

City of Eau Claire Department of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Strategic Plan



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INTRODUCTION

The initial strategic plan for the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department was prepared in 2006 and then later updated in 2011. The purpose of the plan was to identify strategic issues facing the Department over a 5- to 10-year period and develop specific recommendations or actions to address these issues.

There is a distinction between strategic planning for an organization and operational or shorter time planning. Strategic planning can generally be defined as *“A process to assist in producing fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it.”*

The strategic planning process provides a shared vision of an organization’s future and then determines the best way to achieve this vision. Through strategic planning, an organization can:



- Examine the environment in which the Department operates;
- Explore the factors and trends that affect the way they do business and carry out their roles;
- Seek to meet a mission and any mandates that they may have;
- Identify strategic issues that must be addressed;
- Find ways to address these issues by re-examining the organization’s mission, product, services, facilities, costs, financing, management, and organization;
- Direct an organization and its resources toward accomplishing these goals over the upcoming months and years.

Since the plan is 5 years old, it was decided to review the document and determine whether the Department’s strategic issues had changed and whether new strategic actions should be developed.

For this update of the plan (similar to 2011), it was decided to involve staff representing the various operations and facilities managed by the Department. The group involving approximately 14 people met three times to review and update the 2011 plan.

As done in 2011, the plan update team followed a series of steps to assist in updating the plan. The first step was for the team to review and discuss community trends that



may effect future Department operations, the delivery of services and recreational needs of the community. The discussion focused on demographic trends of the community, which are included in Appendix A. The team also discussed general trends encountered within the Department that affect levels of service and programs of the Department itself, since team members were already knowledgeable in these areas.

The following sections of this report provide a summary of the discussions of each exercise completed by the

strategic planning team. Each exercise builds upon the next, with the end result the identification of the strategic issues and recommendations to resolve them.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As part of the process to examine the environment in which the Department operates, team members reflected upon what they felt were key accomplishments or milestones of the Department from 2011 to present. The following is the listing of these accomplishments as they were identified by the team members. They are not listed by priority nor grouped by order of accomplishment or by Division.

- Implementation of Emerald Ash Borer Remediation Program
- Growth of the number of special events held at Phoenix Park
- Coordination with Volume One on Thursday night concert series
- Reorganization of Forestry/Parks Maintenance staff
- Being selected as a National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) gold medal finalist
- Expansion and growth of the volunteer program
- Public recognition of the volunteer program
- Receiving national accreditation through the NRPA
- Upgrades to the mechanical room and equipment at Fairfax Pool
- Undertaking the civic engagement process related to the Fairfax Pool improvements
- Collaboration with Visit Eau Claire on the preparation the Park Facility Economic Impact Study
- Implementation of the “City Passes” punch card program from recreational programs
- General collaboration between the Recreation, Parks, and Forestry and Cemetery Divisions
- Development of the Jeffers Road athletic complex
- Transition from the men’s fast pitch tournament to the women’s fast pitch tournament
- Pinehurst Park winter facility improvements and collaboration with Outdoor More
- Moving the brush site to the Jeffers Road location and overseeing the operation of the facility
- Implementation of the turf feeding program at the cemeteries
- Expansion of the adult recreation programs offerings such as pickleball
- Creation of the volunteer newsletter
- Attendance of the 2015 National Conference by ten members of the staff
- Construction of the new maintenance building at Carson Park



- Collaboration with numerous organizations (public/private partnerships) to provide new facilities programs such as with the Chippewa Valley Pickleball Club, Fire Department, Mayo Hospital, etc.
- Sponsoring the Clearwater Parade
- Increases in providing public open skating at Hobbs Ice Arena
- Completion of improvements at Rod and Gun Park and public involvement process
- Remediation of soil contamination at Owen Park
- Installation of the “Fitness Zone” play equipment with sponsorship from Mayo Hospital
- Partnership with WI Urban Wood in the use of wood from trees removed by the Forestry Department
- Decking of the high bridge
- Development of a successful succession program for staff replacements
- Completion of the club viewing room at Hobbs Ice Arena
- Revisions to the Department’s volunteer manual to be aligned to the CAPRA standards
- Obtaining national certification of the volunteer coordinator
- Concession stand improvements and standardization between each of the concession operations
- Development of the RX park information pages on the Department’s website
- Implementing a life jacket loaner program at Riverview Park
- Installation of numerous energy efficiency improvements at Hobbs Arena
- Installation of the new turf at the Carson Park football field
- Replacement of the AED defibrillation units at the parks
- Preparation of the Department’s first recreation plan
- Implementation of the assess management software Lucy
- Installation of lights at the Fairfax ball fields
- Improvements to the athletic fields at Kessler and Newell Parks
- Improvements to the basketball court at Newell Park
- Continued growth in the use of social media for marketing
- Completion of the park improvements at County Farm Park
- Successful completion of the goose roundups at Riverview Park and Half Moon Lake
- Providing fiber optic lines to the parks and providing WIFI service to the parks
- Converting all the Department’s paper files to digital



- Construction of the pavilion structure within the Forest Street special area
- Installation of the water bottle fill station at Hobbs Arena
- Continued water quality improvements at Half Moon Lake
- Construction of skateboard park at Lakeshore Park
- Improvements (ADA, mechanical, heating, electrical, etc.) at Hoover Chapel at Forest Hill Cemetery
- Installation of new restrooms and landscaping at Phoenix Park near the Farmer's Market Pavilion
- Parking and lighting improvements at the Dog Park
- Adoption of tree pruning cycles within the neighborhood areas
- Replacement of the sound system at the Carson Park football stadium
- Collaboration in promoting and organizing the Eau Claire sculpture tour
- Development of the City-wide deer management plan
- Update of the Waterways Plan
- Increasing community trust in the organization
- Ability to hire quality employees
- Obtaining contracts with nurseries for the purchase of trees
- Installation of a new play feature at Fairfax Pool
- Implementation of changes to the special events review and approval process
- Implementing a helmet rental program at Pinehurst Park
- Completion of an ADA assessment of all park facilities
- Installation of pickleball courts at McDonough Park
- Implementation of a new facility advertising program at Hobbs Arena
- Development of community gardens at Fairfax and Lakeshore Parks and community public involvement in the planning process
- Coordination with Public Works on the reconstruction of streets
- Paving of the Braun's Bay parking lot



TRENDS

As part of the process to examine the environment in which the Department operates, team members also discussed the demographic trends of the community which may affect the delivery of services by the Department. A summary of these general demographic trends from the 2015 Comprehensive Plan and most recent 5-Year Parks and Open Space Plan are included in Appendix A.

On an overall basis, population forecasts continue to show that Eau Claire's population will continue to grow with the rate of increase to be slightly less than the 1% increase that the City has experienced over the past few decades. The size of the City in area will also continue to increase, but at lower rates of growth as shown historically. Growth to the northeast will no longer continue with the incorporation of the Village of Lake Hallie; while growth to the west, northwest, and southeast will continue.

Housing construction has slowed in recent years, with the trend for more multiple-family developments. It is anticipated that housing construction will continue at similar levels as in recent years, with no return of the housing construction levels of the late 1990s.

The planning team also discussed trends or observations that were more specific to the Department. Some of these were outlined in the 2011 Strategic Plan, while others were added during the update process. This updated listing of trends includes:

- The City will see the continued need to combine facilities and programs as funding is reduced.
- Community expectations for services provided by public agencies continues to increase as tax dollars shrink:
 - people expect higher and better facilities and programming
 - they want it immediately
 - they want information 24/7
 - we will see continued job reductions as public expectations rise.
- We have seen the need to provide some services with the help of volunteer labor, which we feel will continue to grow.
- Fees have reached or will soon reach levels where they could impose hardships for households and organizations.
- Fewer programs and activities can be provided with no fee.
- We have seen the need for more cooperation between agencies as funding becomes scarcer, including private sector companies and the medical community.
- There will be increased demand for public transportation and various means of non-motorized means of travel, such as with bicycling.
- The use of social media will continue to increase.
- The decline in the interest in organized adult activities will continue.

