

CHAPTER 3

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY

Existing Conditions and Trends of the Population

The City of Waukesha, which was incorporated in 1896, is a rapidly growing area of southeastern Wisconsin. In the 50-year period between 1950 and 2000, the population of the City increased from 21,233 to 64,825 persons, or a 205% increase. This is shown in Table 1 (below). However, the steady growth in population has been far exceeded by the rapid growth in the area encompassed by the corporate limits of the City. Between 1950 and 2000, the corporate area of the City increased from 4.26 to 21.9 square miles, or a 414% increase. This steady increase in population and rapid growth in corporate area has important implications for the preservation, acquisition and development of parks and open space sites for the City of Waukesha and environs.

Table 2 (p.9) shows the population changes for the City and Waukesha County between 1970 and 2000. For the City of Waukesha, the population increased almost 27% between 1970 and 1980. The population of the County increased by over 21% for this same period. Between 1980 and 1990, the population of the County increased by only 8%. However, between 1990 and 2000, the populations of the City of Waukesha increased by almost 14% while the population of the County increased by over 18%.

TABLE 1

POPULATION GROWTH FOR THE CITY OF WAUKESHA

1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
21,233	30,004	39,695	50,365	56,958	64,825	86,340*

As shown in Table 2 (p. 9), the number of households in the City and in the County both increased from 1970 to 2000 at a larger percentage than the population increase. This relates to the significant shifts, which occurred during the 30-year period in the age composition and marital status of the resident population.

There is a continual decrease in the number of persons per household in the City and County since 1970. For the City, the number of persons per household decreased from 3.29 in 1970 to 2.43 in 2000. For the County, the number of persons per household decreased from 3.66 in 1970 to 2.63 in 2000. This is consistent with population trends in the southeastern Wisconsin region. For the region, the number of persons per household decreased from 3.20 in 1970 to 2.52 in 2000.

The age composition of the resident population of the City changed in the last three decades, as shown in the median age statistics in Table 2 (p. 9). The median age is defined as that age above and below which there are an equal number of persons. In 1970, the median age for the City was 24.5 years; it has steadily increased to where in 2000 it is at 33.8 years. Similarly for Waukesha County, the median age in 1970 was 25.3 years and in 2000 it has increased to 38.1 years. This is consistent with that of the region as a whole, where the median has increased from 27.6 years in 1970 to 35.4 years in 2000. This reflects the reduced number of youth.

*Urban Service Area Population

TABLE 2

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS FOR THE CITY OF WAUKESHA AND WAUKESHA COUNTY: 1970, 1980, 1990, & 2000

WAUKESHA: CHARACTERISTICS	CITY				COUNTY			
	1970	1980	1990	2000	1970	1980	1990	2000
Population	39,695	50,365	56,958	64,825	231,335	280,203	304,715	360,767
Percent change from previous year	--	26.9	13.1	13.9	--	21.1	8.7	18.4
Total Housing Units	12,062	18,333	22,065	26,856	65,249	92,622	110,452	140,309
Percent change from previous year	--	51.9	20.3	21.7	--	42.0	19.3	27.0
Number of persons per household	3.29	2.76	2.58	2.43	3.66	3.11	2.83	2.63
Families	9,644	12,720	14,424	16,288	55,667	73,836	84,074	100,502
Percent change from previous year	--	31.9	13.4	12.9	--	32.6	13.9	19.5
Median Age	24.5	27.1	30.8	33.4	25.3	29.7	34	38.1

Family households continue to be the dominant type of households, both in the City and in the County. For the City of Waukesha, 16,288 such households were recorded in 2000. For Waukesha County, the number of families increased to 100,502

The 2000 census determined that there were 26,856 housing units in the City of Waukesha. This is more than twice the 12,062 units found in 1970. During the 1970 through 2000 time period an average of about 493 residential buildings permits were issued each year. During the 1986 through 1990 period, averages of 486 permits were issued each year. An average of 479 residential permits has been issued each year from 1991 through 2000.

For a more comprehensive review of population, households, and housing units see Chapter 2, Population and Employment Inventories, Analyses and Forecasts, in a Land Use Plan for the City of Waukesha: 2010 SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 169.

It is concluded from the data summarized here, that the City and County populations are continuing to grow into the future. The continued growth in the number of households along with their changing composition and their decreasing average size, may be expected to create a changing demand for land and facilities for park and recreational uses. Other important determinants of existing and future outdoor recreation needs are trends in people's recreational habits, as discussed in the previous chapter, and land use and growth patterns for the City.

