforcing complete streets guidelines or policies, and updating the City's zoning ordinance.

► **Recommendation: Use Data for Planning**

This plan recommends that the City use population, demographic, and household characteristics data in the chapter in all planning efforts.

Population, Household, and Demographic Trends and Projections

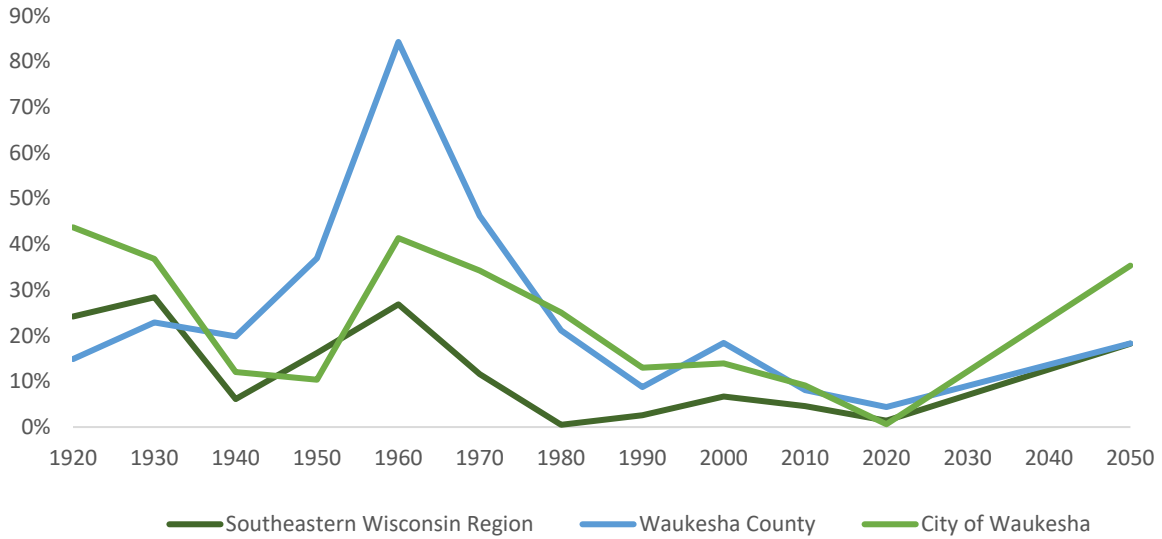
Population Levels

The City's population has increased fairly steadily over time. While the population more than tripled between 1950 and 2010, growth from 2010 to 2020 occurred at a much slower rate.

The City's population is projected to increase by approximately one third from 2020 to 2050. This increase is substantially higher than the anticipated population growth of the County or Region.

⁶ Appendix D of this report documents data sources and contains detailed population, household, employment, and jobs data, much of which comes from the 2016-2020 5-year American Community Survey (ACS).

Figure 1.2: Historic and Projected Population Growth Rate



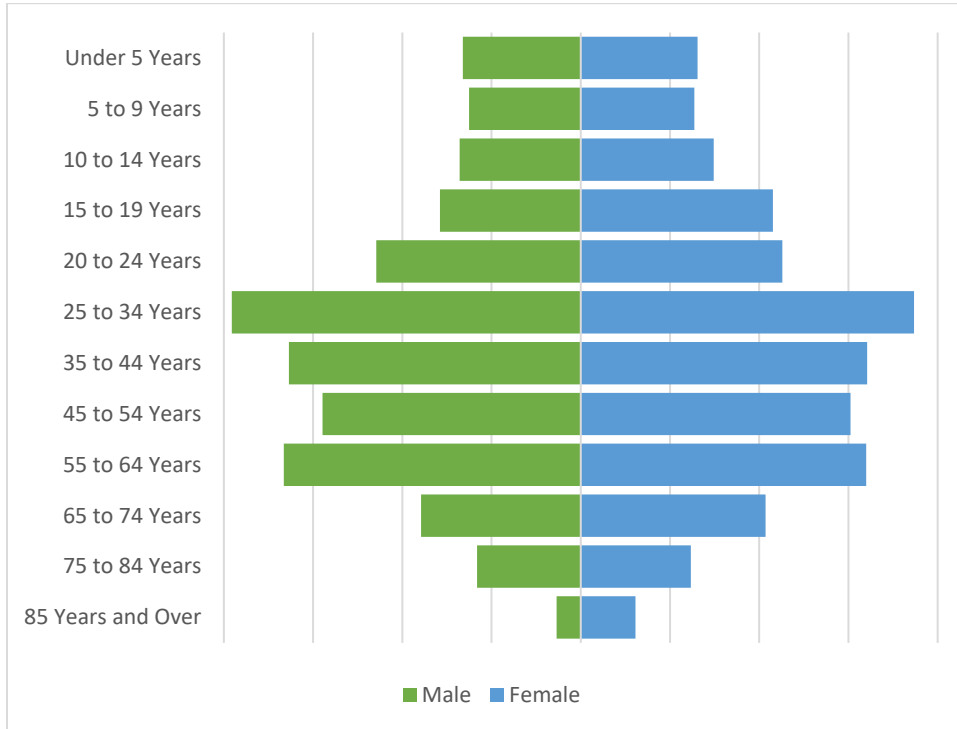
Data on current population levels and projected population growth provide information needed to assess future demand for resources in a community.