- There will be greater demand to provide on-line services and information provided on-line.
- The City will continue to work towards a “paperless” organization.
- There has been a greater awareness and interest in health and wellness in the past five years and this trend will continue to grow.
- Interest in community walkability programs will grow.
- Interest in sustainability and green technologies will continue to increase.
- Local officials will continue to work with the State and federal government to provide passenger rail service to Eau Claire.
- Private grant dollars from the medical sector will continue to be available for health and wellness programs.
- There will be discussions about division and department organization changes and consolidations relative to the Public Works operations, and possibly other departments.
- There will be continued need to encourage internal partnerships and collaboration within various divisions of Public Works.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

A major consideration in decision-making within an organization is the internal and external influences on an organization. This information is useful when recognizing strengths and weaknesses of the organization as team members begin identifying strategic issues. In 2006 and 2011, the Department went through a series of exercises to identify these influences. As part of the update process for the 2016 plan update, staff members reviewed the previous listings from the original plan and updated it as needed.

The following are the influences identified that could be factors (directly or indirectly) in decision-making within the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department:

Internal Strengths (These are resources or capabilities of the Department that help the organization accomplish its mission.)

- Education and training of Forestry crew
- City Council and City Administration supports Department mission and vision
- Professional staff – strong educational training – good diversity in background and expertise
- Equipment and resources are available to do work
- Working relationship with Public Works Department is evolving
- Good policies and procedures in place
- Good understanding of government (ability to work with other governmental agencies)
- Well organized/efficient and detailed administrative team
- Efficient office space for Parks/Forestry/Transit/Streets
- Good working relationships with outside groups (facility users, community groups, neighborhoods, etc.) (Recent examples: Outdoor more, Volume 1, Corba, Miracle League)
- Good training of part-time staff
- Good, energetic part-time staff
- Stability of staff (good longevity)
- Good blend of experienced employees & new/younger ones with fresh ideas
- Flexibility of staff and being adaptive to change
- Well maintained facilities
- Diversity of facilities provided and available
- Diverse types of recreation programs provided, such as aquatics, adaptive rec., adult programs, youth programs, and events
- Good computer systems (communicating, software, support)
- Strong supervisors in each division
- Good leadership of the Department

- Online access to information (website, recreation management, etc.)
- Structure of internship program
- Front office design and accessibility to public
- Quality maintenance and operation of facilities
- Learn-to-swim program (over 2,500 participants)
- Working relationships with other City Departments, particularly Engineering
- Revenue tracking system and staff follow-up
- Current with industry trends
- Exceptional Fairfax training and in-service program
- Strong, talented, and knowledgeable front office team
- Visibility of Department employees at special events
- Unified Parks, Recreation, Forestry/Cemeteries Department staff
- Collaboration with ECASD, Visit Eau Claire, YMCA, EC Youth Hockey, local health providers, and other local Parks & Recreation Departments
- Staff are experts in the community in various capacities (facility scheduling and use, hockey, and manufactured ice)
- Communication and relations with the public
- Playground safety inspector on staff
- Playground inspection program
- Public access to cemetery records
- Asset management program for park inventory in progress
- Volunteer coordinator position
- Cost analysis of operations (ball fields ice rinks)
- Template created for work requested that is not high priority (i.e. encroachment policy)
- Stores Clerk position evolution
- Green initiatives considered in all aspects of operations
- Emerald Ash Borer readiness plan complete
- Completion of 10-year Urban Forestry Management Plan
- Hobbs Management flexibility
- Bio fuel contracts
- Asset management program for Fairfax Pool and Hobbs Arena
- Program and facility affordability
- Incorporating conservation, social equity, health and wellness into long range planning
- Identifying and implementing ADA initiatives
- High level of responsiveness to our customers
- Succession planning and implementation of staff transitions
- Social media initiatives
- Energy efficiency and upgrades in facility operations
- Comprehensive management of concession operations

- Strong safety and risk management program (training, documentation, planning, and evaluation)
- Department accreditation
- The ability to have Flex staff scheduling
- Completion of ADA transition plan
- Streamlined special event process

Internal Weaknesses (These are deficiencies in resources and capabilities of the Department that may hinder an organization's ability to accomplish its mission.)

- Uncertainty of budget from year to year – cuts seem to focus on P & R Department
- Accessibility of certain park areas relating to the ADA requirements
- Lack of training and training funds
- Lack of programming for lifetime activities, early childhood and teen programming, etc.
- Need to grow public awareness through the use of social media
- Marketing of the Department, its programs, facilities, services
- Lack of parkland dedication ordinance
- Understanding changing City processes with Human Resources and Finance
- Upcoming retirements of upper level management staff (such as Parks & Recreation, Public Works, & Fire)
- Learning curve and acceptance of staff to rely more on social media
- Inability of more staff to have access to computers in Parks/Forestry
- Bleacher/seating at Carson Park (aging, safety, and non-portability)
- Owen Park wells pumping to Half Moon Lake
- Department messaging and story to the public
- Analyzing and utilizing online evaluation data
- Outdated and aging facility infrastructure
- Life-cycle of equipment has been increased
- Limited staff resources and relying on part-time labor
- Utilizing and establishing the volunteer coordinator position
- Limited on-site recreation equipment storage
- Limited parking availability at large events
- Researching and collecting data state-wide and nationally
- Training community service workers supervisory skills who manage part-time seasonal staff
- Equipment availability (shared tasks sometimes has created competition of equipment)
- Pending retirements within the Department
- Continuing Half Moon Lake water quality issues

- Pay plan uncertainty
- Expansion of facilities and programs without expansion of workforce
- Carrying capacity of parks to handle some special events
- Work order system not fully in place
- Differing management styles with Community Service
- Evolution of creating Community Services

External Opportunities (These are outside factors or situations that can affect the Department in a positive or favorable way.)

- Networking more with other agencies in the areas of wellness and fitness
- Working more with the DNR and their resources
- Encourage groups to assist in facility maintenance, plantings, upkeep through sponsorships
- Capitalize on the community's support for quality of life programs
- Capitalize on GIS technology
- Expand opportunities to work with the Sports Commission
- Improve marketing of the Department, facilities, programs and services
- Find more sources of revenue through sponsorships, grants, donations, advertising, etc.
- Encourage special interest groups to step forward in being a partner to assist in providing facilities, funding, etc.
- Capitalize on existing staff contacts with organizations and individuals
- Working with community groups to influence decision-making
- Identifying opportunities to reduce duplication of services with outside agencies and businesses
- Optimizing our existing facility use potential
- Use of social media to promote our identity, programs, and facilities
- Contact with outside marketing professionals to promote our Department at a low cost
- Positive climate for utilizing volunteer assistance
- Building relationship with organizations and agencies leadership transitions
- Identifying potential collaboration with UWEC and YMCA recreation with new event center
- Development of the Confluence Plaza area
- North American Hockey League
- Developing a mobile recreation program and associated partnerships
- Receiving the NRPA Grand Plaque and promotion
- Working more closely with Visit Eau Claire
- Establishing prescription for the parks in the health provider offices

- Expanding GIS capabilities
- Building additional public/private partnerships to provide programs and facilities
- Millennials wanting to be involved in the community

External Threats (These are outside factors or situations that can affect the Department in a negative manner.)