Land Use and Growth Patterns

As of December 2000, the area of the City consisted of 21.9 square miles. The majority of land is devoted to urban land uses. The dominant urban land use is residential, with additional land devoted to commercial, manufacturing, transportation and governmental uses.

In December 2002, the City of Waukesha consisted of about 22.7 square miles with residential land uses accounting for approximately 10.7 square miles or 47 percent of the incorporated area. Lands protected under conservancy zoning to remain in a natural state, accounted for approximately 1.5 square miles or 6.0 percent of the incorporated area. Commercial, industrial and institutional uses

occupy approximately 7.8 square miles or 35 percent of the City, leaving 2.7 square miles, or 12 percent in parks or other undeveloped lands.

Prior to about 1963, urban development within the City of Waukesha occurred in relatively tight, concentric rings outward from the central portion of the City. A dramatic change in the pattern of urban development within the area occurred thereafter. It became discontinuous and diffused with such development occurring in scattered pockets throughout the remaining rural areas in the City of Pewaukee and Town of Waukesha adjacent to the City of Waukesha.

Several railroads traverse through the City dividing it into many parts. In addition, industrial development is not concentrated in any one area of the City. These industrial belts, railroads, major thoroughfares and rivers and streams restrict the accessibility of the residents to the City's recreational areas. Therefore, they must be taken into consideration in determining how effectively the City's recreational areas can serve the residents.



Pebble Brook Park Railroad Crossing

There are several important natural resource features in the City of Waukesha and these were identified in the wetland protection and management plan for the City of Waukesha, which is adopted as part of this plan, by reference**. These features include surface water resources, wetlands, woodlands, prairies, wildlife habitat areas and soils.

The surface water resources consist of the streams and associated floodlands. The main system of the Fox River flows through the central portion of the City of Waukesha. The Pebble Creek and Pebble Brook are important perennial streams within the City. The floodlands of the river or stream are the wide, gently sloped areas contiguous to and usually lying on both sides of a river or stream channel. Floodlands are normally defined as the areas, excluding the channel, subject to inundation by the 100-year recurrence interval flood event. This is an event that would be reached or exceeded in severity once on the average of every 100 years. These natural areas are not suitable for urban development due to their natural limitation. However, they are suitable for outdoor recreation and open space uses.

Wetlands have been defined as areas in which the water table is at, near, or above the land surface, and are characterized by both hydric soils, such as peats, mucks, or other organic soils, and by the growth of hydrophytes, such as sedges, cattails, red osier dogwood, and tamarack. Wetlands within the City of Waukesha and planning area in 1985 covered about 6,990 acres (11 square miles). Large areas of wetlands are located along the main stream of the Fox River, Pebble Creek and Pebble Brook located to the south of the City. In addition, small areas of wetlands are scattered throughout the City.

Woodland areas have been identified within the City and planning area. As of 1985, woodland areas covered about 2,640 acres of the City and planning area. About 80 percent of these woodlands are classified as upland woods. The remaining 20 percent are classified as lowland wooded areas.

In 1997, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission completed A Regional Natural Areas and Critical Species Habitat Protection and Management Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin, which identified five natural areas within or adjacent to the City of Waukesha. Natural areas are tracts of land so little modified by human activity, that they contain intact native plant and animal

**SEWRPC, Community Assistance Planning Report 77, A Wetland Protection and Management Plan for the City of Waukesha and Environs. February 1983.

communities believed to be representative of the landscape before European settlement. These include Fosters Woods, an 89 acre xeric woods overlooking the Fox River in the Fox River County Park; Fruits Pond Fen, a 16 acre wetland complex in Woodfield Park; Pebble Creek Railroad Prairie, a 7 acre mesic prairie along the Glacial Drumlin Trail on the west side of the City; Pebble Creek and Minooka Park Woods, an 89 acre xeric woods dominated by white oak, red oak and red maple.