Age

The City has a relatively young population, with a higher proportion of residents aged 15 to 44 and a smaller proportion of residents over the age of 65 than in the County or Region. Although the median age of City residents is also lower than the County or Region, it has been steadily increasing. Trends and projections indicate that the age distribution in the City will continue to shift towards increasing proportions of residents aged 65 and older.

Understanding the City's age distribution has important comprehensive planning implications, including changes in the labor force and in demand or need for various types of housing, transportation access and modes, schools, child care and health care, and recreational facilities to best serve residents.

Figure 1.3: Age Distribution of City Residents



Insert graphic text: Median Age: City 39.7; County 43.2; Region 38.6

It is also worth noting that while females comprise a slightly higher proportion of the City's population than males overall, females also account for a significantly higher proportion of the older adult population.

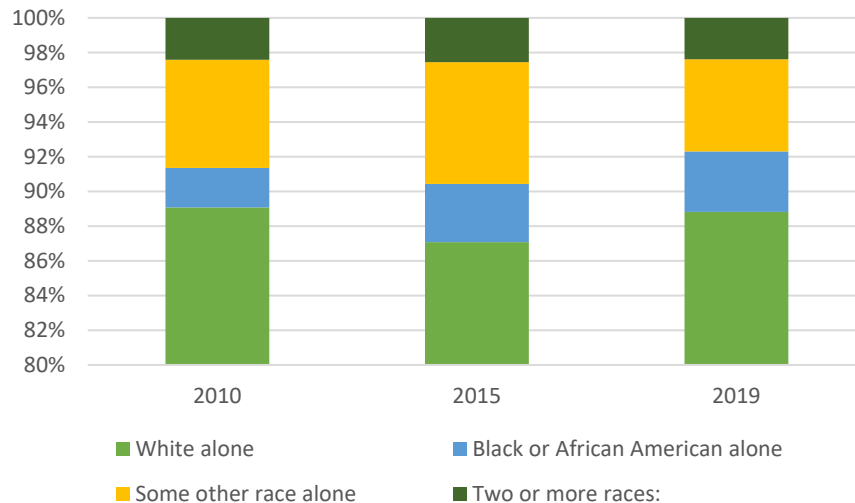
Insert graphic text: City of Waukesha Population by Sex: Female 51.1%; Male 48.9%.

Incorporating age and gender data into planning can enable a community to recognize the differing needs of various population groups, such as access to health care, and is useful in identifying gender disparities, both of which are essential to establishing community policies and programs that meet different populations' needs and prioritize addressing disparities.

Race/Ethnicity⁷

The City's population has been growing more racially and ethnically diverse. Between 2010 and 2020, the proportion of Waukesha residents identifying as Black or African American or as two or more races grew significantly.

Figure 1.4: Trends in Racial Distribution of City Population



Insert graphic text: The City's largest ethnic groups include residents identifying as non-Hispanic white or as Hispanic or Latino of any race.

Race and ethnicity data are important to planning to accurately describe conditions related to a variety of planning considerations, to look for potential differences based on race or ethnicity, and to measure any disparities. Race data may be used to evaluate how fairly and equitably programs and policies serve the needs of people of all races or ethnicities. With a responsibility to serve all residents, local governments need to address inequities and monitor compliance with antidiscrimination laws, regulations, and policies. Using race and ethnicity data in planning processes can also enable a community to access funding established for programs designed to serve specific groups.

