

Wauwatosa Life Sciences District Master Plan Concept

FAQ

Why is development good for Wauwatosa?

Planned and appropriate growth has helped Wauwatosa maintain its high level of services, ability to invest in important community assets, and is the reason growth in property taxes has been controlled. The State of Wisconsin has significantly restricted communities' independent taxing authority, driving Wauwatosa's need to increase the City's tax base or reduce essential services. Cities are not allowed to increase property taxes by inflation.

70% of the City's general fund revenue is property taxes. The State of Wisconsin limits how much property taxes are raised and does not allow for other local taxes such as a sales tax. As a result, new construction is a critical strategy for affording the increasing cost of essential services (e.g., police officer and firefighter salary increases.) New construction also helps limit increases to residential taxes.

We realize growth in this district brings challenges. For instance, more than 30,000 people move in, around and through this area every day. The plan suggests several ideas for addressing traffic, with the aim of minimizing congestion.

An additional challenge is that much of the area is zoned "Special Purpose District—Medical Center." That means the land could be developed in ways that may not generate new, taxable revenue for the City. Rezoning this area will help Wauwatosa protect valuable green space and plan for new businesses that bring taxable revenue. The plan helps us balance the best use of the land with the best quality of life for our citizens.

Why have a plan? Why not leave the area as is?

The City of Wauwatosa has been growing and evolving since the first day it was settled. In the last 30 years, growth in this specific area of the city has proved to be an invaluable asset to Wauwatosa — generating high-quality professional jobs (family supporting jobs) and businesses. The area is an asset to the entire state, bringing innovations in healthcare and biotechnology, academic research and startup businesses —making it the largest hub for biotechnology in Southeastern Wisconsin and second only to UW-Madison Biotechnology Center in the state.

The City and the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center (MRMC) were preparing to begin independent planning for the future of this area. City leadership felt it would be in the best interest of the City to coordinate efforts with MRMC, along with Milwaukee County as the majority landowner. Without a plan the owners of the land could continue to develop in a fragmented and uncoordinated manner. A plan will help to ensure future development is coordinated, thoughtfully planned, and in particular, in the best interests of the citizens of Wauwatosa.

What's the purpose of this plan?

This effort is a unique public-private collaboration with Milwaukee County, the City of Wauwatosa and the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center. The draft plan concept outlines the balance of three key principles:

- **Natural Areas/Balanced Environment:** The plan provides enhanced protections for about 595 acres of green space and natural areas, including about 40 acres north of Watertown Plank Road that are currently zoned for medical use development. There are currently insufficient funds to preserve and maintain these areas due to limited budgets at all levels of government. Smart, responsible change, as recommended in the master plan concept, will foster protection, maintenance and enhancements of the natural environment and critical species habitat. Currently this land is not programmed, funded, or maintained as a park by the County or the City.
- **Economics/Balanced Development:** This plan maximizes the potential to generate high-quality, professional jobs and add property value by identifying the land that could most efficiently deliver both to the citizens of Wauwatosa and Milwaukee County through mixed-use development. It also looks at ways to reduce traffic congestion and reduce dependence on autos. Property taxes generated by new mixed-use development can create revenue needed to protect natural and historic community features.
- **Social Equity/Balanced Equity:** Natural areas should not be exclusively enjoyed by a few, but open and accessible to everyone, including seniors and those with special needs. This plan proposes a mix of development types and use and would also design a much higher level of access to green spaces for people of all abilities.

What is the "Wauwatosa Life Sciences District Master Plan Concept"?

Out of the Milwaukee County Grounds' legacy and anchored by the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center, the Milwaukee County Research Park, and UWM Innovation Campus, the Wauwatosa Life Sciences District is a vision for southeastern Wisconsin's hub for healthcare, biosciences and biomedical engineering. These institutions have used their density and capacity to build a critical mass of researchers and professionals that has created an energetic environment ripe for growth.

Where is it?

The Wauwatosa Life Sciences District Master Concept encompasses 1,200 acres and offers ideas and guidance for the areas surrounding Interstate 41, Mayfair Road from Center Street to Blue Mound Road, and Watertown Plank Road from Mayfair Road to the historic Village. Most of this land is currently and has been historically zoned to support County institutional use for medical and supportive services.

