
CHAPTER 5: HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

This chapter provides background on the diverse set of Historic and Cultural Resources in the City of Janesville. Cultural resources encompass a broad range of historical, archeological, recreational, entertainment, artistic, and educational attributes, and attractions of the City. These resources are fundamental threads in the fabric of the community and help to create a sense of place, identity, and meaning for residents. They are elements necessary for the physical, mental, and social well-being of residents and provide a significant economic benefit by drawing visitors into Janesville.

The information in this chapter will be used to guide future City initiatives related to cultural resources to help advance the overall goal of providing a high-quality of life for all residents and ensuring the City retains a high standard of livability.

**THE CITY'S POLICIES RELATED TO CULTURAL RESOURCES AS PRESENTED IN
THIS *COMPREHENSIVE PLAN* CHAPTER PROMOTE:**

- ◆ Reinvention of the central city – downtown and historic neighborhoods – through thoughtfully interweaving historic preservation with compatible redevelopment to create compelling places.
- ◆ Providing a high quality of life through encouraging the formation of new cultural amenities and supporting the creative culture in Janesville in a way that is culturally-relevant to current residents.
- ◆ Connecting cultural organizations with specific communities and neighborhoods to engage in place-making activities that help residents define and refine their sense of local identity and create unique social spaces that support community health and well-being.
- ◆ Sustaining the City's rich sense of history and cultural heritage.
- ◆ Janesville as a destination for unique cultural and historic amenities.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES GOAL, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Historic and Cultural Resources Goal

Preserve the historic character and architectural landscape of Janesville, while supporting innovation in Janesville’s cultural scene.

Historic and Cultural Resources Objectives

1. Preserve the most historically significant properties and districts in the City.
2. Encourage coordinated promotion and marketing of Janesville’s historic landscape and cultural amenities to further the City’s reputation as a destination for visitors.
3. Support a vibrant, active cultural life in the Downtown area.
4. Provide a rich, culturally relevant culture scene that is driven by and responsive to the needs and interests of current residents.
5. Encourage the formation of new cultural organizations, amenities, and events.
6. Engage cultural organizations, residents, and community stakeholders in placemaking at the scale of neighborhood blocks, neighborhoods, the city, and the region.
7. Create unique social spaces to support community health and well-being.
8. Embrace the City’s growing racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity.



An example of Janesville’s stock of historically significant buildings.

Historic and Cultural Resources Policies

1. Encourage context-sensitive redevelopment in the City through balancing historic preservation, rehabilitation, and infill development.
2. Consider and balance various factors in determining areas for historic preservation versus redevelopment, including the historic significance, re-use potential, surrounding context (e.g., primarily historic or redevelopment oriented), functionality of buildings, cost for rehabilitation v. redevelopment). Consider developing an evaluation system for historic preservation based in part on the Janesville Downtown Historic Preservation Plan. This document may need to be updated in the next 3 to 5 years.

3. Encourage collaboration between the Janesville Historic Commission and Downtown Janesville, Inc. in City revitalization (redevelopment and re-use) efforts to evaluate appropriateness for preservation versus redevelopment of properties based on the criteria outlined above.
4. Continue revitalization efforts in central city neighborhoods as outlined in the Look West and Old Fourth Ward Neighborhood Revitalization Plan. Monitor other aging neighborhoods for the emergence of similar needs during the planning period.
5. Help preserve historic homes, structures, and districts that contribute to the cultural heritage of Janesville, focusing on existing historic districts and buildings.
6. Continue to collaborate and partner with entities and organizations working to sponsor, support, and promote existing city attractions and events. Examples include:
 - a. Partnerships: Encourage new partnerships with emerging organizations and maintain and strengthen those with existing groups such as the Janesville Historic Commission, Forward Janesville, the Janesville Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (JAVCB), Janesville BID Board (Business Improvement District), Rotary Gardens, Rock County Historical Society, Janesville Performing Arts Center (JPAC), the City of Janesville's Parks Division, and the City of Janesville's Recreation Division.
 - b. Destinations and Events: Janesville Farmer's Market, Tour of Wisconsin Bike Races, JPAC, Ice Age Trails and other recreational trails, Rotary Gardens, Lincoln-Tallman House, Traxler Park, and others.
 - c. Facilities: Make available and support use of City-owned spaces for events such as City parks, streets, and facilities such as the Town Square and J.P. Cullen Memorial Pavilion, Festival Street, Main Street, the Marvin W. Roth Community Pavilion, and others.
 - d. Work with neighboring communities and the County to promote regional cultural resources development initiatives.
7. Explore initiatives to spotlight the history and cultural heritage of the City, such as a Janesville Heritage Trail Loop.
8. Engage cultural organizations, residents, and community stakeholders in placemaking and cultural planning efforts throughout the city by encouraging the formation of new culturally relevant community groups, social events, public spaces, and amenities, and supporting existing efforts.



