

2013

Eau Claire Health Chapter Comprehensive Plan



Eau Claire Health Chapter Comprehensive Plan

Draft

City of Eau Claire

1/25/2013

Introduction

MAIN INTRODUCTION TO COME

1. Active Living



INTRODUCTION TO COME

Policy 1.1 Park & Open Space Plan

Update the City's Five Year Park and Open Space Plan. This plan lays out capital and maintenance improvements for parks, play lots, special area facilities, community athletic fields and open spaces within the city. Healthy parks will attract healthy activity.

[photo: people speed-waking on a city trail]

When updating the 2013-2017 plan cross reference/expand upon those pertinent policies from this chapter or from others like the Bicycle and Pedestrian and Waterways plans. If the goal is to empower the community to get the proper amount of physical activity, consider how to increase the likelihood that people will use this type of infrastructure that aids in developing such habits. An example is to increase people's accessibility to parks via more trail corridors and bike lanes. These "connector" components can be as valuable as parks themselves by compelling physical activity.

The plan update should also look to increase lighting on certain trails and park facilities (e.g. tennis courts) to encourage more usage. This would be especially important to get people outside during the winter dark-season. Winter activities such as sledding, tubing, ice skating, show-shoeing, cross-country skiing, downhill skiing and snowboarding could be designed-in at appropriate parks; for example creating a winter "Cold Spot" activity venue at Pinehurst Park.

Policy 1.2 Existing Plans

Implement current plans and goals. Continue to carry out the policies listed in the City's 2010 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. This plan has numerous goals and policies dedicated to seeing the stronger realization of non-automobile forms of travel within the city. The effects of implementing such will promote physical activity. Some policies set forth in this Health Chapter are meant to build upon and expand ideas found in that plan.

Continue to implement the policies set forth in the City's 2005 Comprehensive Plan Parks Chapter and other relevant chapters of the plan which pertain to healthy living in the built environment.

One of the best drivers to be physically active is spending time in nature. Eau Claire is fortunate to have many natural resources and scenic amenities. Implementing the goals of the City's updated 2012 Waterways Plan will help further capitalize on these assets and heighten their usage.

Policy 1.3 Parks & Recreation

Continue to attract participation in parks and recreational programs. To enable and encourage the citizens of Eau Claire to be physically active, strengthen the support and funding for the City's Park, Recreation, and Forestry Department's parks, facilities, and recreational programming. Improvements that would positively benefit public health and recreation are developing Northwest and Otter Creek community parks, Pinehurst Park and Jeffers Road Athletic fields, and more multi-use trails.

The department sends out a semiannual recreation program guide called *Prime Times* which lists numerous fitness offerings for children, adults, seniors and the disabled. Some programs have had to be cut however reducing the number of opportunities and overall participation. With the assistance of community sponsors, consider reviving such programs; for example volleyball winter leagues.

When evaluating future recreational program changes or cuts- such as the number of parks the Summer Playground Program is offered at- carefully weigh the benefits and or consequences that losing these programs might mean for the human health of the immediate area. Careful attention should be given to areas of people with lesser means so they have at least an equal level of opportunity for physical activity. In many large cities, low income neighborhoods can often lack quality recreational programs, playgrounds and parks. They can also be hindered in accessing nearby facilities by physical and land use barriers (i.e. transportation corridors and industry).

Continue community partnerships (see also Critical Partnerships policy) with the Eau Claire Community Parks Foundation, sport clubs, organizations, non-profits, citizen groups, companies, and other interested parties to develop, fund and operate recreation programs, leagues, and events. Some examples of this are working with the baseball and softball little league organizations, partnering with the University of Eau Claire to use facilities like Carson Park Football Stadium, Bohlinger Fields and Hobbs Ice Arena, and teaming up with Volume One magazine to run *Winter After Hours*, an ice skating and social event held at Boyd Park every Thursday during the first two months of the year. Along with many other examples in the community, these partnerships are invaluable to help provide the opportunities for people to be physically active.

Policy 1.4 A Walkable Connected Community

Formalize a planning review policy to examine new developments for walkability and connectivity. Walking must be a priority in a livable and healthy community. [Walk Score®](#), a popular walkability website, identifies how easy it is to live a car-lite lifestyle. It measures housing distances from amenities like shops, restaurants, parks, schools, etc., and the closer the access the higher the score. Eau Claire ranks on average as a “Car-Dependent” community, scoring 46 out of 100. Focusing on walkability is a good investment, not only from the perspective of public health. A [CEOs for Cities report](#) in 2009 found by just adding sidewalks it raised housing values \$4,000 to \$34,000 in the U.S. cities it studied.

The City’s Planning Division should consider, as part of a policy, using a five-minute walking radius template when reviewing new developments. For most people a five minute walk is about a quarter of a mile, the distance most people are usually willing to walk before driving. The five-minute template should be calibrated to a pedestrian’s actual path, meaning a person will not walk “as the crow flies”. The two diagrams illustrate using a black dashed lines actual distances of 1,320 feet via a pedestrian’s path. Note how the different built environment patterns present different implications in the willingness of the pedestrian to travel by foot.



A traditional neighborhood includes a high level of connectivity allowing actual walk distances to nearly meet the ¼ mile radius.



A conventional suburban model of development provides very little connectivity from the residences to the places of business making it very auto-dependent.

Courtesy: John Olson, EVstudio Planning

Depending on the proposed scale and land use, using this “magnifying lens” will help planners visualize the human scale and walking challenges that might be faced (i.e. safety, access, connectivity, and proximity to destinations such as housing, work, retail services, schools or parks).

Design recommendations can then be given to developers so that possible adjustments can be made (e.g. include an outlot/easement sidewalk connection in between two houses to access a school). As noted in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, the City encourages developers to take advantage of Traditional Neighborhood (TND) and Planned Development (PD) zoning which both promote this human-scaled, connected and walkable development scheme with a mix of destinations.

Policy 1.5 Bicycle and Pedestrian Access

Ensure that bicycle and pedestrian site access standards are met. In 2012, per the recommendation of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and Bicycle Advisory Committee, the City enacted an ordinance that requires bicycle parking racks on new projects. The Planning Division will consider developing review standards for new building site plans or developments to make sure that accessibility and connectivity to such facilities is adequately met.

Policy 1.6 Non-Residential Sidewalks

The City should consider reviewing its past practice of waiving sidewalk requirements for commercial and industrial areas. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan aims to close sidewalk gaps which have developed over time in existing major non-residential areas (see the plan’s map on page 30-31). Its goal is to not only provide proper walking infrastructure in insufficient areas but to also enhance overall system connectivity.

As part of future policy to encourage transportation choice, health and safety, consider requiring sidewalks on both sides of the street in retail environments like North Clairemont Avenue and the ancillary retail developments around Oakwood Mall. For business and industrial areas consider requiring at least one sidewalk on the street so workers can walk on breaks and pedestrians can move safely through these areas. The Sky Park Business Park is a good example of where public sidewalks help promote healthy workplaces. Employees can often be found walking or speed-walking on their breaks. These sidewalks also serve as a valuable link between the eastern residential neighborhoods off Violet Avenue with the Chippewa River State Trail on the west side.

As business and industrial Tax Increment Districts develop, the City should also consider installing at least one sidewalk when a new street is constructed or when a building site plan is approved. Sidewalks in these non-residential areas should not be considered unnecessary and burdensome to a developer or business; especially when worksite wellness programs are rising and promoting the very use of such infrastructure for physical activity (see Worksite Wellness policy).

Policy 1.7 Livable Streets

Consider a policy to “reclaim” certain streets to enhance livable neighborhoods. It may be seen as counterintuitive, but streets have always been public places, serving for more than just transportation.

