

# 7. UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

## INTRODUCTION

The Utilities and Community Facilities chapter of the comprehensive plan focuses on ensuring the efficient provision of essential services and the development of necessary infrastructure to support the needs of the City of Berlin. It addresses a wide range of utilities and community facilities, including water supply, wastewater management, solid waste disposal, energy systems, telecommunications, public parks and municipal facilities.

## ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

- **Aging Infrastructure:** Throughout Wisconsin, aging community infrastructure burdens taxpayers and arrests progress. The City needs to balance and plan for future upgrades carefully to minimize negative impacts on the community.
- **Facility Enhancements:** There are opportunities to increase outdoor community facility use through improvements to parks, trails, and public amenities—such as benches, lighting, and outdoor seating.
- **Community Programming and Events:** Public engagement showed a strong desire to preserve and add programming through the School District, Library, and Senior Center.
- **Public / Private Partnerships:** The City provides community services through a combination of publicly owned utilities and partnerships with private companies; these partnerships should be continued to ensure access to services throughout the community.

## VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

At the Public Input Meeting, community members identified the Hospital, School District, and Library as key assets that should be preserved in Berlin.

Community members expressed concern and need for improved roadways and code enforcement on blighted properties.

When asked to rate community facilities, **77%** of survey respondents described public utilities—such as water, gas, and electricity—as “satisfactory” or “excellent.” Regarding cost, **66%** rated it as “satisfactory,” while **24%** rated it as “poor” or “unsatisfactory.”



## UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES GOALS, STRATEGIES, & ACTIONS

### Goal 1 (Community Facilities)

Provide community facilities and services that create a safe, attractive, and healthy environment to meet the needs of current and future City residents.

### STRATEGIES

#### General

1. Collaborate with private organizations that are serving the recreation needs of families, especially those that focus on the needs of seniors, youth and lower-income families.
2. As feasible, locate public-use community facilities where they would be accessible to a majority of expected users via walking or bicycling.
3. Provide adequate facilities in which to house City offices and equipment.
4. Assure health and medical facilities are available to meet the needs of all residents.

#### Parks & Trails

5. Pursue as needed opportunities for acquiring new land for the development of additional parks and open space needs. According to the National Recreation and Parks Association, the national standard is about 10.4 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents.
6. Incorporate historically significant areas and buildings into park expansion/improvement efforts.
7. Develop and maintain safe, attractive community gathering spaces and parks facilities that meet a wide range of recreational needs, both passive and active.

#### Emergency Services

8. Continue to evaluate performance of public safety services and facilities (police, fire and EMS) to respond to the needs of the community; encourage volunteerism associated with Fire and EMS services.
9. Ensure that public safety facilities are optimally located for acceptable response times to existing development and future growth areas.
10. Partner with neighboring jurisdictions to sustain high quality public safety services and facilities (police, fire, and EMS), in balance with budget constraints.

#### Waste Management Services

11. Maintain contracts with waste disposal services to require the recycling of domestic and commercial waste in a manner that is environmentally sound and cost-effective.
12. Continue to encourage recycling and minimize waste.
13. Continue to provide public education and awareness of recycling opportunities for all waste streams, including computers, electronics and appliances (e.g. hazardous waste and e-cycle pickup).

### Coordination with Non-Government Organizations

- 14. Explore new public/private partnerships and maintain communication with private organizations to increase efficiency.
- 15. Collaborate with private and non-profit organizations that provide community services for vulnerable populations, particularly the youth, the elderly, and those with special needs (e.g., daycare, healthcare, senior services etc.).
- 16. Collaborate with organizations that provide resources to expand community facilities, like Green Lake Greenways and local and state organizations.
- 17. Work with the Berlin Area School District to maintain a high level of service and adequately plan for the growing needs of the community.