- Community belief that going towards privatization is the smart way to go
- Individuals/Neighborhood association's influence over decision-making
- Emerald Ash Borer, Gypsy Moth and other exotic pest readiness for these invasions and associated costs
- Reduction in CDBG funding
- Reduction in LAWCON funding
- Competition from outside organizations and businesses for programs and participation
- Budget reductions from Council related to shared revenues
- Negative effects from School District budget cutting:
 - increased charges to the City for facility use
- State Budget Impacts on City Budget and operations
- Impacts of State mandates on City staff (collective bargaining, health care, retirement, staffing levels/shifts and pay planning)
- Expectations of public reaction to service cuts
- Operating expenses exceeding the threshold of what individuals and organizations are able to afford
- Relationship with the Eau Claire Area School District and UWEC
- The impact on transportation to Fairfax Pool
- Community expectations of operating at the same level to provide programs and services with reduced resources
- Public understanding service level challenges due to scarcity of resources (both human and financial)
- Impacts associated with UWEC budget reductions
- Development of UWEC and YMCA recreational facilities
- Development of private recreation enterprises
- Perception of potential health risks associated with youth contact athletics
- Declining participation in beginning levels of youth hockey
- Air quality and refrigerant legislation for public facilities
- Technical advances that threaten personal privacy and data security
- Public perception that City operations should be run "like a business".

MISSION STATEMENT

The team then discussed the Department's current mission statement and discussed areas where changes or improvements should be considered. A mission statement is a "succinct statement that articulates the organization's purpose (the end result an organization seeks to accomplish), its business (a description of the primary means used to accomplish the purpose), and values (the values or beliefs shared by the employees of the organization)." It also includes a vision statement which sets forth the organization's optimum goal to strive for.

In 2011, the planning team spent time updating the initial mission statement that was prepared in 2006. For this update, the group reviewed the mission statement and it was the consensus of the group that no significant change was needed.

The following is the approved mission statement of the Department:

City of Eau Claire Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department Mission Statement

***To provide exceptional park, recreation, and forestry services
that will enrich our citizens and visitors.***

This is accomplished through our values of:

1. **Accountability** - To maintain open relationships with the community.
2. **Responsive** – To provide for the needs of others.
3. **Ingenuity** – To be innovative and creative.
4. **Professionalism** – To be qualified and prepared to work.
5. **Honesty** – To be open and transparent.
6. **Health** – To provide quality opportunities for physical fitness and activity.
7. **Environmentalism** – To provide healthy spaces and places.
8. **Security** – To enforce rules fairly and consistently.
9. **Safety** – To minimize accidents.
10. **Explorative** – To learn new ways to enhance services.

Vision Statement

Contribute to making Eau Claire a vibrant and healthy community.

IDENTIFICATION OF STRATEGIC ISSUES & VISION STATEMENTS

The strategic planning team then worked on updating the list of strategic issues facing the Department. A strategic issue is:

A fundamental challenge affecting an organization's mission, mandates, product, services, facilities, customers or users, costs or management.

If not dealt with, it will lead to:

- A significant problem or crisis within the organization
- A major missed opportunity

In 2011, seven strategic issues were identified within the Department. For this update, the planning team went through an exercise to determine if any of these strategic issues should be eliminated or revised. The process revealed that all seven strategic issues were still relevant for the Department, subject to some revisions and modifications.

Each strategic issue is formatted by incorporating an overall or summary issue statement, which is then grouped with contributing issue statements. These contributing issue statements are included in the plan as they provide greater detail and definition to the overall strategic issues.

In addition, there is a vision statement associated for each strategic issue. This vision represents an optimal outcome of how the planning team would like to see the Department positioned relative to each strategic issue within approximately 5 years.

The following is the listing of updated strategic issues and vision statements:

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

How can Department personnel improve its responsibilities and interaction with its customers?

1. How can the staff improve its customer service with the public when undertaking our roles of providing services and facilities to the community?
2. How can we maintain our service excellence with periodic staffing turnover and possible staff reductions?

VISION/OUTCOME: *“Department staff is well educated, trained, and motivated to provide positive interaction with the public that ensures that the customer feels that they are important, valued, that they are the reason we are in business, and that they are satisfied with the product they receive.”*

PRIORITIZING SERVICES, PROGRAMS, EVENTS, AND FACILITIES

How should the Department gather input, process, prioritize, plan, implement, and maintain its services, programs, events, and facilities to respond to the recreational needs of a changing population and address needs currently not met?

1. How does the Department plan for needs created by the future growth and expansion of the City?
2. How do we meet the needs of a changing population or underserved group through changes or improvements to programs or facilities?
3. How do we interact with outside groups in planning facilities (i.e., how does the City respond to single voices attempting to set policy or direction)?
4. How will the Department document plans and secure funding for future developments?
5. How does the Department receive input from the community in a timely manner?
6. How do we provide the correct balance between quality and quantity of our facilities and programs?
7. How do we staff and provide upkeep for new facilities with shrinking budgets?
8. How can we get community and elected officials to understand the need to maintain and upgrade our existing facilities and infrastructure (i.e. Fairfax Pool, Hobbs Ice Center, Carson Park, etc.)?
9. How should the Department determine its level of support for delivering services and providing facilities with the School District?
10. How does the Department ensure that programs and facilities address social equity in our community?
11. How do we position ourselves with UWEC and the YMCA in providing programming in conjunction with the proposed event center along Menomonie Street?

VISION/OUTCOME: *“The Department offers excellent services, programs, and facilities that meet the changing needs of the community.”*

MARKETING

How does the Department promote its image and visibility and have the community recognize the importance of the Department as a leading provider in park, recreation, and forestry services?

1. How can the Department better “market” or “brand” its product and in the process improve its image and recognition both in the community and within the organization?
2. How can we better educate the community on the value-added benefits of our Department?
3. What role will social media have on marketing and influencing the perception of our Department?
4. What is the message (story) that we want to communicate to the public?

VISION/OUTCOME: *“Through increased visibility of the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department, its programs and facilities, the citizens of Eau Claire see the Department as a valuable community asset that is important to our quality of life and sense of community.”*

PERSONNEL AND STAFFING

How does the Department organize its staff to create a more flexible environment to provide services and programs that are responsive to community needs?

1. How do we organize our staff to create a more responsive, sustainable, and flexible organization?
2. How can the Department work to improve employee scheduling so that we can continue to provide quality services and programs in the most efficient and economic manner?
3. How can we meet customer and service demands with less people while budgets continue to decline?
4. How do we make effective changes to staffing at our parks and facilities, balancing the needs of the users while properly maintaining the facilities?
5. How do we train or cross-train our staff and keep them current on ever changing technologies?
6. How do we recognize staff, division, and Department accomplishments?
7. How do we continue to accomplish our mission as the existing Department transforms into a Community Services Department?

VISION/OUTCOME: *“Department staff has the capability and flexibility to provide services and facilities in an economically responsible manner while providing quality service to the community.”*

FUNDING

How should the Department continue to fund programs, services, and facilities?

1. How do we fund future capital improvements?
2. How can we meet budget goals when proposed funding mechanisms conflict with positions of certain community interest groups (i.e. parkland dedication fee, boat launch fee, etc.)
3. How will the Department fund programs, services, and facilities from alternative funding sources as traditional funding sources become more unreliable?
4. How can we move toward a parkland dedication ordinance and subdivision development ordinance to keep up with demands of expansion?
5. How do we optimize existing facility use potential?
6. How do we identify fee thresholds yet set prices for cost recovery?
7. How do we collaborate with other organizations to deliver services and provide facilities to the public?
8. How can our facilities and operations become more efficient in order to reduce operating costs?

