

MILWAUKEE

comprehensive Plan

DEPARTMENT OF CITY DEVELOPMENT • MARCH, 2010

CITYWIDE
POLICY PLAN
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

I. OVERVIEW OF COMPREHENSIVE “SMART GROWTH” PLAN SERIES

The series of documents that comprise the City of Milwaukee’s Comprehensive Plan represent the culmination of a multi-year public process adopted by the Common Council. The Plan provides a long-term vision for the future of the City of Milwaukee and a policy framework that will help achieve the mission of city government: to enhance the safety, prosperity, and quality of life of all citizens by working directly and through partnerships with our community stakeholders.

A number of planning initiatives preceded the Comprehensive Plan process, however, these were limited scope efforts for specific projects rather than for the City as a whole. This multi-year comprehensive planning process not only establishes the vision and direction for the City, but also satisfies the requirements of the State’s Smart Growth Legislation, which requires that programs and actions that affect land use be consistent with a municipal comprehensive plan. Furthermore, comprehensive plans must include the following nine elements: issues and opportunities, land use, transportation, economic development, housing, natural and cultural resources, utilities and community facilities, intergovernmental cooperation, and implementation. The City of Milwaukee’s Citywide Policy Plan and thirteen Area Plans discuss these state mandated elements and more.

CITY OF MILWAUKEE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A series of fourteen documents

CITYWIDE POLICY PLAN

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Housing & Neighborhoods
- Natural Resources
- Cultural Resources & Historic Preservation
- Community Facilities
- Utilities
- Intergovernmental Cooperation

AREA PLANS

- Downtown
- Third Ward
- Menomonee Valley
- Fond Du Lac & North
- Near West Side
- Washington Park
- Southeast Side
- Northwest Side
- Northeast Side
- West Side
- Near North Side
- Near South Side
- Southwest Side

II. COMMUNITY INPUT AND WORKGROUPS

The Citywide Policy Plan process solicited input from a diverse set of private, non-profit, and public sector experts organized into topical workgroups to address the various plan elements. Workgroups met periodically to identify key issues and opportunities to be addressed in the policy plan and to review plan drafts. The recommendations and policies of the neighborhood Area Plans, which were completed prior to development of the Policy Plan, provided a foundation for citywide policy recommendations in each topic area.



III. CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE CITY OF MILWAUKEE'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Four core principles were identified during development of the Comprehensive Plan. These principles are grounded in the need for the City of Milwaukee to consider development choices with respect to the relationship between and impact on the economy, environment, and equity of the community, while allowing for full citizen engagement in the process to determine the future of the City. The intent is to maximize the environmental, economic, social, and quality of life benefits for all residents.

Milwaukee's community leaders and decision-makers have a responsibility to create a more livable world for ourselves and our children. In order to ensure that the policies outlined within this plan promote the City of Milwaukee's resilience and provide for a sustainable future, the following four core principles will serve as the primary guiding values of the Comprehensive Plan and its measure of its success. Each of the individual principles is a critically important core value. Yet these four principles are interrelated, and a balanced approach following all principles will help to ensure a solid and sustainable city foundation for future generations.

THE FOUR CORE PRINCIPLES

1. A strong and prosperous economy enhances the quality of life for Milwaukee residents.
2. A healthy environment is essential for the survival of all living things and the foundation for a thriving city.
3. A high quality of life depends on the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities to residents.
4. Meaningful engagement in the decision making process helps ensure strong, vibrant, and desirable communities.

THE FOLLOWING PAGES INCLUDE A SUMMARY OF THE VISION AND THE MAJOR POLICY STATEMENTS FOR EACH CHAPTER OF THE CITYWIDE POLICY PLAN. FOR GREATER DETAIL, PLEASE REFER TO THE CITYWIDE POLICY PLAN DOCUMENT.

Through "The Four Core Principles", the City of Milwaukee leadership and community intends to create a sustainable and resilient city that:

- takes proactive steps to achieve a long term vision that is embraced and actively promoted by all of the key sectors of society, including businesses, disadvantaged groups, environmentalists, civic associations, government agencies, and religious organizations
- encourages meaningful community participation, collaboration, leadership, and inclusion of all citizens in the decision-making process
- balances economic growth, investment, and high quality residential, commercial, and industrial development with the enhancement of natural and social assets of the community
- dares to be bold and innovative in creating a vibrant, sustainable future
- stewards its air, water, and land resources as natural and economic assets
- takes responsibility for the education, development, and well-being of children and adults
- encourages neighborhoods to be active, attractive, and walkable neighborhoods with a strong sense of place, high quality of life, and cultural diversity.
- encourages healthy, active living and positive social interaction
- foster easy access to quality resources, goods, services, and opportunities for social and economic mobility to all members of the community regardless of location or socioeconomic status

LAND USE

VISION OF SUCCESS

This plan envisions land use policies that balance the economic, social, and environmental needs of the city, strengthens the local economy, improves the physical environment and preserves a high quality of life for all city residents.