### ACTIONS

- A. Identify representatives from local organizations, such as sports clubs, churches, and youth groups, to foster collaboration and:
  - i. Develop a unified parks and recreation program.
  - ii. Coordinate shared use of parks, recreational facilities, public buildings, and community spaces, along with programming accessible to all residents.
- B. Require fiscal impact analyses of all major capital projects considered for funding. Such analyses should include, but not be limited to, one-time capital costs, life cycle operating and maintenance costs, revenues from the project, and costs of not doing the project.
- C. Make major project-specific capital decisions by the Common Council through the adoption of the City's operating budget and the Capital Improvement Plan.
- D. Annually review the police, fire, and emergency medical services in the City and continue to review all options for providing services that meet the needs of residents. Meet with neighboring jurisdictions, as necessary, to review fire protection and ambulance service mutual aid and/or contractual intergovernmental services.
- E. During the annual capital improvement planning process, consider budgeting for implementation of the recommendations in the City's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.
- F. Review subdivision ordinances for requirements of parkland dedication, considering dedication fees for all rezones that increase the number of dwelling units.
- G. Update the City's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan every five years to maintain grant eligibility.
- H. Develop a strategy to encourage and recognize community involvement in volunteer services by people of all ages.

# UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

## Goal 2 (Utilities)

**Provide adequate water, sewer, and other infrastructure to support the orderly and cost-effective development of the community.**

### STRATEGIES

#### Infill & New Development

18. Maximize the efficiency of investments to existing infrastructure by channeling growth into already served/planned service areas (infill development) and regulating new growth and development.
19. Discourage inefficient “leapfrog” development that results in infrastructure constructed before there is adequate customer base in place to support its maintenance.
20. Maintain and improve utility infrastructure, planning for adequate capacity/integrity to serve both existing users and potential new service areas (maintaining the reliability of existing systems/services is the highest priority).
21. Avoid environmentally sensitive areas when planning the location of utilities to minimize adverse impacts (to the greatest extent possible).
22. Discourage suburban development served by septic systems (i.e. residential densities greater than one unit per 35 acres, non-agricultural commercial, industrial and institutional) within the City’s planning area wherever possible/feasible.

#### Electrical System

23. Continue to bury existing utilities, where feasible, as redevelopment and street reconstruction occur, and continue to require utilities in new developments to be underground.
24. Maintain City ordinances and/or plans that decrease light pollution while promoting public safety (more efficient street lighting, maintaining guidelines/restrictions for commercial and residential exterior lighting, etc.).

#### Data

25. Continue to support public/private partnerships to co-locate telecommunication facilities (e.g., antennas on a water tower, small cells on/in street light poles, etc.).
26. Explore opportunities to improve internet connectivity through state and federal grant programs (e.g., Wisconsin Public Service Commission).

**Leapfrog development** refers to a pattern of urban growth where new developments bypass existing properties and infrastructure, often resulting in scattered, discontinuous development. This phenomenon can exacerbate urban sprawl, increase infrastructure costs, and create challenges for efficient land use and community cohesion.

## Water Supply Services

27. Continue to evaluate and identify capacity concerns with existing City wells when new development is proposed.
28. Locate future municipal wells in areas where there will be minimal impact on groundwater and groundwater recharge, including outside of capture zones for springs.
29. Encourage water conservation methods and practices through public education and awareness, such as:
  - i. Use of no-flush restroom fixtures in commercial businesses
  - ii. Replacing older fixtures with low-flow fixtures

## Sanitary Sewer & Wastewater

30. Provide adequate services for the disposal and recycling of solid waste.
31. Improve the quality of surface water runoff by implementing best stormwater management practices, maintaining the stormwater management system, and expanding facilities as necessary in accordance with the City's policies and ordinances.
32. Encourage residential and nonresidential properties to implement additional stormwater management techniques to reduce the impacts of stormwater discharge (e.g. rain gardens, rain barrels, green roofs, bioretention basins, oil and grease filters) on surface and groundwater resources.