The San Francisco Public Works Department's [Better Streets](#) program is an attempt to reclaim the street for human use while balancing the needs of vehicular travel and safety. The department considers a large variety of [measures](#) in their street projects while also promoting private construction by developers, property owners, merchants and groups of neighbors. A short list of design elements are curb extensions (bulbouts), traffic calming circles, speed humps, street furniture like benches, raised crosswalks walks, median islands, pedestrian refuges, bike lanes, on-street bike corral parking, parklets, living alleys, and public art, and allowing intermittent street openings for block parties like National Night Out and street fairs.



A "parklet" in San Francisco

While Eau Claire is a smaller city and has snow to worry about, some of these design elements have already been successfully used here. South Barstow Street and Water Street have bulbouts and street furniture; 1st Avenue north of W. Grand Avenue is closed to normal traffic providing a pleasant walking experience; traffic calming islands/medians have been installed in several streets such as along 3rd Street, Bellinger Street/5th Avenue, Whipple Street, Fairfax Street and in the skewed intersection of Woodland Avenue and Agnes Street. Other streets have small parkway features such as in Park Avenue and there are large stretches along W. Madison Street, S. Hastings Way, Oakwood Parkway. Safe routes to school infrastructure has been installed in W. MacArthur Ave. at Putnam Heights Elementary, as one example. Probably the most inventive is the recent reconstruction of Thorp Commons [or include photo of the Parklet], whereas pedestrian, bikes and cars are allowed to travel on the same street in a pleasant environment along the Chippewa River bank. The livable features include reduced vehicle traffic speed signs, curvilinear pavement markings, and strategic placement of decorative light poles and boulders to slow traffic. Initiative data has shown crashes are down? compared to when it was a conventional roadway, even though the right of way is shared by multiple user groups.

One exciting possibility on the horizon is a curbless street design (as illustrated for Eau Claire Street reconstruction plan) in front of the State Theater [include rendering]. The design allows for normal vehicle traffic but can be closed on an intermittent basis for theater pre-show parties, street dances, art fairs or festivals. Additionally, the City already allows landscaping and flowers in residential terraces and requires street trees in all new developments to help beautify and restore human health benefits nature can provide in an urban environment.

A policy would direct the Public Works Department and other assisting City departments to consider using various livable street elements where appropriate and financially prudent. The free-market should also be encouraged to consider incorporating some of these features in new subdivisions or site plans.

Policy 1.8 Exercise Eau Claire Events

With the City leading, community stakeholder should consider holding "Exercise Eau Claire Events". To fight against the negative trends of physical inactivity and obesity, make exercise a greater focus in the community while having affordable fun together outdoors. One innovative way is to consider closing down a street or sections of streets on a Saturday or Sunday to hold community recreational days. The City of Bogotá, Columbia closes over 70 miles of streets from vehicular traffic on Sundays from 7 am to 2 pm to hold the world's most successful example, the [Ciclovía](#). Citizens come out in droves to be physically active. Since streets are safe and open to use, people walk, run, bike, skate, play, picnic and

engage with each other socially. Fitness, dance classes and musical performances are also held in the streets. The concept has been so successful that cities large and small around the world and even in the U.S. are trying it. A couple of days over summer would be a logical time to test if this idea would catch on in Eau Claire. Some good street closure locations would be either on Barstow Street, Water Street, or 1st Avenue since they are all in the central city and readily accessible to the trail network.

Policy 1.9 Safe Routes to Schools Plan

Create a master plan. City departments should work with the Eau Claire Area School District to consider completing a Safe Routes to School Master Plan. The Eau Claire [South Middle School](#) – Safe Routes to School Plan is a step in the right direction and a good example of how to integrate elementary SRTSs with a middle school. There remain three elementary schools, two middle schools and both public high schools that lack safe routes.

Over the last four decades, the obesity rate for U.S. children ages 6 to 11 has more than quadrupled from 4.2% to 17%, and it has more than tripled for adolescents’ ages 12 to 19 from 4.6% to 17.6%. [See Ver1 Draft Footnotes 1, 2 or as found in 3] As a safety and health prevention strategy, Congress initiated the Safe Routes to School program in 2005. The City has received over \$480,000 to successfully build out infrastructure, but no coordinated plan exists outside of a combined map of all the individual safe routes. [include SRTS overall map from Bike & Ped. Plan]

A master plan should not only fold in existing safe routes to school but should bring together the rest of the City’s plans for a strong integrated network of bicycle, pedestrian, and transit travel. To secure future investment dollars, a master plan could help the City stand apart when applying for [State grants](#). The Federal MAP-21’s Transportation Alternatives [\(TA\) legislation](#), where SRTS funding is found now, is more comprehensive (facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists, rails to trails, overlook turnouts, community improvements activities like removal of outdoor advertising, environmental mitigation activities, and compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act) and so the competition for these funds will be tougher.

As part of the master plan effort, consideration should be given then on a possible Safe Routes to School coordinator. If determined wise, the position could be housed at the Eau Claire Area School District, City/County Health Department, Public Works, Police Department, etc. For example, the La Crosse County Health Department has had a position for the last several years funded by State DOT SRTS grants. A coordinator would help ensure the community prioritizes children’s health, by bringing stakeholders and volunteers together while helping to implement the master plan. Reactivating Safe STEPS and the Safe Routes to School Task Force at various schools would also aid in creating and fulfilling the goals of the master plan.

Policy 1.10 Safe Routes to Parks

Develop safe routes to parks. In the same vein as Safe Routes to School, consider including in the safe routes master plan the development of safe routes to the community’s parks. This could also be considered in the five year Parks and Open Space Plan update. Specialized signing and lighting would help identify some of the key routes. It is also important to keep these routes “safe” year-round. Linking SRTS with safe routes to parks could give children the opportunity to play together in parks afterschool. This is a tangible way to help children get their 60 minutes of exercise a day in. Not only will safe routes to parks help children be more active and play, it will also help adults find safer ways to get to parks without having to drive.

Policy 1.11 Walk Audits

When considering key pedestrian improvements, consider conducting walk audits. “Areas Requiring Further Study” as noted in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan”, Safe Routes to School, downtown street reconstruction, and sidewalk gaps closures might be logical candidates to perform future walk audits. Other good candidates are Water Street, in and around major retail destinations and any other place where there is or could be a higher than normal level of foot traffic.

Various stakeholders could be brought together during the preliminary planning stages of street reconstruction or trail development to evaluate walking from different user groups’ point of view. This can be undertaken also as part of the safe routes to school and parks master plan (noted in the last two policies). Gather the interdisciplinary group of those who might have an interest in the sidewalk or trail (young, old, people with disabilities, school board, city council, college students, engineers, planners, architects, etc.) to review how to make the walking environment better and safer. If applicable, audits should include bicycling and transit as these are forms of active transportation.

Walkability expert, Mark Fenton, says the key elements of a walk audit should include four things: Understand the mix of stakeholder perspectives, educate on what to look for and that will lead to healthier behaviors, go on the walk, and lastly discuss findings with creation of an early conceptual plan. On the Walk people should note what is good (sidewalks, safe, curb extensions, raised crossing, etc.), bad (no sidewalks or crosswalks, wide roads with speeding traffic, giant parking lots), and any surprises that come up (shortcuts, overlooks, benches, places of interest). Also, sidewalk system connectivity and land use type (live, work, shop, play), density, and proximity to each other should be described as all can increase or decrease the likelihood someone will choose to walk. The CDC also offers a [Walkability Audit Tool](#) that can be used.

Policy 1.12 Active Lifestyles

Making active living the easy thing to do. Study the relationship between the city’s various neighborhoods and their proximity to active living public resources such as sidewalks, trails, bike-lanes, off-road bike trails, transit, parks, dog parks, open space, school yards, community facilities, canoe/kayak launches, etc. With the challenges our winters can present catalog also cross-country and snowshoe trails, sledding hills, ice skating, hockey rinks, etc. Pay special attention to if “play deserts” (lack of play spaces in low-income areas) exist or the type and diversity of resources available to these areas. Map these features to identify the community’s free or affordable active living assets. This exercise may prove fruitful in not only identifying deficiencies and strengths, but also serving as a convenient community active living directory/map for the public and worksite wellness programs to use.

