

# SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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December 19, 2024

Mr. Kevin Boehm  
Director of Parks and Recreation  
City of Whitewater  
City Administration Building  
312 W. Whitewater Street  
Whitewater, WI 53190

Dear Mr. Boehm:

In response to our meeting of June 27, 2024, and your August 15, 2024, email request, the Commission would be pleased to assist the City of Whitewater with preparing its park and open space plan. We expect to begin work on the plan in mid-2025 and to complete a draft of the entire report by late-2026/early 2027, at a cost to the City of \$20,000. Upon its completion, the Commission would provide the City with an electronic copy and 20 printed copies of the report.

The Commission's Community Assistance Planning Report format, utilized for many other local park and open space plans, would be utilized as the template for the City of Whitewater's plan. As this is the first update of the City's park and open space plan in many decades, Commission staff anticipates undertaking a comprehensive and thorough inventory of the park and open space sites, recreation facilities, trails, and natural resource features within and immediately adjacent to the City, along with a brief narrative of each publicly owned park and open space site within the City. Commission staff also propose to review the recent plans and actions of the City pertaining to its existing and proposed park and open space system, obtain input from the public and public officials, and utilize pertinent local and regional park and open space objectives, principles, and standards, to form the basis of the plan's recommendations. A separate Project Overview, which provides additional details about this work effort, is also attached.

It is anticipated that the City Parks and Recreation Board would review the draft plan on a chapter or two bases as it is prepared. One Open House would be held to solicit public comment early in the planning process, and a second Open House would be held once a consolidated draft plan is completed. Following public review and any necessary changes based on public comment, the plan would be approved by the Parks and Recreation Board and forwarded to the Common Council for review and consideration of adoption. We recommend adopting the plan as an amendment to the City's comprehensive plan under Section 66.1001 of the *Wisconsin Statutes*. This would require approval by the Plan and Architectural Review Commission and adoption by ordinance by the Common Council. Commission staff would also assist the City with conducting a public informational meeting, if desired, and a public hearing on the proposed plan. Adoption of the plan by the Common Council would allow the City to be eligible to apply for Stewardship grants administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). The WDNR requires that a local government have a park and open space plan adopted within five years upon submittal of any application for Stewardship grants.

Mr. Kevin Boehm  
December 19, 2024  
Page 2

It is our understanding that UW-Whitewater staff/officials will also be substantially involved in the planning process due to an agreement with the City for the use of recreational facilities at City park sites and UW-Whitewater recreational sites by City residents and school students and staff. We recommend that a mutual understanding between the City and the University pertaining to the shared use of park, open space, and recreational sites and facilities be incorporated into this plan.

If this proposal is acceptable to the City, we request that you sign this letter and return it to us so that we may place this work request on the Commission work schedule. Should you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Joel Dietl of the Commission staff by telephone at (262) 953-3266, or by e-mail at Joel.Dietl@sewrpc.org.

Sincerely,



Benjamin R. McKay, AICP  
Deputy Director

JED/RLR/ap  
12/16/24; 12/4/24; 08/27/24  
#274230-3

cc: Mr. Wesley Enterline, Sustainability Director, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

PROPOSAL ACCEPTANCE:

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Kevin Boehm,  
Director of Parks and Recreation  
City of Whitewater

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Date

## **Proposed Outline and Schedule for the CITY OF WHITEWATER PARK AND OPEN SPACE PLAN**

### **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The project will consist of a plan that will be published as a Regional Planning Commission Community Assistance Planning Report. With City authorization to proceed, it is anticipated that the Commission staff would begin work on the plan in mid-2025. It is anticipated that a draft of the entire report would be completed around mid-2026. The timeframe for completing the draft report may vary based on input from City officials and staff and the public received during the planning process. Final review by the Parks and Recreation Board, and consideration for adoption by the Common Council, would be anticipated in late-2026/early-2027.

