

Watertown Neighborhood Plan

COMMENTS & FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

June 2023

1. What TYPE of housing will this neighborhood provide?

The neighborhood will provide a full continuum of housing options to meet the needs of community members across the lifespan - from *Rentals*, to *Starter Homes*, to *Executive Homes* and *Smaller Home Options for Seniors*.

2. Will the neighborhood include "Public", "Section 8", "LOW INCOME" housing?

The neighborhood will **NOT** include Public, Section 8, or Low Income housing.

3. Will the neighborhood include "AFFORDABLE / WORKFORCE HOUSING"?

The neighborhood will emphasize *Market Rate Housing that is Affordable for our Workforce*.

We are at a point in time where housing is getting too expensive for **everyone**. In April 2023, the average sales price of a home in Jefferson County was \$330,000. The average sales prices for newly constructed homes are moving to \$400,000+.

The Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation purchased this property to ensure that *everyone who works or retires in Watertown can afford to live here*.

Homes and rentals in this new neighborhood will be targeted to meet the needs of the "mainstream" Watertown market - defined as individuals and households with annual incomes from \$35,000 to \$120,000.

4. Why is housing so EXPENSIVE right now?

Wisconsin has a growing number of households, but since the Great Recession of 2008 *too few new housing units have been built*. A growing number of households need housing... more than is available.

Rising interest rates and marked increases in construction costs make it extremely difficult to produce housing right now that is affordable for the average working household.

5. Once developed, will this neighborhood be producing TAX REVENUE for the City?

Yes. Owned by a nonprofit for decades, 90 acres of this neighborhood have not previously been on the City's tax roles. Once developed, the housing units will be taxed, bringing up to \$2.6M *in additional annual revenue* to the City.

6. Can Milford Street support the ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC? Will the road need to be widened or a stoplight need to be put in?

The Hwy 26 bypass has reduced total traffic on Milford Street, and City planners are confident *Milford Street can accommodate* the additional traffic inherent with adding new homes and apartments.

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7. Can there be a way to **CONNECT** the neighborhood to downtown with walking or bike paths?

Yes! Walkability and bikeability is a priority of the neighborhood design.

The current concept includes 3.5 to 4.5 miles of off-road paths. Also, it is likely that sidewalks will be added to Milford Street to connect residents to the rest of the community.

8. Some of the land in the proposed future development area includes land owned by a private farmer. Will that property need to be taken by **EMINENT DOMAIN**?

Development of this neighborhood has always been first about public and private collaboration. The land owner has been involved throughout this process and has been *supportive of development* that proceeds from north to south. Development of the full 200 acres will likely take 5-10+ years.

9. This neighborhood provides for up to 700 housing units. A new Belinski neighborhood will add 200 new homes in 2025. Do we need all of those homes? Will a surplus of homes drive down **HOME VALUES** for current owners?

The current housing need will still exceed proposed development.

The Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation commissioned a market study within the last few months and that study presents these details:

- Jefferson County has a backlog of 3,500 housing units
- Watertown market studies estimate a need for 1,875 single family homes
- Watertown market studies estimate a need for 1,050 rental units

10. Who will **SELECT** developers for this neighborhood?

The Foundation as the land owner will select the developers. But, each individual project will still require City approvals which will include City staff, public, Plan Commission, and City Council input and action.

11. Will **LOCAL LABOR** and resources be used?

The Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation will seek to work with local developers and contractors as much as possible - provided they are cost and quality competitive.

12. Additional feedback received:

Immediate neighbors are generally not in favor of a pedestrian bridge connecting their neighborhood to the new neighborhood.