⁷ Race and ethnicity data documented by the U.S. Census Bureau categorize people as White alone, Black or African American alone, American Indian and Alaska Native alone, Asian alone, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, Some other race alone, Two or more races, Hispanic or Latino (of any race), and White alone (not Hispanic or Latino).

Residents with Disabilities

Disability data indicates the number of people that identify themselves as having disabilities, including hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, or independent living difficulty.⁸ Data on disability levels and trends can guide development of policies, programs, and services to equalize opportunities for all residents.

The City has a higher percentage of residents with a disability than the County or Region. The percent of people with a disability is especially elevated for males and people identified as American Indian and Alaska Native, Hispanic, or Latino (of any race), and other race relative to the County and Region.

With respect to age, substantially higher percentages of City residents aged 5 to 17 and 35 to 64 have a disability compared to the County. City residents aged 65 and older, and especially those 75 and over, also have a significantly higher disability rate than residents of the County or Region.

Insert figure or graphic text: Approximately 12 percent of City residents are living with one or more disabilities, including seven percent of City residents who are experiencing ambulatory difficulty, which is important to consider when examining various housing and transportation needs.

Residents with Health Insurance

Health insurance metrics are useful for describing a population's access to health care. People without insurance are more likely not to receive regular preventative health care to address their health and wellness needs. People's health and wellness needs can vary somewhat based on demographics. While some of the population's needs may be met through lifestyle practices, like regular exercise and socialization that come through active transportation, recreation, and community engagement, greater external supports may be necessary for other populations, including the aging population and those with major health conditions and chronic diseases, for which uninsured people are less likely to receive service.

Disparities in health insurance coverage are particularly high among children under the age of 6 years; males; and among people identified as American Indian and Alaska Native, Hispanic or Latino (of any race), and other races relative to the County and Region.

⁸ As measured by the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS).

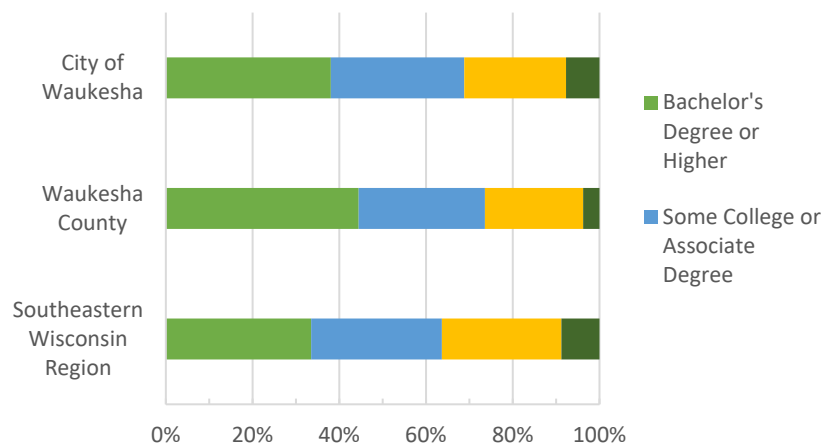
The percentage of City residents who are uninsured is higher than the County and Region in nearly all income ranges but is especially elevated for people with household incomes less than \$25,000. The percentage of uninsured City residents with a disability, however, is lower than the County and Region.

Insert graphic text: While nearly 94 percent of City residents have health insurance, the proportion of uninsured City residents is greater than that of the County or Region.

Educational Attainment

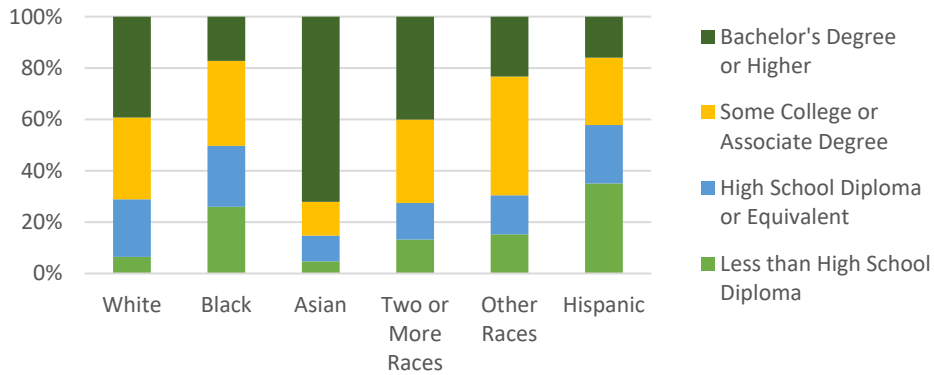
Educational attainment among City residents aged 25 and over is lower than that of the County but higher than that of the Region overall. More than two thirds of residents over the age of 25 have completed at least some college.