The YMCA is an important cultural resource and destination within the City.

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9. Continue expansion of community gateways and wayfinding systems to establish the desired image of the City, and direct visitors to key attractions and businesses of the City (e.g., Rotary Gardens, Downtown).
10. Consider architectural standards that reflect the historic character of the area.
11. Continue to implement, monitor, and update existing tools that address the Goals, Objectives, and Policies of this chapter including but not limited to the City's Strategic Plan, Downtown Vision and Strategy, and Arise Plan.

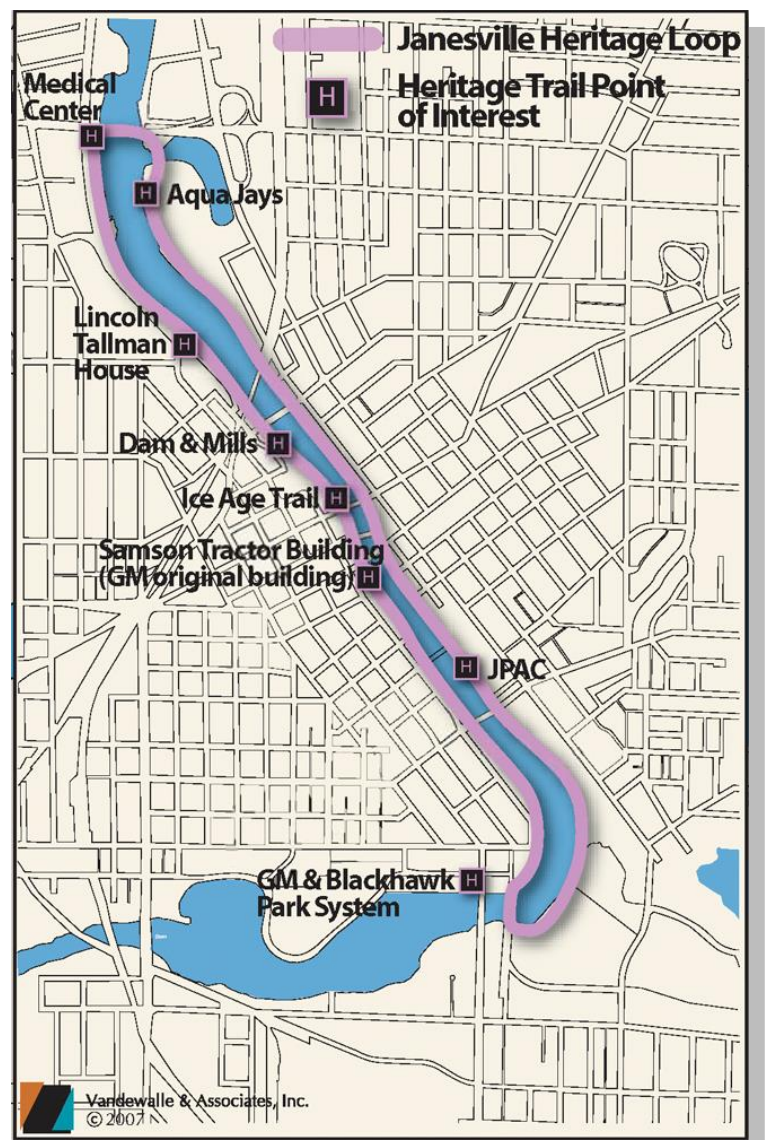
HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES PROGRAMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Support Projects Spotlighting the History and Cultural Heritage of Janesville

Illuminating what makes the City unique can add to efforts to promote the City of Janesville as a tourist destination, as well as enhancing the City's image as an attractive place to live.