VISION/OUTCOME: *“The Department has adequate funding to keep pace with its mission of providing excellent services, facilities, and programs to the community.”*

HEALTHY COMMUNITY

How can the Department contribute to providing new policies, programs, and events that address wellness, child obesity, fitness, the elderly, and lifetime activities within the community?

1. How does the Department empower other agencies to participate in healthy community initiatives?
2. What is the role of the Department in developing such policies and providing these programs and events in the community?
3. How can we collaborate with other agencies that provide health based programs?
4. How can we contribute to making our neighborhoods healthy places to live?

VISION/OUTCOME: *“The Department is a leading provider of programs, events, and policies to promote the health and wellness of our citizens, addressing issues of wellness, child obesity, fitness, the elderly, and lifetime activities.”*

ENVIRONMENT

How does the Department ensure that its facilities, parks, urban forest, and other natural resources are enhanced for future generations?

1. How do we identify, address, and implement “green and sustainable” initiatives?
2. How does the Department gain support of the community and elected officials in pursuing “green” management practices, and funding of sustainable projects?
3. How will the Department respond to threats to the parks, urban forest, and waterways, (i.e. emerald ash borer, deer, geese, curly leaf pond weed, etc.) and gain public acceptance and support of such action plans?
4. How can we enhance the environment of our City’s waterways?
5. How can the Department improve its recycling processes?

VISION/OUTCOME: *“The Department is a steward of our environment and natural resources using sustainable practices that enable future generations to enjoy our resources.”*

BARRIERS TO ADDRESSING STRATEGIC ISSUES

The team continued their work by updating the list of potential barriers that were identified in the previous plan. It is important to identify and be aware of these barriers as they could pose a threat to successfully fulfilling the vision/outcome statements listed under each strategic issue. They include:

- Lack of available staffing time to do substantial marketing efforts and placing it as a higher priority than current job responsibilities.
- The length of time it takes to complete some of the projects and processes.
- The reduction in budget and revenue dollars and the increased competition for grant funds
- The cost of new initiatives including green/sustainability technologies.
- Coordination with Public Works related impacts in park improvement projects.
- Constant changes in technology and ability to keep pace with those changes.
- Lack of flexibility in operations (however, this has significantly improved since 2006).
- Excessive credibility given small groups of people/individuals on community-wide issues.
- Inter-departmental policies and practices of the City.
- Mixed message the Department receives on service delivery to the public.
- Limited City-owned facility space for programming and storage.
- Pending retirements of several department directors and upper level management and its uncertain impact on the Department.
- Fee threshold of individuals, teams, and community user groups.
- The relationship with the School District and how our programs will be impacted by priority/cost for facility use.
- Limitations in workspaces that may lead to difficulties in completing assisted tasks
- Relationships with UWEC
- Continual staff turnover and the need for training of the new employees
- Issues with the Health Affordability Act and the number of hours that can be worked
- Ability to offer competitive wage rates to attract seasonal employees
- Increases in facilities to maintain while staffing decreases or remains constant
- Lack of knowledge within the City about the volunteer coordinator position
- Finding a balance in programs to offer to meet community needs and available staff resources
- Increased competition for funding infrastructure improvements
- Losing touch with volunteer groups once the groups initially get involved with a project
- The ability to keep pace with changes in technology, staff, community needs, etc.
- Lack of knowledge about the roles of other Divisions
- Results of the Presidential election
- The ability to agree on priorities within the Department/City

- Differing trust levels and management styles between Public Works Divisions
- Importance for cross-training for certain tasks
- Increased competition between communities for grant dollars for projects
- Programs and services that may be provided by the private sector

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The final step in the process of updating the 2011 plan was to review the recommendations or action steps contained in that plan. This included:

- Eliminating those actions that were completed or no longer applicable
- Making revisions to actions that were still relevant
- The identification of new actions steps that would be necessary to address each of the strategic issues

Once the list of recommendations was finalized, Department staff developed an implementation schedule relating to each strategic issue and assigned responsibly staff positions or divisions for its implementation or completion. As noted in the implementation schedule, many of the recommendations/actions are completed on an annual basis, while others are listed to be undertaken in specific years.

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

How can Department personnel improve its responsibilities and interaction with its customers?

Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. Continue to provide periodic customer service training for all staff relating to interaction with the public, and providing a better understanding of the concept of service to the customer and proper methods of delivery of the service that encourages them to be positive representatives or ambassadors of the Department. (Including seasonal staff.)	Recreation Mgr	Annual
2. Develop periodic training sessions with the Active Net software to keep current with upgrades and understand the capabilities of the software.	Recreation Mgr	Annual
3. Continue to implement the clothing uniform program for Department personnel to make staff visible and approachable to the public & expand to other divisions	Recreation Mgr Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
4. Continue to have meetings involving all staff to enable them to see the bigger picture (role) of the Department and their importance to the mission of the Department.	Director Recreation Mgr Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
5. Continue to have staff present and visible at facilities (evenings and weekends) when the public uses such facilities.	Recreation Mgr Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
6. Continue to include a customer service focus on all employee orientation.	Recreation Mgr Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
7. Identify ways that the Max-solutions software can be utilized to create efficiencies for customers.	Recreation Mgr	Annual
8. Identify and regularly post free job training webinar opportunities.	Recreation Mgr Parks/Forestry Mgr	Ongoing
9. Examine existing policies, procedures, and practices relevant to direct customer interaction to determine any changes needed to stay current with industry trends related standard processes such as ice reservations, payments, shade trees, consortium groups, etc.	Recreation Mgr Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
10. Develop or download short videos to help train employees relating to regular tasks such as: telephone etiquette, customer service, irate customers, etc. (may be more effective than written manuals)	Dept. Secretary	Annual
11. Encourage greater use of various forms of social media to better inform customers of programs, services, and facilities.	Dept. Secretary	Annual
12. Provide periodic surveys to customers through the registration software regarding their customer service experience.	Dept. Secretary	Annual
13. Develop a transition or coverage plan for the cross training of front counter personnel when personnel are absent.	Recreation Mgr	Annual
14. Develop a telephone protocol training program to improve customer service when responding to questions.	Dept. Secretary	2017

15. Work to develop a City policy to allow employees to use texting capabilities of their city-provided cell phones.	Director	2017
16. Develop a manual or spreadsheet that identifies appropriate staff contacts within the Department/City pertaining to delivery of services and job duties	Dept. Secretary	2017
17. Develop an implementation timetable for the installation of the park identification signs listed in the park signage master plan.	Director	2017
18. Complete the implementation of the Lucity work order system.	Parks/Forestry Mgr	2018

PRIORITIZING SERVICES, PROGRAMS, EVENTS, AND FACILITIES

How should the Department gather input, process, prioritize, plan, implement, and maintain its services, programs, events, and facilities to respond to the recreational needs of a changing population and address needs currently not met?

Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. Continue to use more evaluation tools, such as “survey monkey,” to regularly assess services, facilities, and programs.	Recreation Mgr	Annual
2. Continue to educate the Waterways and Parks Commission to follow their mission as being advocates and ambassadors of the City’s waterways and parks.	Director	Annual
3. Continue to use more community engagement groups (i.e. the Fairfax Pool Group) to obtain citizen input on facilities and operations.	Director Recreation Mgr Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
4. Continue to brainstorm ideas with the various athletic leagues to keep team fees down and increase participation.	Director Recreation Mgr	Annual
5. Continue to meet periodically with the Urban Forestry Alliance, DNR, and other West Central WI communities on forestry-related issues.	Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
6. Work with stakeholders to periodically discuss use of facilities and joint programming.	Director Recreation Mgr	Annual
7. Contact Senior Center officials to discuss ways to coordinate and collaborate on providing programs.	Recreation Mgr	Annual
8. Continue to utilize the system to track citizen input (phone calls, emails, surveys) to better determine public input on issues, programs, and facilities.	Recreation Mgr	Annual
9. Continue to implement a new program or event periodically and evaluate its success.	Recreation Mgr	Annual
10. Monitor trends in other communities and at the State and national level in order to be able to effectively respond to changes.	Director Recreation Mgr Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
11. Study facilities for the need for surveillance cameras.	Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual

12. Become involved in facility discussions with UWEC and YMCA relating to the new Menomonie Street event center to determine possible collaboration with Hobbs, the recreational trail, Half Moon Lake, and Carson Park.	Director	Annual
13. Ensure that factors relating to social equity are considering the planning for facilities and programs.	Recreation Mgr	Annual
14. Encourage multi-use in the planning and development of new facilities and partnerships with outside organizations.	Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
15. Review new project proposals for consistency with the City Council strategic plan.	Director	Annual
16. Sponsor tours of facilities for the City Council	Director	Annual
17. Continue to partner with the medical institutions to provide health and fitness programming and facilities.	Recreation Mgr	Annual
18. Continue to incorporate the use of social media such as Twitter and Instagram to gather community input and disseminate information.	Dept. Secretary	Annual
19. Work with the Eau Claire Curling Club on the possible need for a new facility.	Director	2016-17
20. Work with the Miracle League organization to develop a facility in Eau Claire.	Director	2017
21. Complete the 2016 community survey of the parks and facilities. a) Review existing services, facilities, and programs and update, eliminate, add, re-purpose as needed to meet community needs. b) Develop an action plan to address deficiencies identified.	Director	2017
22. Coordinate with the City Planning and Engineering Divisions in providing provisions for boulevard trees.	Parks/Forestry Mgr	2017
23. Update the 2013-2017 Five-year Parks and Open Space Plan.	Director	2018
24. Develop an incentive program to encourage groups to volunteer their services to enhance the City's parks (passes, reduced fees, etc.)	Volunteer Coord.	2018

MARKETING

How does the Department promote its image and visibility, and get the community to recognize the importance of the Department as a leading provider in park, recreation, and forestry services?

Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. Televis Waterways and Parks Commission meetings on CATV or the internet.	Director	Annual
2. Develop additional video segments televised on CATV or for You Tube and Facebook focusing on the parks, and the Department's facilities and programs.	Director	Annual
3. Contact businesses to become partners in sponsoring ads.	Director	Annual

4. <u>Continue to</u> work with the Community Parks Association to identify ways the Association could assist in marketing and fund raising efforts.	Director	Annual
5. Expand upon the program to use social media such as Twitter, Facebook, U-Tube Instagram and to promote and inform the public about events, programs, “how to” segments for the Department, as a method of providing “low cost” advertising. Work to focus on younger groups such as the Millennials.	Dept. Secretary	Annual
6. Continue to capitalize on “traditional” media sources, such as television and radio, to provide “free” public service promotions of programs and events.	Dept. Secretary	Annual
7. Initiate a program to internally spotlight the talents, education, and background of Department employees.	Dept. Secretary	Annual
8. Improve coordination with DECI to better promote and market park and recreation events in the Downtown and vicinity.	Director	Annual
9. Partner with high profile organizations or business such as Mayo Hospital market programs and facilities.	Director	Annual
10. Install signs at strategic locations within the parks to inform the public about the costs of public dollars associated with acts of vandalism.	Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
11. Expand the usage of the department logo to its fleet of vehicles and all out-going media communications.	Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
12. Partner with the Board of Realtors, Visit Eau Claire, and Volume One to market and feature the City’s parks and open space areas in their respective publications.	Director	Annual
13. Use U-tube and Go Pro applications to better inform “tell the story” to the public about the Department’s programs and facilities	Dept. Secretary	Annual
14. Promote the economic benefits/impacts of the various facilities in public presentations.	Director	Annual
15. Make presentations to service groups and other community organizations to encourage them to become advocates of the park and recreation programs and to encourage the donation of time or funds.	Director Recreation Mgr Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
16. Submit an application for the National Recreation and Parks Association re-accreditation.	Director	2017
17. Contact the marketing department at the University to establish an intern program to assist in marketing efforts.	Director	2017
18. Schedule a Department brainstorming session on other innovative marketing ideas or create a Department marketing committee.	Dept. Secretary	2017
19. Consider a full-time marketing staff position for the Department.	Director	2017
20. Complete the implementation of the master sign identification plan for the parks.	Director	2020

PERSONNEL AND STAFFING

How does the Department organize its staff to create a more flexible environment to provide services and programs that are responsive to community needs?

Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. Continue to make the Department's mission statement and vision readily accessible and visible to Department employees.	Director Recreation Mgr Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
2. Continue to update the Department's plan relating to future retirements of supervisory employees that will provide documentation of these supervisory job responsibilities and recommendations for a smooth transition as retirements occur.	Director	Annual
3. Continue to update the plan to provide front-line employees with on-going training and cross-training opportunities so that they can expand their knowledge base and provide better and more efficient service to the Department. (Including part-time and seasonal employees.)	Recreation Mgr Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
4. Continue to review the current staff responsibilities and seek to provide front-line employees with greater decision-making responsibilities within their work environment.	Director	Annual
5. Initiate a program to internally spotlight the talents, education, and background of Department employees.	Dept. Secretary	Annual
6. Continue to explore and research new and innovative equipment, techniques, and processes to assist employees in their jobs.	Director Recreation Mgr Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
7. Continue to expand upon sharing maintenance responsibilities with Streets Division personnel.	Director	Annual
8. As Department divisions transition to a Community Service Department orientation, work to keep the identity of the Parks and Recreations operations.	Director	Annual
9. Identify a vision and responsibilities for the volunteer coordinator position. (Also find a "home" for the person.)	Recreation Mgr	2017
10. Provide computer access that is readily available to all employees in need of access to the City's computer network.	Director	2018

FUNDING

How does the Department continue to fund programs, services, and facilities?

Recommendation	Responsibility	Timeframe
1. Continue to seek opportunities for grant funding assistance for facilities, services, and programs, and look for opportunities to coordinate with other organizations in addressing recreational needs.	Director	Annual

2. Continue to involve user groups in partnerships in cost sharing responsibilities in the development and maintenance of park and recreational facilities.	Director Recreation Mgr Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
3. Look for additional funding support from the room tax revenues with increased events being held in the City's parks and facilities.	Director	Annual
4. Continue to develop "friends" groups to assist in the development, maintenance, and operation of facilities.	Director	Annual
5. Continue to encourage a "donation friendly" environment within the City for the donation of funds and services for park facilities, and promote the Department as a charitable organization.	Director	Annual
6. Continue to provide information to the community and City Council that documents the economic, health, environmental, and social importance of the Department.	Director	Annual
7. Continue to develop and update fee schedules or cost recovery systems for services and facilities such as for scoreboard use, press boxes, use of PA systems, forestry services, etc.	Director	Annual
8. Study the feasibility of selling naming rights to facilities	Director	Annual
9. Continue to assess the feasibility of an "urban forestry" surcharge per parcel to assist in forestry operational expenses.	Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
10. Continue to research other Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Departments for innovative ideas for funding and industry trends.	Director	Annual
11. Identify the "downtime" of existing facilities and study ways to utilize this available time.	Recreation Mgr Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
12. Make greater use of volunteers and identify jobs that could be completed the volunteers.	Volunteer Coord.	Annual
13. Expand upon existing partnerships with local health providers.	Recreation Mgr	Annual
14. Review current agreements for the possibility of increasing advertising revenues and look for new opportunities for ad sales.	Director	Annual
15. Look for reductions in areas of printing, such as with the Prime Times brochure.	Recreation Mgr	Annual
16. Continue to have exclusive pouring rights policies and other exclusive right agreements.	Director	Annual
17. Continue to study costs associated with the privatization of services, programs, and facilities.	Director	Annual
18. Develop a policy and procedure with the Public Works and Community Development Departments to formalize requirements for development agreements pertaining to the planting of boulevard trees within new subdivisions.	Parks/Forestry Mgr	2017
19. Investigate opportunities to develop a Forestry/Stormwater Utility similar to Milwaukee.	Parks/Forestry Mgr	2017
20. Review the ECASD Summer School partnership funding and charges.	Recreation Mgr	2017
21. Consider a full-time City-wide grant writer position.	Director	2019
22. Discuss options with Department of Community Development regarding City reconsideration of parkland dedication provisions.	Director	2019