Figure 1.5: Educational Attainment of Residents Aged 25 or Older



There are disparities in educational attainment by race and ethnicity within the City. Residents who are Asian, white, or two or more races are more likely to have at least some college, while Black and Hispanic or Latino residents are more likely than other racial or ethnic groups to have secondary education as their highest level of educational attainment.

Figure 1.6: Educational Attainment by Race

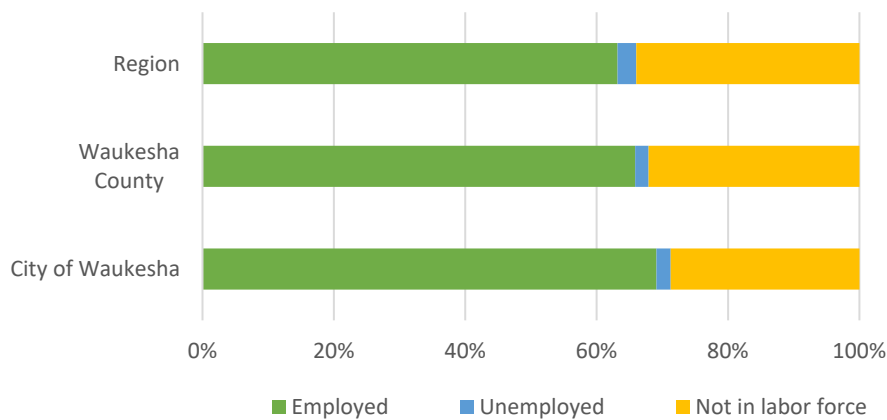


Labor Force

The City has a larger proportion of its population in the working age range than the County or Region, which corresponds to a high level of labor force participation. A higher proportion of the working age population is employed, and lower proportions are either not in the labor force or are unemployed, as compared to the County or Region.

Call Out: The City's labor force will likely change along with its shifting age distribution. Attracting new residents and making jobs accessible to non-resident workers will be important for the City's economy.

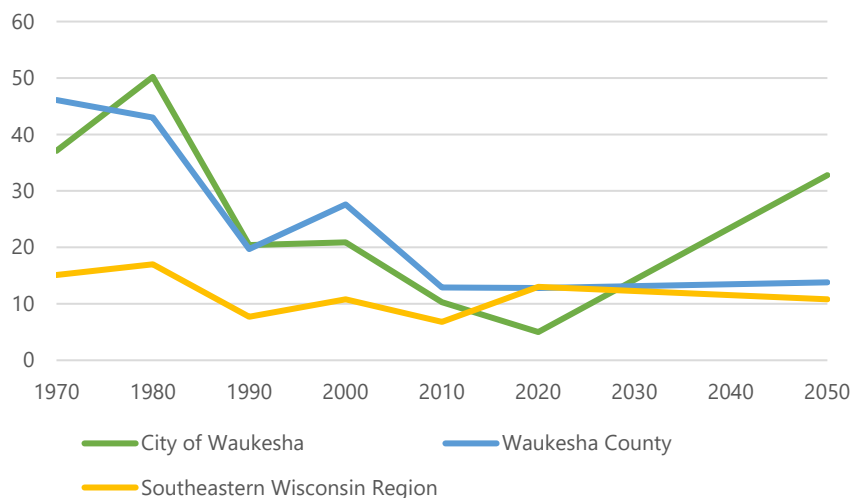
Figure 1.7: Labor Force Participation



Household Levels

The number of households⁹ in the City has been consistently increasing at a higher rate than the City's population. Waukesha County has experienced higher household growth than the Region since 1960, but the City's growth has been slower than the County's since 2000. The City has experienced relatively slow growth in the number of households since 2000 but is projected to grow substantially by 2050. Similarly, the City is projected to see a much higher rate of growth than either the County or Region.