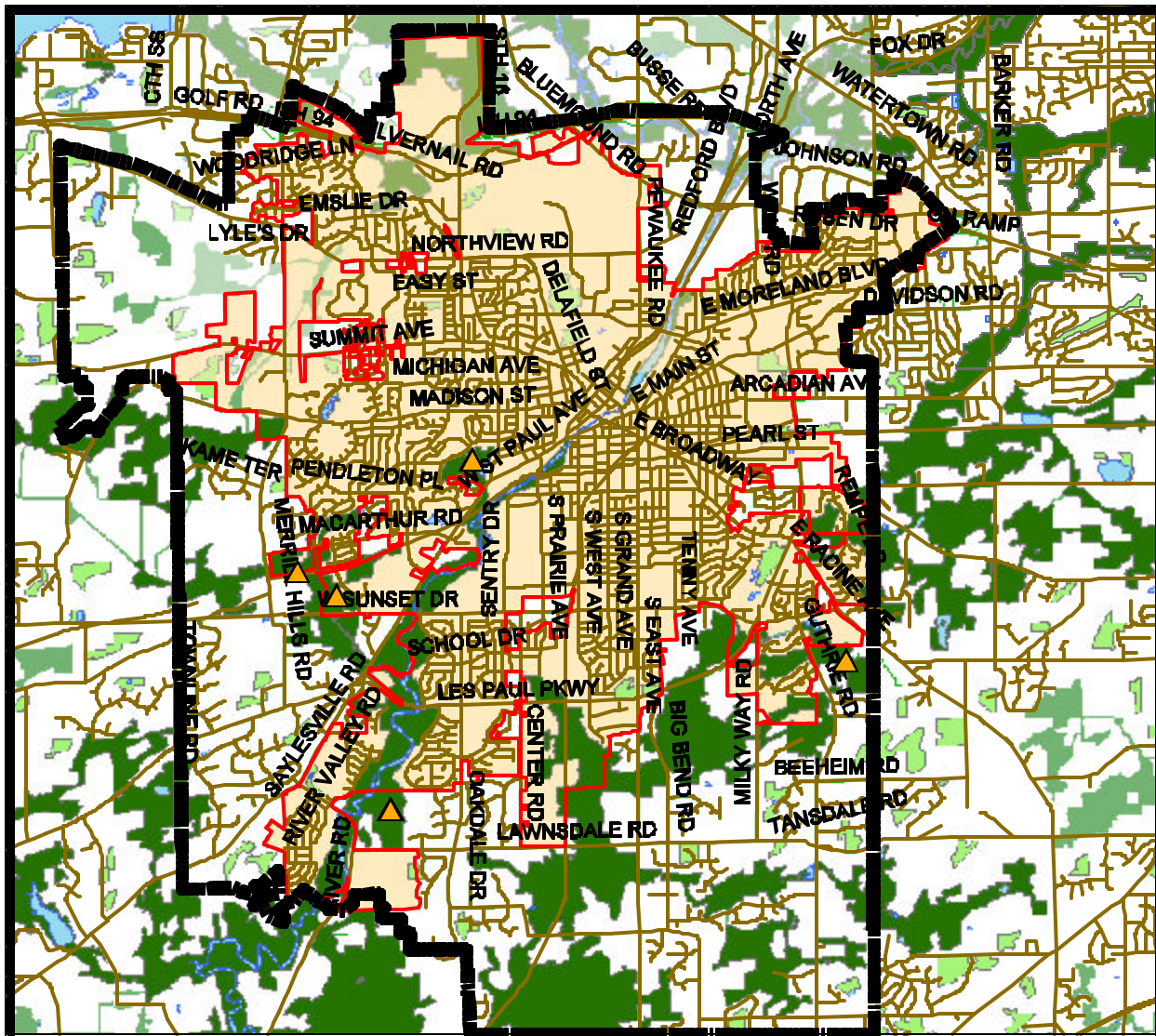
Wildlife habitat areas in and adjacent to the City of Waukesha generally occur in association with existing surface water, wetland and woodland resources. In 1980, wildlife habitat areas covered about 3,290 acres in the City and environs. About 47% of these wildlife habitat areas are also classified as wetlands.

Environmental corridors are formed when these natural resource features are combined, that is, when a composite is made of all of the best remaining woodlands, wetlands, prairies, and wildlife habitat areas and all of the major bodies of surface water and related undeveloped floodlands. Environmental corridors are located generally along the major perennial streams in association with the Fox River, Pebble Creek and Pebble Brook, and with large wetland complexes on other perennial and intermittent streams. These areas are important since they provide natural beauty, a high level of environmental quality and valuable recreational opportunities. There is a need to maintain the integrity of these remaining environmental corridors and important resource features in and near the City of Waukesha since they provide suitable locations for local parks and study areas. These areas should









Fox River Sanctuary Boardwalk

remain in their natural state and not be developed or destroyed. The environmental corridors are shown on Map 1 (p. 12).



Waukesha Planning Area

Environmental Corridors, Isolated Natural Resource Areas

-  Primary Environmental Corridor
-  Secondary Environmental Corridor
-  Isolated Natural Resource Area
-  Existing Natural Areas within the proposed Urban Service Area
-  City of Waukesha (January 2003)
-  Proposed Urban Service Area



Community Development Department - January 2003