Policy 1.13 Obesity Mapping

Consider mapping localized or county-level body mass index (BMI) data. If a large enough sample can be obtained stakeholders might be better able to understand the possible connections between the built environment and obesity.

Obesity is defined as a body mass index (BMI, a ratio of weight to height), of 30 or more. Overweight is defined as a BMI of 25 to 29.9. Adult obesity rates have doubled since 1980, from 15% to 30%. In Eau Claire County, between 2000-2002 the Eau Claire City/County Health Department estimates that 55% of the County’s population was either overweight (32%) or obese (23%). In 2008, 29% of children were either overweight or at risk. Obesity is a prescription towards having other chronic diseases which decrease quality of life and escalate health care costs. To reverse growing trends, the City/County Health Department and Planning Division along with help from others such as Healthy Communities Council,

health insurers, hospitals, schools, Eau Claire County Extension Office, United Way, UWEC, etc. should all work together to complete this investigation. The La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium has produced a “The Burden of Obesity and Physical Inactivity” [report](#) for their area to help them make better informed decisions.

While BMI is not an exact science, it is generally accepted by the medical profession to be a useful proxy. Thus, it may help to illustrate places in the community where people generally tend to be more overweight or obese. This can then lead to asking deeper questions about if the built environment might be to blame and what specific things are prohibiting people from being more physically active, eating nutritious foods, etc. If limitations are found, follow up by considering counter measures that could be undertaken. An obesity map could also be overlaid with several other important health risk factors- healthy food access, neighborhood income and age, schools, trails/parks to ask further questions.

Policy 1.14 Workplace Wellness

Promote on the City/County Health Department’s website materials and existing programs that help foster worksite health and wellness. Plenty of great resources are available from the [CDC](#), and [State of Wisconsin’s](#) Department of Health Services. Locally, the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce has a worksite wellness [program](#) to encourage businesses’ employees to be healthier. Companies can get certified depending on their commitment level and implementation of activities such as fitness classes, healthy vending machines, incentives for regular exercise at a gym, credits on deductibles, etc.

In an effort to combat rising medical insurance costs, many employers are creating with the help of their health insurers, worksite wellness initiatives. The popularity of these programs is growing fast and with good reason. According to the [Minnesota Department of Health](#) [[page 5, or cite the original source](#)], for every \$1.00 a business spends on workplace wellness, in return they receive approximately \$3.00-\$6.00. Investing in employee health can be very important to businesses’ bottom line. Other studies have shown wellness programs boost productivity, worker morale, and help shed workplace mental stress.

Working possibly through the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce’s Health & Wellness Committee’s program, see if the community should attempt to become a designated WELCOA “[Well City USA](#)”, where 20% of the city’s employment is participating in worksite wellness programs. Another option is to reach a certain percentage of businesses receiving the [Governor's Worksite Wellness Award](#).

When it comes to the built environment, the City encourages businesses to leverage what Eau Claire has to offer by utilizing the built environment (parks, sidewalks, trails, sport facilities, and recreational programming). Off-site, employers can encourage “Walk and Talk” meetings or create maps using [MapMyWalk.com](#) of safe walking routes of nearby sidewalks and trails for their employees. The CDC has a good [Walkability Audit Tool](#) to evaluate walking opportunities found around a business site.

Businesses on-site could consider installing bike racks, small gyms, and showers. They could encourage employees to take the stairs rather than the elevator, create/install breast-feeding privacy rooms and quiet rooms to relieve stress, provide healthy meal or vending options in cafeterias or break rooms, install a company garden, participate in a farm-to-work program (see Policy 2.4), bring nature into the building or add windows to view outside nature. Another strategy is by specially signing or painting parking stalls located the farthest away from the building entrance, a business can challenge their employees to get more walking in.

Policy 1.15 Joint Use Public Facilities

The City and other public service providers should continue to look for more ways to cost-effectively offer joint use of public facilities for physical fitness. For example, Hobbs Ice Arena now includes a fitness gym. Afterhours some area schools are open to the public for recreational programs, open gym, swimming, tennis, and track. UWEC's University Recreation & Sport Facilities offers to the public for a reasonable fee various fitness class and wellness seminars. There are many others partnerships in the community that could be developed to help keep our citizens active and healthy.

Policy 1.16 Wellness Community Website

Consider creating a public advocacy campaign website that collects all the various community opportunities related to physical activity and healthy living and challenges people to fulfill their personal goals. Stakeholders such as the Healthy Communities Council's Action Teams, City/County Health Department, Parks, Recreational and Forestry Department, YMCA, United Way, hospitals, Volume One Magazine, etc. could collaborate to develop this resource guide for the public. This effort could easily tie in existing efforts such as [Prime Times](#), the City's recreation program guide, [Energize Eau Claire](#) campaign's website, Volume One's "Chippewa Valley Health, Fitness and Wellness Guide", etc.

As a component of providing a quality of life, more communities are creating active living resources like webpage portals as a go-to place to access information on what community has available for healthy living (trails, parks, recreational programs, health care, fitness clubs and classes, cooking sessions, etc.). Good examples nearby are [DuluthFIT](#), Ramsey County's Active Living Ramsey Communities initiative [website](#), [Marathon County](#), and Green Bay's [LIVE54218](#).

Policy 1.16 Critical Partnerships *[could be better located in the future introduction section]*

Increase community physical fitness/healthy living by working together. There are many excellent non-profit and for-profit groups dedicated in this community to promoting healthy living. However, many health efforts are being done in "silos", tending to produce duplication, extra meetings, needless competition, and worst of all, less effective action. The Eau Claire County Health Communities Council could potentially act in a greater way as a clearing-house to bring more separate/parallel initiatives under one umbrella. Various entities like ACHIEVE Eau Claire, Clear Vision Eau Claire, The Network of Care, United Way Health Advisory Council, YMCA, etc. could focus their efforts if they were a Council "action team". One team's charge could specifically be looking after the implementation of this chapter's policies. The Health Communities Council could also help to organize and bring together work on specific projects combining the strengths of individual action teams. Often times, these collaborative approaches can improve the chance of receive grant funding. The La Crosse Medical Health Science [Consortium](#) is one such collaborative between two regional medical systems, three institutions of higher education, the school district and County Health Department of La Crosse. Any new health collaborative or consortium effort should take into account the policies in this chapter.

Physical activity partnerships with sport clubs, non-profits, businesses, hospitals, fitness clubs, neighborhood associations, etc. should continue to be developed with the City Parks Department, to put on events such as marathons, fun-runs, basketball tournaments, etc.

Policy 1.17 Develop Metrics & Goals *[could be better located in the future implementation section]*

Commit to goals and tracking performance. Use both process (was what was proposed accomplished?) and health outcome measures to track progress. Align what is tracked with established methods such as the *County Health Rankings* and the future minimum data set being proposed by UW-Madison. This will

ensure that benchmarking of data can be the same over time. Focus on evidence-based health outcomes that have been proven in built environment research (i.e. access to places for physical activity or zoning regulations enabling physical activity,). Tie these metrics and goals into the County's Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) goals for obesity reduction, etc.)

More and more grant funding is being tied to the ability to track changes and measure community goals. Evaluating the effectiveness of active living strategies which are important will take some degree of measurement. As it relates to the built environment, there are several other things that can be done. For example to evaluate the effectiveness of installing bike trails, use counters to determine how many people have been using the trails. Use counters also during planning stages for where a trail or new sidewalk might be needed to see how many people already use the street or grass.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan has a goal to increase the 1% of who bike to work and the 7% of people who walk to work in the City. However, there is no goal to strive for (e.g. by 2020 the City will increase the number of bike lanes by 40% and complete 50% of the major sidewalk gaps, in that seeing an increase of bicycling to 4% and 10% in walking to work). As we continue to make improvement in active transportation and recreation, to see the effectiveness of investments and to continue or decide not to make future investments, keep track of performance standards such as trail user counts, bicycle counts, transportation mode shifts, miles of new trails, bike lanes or sidewalks. Having an initial baseline on non-automobile transportation/active living forms of travel will aid in creating future goals, making projections and planning for those improvements.