Figure 1.8: Historical and Projected Household Levels

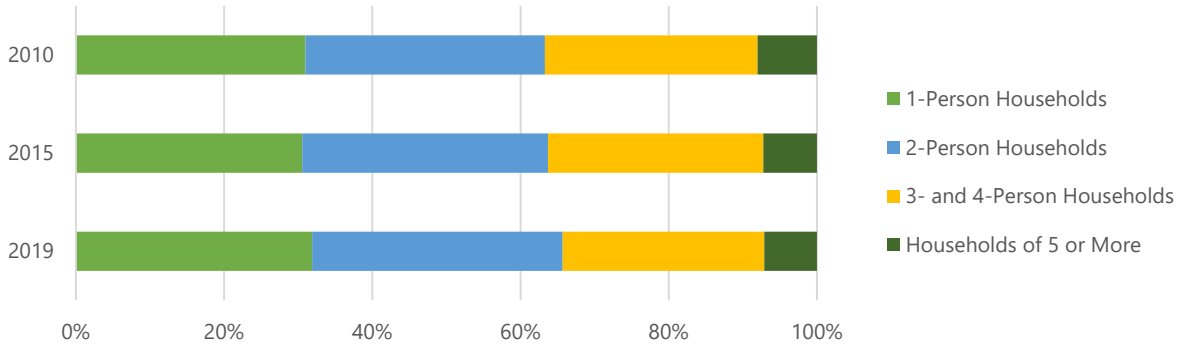


Household Size

The average household size in the City has decreased in recent decades, corresponding to national trends. The decline in household size is related, in part, to changing household types. In recent decades, single-person households and other non-family households have increased at a much faster rate than family households. Two thirds of all households, owner- and renter-occupied, in the City of Waukesha are one- or two-person households, higher than either the County or Region. An even greater proportion of renter-occupied households – nearly three quarters – are one- or two-person households. There is a higher proportion of one-person households in the City than the County, and every county in the Region with the exception of Milwaukee County.

⁹ A household includes all people who occupy a housing unit, which is defined by the Census Bureau as a house, apartment, mobile home, group of rooms, or single-room that is occupied, or intended for occupancy, as separate living quarters.

Figure 1.9: Changes in Household Size



Household Composition

A smaller proportion of households in the City have people under the age of 18 living in them than either the County or Region. The City also has a smaller proportion of households with people over the age of 60 than the County and Region.

Household Income

The City's median household income is lower than that of the County but higher than that of the Region. The City has a higher proportion of moderate-income households (\$50,000 to \$100,000 per year) than the County or Region. Since 2015, the City's median household income has increased at a slower rate than either the County or State.

Figure 1.10: Household Income Distribution

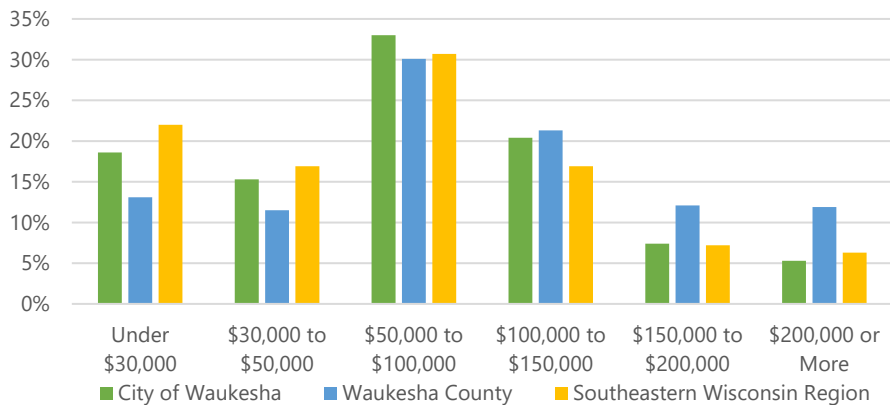
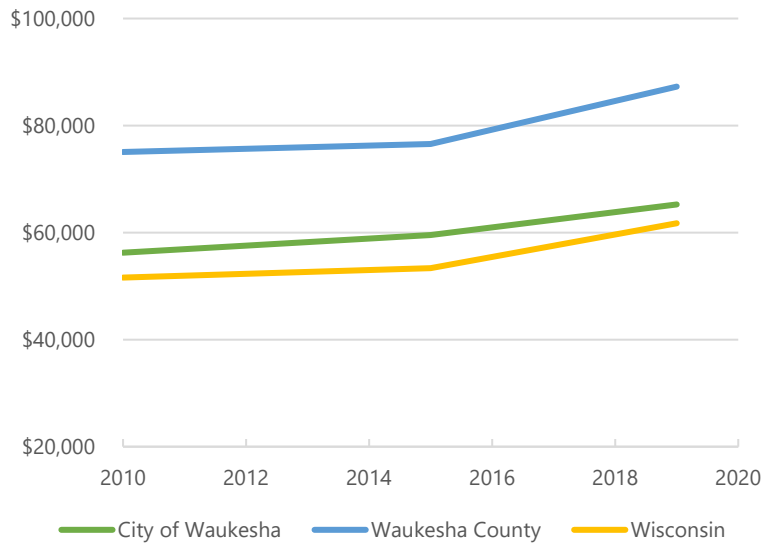