THE VISION OF SUCCESS FOR LAND USE INCLUDES:

Sustainable Growth

The City will manage growth and change through effective land use policies that sustain Milwaukee's high quality of life, protect natural resources, and drive economic vitality. As a result, Milwaukee will be a more desirable place to live, work and visit.

Coordinated Planning

Land use and transportation planning will be coordinated to sustain and implement wise transportation planning and construction.

Quality Urban Design

The City will promote good urban design that embraces the creation of places with lasting value and civic meaning.



POLICIES

I. Use a targeted catalytic approach to Plan land use and development to meet and stimulate existing and future market demand for residential, commercial, and industrial uses and to strengthen the local and regional economy.

- A. Use the city's land control and development review process to encourage new sustainable development, investment, and economic activity.
- B. Balance and coordinate land use, development and infrastructure investment decisions to make efficient use of existing city infrastructure, utilities, services, and resources
- C. Strengthen commercial and industrial centers, districts, and corridors and expand commercial and industrial activity



II. Coordinate land use, transportation, and public infrastructure planning.

- A. Develop a coordinated land use and transportation plan for the city that considers the location, density, and access to housing, commerce and industry, daily needs and services, parks and open space (including community gardens), and community, institutional, and civic facilities
- B. Encourage mixed-use, higher density land use around public transit stations and networks

III. Sustain, restore, and enhance the livability, character, and stability of Milwaukee's neighborhoods.

- A. Adopt citywide standards and guidelines that enhance the health, safety, convenience, stability and quality of neighborhoods and improve the quality of life for residents and stakeholders
- B. Encourage the development of community focal points around key neighborhood assets
- C. Ensure that neighborhoods are unique, beautiful, and engaging for a diversity of residents, businesses, and visitors
- D. Strengthen and highlight the city's downtown central business district as a regional center of activity, economy, and social gathering
- E. Develop and adopt illustrated urban design standards that promote high quality, context sensitive, sustainable, market-competitive, and traditional neighborhood designs



HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

VISION OF SUCCESS

This plan envisions the active preservation and support of Milwaukee's many safe, diverse, thriving, culturally rich and walkable neighborhoods that provide residents with ample housing, recreational, and lifestyle alternatives.

THE VISION OF SUCCESS FOR HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS INCLUDES:

Quality Housing Choices

Neighborhoods will have a range of high-quality, well maintained housing options for residents from all income groups

Economic Vitality

Family supporting jobs with benefits will be available and accessible to all city residents, with a good many located within walking distance or biking distance of neighborhoods

Sustainable Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods will be safe, healthy, and sustainable and ideally will have jobs, educational institutions, health care providers, shopping, and recreational opportunities available to residents within walking distance or via multiple transportation alternatives, ultimately resulting in decreased dependence on fossil fuels and improved cleanliness of air and water.



POLICIES

I. Improve the quality, diversity, and affordability of housing stock within the city.

- A. Promote preservation and improvement of existing housing stock
- B. Aggressively market Milwaukee for infill and new housing development for residents of all income levels
- C. Support and encourage housing diversity to accommodate a variety of housing needs
- D. Provide and maintain high quality public housing and community service programs
- E. Promote programs to increase home ownership and responsible rental property ownership
- G. Improve the energy efficiency and sustainability of new and existing housing

II. Provide a rich mix and balance of housing types, workplaces, shops, schools, recreation areas, and places of worship within neighborhoods.

- A. Support viable neighborhood centers, public places and local retail development
- B. Ensure access and proximity to jobs
- C. Promote public transit options for citizens

III. Coordinate resources to support and enhance neighborhood development, reinvestment, and stabilization efforts.

- A. Establish or enhance partnerships which help improve neighborhoods and build capacity
- B. Improve the physical environment of neighborhoods

IV. Preserve and enhance the social environment and health of neighborhoods.

- A. Take action to make neighborhoods safer
- B. Promote wellness and sustainable practices within neighborhoods.



TRANSPORTATION

VISION OF SUCCESS

This plan envisions providing all residents and businesses with a high quality, well-maintained, multi-modal transportation system that efficiently integrates multiple transportation options across the region, while strengthening the local economy and reducing environmental impacts.

THE VISION OF SUCCESS FOR TRANSPORTATION INCLUDES:

Planning and Connectivity

Land use and transportation planning will be integrated with diverse housing and reliable transportation options connecting people to jobs, educational institutions, health care providers, shopping, and recreational outlets. Unified planning and operations will result in simple and seamless transitions from one public transit system to another with connections to destinations throughout the region, state, and country.