Consider applying for national recognition like a National League of Cities' "[Let's Move City](#)" or "[Playful City USA](#)" as well as maintain or enhance [Bicycle Friendly Community Program](#) status after 2015.

On a macro scale the City/County Health Department or the Healthy Communities Council along with other stakeholders could consider adopted a set of health related goals, aside from just health and the built environment goals. The La Crosse Medical Health Science [Consortium](#) Health [Scorecard](#) Project has a goal of by 2015 being the State's healthiest County (ranked 23rd in 2012). Eau Claire County ranked 19th out of 72 Wisconsin Counties on the [County Health Rankings](#) but scoring 56th in the physical (built) environment category. The County underperformed in fast food restaurants density (worst at 52%), and limited access to health foods (12%). Access to recreational facilities was fairly strong (12th rank) and air pollution was not a large problem. Other poor areas to note as it relates to this chapter's policies were 25% excessive alcohol consumption and 28% of our adult county residents are obese.

2. Food & Nutrition



INTRODUCTION TO COME

Policy 2.1 Community Gardens

Increase the amount of community gardens and see that every city neighborhood has a garden. This policy is also noted in the Sustainability Chapter under the Local Food Objective. The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department's 2011 Park Needs community survey revealed strong support for allowing community gardens to develop in parks. Growing and eating your own food helps to be physically active, boosts human nutrition, teaches how food is grown and achieves sustainable living.

Currently there are eight community gardens, two of which offer rental plots. The Jeffers Road Community Gardens' (started in 1979) plots measure 20'x45' and in 2012 cost \$35 per plot. The Eau Claire County Extension with the help of the Eau Claire Area Master Gardener Volunteer Association administers/maintains the gardens on City owned park land. The other, Forest Street Gardens near the Downtown Farmer's Market has plots 20'x20' and also runs \$35 per plot. A reduced rate is offered to those with limited income. On the garden site are raised wheel-chair accessible table-gardens and a large communal garden where those who work it can receive its food. Food from this garden is also donated to feed low income residents who eat at Community Table.

A 2010 survey by Eau Claire County Extension Office of Jeffers Road Community Gardens' renters identified reasons why community gardens are valuable in urban environments. Of those that responded, 56% said they rent plots because they have no garden space at home, 12% said because they rent and cannot put one in the yard, and 22% said they needed more space than what their home garden could provide.

The survey also found plot renters were coming from the south side of the city to the northwest for the community garden and that they desired a location nearer where they live. Thus, with the assistance of those interested the City should look at helping to develop a community rental garden on the south side. Fairfax Park is one such possibility. Other Eau Claire locations that might prove useful are in northeast, southwest and west. School sites might provide good locations (such as the Putnam School garden) as well as areas that are found to be without fresh food access, typical called "food deserts." The Clear Vision Empowerment Summit's action team on local food development might be a good partner to work with to investigate and create new sites. Community gardens- as the others are- should be operated by stakeholders and not the City.

Eau Claire Community Gardens

- **Lakeshore Park Garden** - Operated by Randall Neighborhood Association
- **McDonough Park Youth Garden** - Operated by Eau Claire County-Care of UW-Extension Office
- **North River Fronts Youth Community Garden** - Operated by Eau Claire County-Care of UW-Extension Office
- **Demmler Park Neighborhood Garden** - Operated by the Third Ward Neighborhood Association
- **Boyd Park Gardens** - Operated by the East Side Hill Neighborhood Association
- **Jeffers Rd. Community Garden** - Operated by Eau Claire County-Care of UW-Extension Office
- **Forest Street Garden** - Operated by North Riverfronts Association
- **Eau Claire Exposition Center Demonstration Gardens** - Operated by Eau Claire Area Master Gardeners



North River Fronts Community Youth Gardens

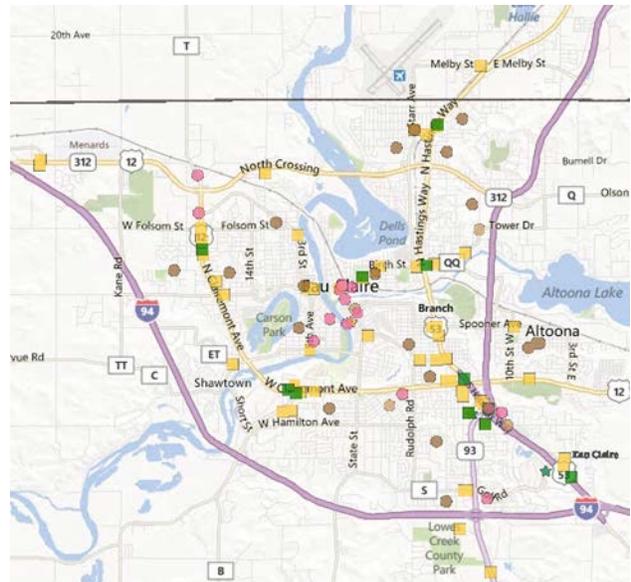
Policy 2.2 Fresh Food Access

See that the access of fresh food is easy for all. The USDA Food Desert Locator (map on the right) identified Eau Claire Census Tract #6 as having a “food desert” or lacking fresh food access. The USDA’s Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) [defines](#) a food desert as a low-income census tract where a substantial number or share of residents has low access to a supermarket or large grocery store.



The neighborhoods represented in the Census Tract #6 are North Side Hill and North River Fronts. Much of this area has physical natural barriers. The Locator used 2000 population and housing U.S. Census data. Of the 5,401 people living in the tract 3,987 or 74% had low access (more than 1 mile from a supermarket or large grocery) and 796 or 15% had low access and low-income (a poverty rate of 20% or higher or a median family income at or below 80% of the area's median family income). Other key demographic breakdowns were the number of children age 0-17 with low access was 1,241 or 23%, the number of people age 65+ was 298 or 5.5% and 171 housing units or almost 8% had no vehicle and low access.

While the data used was from the 2000 U.S. Census and an amalgamation of 2006 supermarket listings- having over \$2 million annual sales and containing all major food groups- it did not take into account other possible places of possible fresh food access. These could be smaller grocery stores, corner stores, farmer’s markets, community gardens, food pantries, schools serving free and reduced breakfasts and places like Community Table. Although there have been more recent strides made, gas station convenience stores typically only carry a limited selection of healthy food.



The [Wisconsin Food Security Project](#) (to the right) better identifies these “smaller” local resources (Farmers Market accepting FoodShare, WIC vouchers, WIC Farmers Market coupons, Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program vouchers, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Retailers, Stores accepting WIC, Food Pantries, Summer Meal Sites, Public schools Serving Breakfast. On the map, the light brown dots are schools that don’t serve breakfasts.

Additionally, the Eau Claire County (ECC) Poverty Work Group, a subcommittee of the ECC Hunger Prevention Coalition, prepared a [Food Assistance Issue Paper](#) in 2008. It cited a 2004 UW-Extension survey of household food needs conducted at the Eau Claire Area School District’s three lowest income elementary schools (Lakeshore, Longfellow, and Lincoln (now Montessori). The study indicated 25% of families responding were food insecure and 13% experienced hunger in the past year. The school district

study parallels data for the same year tracked by the US Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of the Census known as the Federal Food Security Module.

Working collaboratively, the City/County Health Department, City Planning Division, UW-Extension, ECC Hunger Prevention Coalition and other stakeholders such as the Eau Claire Area School District, UWEC, neighborhoods groups, and concerned citizens, should first catalog and map the city's various food outlets and overlay neighborhood demographics to understand better the relationships and barriers for fresh food access. This exercise may lead to new conclusions about the built environment such as focusing on attracting a supermarket or corner grocer in a location that has low access. Attracting a grocer to an area of need has already been done successfully for the downtown in the Phoenix Parks development.

