



BUILDING SAFETY & ZONING DIVISION

PLAN COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

WATERTOWN

Opportunity runs through it.

TO: Plan Commission
DATE: January 12th, 2026
SUBJECT: Initial Review - Comprehensive Plan Amendment

A Comprehensive Plan Amendment request from Carol Quest, agent for the Watertown Health Department, to change the Future Land Use designation on parcels located at 507 and 515 S First Street and 510 S Second Street. Parcel PIN(s): 291-0815-0424-043, 291-0815-0424-042, & 291-0815-0424-040.

&

A Comprehensive Plan Amendment request from the City of Watertown to change the Future Land Use designation on City parcels located 514 S First Street and 410R S First Street. Parcel PIN(s): 291-0815-0424-011 & 291-0815-0424-009.

SITE DETAILS:

Health Dept Parcels

Acres: 0.13, 0.24, 0.14

Current Zoning: Central Business (CB) & Multi-Family Residential - 8 (MR-8)

Existing Land Use: Office, Parking Lot, Vacant Land

Future Land Use Designation: Central Mixed Use & Two Family Residential

Other Parcels

Acres: 1.19, & 0.20

Current Zoning: Planned Office and Institutional (PO) & General Industrial (GI)

Existing Land Use: Community Center, Parkland, & Riverwalk.

Future Land Use Designation: Central Mixed Use.

BACKGROUND & APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:

The applicant is proposing a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to change the Future Land Use (FLU) designation of three parcels from Central Mixed Use FLU and Two-Family Residential FLU to Institutional FLU. Two of these parcels are currently the site of the City of Watertown Health Department. The third parcel was recently purchased by the Health Department to construct a storage building and heated garage space to provide services to clients of the Health Department. Additional parking will also be provided by the project. To construct the proposed building the three parcels need to be combined via a Certified Survey Map (CSM), the purchased parcel needs to be rezoned to Central Business (CB) zoning, a Conditional Use Permit CUP for a Non-Residential Accessory structure needs to be approved, and the FLU designation of the combined parcels needs to be changed to Institutional. This request for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to change the FLU designation is one of the steps in this process. A rezoning, CUP, and CSM associated with this project are also pending.

In addition, during the review of the proposed Health Department project, it was determined that two city parcels across S First Street (to the west) from this proposal do not have a FLU designation consistent with their current use. One of the parcels contains the Community Center and other parcel contains parkland and a section of the riverwalk. Both of these parcels currently have FLU designations of Central Mixed Use. The proper FLU designation for these parcels based on their use is Institutional FLU. Since the City was conducting a Comprehensive Plan Amendment process for the Health Department project it appeared prudent to also correct the FLU on these city parcels as part of that effort. The proposed change of the FLU on these two parcels is not associated with nor required for the Health Department project.



BUILDING SAFETY & ZONING DIVISION

PLAN COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

STAFF EVALUATION:

Land Use and Zoning:

Health Dept Parcels

Nearby Future Land Use designations include Two-Family Residential to the east and Central Mixed Use to the North South and West. Institutional Future Land Use exists to the southwest

Nearby Zoning includes Multi-Family Residential - 8 Zoning to the east. Central Business Zoning exists to the north and south. Planned Office and Institutional Zoning exists to the west.

Other Parcels

Nearby Future Land Use designations include Central Mixed Use to the North and East. Institutional Future Land Use exists to the south. The Rock River exists to the west

Nearby Zoning includes Central Business Zoning to the east. General Industrial Zoning exists to the north and Planned Office and Institutional Zoning exists to the south. The Rock River exists to the west.

Wisconsin Statutes

Per the Wisconsin Statutes it is the role of the Plan Commission to prepare a Comprehensive Plan Amendment and recommend the amendment to Common Council.