Transportation Options

Emphasis will be placed on moving people between destinations rather than moving automobiles. Streets will be designed for multiple transportation options, including automobiles, dedicated public transit lanes, bicycle lanes, and wide, streetscaped sidewalks to encourage walking. In addition, multiple public transit systems (bus, streetcar, commuter rail, high speed rail) will serve the mobility needs of the city and region.

Economic Development

The transportation system will support the local economy by efficiently and conveniently connecting residents to their workplaces, as well as facilitating the movement of goods and services. Fixed route public transit will serve as a framework and catalyst for future economic development.

Improved Health

Due to increases in pedestrian and bicycle traffic, and growing use of public transit options, the health of the population will improve substantially and air pollutants will be reduced.

Intergovernmental Cooperation

Transportation system benefits and costs will be shared by the region, with ongoing cooperation between local communities, governing entities, and public transit system operators.



POLICIES

I. Make transportation decisions to support economic development, environmental sustainability and community goals.

- A. Coordinate regional transportation planning with land use planning
- B. Assure city zoning codes and policies support multi-modal transportation
- C. Promote transportation improvements that enhance health and quality of life

II. Connect Milwaukee to the country and the world for trade and travel.

- A. Preserve and improve mobility and access for the transport of goods and services
- B. Maintain and expand passenger multi-modal transportation options and facilities



III. Support the expansion of public transit and promote options that connect the greatest number of people to the greatest number of destinations.

- A. Support the expansion of public transit options and service
- B. Explore funding and governance options for the maintenance and operation of new and existing modes of public transit
- C. Provide amenities which enhance the experience of public transit users

IV. Maintain a sustainable and well balanced street and highway network that safely and efficiently moves people and goods and supports the economy.

- A. Maintain the existing system of streets and bridges
- B. Continue to encourage integration of Complete Streets principles and sustainability into street design and reconstruction projects
- C. Provide transportation demand management, also support programs and strategies aimed at reducing car trips, minimizing miles driven and increasing occupancy

V. Increase opportunities for walking and biking as practical options that contribute to neighborhood vitality and public health.

- A. Create attractive and convenient pedestrian and bicycle routes and facilities
- B. Provide amenities for bikes and cyclists
- C. Ensure accessibility for people of all abilities
- D. Utilize streetscaping to create safe and engaging pedestrian and bicycle friendly spaces



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

VISION OF SUCCESS

This plan envisions growing the local economy sustainably and providing all city residents with the opportunity and resources necessary to achieve economic stability and success.

THE VISION OF SUCCESS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCLUDES:

Strong Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods will be safe, walkable, diverse, thriving, and culturally rich.

Quality Education

Children will be empowered with the tools needed to reach their full potential, including a superior education.

Employment Opportunities

Citizens will have equal access to living wage, family supporting jobs with benefits.

Sustainability

The environment and economy will support and sustain a high quality of life for this generation and future generations.



POLICIES

I. Ensure that the City's economic development efforts complement the efforts of local and regional partners.

- A. Align City government's economic development efforts with the efforts of others pursuing economic and employment growth, and expansion of the tax base in Milwaukee and the region.
- B. Align City government's economic development efforts with the needs of local employers, since most job growth occurs through the expansion of existing companies.

II. Maximize and target City government's economic development resources through partnerships and targeted investment.

- A. Maximize and target City government's economic development resources to employers and sectors poised for growth in the Milwaukee region.

- B. Maximize and target City government's economic development resources so Milwaukee residents benefit from the growth of economic opportunity.
- C. Maximize and target City government's economic development resources through partnerships that leverage additional resources.

III. Grow the workforce employers need through education, training, and attracting talent.

- A. Grow the workforce employers need by encouraging Milwaukeeans to finish high school and pursue post-secondary education.
- B. Grow the workforce employers need by providing robust training resources and vocational training preparation to the citizens of Milwaukee.
- C. Grow the workforce employers need by making Milwaukee attractive to talent from elsewhere.

IV. Operate City government in a manner that supports economic development.

- A. Operate City government in a manner that supports economic development by reducing crime.
- B. Operate City government in a manner that supports economic development by providing a high quality physical infrastructure and top-notch local government services.
- C. Operate City government in a manner that supports economic development by ensuring a consistent, understandable and predictable regulatory framework.



NATURAL RESOURCES

VISION OF SUCCESS

This plan envisions cleaner, more abundant natural resources throughout the city that are valued as economic and quality of life assets to be preserved and enhanced.

THE VISION OF SUCCESS FOR NATURAL RESOURCES INCLUDES:

Green Infrastructure Improvements

The city's green infrastructure network will be expanded, connected, and strengthened through restoration, management, and integration into the urban landscape. This network will provide aesthetic, recreational, educational, and ecological services to the city.

