

Manitowoc Kick Off Meeting Summary

The City hosted a kick off meeting for the Comprehensive Plan process on February 5, 2008. This meeting was attended by aldermen, Plan Commissioners, City staff, representatives from the Manitowoc Public School District, UW-Manitowoc, Silver Lake College, Manitowoc Public Utilities, and other key stakeholder. The group was introduced to the planning processes and offered initial input about existing conditions in the City of Manitowoc including opportunities, challenges, and where the City should focus the most attention to address these issues.

Participants identified a wide range of opportunities, building on the City's location and current assets. Manitowoc's location along the shore of Lake Michigan with access to nearby metropolitan areas via Interstate 43 present numerous opportunities, particularly for regional water uses and technologies. Another locational opportunity relates to Manitowoc's potential as a future destination for "urban refugees" from larger metropolitan areas such as Milwaukee and Chicago. The City's existing assets including an adequate water supply and infrastructure, City-owned water and electric utility, cultural attractions, good schools, local post secondary education institutions, airport, and car ferry also present unique opportunities for the future.

Like all places, Manitowoc faces challenges. Physical expansion limitations, underutilized river front properties, a shortage of skilled workers, and the lack of a strong connection between I-43 and Downtown are significant issues that the City will need to address in the future. Other challenges include negative perceptions of Manitowoc and the lack of a framework to encourage and support innovation in the community. This planning process will be an opportunity to think collaboratively and creatively about these challenges.

Finally, participants suggested where the City should focus the most attention to address these issues. Responses centered on infill and redevelopment of key areas in the City as well as maintenance of existing developed areas. There was also a desire to raise awareness of and encourage "green" technologies and development. It will be important to improve the transportation network, both for pedestrians and automobiles, through the City, particularly from the lakeshore to I-43. In addition, the City should continue to collaborate with neighboring communities, institutions, and Manitowoc County on issues of mutual concern including maintaining rural character, economic development, and the future of the I-43/Waldo Boulevard interchange.

All of these issues will be taken into consideration throughout the planning process.

Complete List of Responses

Opportunities/Assets

- Celebrate diversity
- Future destination for Illinois escapees
- Establishing a conference center – none currently in City
- Historic corridor – Lincoln High School to Two Rivers
- Cultural Assets
- Adequate water supply
- Infrastructure (walkability)
- Skilled workforce
- Good relationship between City and Two Rivers (parks and trails)
- Lakeshore
- I-43 – need to get people off and into the City
- Nearby metro areas
- Good schools
- Local post secondary education opportunities
- Healthy manufacturing base
- Gateway corridor – unique appearance/identity
- Make City approval processes easier
- Encourage capital investment through incentives
- City owned water/electric utility - provide water resources to surrounding communities (revenue)
- Airport – accessible to businesses with ability to accommodate corporate jets, with charter service; room for airport development; runway too short for some corporate jets; need to consider airport approaches with future development
- Car ferry

Challenges

- Limited to westward expansion only
- Defunct industrial property along the River corridor
- No 4-lane connection to Appleton
- Lack of visual link between I-43 and Downtown
- Downtown traffic
- Skilled workforce shortage
- Blue collar image
- Resistance to cultural change
- Poor City image
- No community foundation – need framework to encourage desire for innovation

Focuses

- Realistic redevelopment of key areas
- Less focus on greenfield development – more on infill and redevelopment
- I-43 corridor
- Improve transportation links, both pedestrian and auto, through the City from the lakeshore to I-43
- Existing housing stock maintenance
- Near north side parking – this is a City issue as private investment is not feasible
- Green technologies awareness in the community
- Plan should encourage “green” development
- Redevelopment of riverfront needs to reflect market and increase public access
- City/Rural collaboration – agriculture, I-43 corridor and Waldo Blvd interchange
- Maintain rural character in surrounding Towns
- Aesthetics on S. 10th Street need to be improved – entrance/community destination signage
- Agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism economic development strategies

Priorities

- Bringing youth back after college
- Attract out of town youth to local colleges
- Encourage youth to get jobs in the City
- Human scale development which encourages walkability (e.g. 8th Street)
- Remain entrepreneurial in an environment of decreasing resources and increasing mandates

City Enhancements

- Enhance image of the City
- Consider lakeshore peninsula
- Attract new investment
- High quality jobs
- Meet retail needs of the community locally