Per Wis. Stat. § 66.1001(4)(b):

(b) The plan commission or other body of a local governmental unit that is authorized to prepare or amend a comprehensive plan may recommend the adoption or amendment of a comprehensive plan only by adopting a resolution by a majority vote of the entire commission. The vote shall be recorded in the official minutes of the plan commission or other body. The resolution shall refer to maps and other descriptive materials that relate to one or more elements of a comprehensive plan.

Comprehensive Plan Goals, Objectives, and General Policies:

The 2019 Watertown Comprehensive Plan includes goals, objectives, and general policies for the Plan Commission to consider when reviewing Comprehensive Plan amendments.

Land Use Goals, Objectives, and General Policies

Goal:

1. Promote a future land use pattern that is harmonious with the natural landscape, features visually attractive development, and is economically viable.

Objectives:

1. Ensure that a desirable balance and distribution of land uses is achieved.
2. Maintain high standards in the Zoning Ordinance for buildings, landscaping, signage, building materials, and parking lots.
3. Ensure that conflicts between neighboring land uses are minimized with logical land use transitions and bufferyards.
4. Utilize existing public facilities to serve new development whenever possible.
5. Coordinate land development with transportation system improvements.
6. Encourage City landowners to open up suitable undeveloped areas for new development as the need arises.

Policies:

1. Prioritize infill and redevelopment opportunities, especially downtown and along the river, before new greenfield development along the City's boundaries.
2. Direct new housing development in locations with convenient access to commercial and recreational facilities, transportation systems, schools, employment opportunities, and other necessary facilities and services.
3. Require all new development within Watertown's long-term growth area to be served with the full array of municipal services (e.g. sanitary sewer, storm sewer, municipal water, police, fire, etc.) unless covered by an intergovernmental agreement.
4. Encourage the strengthening of existing neighborhoods through maintenance of the existing housing stock, creative reuse of vacant or under-utilized buildings, and infill on vacant parcels.



BUILDING SAFETY & ZONING DIVISION

PLAN COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Opportunity runs through it.

5. Require all proposed residential developments to dedicate land, or pay a fee in lieu thereof, for public park, recreation, and open space acquisition and development.
6. Strive for compatibility of adjacent land uses by requiring site plan review for all multi-family residential, commercial, office, industrial, recreational, and institutional land uses.
7. Buffer incompatible land uses from each other through the strategic use of plant materials, decorative fences, walls, or berms.
8. Require new development and redevelopment projects to include high quality building design, landscaping, stormwater best management practices, and signage and to meet at least the minimum landscaping and performance standards as codified in the City's Zoning Ordinance.
9. Encourage that new residential development within the Planned Neighborhood designation comply with the City's historic housing mix. The desired mix of residential uses in any neighborhood should be mostly single-family (approximately 50 percent), generally with no more than 20 percent of dwelling units being duplex units and not more than 30 percent being multi-family units.
10. Require detailed development plans that include: (1) proposed land use pattern of the area; (2) recommended zoning for the area; (3) recommended lot pattern; (4) location of necessary municipal utilities; (5) locations of parks, open space, and civic or institutional buildings; (6) proposed street system that will serve the area; and (7) a development phasing timetable so the City can coordinate capital improvements with the development of the area.
11. Factor public health into the site plan review process through the addition of specific criteria in which new development, redevelopment, and infill development must address in order to integrate land use planning, transportation, and public health.
12. Work with Jefferson and Dodge Counties, in addition to all surrounding Townships on future land use planning within the City's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction to promote intergovernmental cooperation and a unified future planning of development and services. Seek intergovernmental agreements with all surrounding Townships.
13. Reevaluate the City's supply and demand for industrial land every 5 years.
14. Develop detailed neighborhood plans for the Bethesda campus between Milford Street and the Rock River in order to foster high-quality and well-planned future development.

PLAN COMMISSION OPTIONS:

The following are possible options for the Plan Commission:

1. Set public hearing date for February 3rd, 2026.
2. Set public hearing to a later date.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

- Staff recommends setting the public hearing date for February 3rd, 2026

ATTACHMENTS:

- Application materials.