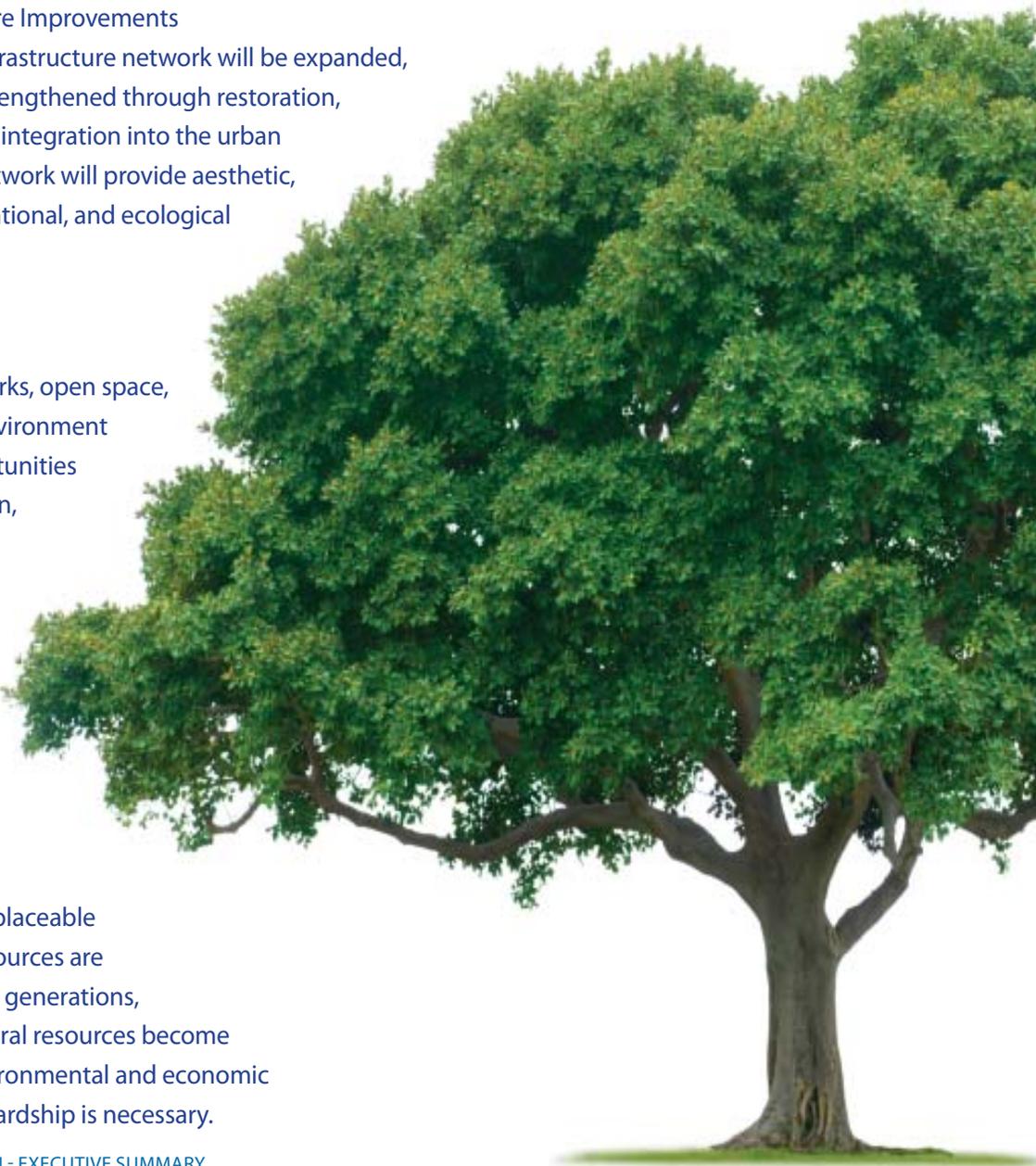
Accessibility

Public access to parks, open space, and the natural environment will provide opportunities for active recreation, leisure, and engagement with the outdoor environment, regardless of age or ability.

Resource

Management

To ensure that irreplaceable environmental resources are available for future generations, and to ensure natural resources become recognized as environmental and economic assets, better stewardship is necessary.



POLICIES

I. Protect and restore natural resources to ensure that Milwaukee's rich natural heritage remains intact, healthy, and functional for the benefit of future generations.

- A. Identify, preserve, and enhance the quality of natural resources, natural features, biodiversity, and ecological integrity of the community.
- B. Prioritize the preservation and enhancement of water resources and features, which are critical natural assets for the city.
- C. Enhance the urban forest and incorporate green infrastructure elements within the urban environment.