## ACTIONS

- I. Require new development proposals be reviewed by all City departments to ensure that essential utilities can be provided to the subject area in a timely and efficient manner.
- J. Require new development to pay the full cost of new municipal services needed to support the development, so that the existing taxpayers are not burdened with inequitable taxes or service costs. Consider methods to recover the costs of utility facilities necessitated by new growth, such as impact fees.
- K. Annually review existing data relative to the conditions and capacity of municipally provided facilities (water and wastewater); repair/upgrade facilities as needed to serve both existing and future populations.
- L. Promote available incentives, energy audits and appliance recycling offered through Berlin Water/Sewer Utility, Focus on Energy, or other sources to assist individuals and businesses with energy efficiency and renewable energy measures.
- M. Conduct an Impact Fee Needs Assessment on all potential municipal utilities and facilities in order to impose impact fees on any new development which impacts the level of service within the system; review and potentially update every ten years, at a minimum.

# UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

## UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

This section inventories current facilities and public utilities that are vital to maintaining City operations and community quality of life.

### PUBLIC FACILITIES / SERVICES

#### Public Safety, Health, and Welfare

- **Fire & EMS:** Fire protection for the City as well as the surrounding communities is provided by a volunteer fire department. Being centrally located in the City of Berlin their district extends into the Towns of Berlin, Seneca, and St. Marie in Green Lake County, the Towns of Aurora and Warren in Waushara County, and the Town of Nepeuskun in Winnebago County. Although a separate organization, the City also has EMT's that provide ambulatory medical care to the community, with three facilities in Green Lake County.
- **Healthcare Facilities:** For medical, dental, chiropractic, and mental health services, residents of the City of Berlin have access to a range of healthcare providers located within the City. ThedaCare Medical Center–Berlin serves as the primary hospital, offering emergency care, inpatient services, and specialty clinics. Additional services are available through ThedaCare Physicians.
- **Senior Care:** The Berlin Senior Citizen Center provides programs, meals, transportation, and social activities aimed at empowering older adults to maintain independence and stay actively engaged in the community.

#### Parks and Open Spaces

- Riverside Park
- Nathan Strong Park
- Forsyth's Park
- Longcroft Park
- Firefighters Park
- Volunteer Park
- Mound Street Park
- Berlin High School Park
- Berlin Middle School Park
- Clay Lamberton School
- City Forest
- Berlin School Forest
- Berlin Locks
- Bohn Farm, City Wildlife Area

#### Trails

- Mascoutin Valley State Trail

#### Schools & Education

- **Berlin Area School District:** The City of Berlin is served by the Berlin Area School District. Schools within the system include Clay Lamberton (pre-K-5), Berlin Middle School (6-8), and Berlin High School (9-12). All schools are located in the City limits.

### UTILITIES

- **Electric:** Alliant Energy provides electrical power to the City of Berlin.
- **Natural Gas:** The City is served by Alliant/Wisconsin Power and Light Company for natural gas services.
- **Refuse/Recycling Collection:** The City contracts with Waste Management to handle curbside garbage and recycling for all residential properties with four or fewer units. Commercial buildings and residential buildings with over five units must contract for their own refuse and recycling pickup.
- **Telecommunications:** Cellular and mobile service is provided to residents throughout the City by Verizon, T-Mobile, AT&T, and U.S. Cellular. Wireless and satellite high-speed internet can be obtained through HughesNet and Viasat, while traditional wired and wireless broadband internet access is available through Spectrum and Brightspeed.
- **Water:** The City of Berlin has a public water distribution system under its control provided through three municipal wells and two water towers.
- **Wastewater:** The City's sanitary treatment facility is located in the north industrial park.
- **Stormwater:** The current stormwater system is designed throughout the City to handle the 10-15 year storm. Major outlets for this system empty into the Fox River.



*Berlin Senior Citizen Center, Photo Source: City of Berlin*



*Berlin Fire Department, Photo Source: City of Berlin*



*Fox River, Photo Source: City of Berlin*