Janesville Heritage Trail Loop

Janesville's extensive bicycle and pedestrian trail system is a source of pride and enjoyment for residents. The City supports exploring development of a "Janesville Heritage Trail Loop" to coincide with the existing and planned riverfront trail (Riverwalk) and off-river trail, spotlighting the unique historic and cultural assets of the City. This trail could run roughly from the riverbend area south of Racine Street north to Memorial Drive – generally adjacent to the River on both sides. The Trail Loop could include interpretive exhibits spotlighting such attractions as the former General Motors site, historically significant buildings on River Street, the "Cultural District" (library, JPAC, senior center), historic Main and Milwaukee Streets, the dam, Aqua Jays performance area, and Traxler Park.



Branding a segment of trail as a Heritage Loop will help showcase some of the unique sites that contribute to Janesville's history and define its modern-day culture.

Museum Project

A successful community builds its future on a strong understanding of and appreciation for its past. To continue to be a great place to raise a family, it is important that the City provide entertainment opportunities for all ages – from youth to young families, to older residents. Children’s museums provide a great way to excite and inspire youth. The City will continue to support efforts to develop a Children’s museum in Janesville.

Gateways and Wayfinding

The City will continue work on establishing increased identification of community gateways and wayfinding systems to enhance the desired image of the City and direct visitors to key destinations and activities (e.g., Rotary Gardens, Downtown). Gateways (points of entry) and wayfinding (guides to destinations) are critical components of creating positive visitor experiences. A gateway should signal a sense of arrival when a traveler has reached his or her destination. A recent example includes the “Festival Street” entrances on S. River Street. The archways, banners, and street design create a transition between the Town Square and the rest of downtown. Establishing a gateway is an opportunity for a community to project its desired image, signal that you have reached a destination, and create a positive first impression.

Wayfinding is the concept of providing guides to assist in knowing where you are going, how to get there, and when you have arrived. Strategic routing is a key component of wayfinding. When considering wayfinding to downtown Janesville and attractions in the City, the goal is to provide a positive visitor experience from the time the visitor enters the City, to the time they reach their destination. Routing visitors via the most attractive, safe, and hassle-free manner is paramount. Existing traffic patterns, land use, streetscaping, and aesthetics are all considerations in which ways to direct visitors.

Bolster Janesville’s Role in Developing New, Innovative Cultural Resources

The City is part of a much larger region that offers a broad and diverse range of historic and cultural resources. Janesville can carve out a unique role that provides pathways for residents to define and refine their sense of local identity, provide a high quality of life, all while creating spaces and places that are vibrant and engaging for residents and visitors alike.

One part of this strategy is, as discussed above, supporting projects that spotlight the City’s history and cultural heritage. The City can draw from the presence of industry - both historic and present day - (e.g., Parker Pen, milling, and General Motors), as well as the concentration of high-quality historic homes and structures such as the Lincoln-Tallman House, the Rock River, Rotary Gardens, and the Historic Armory.

The City is a slowly evolving place and efforts to support new, innovative cultural resources should be pursued. Nearby communities offer desirable and interesting amenities (such as the Beloit



Both the Janesville Performing Arts Center (JPAC) and the Historic Armory are valued cultural resources and entertainment venues in the community.

International Film Festival) which help to create a regional brand for Rock County as a destination for culture. The Janesville community is becoming more ethnically and culturally diverse which provides opportunities to highlight the unique cultures already represented in the City. With the Downtown undergoing a revitalization, there is opportunity to bolster the restaurant scene, retail offerings, and to embrace the eye-catching murals going up across Janesville's historic center. Additional entertainment venues, hotels, and the proposed indoor sports complex, would also help to attract visitors to enjoy the arts, culture, environmental and entertainment offerings, particularly in Downtown Janesville.

The City should also work to build its cultural and entertainment offerings to keep residents in the community, rather than leaving the community for arts, entertainment, and culture. The City, in partnership with Forward Janesville and the Janesville Area Visitors and Conventions Bureau, should continue to promote arts, culture, and entertainment to residents of Janesville. Current arts and cultural assets in Janesville include the Janesville Performing Arts Center (JPAC), the Hedberg Library, the Lincoln-Tallman House, the Beloit/Janesville Symphony Orchestra, Rotary Gardens, and public art exhibits.