II. Enhance the city's park and open space network to provide access and enjoyment for all. Access to open space, recreational resources, and programming are key elements to a high quality of life, and should be made available to residents of all abilities.

- A. Ensure easy and equitable public access and connectivity of parks, nature, and open space across the city and region.
- B. Improve and expand a diversity of facilities and programming within the park and open space system.
- C. Improve and seek funding to support park acquisition, maintenance, and programs.

III. Reduce the city's contribution to energy consumption and climate change.

- A. Minimize peak energy demand and reduce overall energy consumption of buildings and infrastructure.
- B. Foster greater use and development of alternative energy systems and practices.
- C. Plan land use, employment, and transportation systems to improve the efficient movement of people, goods, and services and to reduce vehicle emissions and dependence on automobiles.
- D. Engage residents, businesses, institutions, agencies, and organizations in conversation and actions to reduce the city's impact on climate change.

IV. Improve the City's efforts to reduce waste, and support land and resource reuse and recycling strategies.



CULTURAL RESOURCES & HISTORIC PRESERVATION

VISION OF SUCCESS

This plan envisions the support and enhancement of the city's robust arts scene, unique cultural resources, historic and iconic structures and spaces, and diverse, vibrant neighborhoods as vital elements of the community, the economy, and our quality of life.

THE VISION OF SUCCESS FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES & HISTORIC PRESERVATION INCLUDES:

Diversity of Arts Experiences

Participation and access to diverse artistic and creative endeavors, attractions, experiences, and education will be affordable, convenient and distributed throughout the city.

Community Support

Cultural, artistic, and historic resources and the creative economy will be valued and supported as a critical element of a strong, diverse urban community that is socially and economically healthy.

Empowerment

Citizen involvement in urban design and public art has the ability to create unique districts, streets, parks, neighborhoods, engender loyalty to places, and add value to the public realm.



POLICIES

I. Support and promote the arts and cultural resources.

- A. Inventory, support, and promote arts and cultural resources, industries, institutions, and infrastructure as critical to a modern urban economy.
- B. Develop and improve funding mechanisms and support for arts and cultural institutions, facilities, and programs.
- C. Establish a creative coalition of individuals, professions, businesses, nonprofit groups, and institutions to foster cooperation and take advantage of shared resources and economies of scale across the region.

II. Integrate arts and cultural resources and diversity into neighborhoods.

- A. Encourage the integration of arts and culture into neighborhoods to increase exposure to a diversity of experiences and perspectives and to strengthen the social and community fabric.
- B. Expand access, awareness, and participation in affordable, family friendly arts and cultural programming, education, and entertainment.

III. Preserve, enhance, and promote the cultural heritage, beauty, and identity of the City of Milwaukee.

- A. Ensure historic elements are preserved and restored for the benefit of current and future generations.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

VISION OF SUCCESS

This plan envisions the City and its partners are able to provide readily accessible public services and facilities that ensure coverage of basic needs and promote wellness, healthy lifestyles, safety, and enhanced quality of life for all residents. The city will be regarded as safe for all citizens, which will foster continued economic expansion and improve the overall quality of life.

THE VISION OF SUCCESS FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES INCLUDES:

Health and Wellness

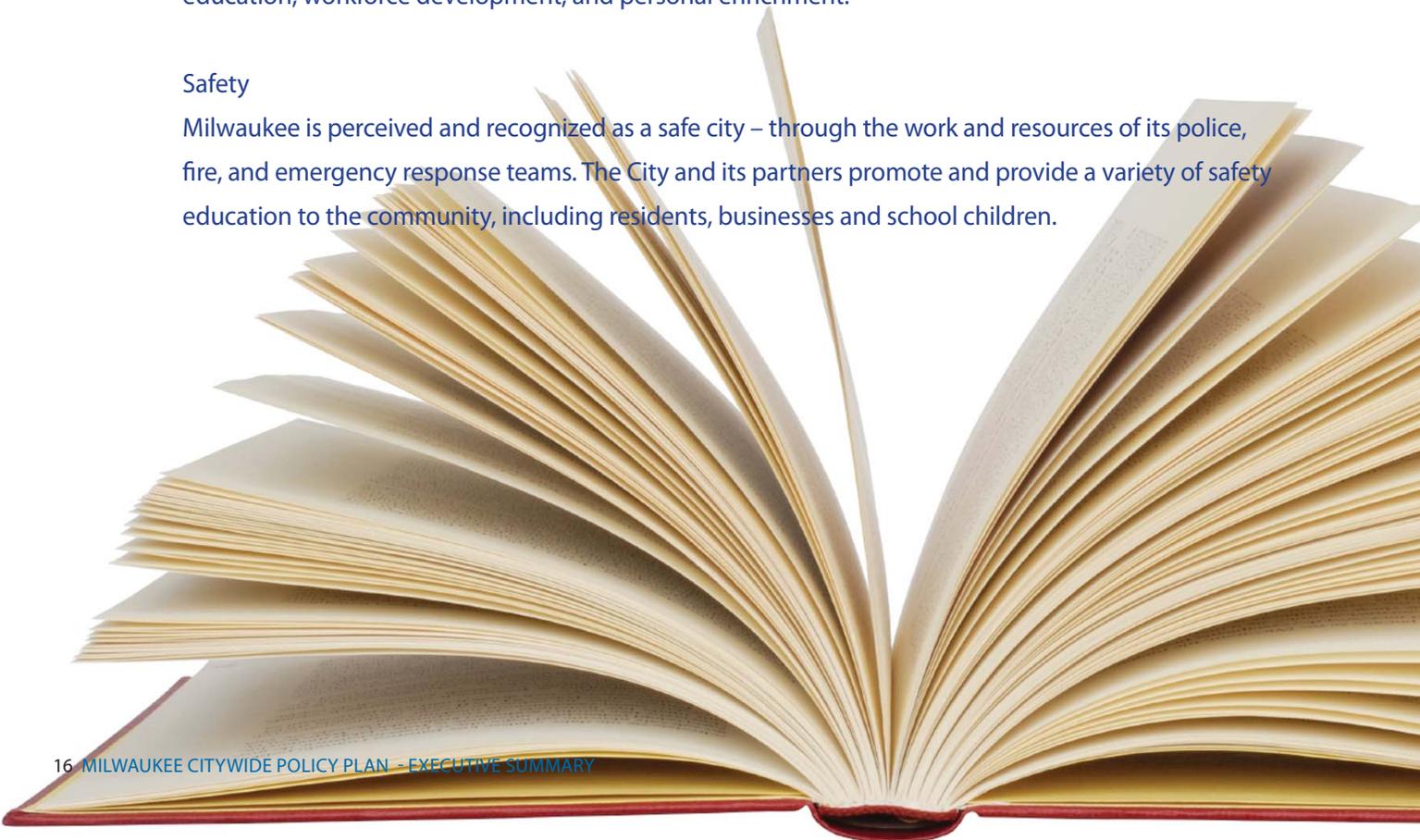
The City and its partners provide and promote standards and opportunities for health care, basic needs, child care, healthy food, and recreational opportunities.

Education and Economic Development

The City and its partners promote and provide opportunities for life-long learning, including basic education, workforce development, and personal enrichment.

Safety

Milwaukee is perceived and recognized as a safe city – through the work and resources of its police, fire, and emergency response teams. The City and its partners promote and provide a variety of safety education to the community, including residents, businesses and school children.



POLICIES

I. Ensure a safe environment where neighborhoods, parks and streets remain safe, conducive to a positive social atmosphere, and promote and healthy living/working environment.

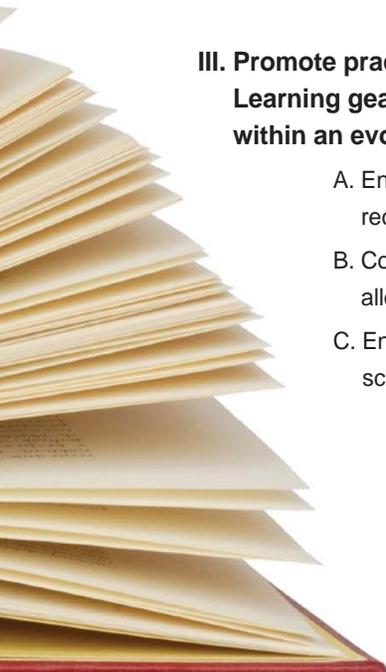
- A. Continue to reduce crime and pursue preventive measures that reduce crime.
- B. Promote fire and structural safety through prevention and education, and the maintenance of adequate staff and facilities.
- C. Maintain the quality of existing facilities, and housing stock to ensure the protection of the public's health, safety, and welfare.

II. Enhance and maintain the quality of Milwaukee's health care system using an approach that implements new technological and innovative techniques to provide strong reliable patient care, allow access to a variety of health institutions, and monitor the quality of resources provided. In addition, continue to provide a parallel network of preventive facilities and programs that support community wellness.

- A. Protect and enhance community health for the individual, community and environment while promoting general health in the population, frequently advocated and undertaken by the members of the Milwaukee Health Care Partnership.
- B. Establish and coordinate facilities that provide the tools and resources to enhance preventive health care and maintenance of good quality health practices.
- C. Promote a high standard of health care training and education for all healthcare employees to ensure that patient care is consistent and meets or exceeds citywide standards.
- D. Encourage the availability of equitable health care so that everyone, including high risk populations, poor communities, and those facing socioeconomic barriers, can receive quality health care.