Other strategies could then be explored such as encouraging new farmer market locations, more community gardens, free markets on school grounds (as what the City of Fresno, CA has done), giving support or incentives to get grocery/gas station stores to sell healthier foods (as Albert Lea, MN has done), or requiring, , corner stores with a grocery license to stock a certain amount fresh fruits and vegetables (as [Minneapolis](#) has done). Community Development Blocks Grant funds or grants from Transform Wisconsin (if available) could also be used in ways to help finance community gardens and building the needed partnership capacity so they can last overtime, while strengthening neighborhood reinvestment. Also, the USDA, Treasury and Health and Human Services have dedicated funds to support strategies that improve access, purchase and consumption of healthy affordable foods in the establishment of healthy food retail outlets located in defined food deserts.

Policy 2.3 Year-Round Farmer's Public Market

The City should consider developing a year-round farmer's market.

The success of the downtown farmer's market has been enormous, however it has reached capacity for the size of the site and thus there are a number of farmers and CSAs who are on a waiting list. Additionally, the space is not enclosed and impractical for winter use and available parking is becoming an issue as more apartments are built. The Downtown Farmer's Market at L.E. Phillips already runs a winter farmer's market the second Saturday each month from November to April where people can purchase high quality local vegetables, meat, dairy, poultry and other farm products.

Just as the Downtown Farmer's Market was a key catalyst for redevelopment in Phoenix Park, a year-round market may be another opportunity to do likewise while giving more farmers a further chance to sell directly to urban consumers. A conceptual idea of a year-round farmer's market in the West Bank Redevelopment District was submitted recently by the City Council President to the Mayor's Institute on City Design. Architects and planners from across the Midwest gave the City more ideas [report coming soon] on how to make a viable year-round farmer's market. The proposal was along the west bank of the Chippewa River on the former site of Lange's Cannery. The market's design played-off the canning company's old circular silo. Not only was there space envisioned for the local food vendors, but flowers, arts and craft vendors could also take part. Plus the design included a commercial kitchen business incubator, attached greenhouses, a food cellar, and rental space for events such as weddings, seminar meetings, etc. Restaurants and a smaller outdoor ice skating rink could even be part of the mix to make it more of an attractive and viable venture.

Famer's Markets (from Western WI Farm Fresh Atlas)

- Downtown Farmer's Market – Phoenix Park
- Festival Foods Famer's Market – Mall Dr.
- Oakwood Mall Famer's Market - Golf Ave.
- Gordy's Country Market – Birch St.
- Fresh Start Famer's Mart – UWEC Campus
- Winter Farmer's Market - LE Phillips Senior Center

In order to explore this concept further, the Redevelopment Authority should be heavily involved as they have been purchasing properties in the area and will be completing a specific development plan for the district. Partnerships with food related businesses like Silver Springs, Nestlé, etc., CVTC's and UWEC's food programs, food pantries, hospitals, etc. should also be considered in pursuing the creation of such a year-round public farmer's market.

[Findlay Market](#) in Cincinnati is one example of these types of popular year-round markets. In downtown La Crosse, Western Technical College, Hillview Urban Agriculture Center and Mayo Clinic Health System-Franciscan Healthcare have plans to create an [Urban Landscape and Agriculture Center](#) with greenhouses for year-round food. The center would be an educational resource for the college and a community venue used for promoting local food and sustainable living.

Policy 2.4 Farm-to-Urban Consumer

Develop more farm-to-work or farm-to-school programs. Sacred Heart Hospital contracts with area farmers for produce and meat which they use in their cafeteria meals. The City's "Green Team" will be investigating in 2013 the possibility of creating a public employee farm-to-work program with area CSAs. [New York's](#) City Hall launched a similar government-sponsored CSA program in 2011. Chippewa Valley Technical College established a student-run mini-CSA in the fall of 2012 using greenhouse and hydroponic facilities. The program was full in less than a day and plans are to continue it into spring 2013. In [Wood County](#), WI health officials and advocates began a program to bring school children out for visits to working farms. They then brought the produce from the farms to the school cafeteria. Other programs such as the [Vernon County's](#) Farm to School Initiative is run by the school district, AmeriCorp members and volunteers through a Transform WI grant. They have a goal to expand the program to all Vernon County school districts. A Transform Wisconsin Grant (if available in the next round of funding) may also provide an opportunity to create a farm-to-school program. The Eau Claire Area School District is a member of the Alliance for a Healthier Generation and a program like this would fit well in the initiative. Eau Claire County Extension, River Country Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc., Wisconsin Farmer's Union, etc. might also be good partners in helping to create a program.

How does a Farm to Work program work?

A business contracts with a farmer or CSA (community supported agriculture) farm to provide vegetables and or meat to subscribers at the business. Each week, deliveries are made to the business site with subscriber's boxes filled with that week's harvest.

Policy 2.5 Fast Food Density

Study local fast food density, accessibility and the possible implications. While the fast food trend to offer healthier foods not high in calories and fat is growing, and some have begun to label calories on their menus (federal labeling law will take effect in early 2013), the concentration of fast food restaurants in Eau Claire is the highest in the State (County Health Rankings, 2012).

In many larger cities lower-income neighborhoods have a higher concentration of fast food restaurants because the food is affordable. Adult and child overweight and obesity trends may prove higher in these neighborhoods because parents spend most of their money on housing, transportation and other essentials like clothing. If food is fast and cheap and easy to get, the temptation is there to get full on these types of unhealthy foods on a regular basis.

How do the USDA, Treasury and Health and Human Services define "healthy food"?

These three programs seeks to increase access to whole foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fat free or low-fat dairy, and lean meats that are perishable (fresh, refrigerated, or frozen) or canned as well as nutrient-dense foods and beverages encouraged by the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA).

Since Eau Claire County has the worst percentage (52%), and with most of these locations being in the City of Eau Claire, study why by mapping the geographic relationship between these restaurants, schools, low income areas/neighborhoods, and overweight and obesity populations (if it can be obtained on a Census Tract level). If there are obvious trends, seek ways to combat the problem. Some cities have passed regulation to not allow fast food restaurants within a certain distances of schools and have created mobile food markets that bring fresh health food into lower income neighborhoods. Others have gone further and banned fast food restaurants in certain parts of town or made it more difficult to access them conveniently by disallowing drive- throughs.

Policy 2.6 Urban Agriculture

Consider allowing urban farming/animal husbandry while protecting against possible nuisances.

More communities are allowing the keeping of certain types of animals such as domestic fowl (chickens and ducks) and small animals (rabbits, miniature goats and miniature potbelly pigs) and bee keeping. The City of [Seattle](#), for example combines a small animal provision with owning cats and dogs so that three such animals can be kept on a residential lot less 20,000 s.f. In addition, eight domestic fowl, not including roosters, may be kept when 10 feet away from any residential structure on an adjacent lot. The keeping of bees, when State registration is completed, is also allowed if specific setbacks are met. Nearby, the City of [Menomonie](#) and New Richmond have allowed the keeping of chickens recently to promote local food in their communities.

Policy 2.6 Promoting Local Food Businesses

Working with key stakeholders, help support the economic development of the area food business.

Agriculture in Eau Claire County is big business providing over 4,480 jobs and \$1.1 billion in sales, noted in a [UW Extension](#) report. The City should seek out value-added food businesses and help start-up business with incentives or supporting a kitchen incubator. Eau Claire County is already looking at starting a kitchen incubator at County Expo. An economic and market analyses of farming within the immediate region could help identify new business opportunities. Another possibility is to apply for federal Healthy Food Financing Initiative grants and loans to help open new fresh food outlets such as supermarkets, farmers' markets, and expanded convenience stores in low-income and under-served areas. Transform Wisconsin Grants (if available) may also provide an opportunity to create incentives for farmers such as creating farm-to-school programs.