HEALTHY COMMUNITY

How can the Department contribute to providing new policies, programs, and events that address wellness, child obesity, fitness, the elderly, and lifetime activities within the community?

Recommendation	Staff Person	Date
1. Identify other agencies that would be beneficial to partner with to participate in a healthy community initiative.	Recreation Mgr	Annual
2. Explore partnerships the Eau Claire School District and other organizations in providing a "healthy lifestyles" program for youth.	Recreation Mgr	Annual
3. Continue to take an active role in the programs, activities, and events sponsored by the City's Wellness Team.	Director Recreation Mgr Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
4. Continue to grow partnerships with the hospitals, other area health care providers, and Senior Center in providing leisure activities for seniors.	Director	Annual
5. Continue to sponsor more "active" special events (rather than longer programs) that promote exercise and healthy lifestyles.	Recreation Mgr	Annual
6. Continue to identify areas to expand the recreational trail further encourage more walking and bicycling.	Director	Annual
7. Create or improve policies to protect boulevard trees and encourage more plantings with reconstruction projects.	Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
8. Create information about the health benefits of specific activities and make available on-line and at the parks.	Recreation Mgr	Annual
9. Continue to provide drop-in programs the promote physical activates.	Recreation Mgr	Annual
10. Recognize the increased numbers of people with special needs and provide programs for this group.	Recreation Mgr	Annual
11. Identify gluten free products to serve at the concession stands.	Recreation Mgr	2016
12. Expand the "safe routes to school" to a "safe routes to parks" program to include the City's parks and recreational facilities.	Director	2017
13. Create a brochure that features sustainable walking initiatives that address issues of accessibility, and social equity.	Recreation Mgr	2017

ENVIRONMENT

How does the Department ensure that its facilities, parks, urban forest, and other natural resources are enhanced for future generations?

Recommendation	Staff Person	Date
1. Continue to remove undesirable and invasive plants from all parks and waterways. Work to involve Community Service staff in this effort.	Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
2. Continue to have a staff member on the City's "Green Team."	Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
3. Encourage employees with knowledge in recycling, green and sustainable practices, and the environment, to take active an active role in informing the public about the importance of our natural resources.	Director Recreation Mgr Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
4. Continue to develop "rain gardens" where feasible to reduce runoff from parks and facilities.	Director Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
5. Continue to implement the various components of the action plan prepared for the Emerald Ash Borer disease and market the plan to the public and media.	Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
6. Continue to consider green and sustainable practices and alternatives for all projects undertaken by the Department.	Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
7. Continue to encourage the use of recyclable materials for park projects.	Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
8. Continue to look for potential new open space areas and eliminate those areas that are underutilized.	Director Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
9. Continue to provide educational/informational signage of recycling and green projects occurring within the parks and facilities.	Recreation Mgr Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
10. Identify additional locations for the water bottle fill stations and sell refillable bottles where appropriate.	Recreation Mgr Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
11. Continue audits of facilities and equipment to look for ways to reduce energy consumption and water consumption. (Encourage energy reduction improvements as a priority in facility renovations.)	Director	Annual
12. Implement the recommendations of the Waterways Plan.	Director	Annual
13. Continue to research and implement optimal ways to manage deer and geese populations within the City	Director Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
14. Research products that are more environmentally friendly integrated with pest management.	Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
15. Implement programs to educate younger generations to help recognize threats to parks, the urban forest, and our waterways.	Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
16. Educate part-time staff about green initiatives (i.e. printing, purchasing supplies, use of facilities, etc.)	Director Recreation Mgr Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual
17. Promote the re-use of the urban wood products removed from the parks and boulevards.	Parks/Forestry Mgr	Annual



APPENDIX A

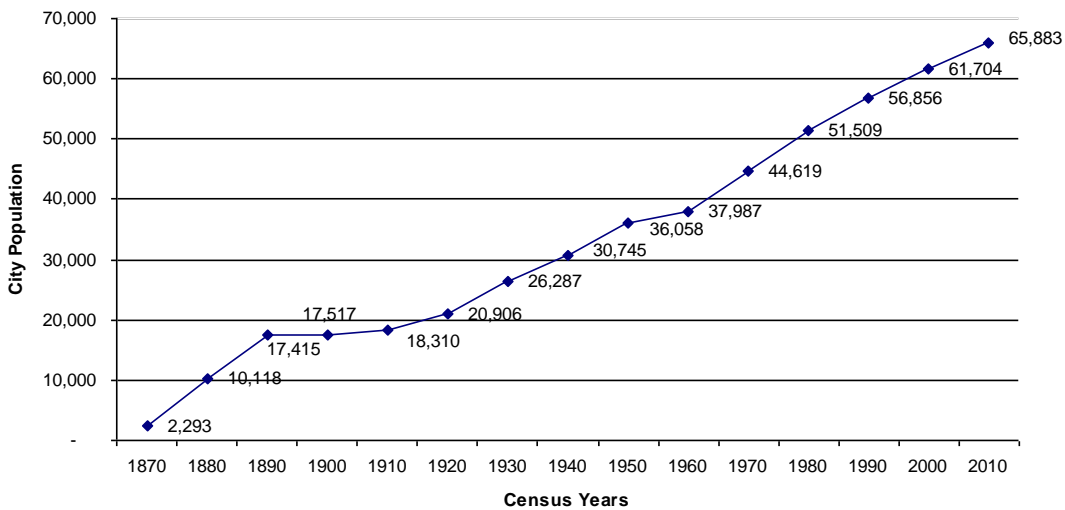
**TREND AND BACKGROUND
INFORMATION
FOR THE
CITY OF EAU CLAIRE**

GROWTH TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

(From 2015 Comprehensive Plan and State Demographic Service Center)

Eau Claire Eau Claire was incorporated in 1872, with a population of 2,293. The lumber industry created a population boom in the years following, as the City's population swelled to over 21,000 persons by 1885, making Eau Claire Wisconsin's third largest city, twice the size of Madison. However, lumbering soon began to decline with the depletion of the timber forests to the north, leading to mill consolidations and closings. Between 1885 and 1890, Eau Claire lost twenty percent of its population but still finished the decade with a gain.

**Figure 2-1
Growth in Population, 1870 – 2010**



Despite the loss of the lumber industry, Eau Claire was able to make a transition to a diversified manufacturing base by the early 1900s and saw steady population growth through the 1940s, reaching a population of 36,058 in 1950. The City's population continued to grow through the 20th century, with a broad-based economy featuring regional retail and medical centers, education, service businesses and a diversified industrial base. The last three decades have each seen steady population growth of approximately 7 to 10 percent as Eau Claire's population reached 65,883 in 2010.