III. Promote practices that lead to life-long learning for people of all ages, abilities and interests. Learning geared towards self-improvement, as well increased workforce development to compete within an evolving global economy.

- A. Encourage new opportunities in the green economy, with targeted small business incentives and the recruitment of new talent to the area.
- B. Continue the excellence and diversity of Milwaukee's library system and institutions of higher learning allowing future expansion and program coordination with local community groups.
- C. Ensure the highest level of care for children and the highest level of educational quality and diversity for school aged children.



UTILITIES

VISION OF SUCCESS

This plan envisions that the City and its partners provide readily available and well-maintained utilities throughout the city that ensure a high quality of life for residents and to support economic expansion within the region.

THE VISION OF SUCCESS FOR UTILITIES INCLUDES:

Coordinated Planning

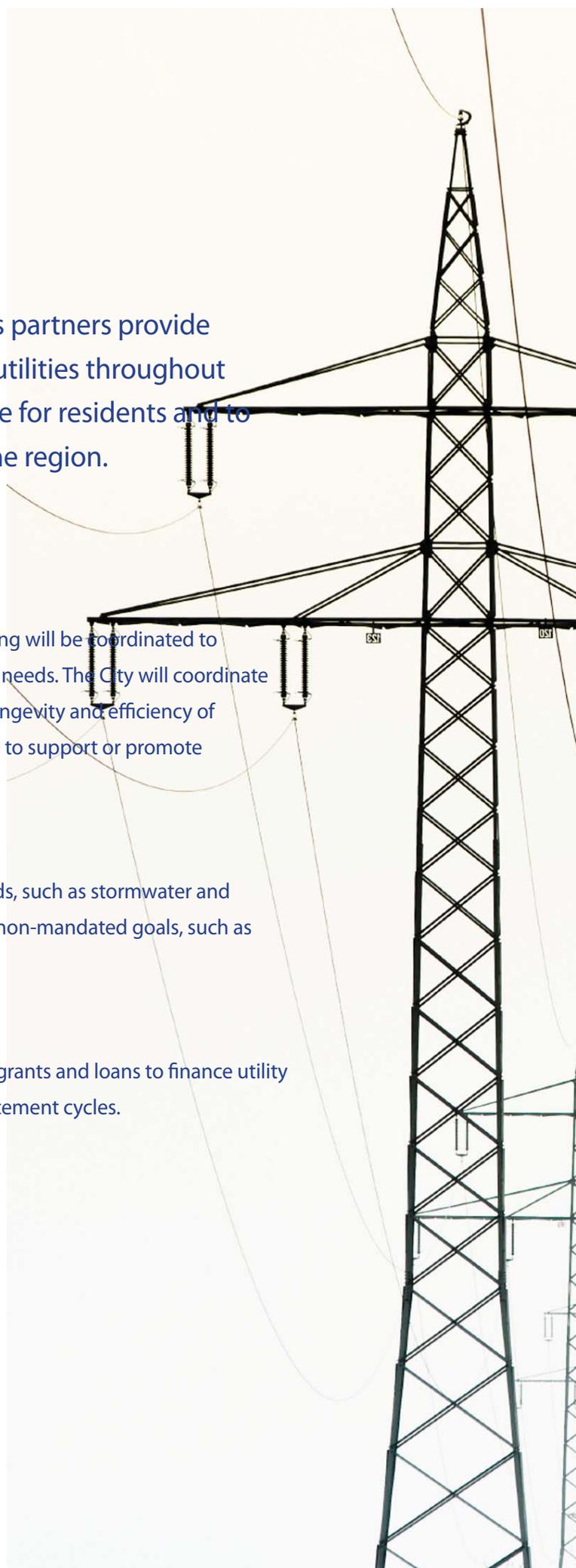
Utility infrastructure and regional land use planning will be coordinated to accommodate changing economic development needs. The City will coordinate utility planning with its partners to best ensure longevity and efficiency of infrastructure. Infrastructure will not be extended to support or promote decentralized land use or sprawl.

Achievement of Standards

Utilities will meet or exceed government standards, such as stormwater and clean air requirements, while being proactive on non-mandated goals, such as reduction of fossil fuel consumption.

Sustainable Funding

Utilities will continue to pursue federal and state grants and loans to finance utility improvements consistent with appropriate replacement cycles.



POLICIES

I. The City of Milwaukee will maintain, improve and expand utilities and infrastructure, as well as partner with other utilities, agencies and advocacy groups to provide cost effective and efficient services for its residents and businesses.