Figure 1.11: Median Household Income



Household Poverty Levels

The City has a larger percentage of households below the poverty level compared to the County, but a smaller percentage compared to the Region.

Households receiving food stamps or participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a measure often used to provide an understanding of those households which may be struggling to meet basic needs. More than half of the households receiving SNAP in the City have children under 18 years of age, a higher proportion than the County and Region. Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino households are overrepresented in SNAP assistance relative to their share of the City's population.

Insert figures and/or graphic text: 9.8% of households in the City of Waukesha have been living below the poverty level in the past year.

Household Transportation Access

Households in the City are more likely to lack access to a private vehicle than those in the County as a whole. A higher proportion of households that do have a vehicle in the City have only one vehicle available as compared to the County or Region.

Geographic Mobility

A smaller proportion of City residents live in the same residence as they did the previous year when compared to the County and Region. Of City residents who had moved, a higher percentage moved to the City from another state or outside the U.S. than those who moved from elsewhere in the County or Region.

The City has a higher proportion of foreign born residents and a significantly smaller percentage of foreign-born residents who have become naturalized U.S. citizens than the County and Region. Many of these residents are relatively recent arrivals, with nearly a third having entered the U.S. after 2010, in contrast to the less than one quarter of County and Region residents. More than half of foreign-born residents were born in Latin America. The proportion of City residents born in Latin America is substantially higher than the Region as a whole, and more than twice that of the County. A higher percentage of City residents speak Spanish at home and are more likely to speak English less than “very well” than the County or Region.

Insert figures/graphic text on geographic mobility.

Review of Existing Plans, Studies, and Regulations

An important part of the comprehensive plan update process is reviewing plans, studies, and regulations affecting the City that have occurred since the City’s previous comprehensive plan was adopted. Such documents could include relevant local, County, State, and regional plans and studies that should be considered in the development of the City’s comprehensive plan update.

Examples of relevant resources include area or neighborhood plans affecting portions of the City; County strategic plans and plans for parks and open space; regional plans related to land use and transportation (VISION 2050), natural areas, and air and water quality; and State plans for health improvement and active transportation. Some resources may be prepared by more than one geography, like the Waukesha Area Transit Development Plan, which was prepared in a joint effort that included staff of the City of Waukesha and Waukesha County with support from Commission staff. In other instances, different agencies may prepare numerous resources on the same topic, like housing.

Resources reviewed during this update process are listed in an annotated bibliography in Appendix C of this report.¹⁰

Call Out: A community’s comprehensive plan provides a rational basis for local land use decisions with a vision for future planning and community decisions that should reflect state, regional, county, and local contexts to ensure the plan properly relates the community to its larger surroundings.

¹⁰ Information on the City’s zoning code in place as this update was being prepared is set forth in the land use chapter (Chapter 2) of this report.

Public Involvement

Wisconsin's comprehensive planning law requires public participation in every stage of developing a comprehensive plan or comprehensive plan update. Public involvement plays an important role in planning and can significantly help communities in numerous ways, including fostering connections and partnerships to better ensure that communities create sound plans that reflect public needs and interests and have public support to more easily implement those plans.