Why was the name changed from Wauwatosa Quadrant Master Plan Concept to Wauwatosa Life Sciences District Master Plan Concept?

As the plan moved through the draft process, the name of the plan changed from one that was more geographic in nature to one that best described the majority of the uses in the area, building upon the intrinsic qualities already present in the planning area.

Who owns the land?

There are a multitude of owners of portions of this 1,200-acre area of land, including but not limited to: Milwaukee County, Wisconsin Lutheran College, State of Wisconsin (DOT and DNR), Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, UWM Innovation Campus, Echelon, Milwaukee Regional Medical Center, Ronald McDonald House, and multiple owners within the Research Park. Wauwatosa does not own any property in the Wauwatosa Life Sciences District Master Plan Concept area, but has zoning authority over the land.

Does the City really want to protect open green space?

YES! The City wants to properly zone the most desirable green space to conserve and protect environmentally-significant and historic areas, as well as the wildlife living there. Currently, much of the land is private, so visitors are unwittingly trespassing. Some of this area is currently zoned for development and not only not protected, but could be built upon with no public input.

The current plan recommends changing zoning to protect valuable green space within the planning area. The City wants to work with its partners to improve access for ALL to these natural areas. The question is, how do we increase access to the site without negatively impacting it and the wildlife living there? This is a question that deserves, and is receiving, further study.

Why would a new road be added in this area?

The installation of a road or scenic parkway on the north side of Watertown Plank Road is an option. The intended purpose of the scenic parkway would be to delineate the protected green space and provide accessibility.

The proposed scenic parkway was carefully planned to avoid critical features such as historic ruins, as well as skirt the edges of existing environmental corridors and major topographic features. The butterfly sanctuary will remain untouched. For most of its length, the proposed scenic parkway runs along the edge of the woods which is currently buildable non-parkland area.

The proposed scenic parkway would follow guidelines for streets in environmental corridors developed by SEWRPC (Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.) SEWRPC maps ongoing changes in environmental corridors and provides modification recommendations to minimize negative outcomes. This draft plan follows those guidelines.

Does planning work?

The City has successfully used plans to develop the Burleigh Triangle area (Burleigh Triangle & Mayfair Road Corridor North Redevelopment Vision and Plan), East Tosa (East Tosa North Avenue Plan), the Village (The Village of Wauwatosa Plan), and the City's bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure (Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities Plan.)

In the County Grounds area (Milwaukee County Grounds – Northeast Quadrant Economic Development Zone Area A and UWM Innovation Park Master Plan), the development of UWM Innovation Campus serves as a model for sustainable future growth that balanced development, quality of life and the

environment. Some highlights include: 11 acres donated for a Monarch habitat area, the addition of walking and biking trails, 22 bio-filtration basins to contain water and avoid runoff in nearby Menomonee River, and the installation of LED street lights with dimmers to reduce light pollution on the night sky and minimize the impact on wildlife and bird and butterfly migration.

How can I offer my thoughts and opinion on the plan concept?

Your input on the future of the area and how to balance growth, green space, and neighborhoods is vital to the success of this plan. The City will be holding a third open house in late March or April. In the meantime, please visit the online town hall at <http://wauwatosa.net/planningsurvey> for further information and updates. If you have any questions, please contact Paulette Enders, Development Director via email at wlsdistrict@wauwatosa.net.

What are the next steps?

- All comments will be tabulated and analyzed.
- The City values the perspective of all citizens and appreciates their feedback, which will be taken into consideration in the next draft of the plan.
- A third public Open House will be held in late March or April. The date is yet to be determined and publicized.
- After the third Open House, the City of Wauwatosa will complete the following process:
 1. A final draft Master Plan Concept, with modifications from the public input, will be submitted to the Plan Commission, with an opportunity for public comment.
 2. A public hearing with public comment will be held in front of the Common Council.
 3. A Community Affairs meeting will be held, with an opportunity for public comment.
 4. A Common Council meeting will be held where final adoption of the Master Plan will be considered.

The Wauwatosa Life Sciences District Master Plan can be found on the City's website at <http://www.wauwatosa.net/index.aspx?nid=395>. The City will publish all future meeting dates, times, and locations on its website.