Policy 2.7 Regional Food Hub

Collaborate with others to research if the region needs a food hub. Currently there is no such resource in the area. If a need can be demonstrated, help develop a hub in the City of Eau Claire. For example, the Dane County Planning and Development Department raised funds for a [feasibility study](#) to determine the market viability for a regional food hub. [Fifth Season Cooperative](#) (Vernon County) and [Big River Farms](#) (Marine on St. Croix, MN) are good existing models located near but far enough outside our immediate region.

The [USDA](#) defines “*regional food hubs*” as a business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demand. A good example of this is connecting restaurants, schools, grocery stores, etc. that are looking to incorporate local food into their menus/offersings with the farmers that will supply the food. Food hubs can make this exchange happen.

Farmers continue to face challenges by the lack of distribution, processing and marketing infrastructure to get their products to market. This is especially true for small to midsized farms. In Eau Claire County, over 90% of those who own farms are individuals or families and the average size of a farm continues to decrease to 170 acres ([UW Ext.](#) report). While their farm size has grown smaller, diversification continues to evolve as local farms look to fulfill ethnic and specialty food niches (meat goats, grapes, apples, etc.). A food hub could help sustain not only our county/regional farms and supply larger markets like the Twin Cities, but also help urbanites gain better access to quality local food. Local food sales continue to grow, they were estimated to be \$4.8 billion in 2008, and are projected to climb to \$7 billion in 2011 (USDA-ERS report).

Policy 2.8 Community Food Systems Plan

Consider creating a master plan on the community's food systems. In essence all of the policies in this section could be brought together in a master food systems plan. The American Planning Association has official policy on food systems planning that would be useful guidance to shape a plan. In a plan, the City should review its zoning code with an eye on facilitating stronger local food systems, growing opportunities and business development. This would also open the chance to bring together stakeholders to create a plan that can help the community benefit from strong local food production, economic development and fresh food access for all people.

Policy 2.9 Lactation Support

Build upon the City/County Health Department's breastfeeding services to help foster more private breastfeeding places in worksites and in public. The breastfeeding support resources could be augmented to add information on how to create/set up worksite privacy rooms. This information can also help architects plan for these spaces when designing buildings. Private places are important for new mothers so they can pump nutritious milk for their infant on a regular basis and feel unhindered. Often times, women are forced to awkwardly use bathroom stalls, stairwells, vehicles. Current legislation requires by law that workplaces provide employees with a lactation room or private area.

Policy 2.10 Goals and Metrics *[could be better located in the future implementation section]*

Create goals and metrics to see the realization of healthy food and nutrition in the community. For example, Philadelphia has a target to bring local food within 10 minutes of 75% of residents. Other City goals might be to have a community garden in every neighborhood by a certain year, construct a year-round farmers market, food hub and or kitchen incubator.

3. Land Use



INTRODUCTION TO COME

Policy 3.1 Sustainable Growth

Continue to encourage compact contiguous mixed use development. The City's 2005 Comprehensive Plan's overarching theme is to see the city take on more of this sort of urban character (see pages 2-4 through 2-6 for more specific policy). The evidence is clear that a diverse mix of housing and destinations in compact arrangements promote healthy living by making it easier to walk, bicycle and take transit. The City may want to consider offer incentives (reduced application fees or expedited permit reviews) to attract the type of projects the community wants for its future.

The community's vision for sustainable growth matches with what is happening across the U.S, especially in larger cities. In their semi-annual magazine *On Common Ground*, the National Association of Realtors® forecasted that the major trend for what gets built and sold in the decades ahead will be for Generation Y preferences; which represents today's 20-somethings and teenagers. These trends are for in-town living, environmental conservation and the desire to drive less. Changing demographics of smaller household size, baby-boomer retirement, and rise in ethnicity will contribute to growing urbanization of cities, transportation choice, and greater sustainability. Building these types of developments locally will require developers, builders, realtors, and local government to be on the same page working together to adapt to the changing market.

Policy 3.2 Health Impact Assessments

Require Health Impact Assessments (HIA) to be undertaken when a built environment issue, proposal or plan has the potential to significantly affect public health. The International Association of Impact Assessment defines an HIA as "a combination of procedures, methods and tools that systematically judges the potential, and sometimes unintended, effects of a policy, plan, program or project on the health of a population and the distribution of those effects within the population."

The major steps in conducting an HIA include:

1. Screening: Determines the need and value of a HIA
2. Scoping: Determines which health impacts to evaluate, methods for analysis, and a workplan
3. Assessment: Involves profiling existing health conditions, measuring potential health impacts and identifying strategies to manage identified adverse health impacts
4. Reporting: Includes the development of the HIA report and communication of findings and recommendations
5. Monitoring: Quantifies impacts on decision-making processes, the decision, and health determinants [Source: [DHS Wisconsin Health Impact Assessment Online Toolkit](#)]

Along with developing a formalized policy or ordinance, work collaboratively with the City/County Health Department and others to receive training, build capacity, and perform HIAs or rapid HIAs reviews on public or private projects. Case examples are large-scale new subdivisions, redevelopments, sub area plans, transportation corridor projects, environmental remediation, sand processing plants, alcohol outlet density, updates to comprehensive plans, etc.

Policy 3.2 Complete Streets [include a photo]

Formalize a policy using “Complete Streets” principles. On page 40 of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan it states that the City should review the feasibility of implementing a complete streets program for the construction of new streets and the reconstruction of existing streets. A “complete street” is a street that is designed for all users, such as motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians; including people with mobility restrictions.” In recent years the City has made strides in providing streets that are safe and convenient for all users. By practical experience however, not every public-right- of way can accommodate all users in a safe and clearly delineated way. Thus, the City should work towards formalizing its policies regarding the implementation of complete street principles. The formalized policy, led by the Public Works Department will assist staff as they plan new streets and reconstruct existing streets and also make expectations clear to developers when proposing new subdivisions.

Policy 3.4 Transportation Management Demand

The Public Works Department should consider Transportation Management Demand (TDM) strategies to reduce congestion, vehicles mile traveled (VMT) and local air pollution. Options might include promoting and expanding transit, bicycle commuting, encouraging carpooling, car share, commuter choice programs, flex hours, stronger transit service and access locations, etc. Work with City Planning, Chippewa Valley MPO and other stakeholders like Chippewa Valley Transit Alliance. Explore possible innovative solutions- while the Regional Transit Authority legislation remains repealed- such as a private-public Transportation Management Organizations (TMO) that helps businesses benefit directly from implementing their own TDM strategies in conjunction with agency programs like transit.

Policy 3.5 Transit Development Plan

Update the five year transit development plan. The update should look to possibly serve new areas of the city by adding or modifying existing routes. Offering Sunday service and building a new downtown transit center should be considered. The center should include the integration system connectivity of pedestrian and bicycle modes of travel to further increase bus ridership via these active transportation modes. Riding the bus is considered active transportation since one has to reach the bus stop usually by walking. Bike racks should be included on all buses to enable more bicycling to the bus stop.

Policy 3.6 Aging in Place

Enable seniors and baby-boomers to age in place. In 2011, the U.S. Census estimated there were 41.4 million persons aged 65 and older, or 13% of the population. By 2030, the number of older persons is expected to increase to more than 72 million (20%) and continue to increase thru 2050. Persons over 85 years of age and older represent the fastest growing age cohort in the U.S. (Source: [U.S. EPA](#)). A [research report](#) by AARP Public Policy Institute says nearly 90% of people over age 65 want to stay in their home for as long as possible, and 80% believe their current residence is where they will always live. The Eau Claire County Age-friendly community survey found **_(not to be released until March)_**.

There are several strategies the City could consider when helping people to age in place. Consider allowing accessory dwelling units, sometimes called “granny flats”, to be allowed in the R-1 District (currently only allowed in the Traditional Neighborhood District). Educate developers about the [Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities](#), [Communities for a Lifetime](#) and the “[Village Movement](#)”, which links neighbors together to help one another remain in their homes as they grow older. These strategies give seniors better quality of life, independence and mental health benefits. [include an ADU floor plan]

Policy 3.7 Housing Deficiencies

Ensure minimum housing code compliance continues. The City/County Health Department's Intensified Housing Code Compliance Program helps to improve the condition of the City's and County's housing units. In the City, a systematic approach is used via field surveys. Federal CDBG funding used for this program continues to decrease and makes it difficult to tackle the persistent deterioration of housing. Increased funding support from the levy should be considered.