- A. Support economic development in the greater Milwaukee region
- B. Provide an enhanced quality of life for residents
- C. Continue capital improvements through a comprehensive and collaborative financial plan

II. Maintain A high quality and efficient utility infrastructure that allows for growth, while respectful of the environment

- A. Improve river and lake water quality
- B. Promote efficient water usage practices
- C. Coordinate utility infrastructure and economic development planning
- D. Explore and promote new utility infrastructure technologies and practices



INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

VISION OF SUCCESS

This plan envisions the City engaging in meaningful intergovernmental and intragovernmental dialog resulting in committed action to strengthen the city and the region.

THE VISION OF SUCCESS FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION INCLUDES:

Regional Planning

Regional planning at all levels will be coordinated to re-evaluate changing land use and economic development conditions, and to minimize urban sprawl and create a more sustainable and integrated pattern of development.

Strong Communication

The City and its partners will engage in ongoing, open and meaningful discussions to ensure a cohesive approach to decision-making and problem-solving for the region.

Shared Benefits & Costs

The City will continue to work with regional partners to ensure that benefits and costs are shared equitably throughout the region and that we collectively invest in this region's best assets, consider potential for generation of wealth, as well as considering the region's best resources – it's people.



POLICIES

I. Foster effective communication and good working relationships between the City of Milwaukee and all of its Government partners

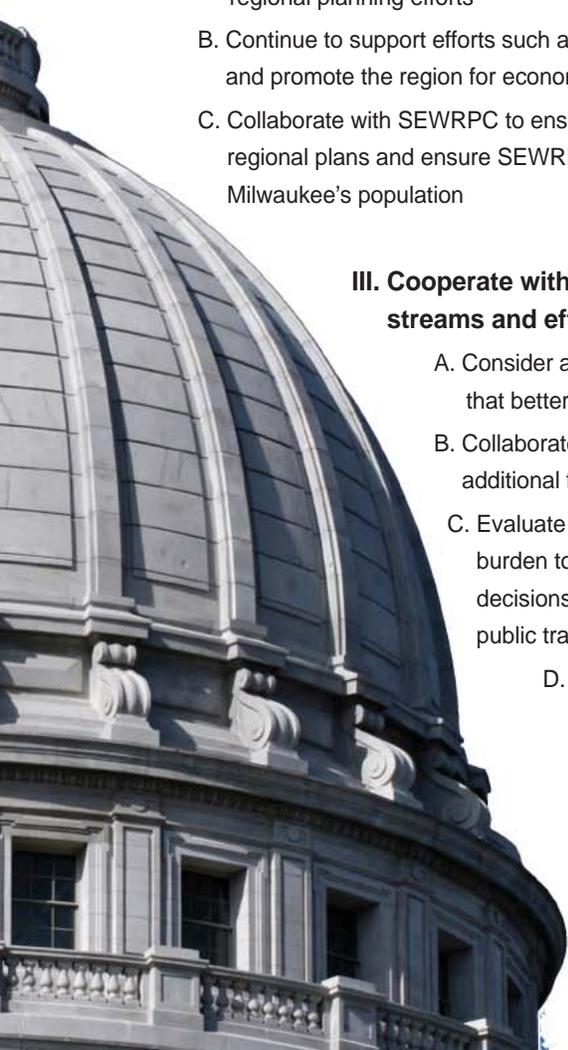
- A. Seek opportunities for cooperation with other jurisdictions on issues that can best be addressed regionally such as transportation, affordable housing, water quality and supply, and air quality
- B. Initiate meetings among staff and elected officials of appropriate government entities when opportunities exist for cross jurisdictional collaboration
- C. Ensure the City of Milwaukee maintains appropriate local control and authority, commensurate with its population and central position within the region, while advancing intergovernmental cooperation
- D. Use technology and outreach to stimulate citizen input and dialog on regional issues

II. Promote a more comprehensive and coordinated metropolitan approach to planning, development, and service delivery

- A. Encourage the state to become more active in supporting and rewarding regional planning efforts
- B. Continue to support efforts such as those of the Milwaukee 7 to market and promote the region for economic development and job creation
- C. Collaborate with SEWRPC to ensure urban concerns are addressed in regional plans and ensure SEWRPC's governing body is representative of Milwaukee's population

III. Cooperate with other jurisdictions and state government on revenue streams and efficiencies

- A. Consider alternatives or modifications to the state revenue sharing formula that better serve Milwaukee
- B. Collaborate with other jurisdictions and partners to identify and secure additional federal funding, such as New Starts funds for public transit
- C. Evaluate the possibility of shifting a portion of local jurisdictions tax burden to alternative revenue mechanisms to encourage better land use decisions. For example, fund RTA using sales tax instead of funding public transit with a property tax
- D. Continue to identify opportunities to work with other government entities to share services, and to eliminate inefficiencies and duplication of efforts





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