The population of the City of Eau Claire and the Eau Claire Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which includes Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties, has grown at a similar rate since 2000 as shown in Table 2-1.

**Table 2-1
Population Growth from 2000 to 2010**

	2000	2010	Percent Change 2000 to 2010
West Central RPC Metro Planning Area	104,005	114,515	10.1 %
City of Eau Claire	61,704	65,883	6.8 %

Source: U.S. Census 2000 and 2010

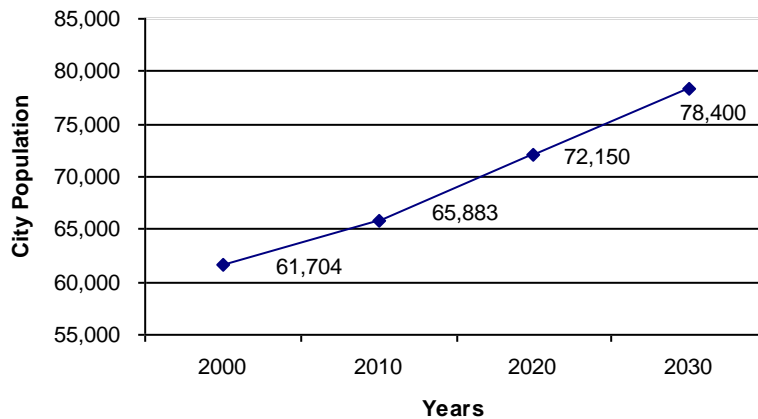
Forecasts by the City, the Eau Claire Area School District and the Wisconsin Department of Administration indicate that the City of Eau Claire and the MSA will continue to grow slightly faster than they have in the recent past. As illustrated in Table 2-2, the growth rate for the MSA is projected to be slightly higher than that of the City over this period. Based on these projections, Eau Claire’s population will increase by approximately 12,500 persons between the years 2010 and 2030.

**Table 2-2
Forecast Population Growth to 2030**

	2000	2010	2020	2030	Percent Change 2010- 2030
City of Eau Claire	61,704	65,883	72,150	78,400	19 %
West Central RPC Metro Planning Area	104,005	114,515	125,000	135,000	18 %
City / Metro	59 %	57 %	58%	58 %	

Sources: 2000 U.S. Census; West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, LRTP Update; City of Eau Claire, *Sewer Service Area Plans*, 2013.

**Figure 2-2
Forecast Population Growth to 2030**



Households

Forecast of Households

The number of households in Eau Claire has been forecast in five-year increments from 2000 to 2030 as shown in Table 2-5. This households forecast is based on the forecast of population presented above.

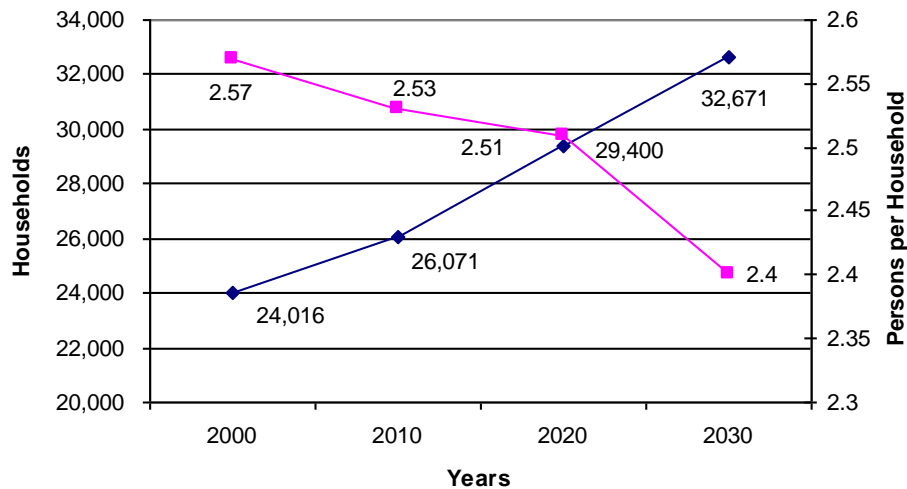
The rate of growth of households exceeds that of population because it is assumed that the average household size will continue to decrease slightly, following the trend of the past twenty years.

Table 2-5
Forecast Number of Households and Persons per Household to 2030

	2000	2010	2020	2030	Average Annual Percent Change 2010 - 2030
City of Eau Claire	24,016	26,071	29,400	32,671	1.2 %
Persons per Household	2.57	2.53	2.51	2.40	- 0.65 %

Source: City of Eau Claire, *Sewer Service Area Plans*, 2013.

Figure 2-3
Forecast Number of Households and Persons per Household to 2030

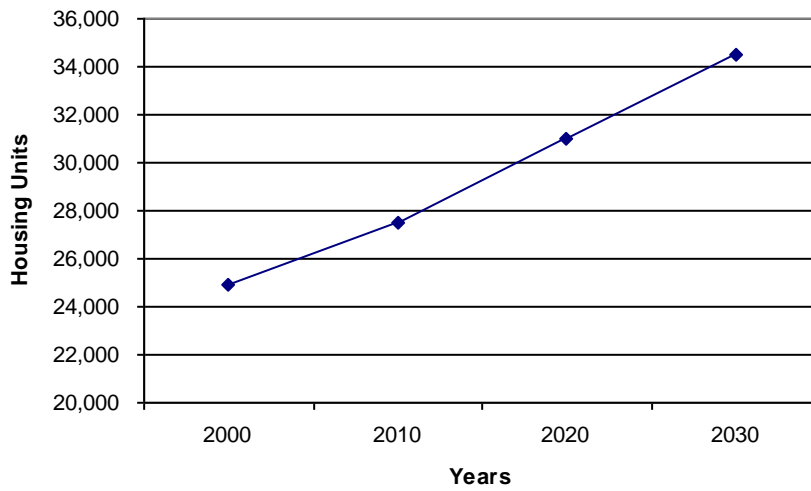


**Table 2-6
Forecast Number of Housing Units to 2030**

	2000	2010	2020	2030	Change 2010 - 2030	
City Forecast	24,895	27,507	30,900	34,470	6,964	+25 %
State Forecast			28,400	31,000	3,493	+13 %

Sources: US Census; City of Eau Claire; *Sewer Service Area Plans*, 2013.

**Figure 2-4
Forecast Number of Housing Units to 2030**



**Table 2-8
Population by Age, City of Eau Claire**

Age Group	1990	%	2000	%	Age Group	2010	%	Percent Change 1990-2010
Under 5	3,975	7	3,574	6	Under 5	3,889	6	+1 %
5-17	9,118	16	9,784	16	5-19	12,726	19	-3 %
18-24	12,287	22	13,650	22	20-24	10,827	16	
25-34	8,636	15	8,161	13	25-34	9,785	15	0 %
35-44	7,612	13	7,916	13	35-44	6,749	10	-3 %
45-54	4,229	7	7,402	12	45-54	7,405	11	+4 %
55-64	3,758	7	3,849	6	55-64	6,822	10	+3 %
65 +	7,241	13	7,368	12	65 +	7,680	12	-1 %
TOTAL	56,856	100	61,704	100		65,883	100	
Median			29.4			29.8		

Source: U.S. Census

Nevertheless, the median age in Eau Claire in 2010 was 29.8 years, which compares with 36.2 years for the Eau Claire Metropolitan Statistical Area and 38.5 for the state. Eau Claire's median age is also lower than other similarly sized communities such as La Crosse, Oshkosh, Waukesha, Appleton, Janesville, Sheboygan and Wauwatosa, perhaps because of the large number of college-age residents.