From 1993 to 2010 the number of blighted or deteriorated homes in the City was greatly reduced by this program. What remains however is the reality that homes will continue to age, violations will occur, and new building codes will create non-conforming structures. Thus, to keep pace consider other complimentary strategies such as a landlord rental licensing inspection program, enacting an ordinance that requires housing maintenance compliance or a disclosure report given at the time of sale.

The City of St. Paul requires all single family and duplex homes for sale to have a Truth-in-Sale of Housing disclosure prepared by a certified independent evaluator and made available to prospective buyers. The report is a disclosure only, and does not mandate repairs unless so deemed by the Fire Marshall. Richfield, MN on the other hand, requires that all single family and duplexes be inspected by the City Inspection Division and a Certificate of Housing Maintenance be obtained prior to closing. Code deficiency repairs must be completed by the seller and re-inspected before the closing to receive the certificate. The buyer can make the needed repairs if negotiated in the sale and a cash escrow agreement is signed.

Policy 3.8 Healthy Buildings

Consider exceeding the minimum building codes to improve human health in the homes, workplaces, schools, hospitals, civic buildings and other structures- whether new or renovated. A U.S. EPA *Healthy Buildings, Healthy People for the 21st Century* [report](#) says on average we spend about 90 percent of our time indoors, where pollutant levels are often higher than those outside. It goes on to say that most Americans and building managers do not have a clear sense of the significant health risks of indoor pollution or know what they can do to reduce risk for asthma, cancer, and other serious diseases caused by indoor pollutant exposure.

Indoor pollution is estimated to cause thousands of cancer deaths and hundreds of thousands of respiratory health problems each year. In addition, hundreds of thousands of children have experienced elevated blood lead levels resulting from their exposure to indoor pollutants. Common techniques to provide a healthy indoor environment is to address moisture and mold prevention, use safer building products (i.e. no to low-toxicity) and custodial care standards, abate lead and asbestos, mitigate radon leaks, and eliminate second-hand smoke. The [green building movement](#) is one such approach to address health and the environment in buildings (see pages 15-17, 15-18 in the Sustainability Chapter for further policy).

The EPA has developed a voluntary guidance document called [Healthy Indoor Environment Protocols for Home Energy Upgrades](#), which provides a set of best practices for improving indoor air quality in conjunction with energy upgrade work in homes. This and other trade resources could be referred to if crafting superior codes is considered important. Meanwhile, continue to administer the City/County Health Department's Radon and Lead reduction programs. Educate also builders on the human health and marketability benefits by constructing sustainable buildings.

Policy 3.9 Affordable Housing

Consider options to include more affordable housing units within private developments. The City of Eau Claire Housing Authority's waiting list has been over 550 people since July 2010. With federal housing program funding being cut each year, the Housing Authority's ability to meet this need with new public housing is severely limited. However, private developers can help ease this burden in a couple of ways. One way would be to encourage developers to take advantage of the Low Income Tax Credit Program administered through the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority, providing program eligibility requirements are met. A second way is for the City to require any new housing or multi-family construction to set aside units to be used for the purpose of affordable housing for low income residents. This could be accomplished by designating a certain percentage of units within a new development be offered to low income home seekers. The Housing Authority, working with these private developers, can assist by providing Housing Choice Vouchers to tenants seeking to rent in such developments. [include a photo of mix-income housing]

This is important because low-income individuals and families can often be marginalized to more depressed areas of cities and thus they feel not integrated into the rest of community. Some low-income individuals- for example the born disabled- may have had no other choice in their personal economy, and should not be marginalized by any city trying to promote community health and wellness for all. For issues on sheltering the homeless see the 2005 Comprehensive Plan's Policies on page 10-9.

4. Safety & Crime



INTRODUCTION TO COME

Policy 4.1 **CPTED Review**

Adopt a formal site plan review policy for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. CPTED is based on the premise that the proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear of crime and incidence of crime, and to an improvement in quality of life [\[source\]](#). Common examples are making sure pedestrian tunnels are well lit, lighting is provide on appropriate trail sections, locating security call-kiosks on college campuses, eliminating or redesigning hiding places (landscape brush, tree undergrowth and fencing), installing speed bumps to slow traffic, locating plenty of windows on the street or alley, etc. More cities and counties throughout the country are adopting CPTED policies, ordinances or overlay zoning districts requiring site plan review with crime prevention in mind.

Eau Claire Achieve’s Community Health Assessment and Group Evaluation 2010-2011 Community-At-Large surveys found little in the way of public policy in support of crime prevention, although the built environment had good scores. The Eau Claire Police Department uses a proactive problem-oriented policing strategy and CPTED falls within this protocol. The Police’s Certified Landlord program is one way that landlords can help prevent illegally activity on their property. To advance crime prevention, consideration should be given to interdepartmental staff receiving CPTED training and then deciding on if a formal policy or ordinance needs to be created. Enacting this policy will help deter crimes such as pan-handling, theft, vandalism, robbery, rape, etc. [\[show a photo of CPTED work\]](#)

Policy 4.2 **Threats & Terrorism**

Plan for the unthinkable. In after-effect of the horrible shooting murders at Sandy Hook Elementary and Altoona School District going into a campus-wide “lockdown”, the Eau Claire Police Department should aid the Eau Claire Area School District in their assessment of how vulnerable the district’s schools are to a similar threat. While tragedies caused by evil cannot be altogether prevented, there are steps our community can take.

Physical built environment techniques used to eliminate or reduce the opportunities for those who plan evil can be; limiting the number of entries from outside, securing a single-point public access with a check-in counter or cardkey entry system, installing blast-harden entries (i.e. solid concrete flower planters in front of the main door), minimizing or altering locations where people can hide such as stairwells and bushes, installing effective security lighting, providing panic alarms in board rooms. Other strategies are; knowing your exit plan by locating maps in hallways, discouraging parking stalls up close to the front of a building, being aware of your environment by seeing if anything or anyone seems suspicious, etc. While some of these strategies might not be practical for all situations, architects and site designers should keep in mind, especially for public buildings, these security enhancement strategies. For businesses, depending on the type, they might need to balance the desire for security with the need to attract customers.

Policy 4.3 Dangerous Street & Intersections

Enforce and modify areas where drivers speed and disobey traffic rules. Make observations and review crash data along these dangerous points, intersections, streets to reduce or eliminate conflicts with pedestrians, bicyclists, and people with disabilities. Work with stakeholders to identify dangerous situations such using the concept explained in the Walk Audits policy ([see page ___](#)). State Street, especially on the hill and along campus, is one such street that has regular speeding and is dangerous to people walking or biking. Many of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans goals address issues like this but more can be done so that drivers respect the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.

Policy 4.4 Trail Lighting

Consider adding more lighting on some of the City's multi-use trails. Use down-cast lighting with possible motion sensors. Approximately 3 miles of 27 miles are currently lighted. Adding more light will allow people extended use- especially in the winter months, but also add that extra sense of security.

Policy 4.5 International signs

Consider incorporating more international signage in Eau Claire at Parks, on streets, way-finding signage, etc. International signage standards attempt to make things easily recognizable to others creating less confusion and possible accidents. One example is found on round-bouts. [\[show a picture of some designs\]](#)

5. Drug Use



INTRODUCTION TO COME

Policy 5.1 Alcohol Usage

Research the relationship between the amount of alcohol selling establishments and criminal activity.