Ideas for enhancing cultural offerings in the City include:

- ◆ Encourage the creation of a local cultural arts strategy for the City of Janesville using principles from “Agenda 21 for Culture” created by The Global Network of Cities, Local and Regional Governments, and other culture resources.
- ◆ Encourage the creation of a council or committee on culture that reflect the diversity of cultural agents within Janesville. This committee would oversee many of the cultural planning efforts mentioned below, along with being an entity to spearhead new initiatives and to support promotional efforts related to Janesville's cultural resources.
- ◆ Establish a charter of cultural rights and responsibilities.

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- ◆ Community-driven public art projects and creative placemaking would provide residents an opportunity to define and refine their sense of local identity.
- ◆ Creating an arts and culture incubator and maker space.
- ◆ Creating an artist-in-residency program for Downtown Janesville.
- ◆ Establishing a network of art galleries and organizing gallery night events to showcase local artists.
- ◆ Engage unique ethnic, cultural groups and neighborhoods in cultural planning efforts to create and support culturally relevant social life as well as map, chronicle, enhance, and create culturally relevant third places.
- ◆ Continue to encourage development of a Downtown entertainment district through encouraging strategic redevelopment and revitalization of sites and buildings, as recommended by the ARISE Downtown Plan.
- ◆ Coordinate regional events (such as the Rock County Fair) with other programs to increase awareness of cultural opportunities in the community.
- ◆ Continuing to encourage tours and walks spotlighting the historic buildings within the City – particularly the downtown and historic neighborhoods.
- ◆ Work with organizations and schools to promote youth arts, culture, recreation, and sports activities.

CULTURE AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Culture can be understood as the “languages, customs, beliefs, rules, arts, knowledge, and collective identities and memories developed by members of all social groups that make their social environments meaningful.” – American Sociological Association

The role that culture plays in providing a high quality of life in City of Janesville is complex. The physical, mental, social, and economic well-being of individual residents and the community are shaped by the historic development of cultural resources – those places, events, and attributes that make the City unique. These places help define the City’s “sense of place” and help to provide residents with meaningful social lives.

Support Mental and Social Well-Being through Social Infrastructure and Third Places

Janesville’s history and culture today reflect the City’s long history of settlement for agricultural reasons and its ongoing evolution as a place defined by industry, commerce, and the people who have driven the area’s economic success. In the pursuit of economic well-being for the residents of Janesville, what can often be missed is the mental and social well-being that is the result of both economic, environmental, and social dynamics. One such dynamic is the presence, availability, and quality of “Social Infrastructure”. Places like libraries, schools, parks, sidewalks provide both organized and informal ways to bridge and bond individual and community social networks. While commercial establishments like cafes, restaurants, and pubs serve as “third spaces” that provide a space away from home and work where the social life of a place occurs. Even community organizations provide valuable and necessary roles in supporting the mental and social well-being of communities.

Redevelopment in areas around the city provide a unique opportunity to bolster and enhance the existing social infrastructure while also addressing gaps that may exist. The suggestions in the section above on developing new, innovative cultural resources above go a long way towards providing a healthier and more supportive social environment. The continued revitalization of Downtown will integrate the historic structures with newer buildings and amenities that will be spatially connected through developments such as the Town Square/Festival Street. As these developments occur, efforts should be made to engage community-driven processes to activate and define these spaces as locally constructed “social infrastructure” in hopes they will achieve the status and role of “third spaces” for residents within and without the Downtown Area. Similar efforts should be made within each neighborhood in the City to support walkable, bikeable, and hyperlocal spaces to support the well-being of and provide a high quality of life for all residents.

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

“Social Infrastructure” is not a term conventionally used to describe the underpinnings of social life. But this is a consequential over-sight, because the built environment—and not just cultural preferences or the existence of voluntary organizations—influences the breadth and depth of our associations. If states and societies do not recognize social infrastructure and how it works, they will fail to see a powerful way to promote civic engagement and social interaction, both within communities and across group lines. “– *Palaces for the People* by Eric Klinenberg

THIRD SPACES

“The sociologist Ray Oldenburg called “third spaces,” places (like cafés, diners, barbershops, and bookstores) where people are welcome to congregate and linger regardless of what they’ve purchased. Entrepreneurs typically start these kinds of businesses because they want to generate income. But in the process, as close observers of the city such as Jane Jacobs and the Yale ethnographer Elijah Anderson have discovered, they help produce the material foundations for social life.” – *Palaces for the People* by Eric Klinenberg