Public Participation Process

Public participation efforts conducted during this plan update process enable the City to interact with residents, business owners, and other stakeholders to provide and receive useful information relative to comprehensive planning. Adoption of written public participation procedures is one of the required components of public participation under Section 66.1001(4)(a) of the *Wisconsin Statutes*. In accordance with the *Statutes*, the City Council adopted a public participation plan (PPP) in June 2022.¹¹ The PPP set forth the City's multifaceted approach to gathering public input, including surveys and in-person events.

Call Out: Public participation efforts provide an opportunity to better explain complex issues and choices and encourage residents to share ideas and comments that can improve planning efforts.

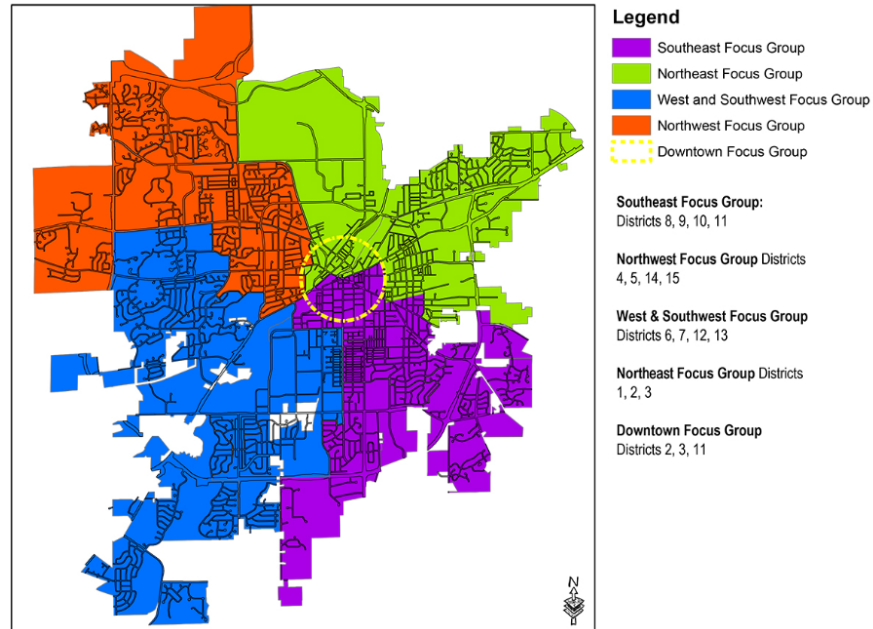
- Mayor's Celebrate Waukesha Breakfast - The comprehensive plan update kick-off in September 2021, with local leaders in attendance invited to identify the City's strengths and challenges

Insert photo of Mayor's Breakfast event.

- National Community Survey (NCS) – A benchmarking survey of residents citywide, distributed by mail and made available online in early 2022, provided statistically significant results regarding comprehensive plan-related topics, including housing, quality of life measures, municipal services, safety, and more
- Business Owner Survey - An anecdotal, online survey of business owners conducted by the City in winter and spring of 2022 focusing on considerations for worker recruitment/retention, business location and development, complementary businesses, and additional topics related to economic development

¹¹ See Appendix A for the PPP and City resolution adopting the PPP.

- Focus Groups - A series of five in-person events, including four neighborhood meetings and a fifth meeting specific to downtown, hosted by the City in the summer of 2022 that enabled City residents and business owners to provide input regarding comprehensive plan elements



Focus group map caption/call out: The public was welcome to attend any or all of the five focus groups, four of which were organized around aldermanic districts while a fifth was related to downtown, regardless of their place of residence or business.

- Public Meetings – In accordance with Section 66.1001(4)(a) of the *Wisconsin Statutes*, which requires holding public meetings for which advance notice has been provided, the City published a Public Hearing Notice on November 17, 2023. The notice established that a public hearing regarding the draft update, including a description of the planning process and report contents, was to be held during the December 19, 2023, meeting of the Common Council. Publication of the notice coincided with the draft comprehensive plan update being made available for public review at local government offices and on the planning website.

Call Out: Input and information gathered through the public involvement process for this update relates to each of the comprehensive plan elements and is highlighted in call outs throughout this report. These call outs identify current issues and opportunities and establish the foundation for updated goals and policies.