The proposed project outline is follows:

#### **Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION (to be completed by Fall 2025)**

- Identify other Regional, County, and City Plans that may affect the Plan
- Identify the Study/Planning Area for the Plan (City is located in both Rock and Walworth Counties)
- Provide information regarding agreements between the City and public school districts and the City and UW-Whitewater for use of recreational facilities
- Provide information about the University of Wisconsin (UW)-Whitewater's involvement and various recreational facilities within the Plan
- Identify the City plan review process, the public input process, and the format of the plan

#### **Chapter 2. INVENTORY FINDINGS (to be completed by late-2025)**

- Provide population (2020, DOA estimate to 2025), land use (2020), park and open space sites (2025), recreation facilities (2025), trails (2025), pedestrian/bikeways (2025), floodplains (2024), environmental corridors (2020), and Natural Areas and Critical Species Habitat sites (2025) text, maps, and tables associated with the aforementioned sections
- Determine/Provide two different population numbers: population of just the City based on the U.S. Bureau of the Census (2020) or include the 2020 City population and the number of students housed on the UW-Whitewater campus for about 8-9 months each year
- Provide an inventory of existing City parks, school district sites, County parks/sites, and UW-Whitewater facilities/sites: UW-Whitewater facilities/sites will be two different components in the Plan, one section providing a narrative detailing those facilities/sites that are available to be used by the public (City residents), which will be included in the overall park and facilities for the City, and one section identifying those sites/facilities that are just relegated for university sports teams, clubs, organizations, etc.
- Provide some narrative about the State sites and facilities (WDNR sites) located near the City, especially the Kettle Moraine State Forest-Southern Unit
- Provide information about the natural resource features, environmental corridors, and other open space amenities within and adjacent to the City

**Late-2025 – Parks and Recreation Board reviews Chapters 1 and 2**

**Chapter 3. STATUS OF PREVIOUS AND CURRENT PARK AND OPEN SPACE RELATED CITY ACTIONS (to be completed by early-2026) (Optional – If any park and open space, trails, or recreational facility recommendations are detailed in any recently adopted City plans (last 10-15 years), then this chapter may be included to determine the status of such recommendations. If not, then this chapter may not be needed.)**

- Provide a summary of the City's current and recent actions (plans, programs, recommendations, etc.) pertaining to park and open space sites, recreational facilities, and natural resource preservation)
- Provide a summary of the status of park and open space related plans and recommendations to be implemented by other units of government

**Chapter 4. FRAMEWORK FOR PLAN DEVELOPMENT (to be completed by Spring 2026)**

- Provide detail/maps about other City, County, Regional Plans that may affect the Plan
- Provide details/maps/tables about the UW-Whitewater Athletics and Recreation Facilities Master Plan (2017) and facilities, usage, and recommendations identified in the plan
- Include per capita and accessibility standards, and other pertinent objectives, principles, and standards for City parks and recreational facilities
- Determine the projected population for the City: projection for just the City or include potential population numbers of students at UW-Whitewater and the City
- Include NRPA walkability standards/text or other standards regarding walkability (VISION 2050)

Appendix A – Regional Outdoor Recreation Planning Objectives, Principles, and Standards (to be completed by Spring 2026)

**Spring 2026 – Parks and Recreation Board reviews Chapters 3 and 4 and Appendix A, and Spring 2026 First Public Informational Meeting/Open House held**

**Chapter 5. PARK AND OPEN SPACE PLAN (Summer 2026)**

- Provide Areawide Recommendations section about Rock and Walworth County park plans (parks, trails, and facilities)
- Identify State sites located near the City/planning area and provide existing facilities and recommendations as cited in site Master Plans
- Identify and provide the open space preservation element and determine existing and proposed ownership of lands with the environmental corridors and other natural resource features within the City/planning area
- Identify City Park and Open Space Recommendations, including trail and pedestrian recommendations. The recommendations can be improvements to existing facilities or new parks and developments proposed in the City's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) or developments and improvements suggested by City staff/officials, UW-Whitewater staff/officials, or the Parks and Recreation Board
- Identify other considerations and public input
- Identify plan implementation steps, and identify plan costs for at least the first 5 years of the plan (consistent with CIP)

**Summer 2026 – Parks and Recreation Board reviews Chapter 5, Parks and Recreation Board reviews consolidated plan, and Second Public Informational Meeting/Open House held**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (to be completed by Fall 2026)**

**Fall 2026 - Parks and Recreation Board meeting to review consolidated plan/approve plan, Public Notice for Public Hearing (30 days prior to)**

**Late 2026/Early 2027 – Common Council Public Hearing, Plan and Architectural Review Commission  
Approval by Resolution, Common Council Adoption by Ordinance**

C-Whitewater POSP – Outline (00274231-3)

JED/RLR

12/16/24; 12/4/24; 08/27/24