Household and Family Composition

Table 2-9 provides a summary of information pertaining to household and family composition for the City for 1990, 2000 and 2010. As shown, family households as a percentage of the total declined by 4 percent during the prior decade. (Family households are those where two or more persons living in a household are related.) Correspondingly, the non-family households significantly increased during the 2000s and now represent 47 percent of the City's households. This is a major change since 1990, when the family to non-family ratio was 61:39. In addition, one-person households increased to 32 from 28 percent of the total households during the 2000s.

**Table 2-9
Household and Family Composition, City of Eau Claire**

	1990	%	2000	%	2010	%
Household Type						
- Family household	12,838	61	13,567	57	14,293	53
- Non-family household	8,280	39	10,449	43	12,510	47
TOTAL	21,118	100	24,016	100	26,803	100
Married Couple Families	10,391	49	10,866	45	10,618	40
- With children	5,029	23	5,017	21	4,266	16
Female Householder	1,995	9	2,014	8	2,522	9
- With children	1,385	11	1,391	10	1,777	6
Persons Per Household	2.49		2.38		2.29	
Persons Per Family	3.07		2.99		2.89	
Hshd's with one or more persons 65 years or more	5,022	24	4,826	20	5,637	21
Persons in Group Quarters	5,839	28	6,182	26	4,536	17
One-person Households	5,869	28	7,157	30	8,485	32

Source: U.S. Census

The composition of family households in Eau Claire has also undergone some changes during the decade. The percentage of married-couple families with children has decreased from 23 percent of all families in 1990 to 16 percent in 2010. That certainly has contributed to the shrinking average family size. The percentage of female-headed households with children at home has declined from 11 percent in 1990 to 6 percent in 2010, a helpful trend.

It is also interesting to note that the number of households with a member age 65 or older has declined from 24 percent to 21 percent since 1990. That percentage should rise as the Baby Boom generation began to reach that age in 2011.

Income and Poverty

Income levels for the City of Eau Claire and surrounding areas have traditionally lagged behind income levels of the State of Wisconsin and the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. Table 2-10 and the accompanying graph provide this information for 2000 and 2010.

Comparing the 2000 and 2010 figures shows that incomes have increased within the City and MSA. However, a comparison of these income figures indicates that the gap between the City and the MSA widened substantially during the decade, while the gap between the City and the State widened only slightly. Thus, Eau Claire is becoming less like the surrounding communities in terms of income.

It is important to note the difference in income between people who live in Eau Claire and those who live nearby. Many upper-income residents have chosen home locations outside the City for a variety of reasons. This has skewed the data on median income, the proportion of residents at various income levels, and the percentage of the City population with incomes below the defined poverty level. Related negative effects include reduced demand for upper-value housing, reduced support for

neighborhood revitalization, a greater sense of “us versus them,” reduced support for solving city problems, increased driving and increased loss of farm land.

**Table 2-10
Earnings and Income Comparisons, 2000 and 2012**

	2000					2010 or 2012				
	Eau Claire	Metro Area	City / Metro	State	City / State	Eau Claire	Metro Area	City / Metro	State	City / State
Mean Hsld. Earnings	44,531	NA	NA	53,084	84 %	52,026	61,132	85 %	66,710	78 %
Median Household Income	36,399	39,372	92 %	43,791	83 %	39,376	48,691	81 %	51,059	77 %
Median Family Income	49,320	48,922	101 %	52,911	93 %	60,513	62,636	97 %	65,154	92 %
Per Capita Income	18,230	18,875	96 %	21,271	86 %	22,858	25,267	90 %	26,994	85 %
Median Earnings, All Workers	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	20,468	24,862	82 %	30,039	68 %
Median Earnings, Male Full-Time	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	39,121	41,288	95 %	46,898	83 %
Median Earnings, Female Full	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	31,946	32,266	99 %	36,535	68 %

Sources: U.S. Census, 2000 and 2010; American Community Survey, 2012. NA: Data is not available.

Rates of Poverty

Rates of poverty by any measure in Eau Claire are higher than those of the state. Table 2-11 illustrates that although Eau Claire and Wisconsin had similar poverty rates in 2000, the City had slipped behind by 2010.

**Table 2-11
Poverty Rates, 2000 and 2010**

	2000		2010	
	Eau Claire	State	Eau Claire	State
% Families Below Poverty Level	5.5	5.6	10.2	8.9
% With Children Under 18 Years	8.5	8.8	18.2	15.4
% With Children Under 5 Years	13.8	12.2	28.3	16.2

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 and 2010.

The federal Census figures for families below the defined poverty level is a single indicator that does not portray the full scope of economic stress. Anecdotal and other information paint a picture of spreading and chronic unemployment, underemployment and lagging income among individuals, households and families, with women and children suffering the most. These local and national problems have been exacerbated by the Great Recession although falling rates of unemployment since 2011 have mitigated the effect somewhat.

The City of Eau Claire and the Department of Housing and Urban Development identify areas in the City having concentrations of Low and Moderate Income (LMI) families in order to provide programs and services for these families. These LMI areas have typically been located in the older portions of the City extending out from downtown. Based on the Census statistics, several LMI areas are also located on or near the periphery of the City within more recently developed multiple family housing projects. These additional lower income areas need to be recognized and considered as decisions are made concerning needed services from departments such as Parks and Recreation, Police, City-County Health, etc.

PARKS PLAN CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

(From 2013–2017 Park and Open Space Plan)

The 2013 – 2017 Park and Open Space Plan is based on a number of broad general conclusions, which relate to existing conditions and trends that are expected through the timeframe of the plan. The following is a listing of these general conditions and trends that were used as a basis for the Plan.

1. The demand for family activities and facilities will increase.
2. Competition for the tax dollar within the City will continue to increase as shared revenues and CDBG funds decline. The need for interagency cooperation in providing and maintaining parks and other recreation facilities will need to increase.
3. Over the next five-year period, Eau Claire’s population will continue to grow at a rate slightly less than one percent per year, which is similar to that experienced in recent years. See the City of Eau Claire’s Comprehensive Plan and annual development reports for additional background information on demographic and growth trends for the City.
4. Residential construction within the City will be focused within the southwest and northwest quadrants of the City. We will also see residential growth to the east of the City with the redevelopment of the former Hillcrest Golf Course and to the northeast in the Village of Lake Hallie.
5. Commercial and residential construction will continue along the Highway 53 Freeway both within the City of Eau Claire and City of Altoona. Growth will continue to the southeast in the Oakwood Mall area and south along Highway 93 to the south of Interstate 94.
6. The City will continue to experience growth through annexations in similar fashion as the City has experienced in recent years.
7. Neighborhood associations will grow in number. This will place an increased emphasis on the neighborhood playgrounds and open space and will result in higher levels of expected service.
8. On-campus enrollment at the Chippewa Valley Technical College and the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire will not significantly change over the next five years.
9. Downtown redevelopment and growth will continue in the Phoenix Pak area.
10. Tourism will continue to grow in Eau Claire creating demand for facilities and activities that can accommodate large numbers of people. These activities will draw people to the City.
11. The Senior Citizen population will continue to increase creating greater demand for facilities and activities for this population group. In addition, the Senior Citizen population will be more active than past generations thus creating further demand for facilities.
12. There will be an increased demand for higher risk recreation facilities such as skate parks, climbing, kayaking, etc.
13. The Eau Claire School District has experienced small increase in enrollment over the past couple years. It is anticipated that this trend will continue.