Eau Claire County is one of the worst counties in the state for excessive-drinking ([2012 County Health Rankings](#)). The Water Street Commercial District General Development Plan's zoning is an example of limiting the number of taverns in an area so crimes are reduced, property values are not negatively impacted, and there is a guaranteed mix of other commercial land uses. Research was previous done by UWEC on areas of the city that have higher concentrations. The United Way has goal to reduce alcohol abuse and underage drinking, and could also help play a role in conducting this research.

Understanding the accessibility of alcohol is one factor in preventing abuse. If relationships can be demonstrated by mapping exercises or by other evidence-based research, consider strategies to help improve situations. For example, if there are a number of drinking violations with minors in a given area, consider stepping up enforcement on these outlets or possibly regulating the distance these establishments are to schools. Concentration maps would also prove as a useful tool for the City's Liquor License Review Committee when making decisions on granting new alcohol licenses.

Policy 5.2 Safe Rides

Consider providing more education and incentives for people who need a safe ride or don't want to drive home after over-drinking. The Eau Claire County Health Needs Assessment Survey found **[waiting for final results]** that people not only wanted more safe rides but also the option to allow downtown overnight on-street parking so people can leave their cars, get a taxi or stay with friends. In many places signs along downtown streets do not allow on-street parking from 2 a.m. to 6 a.m. With new designated unloading zones along South Barstow Street, there is a chance to possibly change this overnight on-street parking policy.

Policy 5.3 Tobacco Free Parks

Consider banning tobacco use in parks. The 2011 Parks Survey found that there is support for passing legislation to ban the use of smoking in City parks. Even brief exposure to secondhand smoke can be harmful to health. The [CDC](#) has found that second-hand smoke can contain toxic and cancer-causing chemicals, causes heart disease and lung cancer in nonsmoking adults, cause sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), and cause a number of health conditions in children, including middle ear infections, more severe asthma, and respiratory infections. Therefore, an ordinance that restricts smoking and tobacco use in public parks and along trail corridors will help reduce this public health threat.

Policy 5.4 Tobacco Free Multi-Family dwellings

Consider limiting, separating units or banning tobacco use in multi-family dwellings. Multi-family dwelling may consist of shared air ventilation openings where second-hand smoke can flow into other resident's living units. A new study published by the Journal Nicotine & Tobacco Research found over one-quarter of the U.S. population (79.2 million individuals) reside in multi-unit housing and that disparities in multi-unit housing residency exist across subpopulations. Among multi-unit housing residents with smoke-free home rules (62.7 million), an estimated 27.6–28.9 million have experienced

secondhand smoke infiltration. The same study found that nationally, 47.6% of multi-unit housing residents are male, 53.3% are aged 25–64 years, 48.0% are non-Hispanic White, and 24.4% live below the poverty level. Thus, more cities are passing local legislation to reduce the health impacts to non-tobacco users living in these multi-unit housing environments. Policies or ordinances prohibiting smoking in multi-unit housing, including living units and indoor shared areas, represent the most effective way to fully protect residents from involuntary exposure to secondhand smoke and possible side-effects.

Policy 5.4 Tobacco Free Public Events

Consider an ordinance that restricts smoking at community festivals and other public events like outdoor concerts. The Eau Claire Area School district already utilizes this option. This may depend community-wide though on the location and event organizer. Exposure to second-hand smoke can be very direct when people are smoking in close quarters. Health effects are noted in above policy 5.3.

6. Environmental Exposures



INTRODUCTION TO COME

Policy 6.1 Emergency Preparedness

Complete and implement the 2012-2017 City of Eau Claire Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan. FEMA is currently reviewing the draft document for approval. The plan developed by the City Steering Committee, community stakeholders and West Central Regional Plan Commission sets out mitigation measures to reduce the risks from natural hazards. It serves also as a guide for decision-making protocol in times of emergency. The plan provides data on weather trends, an assessment of risks that the community is vulnerable to, and current and recommended mitigation strategies. Droughts, tornados, wind and hail storms, blizzards, floods, droughts, extreme cold and heat, wildfire power outages, dam failure, and health pandemics like H1N1 are all situations that could occur locally. [Disaster Ready Chippewa Valley](#) and [Be Ready Eau Claire](#) are good existing local websites that people can go to understand what they can do to prepare for or deal with the threat of a natural disaster.



Policy 6.2 Climate Changes

The City should consider adaption measures as part of planning for a warmer climate. The City's Sustainability Chapter addresses the issues of a warming planet and what mitigation should be undertaken. Several recommendations are also outlined in the City's 2011 Carbon Footprint report. Last year was the warmest year on record for the U.S. Since 1960 Eau Claire County's average temperature has warmed from 43.8 degrees Fahrenheit to 45.6 degrees in 2010 ([Source](#)). What the data and modeling show for Wisconsin is likely more extreme weather conditions/events such as droughts, heat waves in the summer and heavier snow precipitation events in the winter. Cities are creating "cooling centers" for people who do not have air-conditioning or are vulnerable during heat-waves. The proposed STRONG Act—Strengthening The Resiliency of Our Nation on the Ground Federal funding legislation may also help support local resiliency planning in the face of increasing extreme weather events.

Policy 6.3 Air Quality

Continue to protect the city's air quality. The air quality is reasonably healthy for Eau Claire County, but that does not mean there is not any air pollution. Elevated concerns of air pollution particulates and ozone are usually less than 5 days every year. The DNR maintains a [database](#) of air permits within Eau Claire County to understand pollution emitting sites and how that might impact existing neighborhoods. The DNR also provides services dealing with mobile air pollution sources such as:

- Quantifying emission reductions, both criteria pollutants and GHG gases associated with transportation alternatives
- Technical assistance in developing ride share programs
- Reviewing communities transportation plans
- Providing model ordinances for idle reduction policies, both on-road and non-road

- Technical assistance on interaction between land use policies and transportation planning
- Assistance in developing Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Grant applications, (Non-Attainment Areas only)
- Technical assistance in developing transportation efficiency projects, (traffic signalization and eco-driving)
- Reference materials on benefits attributed to bike accommodation and pedestrian enhancement

The City's current strategies to reduce air pollution are through decreasing vehicles miles traveled (VMT) via transit service and implementing the goals of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (see also policies 3.4 and 3.5). The City's 25x25 Energy Independent Plan along with Eau Claire County and the City of Altoona is also a strategy that other in the private sector can follow by conserving energy, installing energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. The City also further protects air quality impacts through conditions on conditional use permits and via other zoning mechanisms.

Policy 6.4 Contaminated Lands & Water

Work to eliminate or minimize any human health threats related to contaminated places. Map where these polluted lands/waters are and investigate the potential health impacts. Seek Federal or State cleanup funds/grants if needed to put these lands back into some productive use (e.g. the current Sky Park Solar Farm study) or to complete a city-wide environmental assessment to comprehensively assess all contaminated sites in the city.

The DNR maintains a Remediation and Redevelopment [map database](#) of active and closed polluted properties in the city. Some of these sites are within, close by, or outside residential neighborhoods and are of special concern. The EPA also has a listing of sites under the National Priorities List (NPL) Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) program and an interactive "Repowering" contaminated lands [mapping tool](#) to identify these sites. [\[show the DNR R&R map\]](#)

General water quality has improved in the city but protection should continue with an emphasis on implementing ground water purification at places like Blue Valley Landfill in the Town of Union (owned by the City) and City Wells Field. New development mitigation measures for on-shore and upland non-point water pollution runoff should continue by requiring stormwater pollution and prevention plans. See the City's Waterways Plan on pages 57-68 for more specific actions.

Policy 6.5 Heavy Industry Impacts

The City should require mitigation on various air, water, noise and transportation concerns associated with heavy industry. While this applies to all potential uses in the City's I-2 heavy industrial zoning district, the area's growth of industrial sand mining and manufacture for the gas and oil hydrologic fracturing industry is unique.

The City's heavy industrial I-2 district allows for gravel pits, processing plants and railroad freight facilities, such as sand transloading through a conditional use permit. Some issues affecting nearby residents have ground water depletion and pollution, heavy truck traffic, freight train noise, and fugitive dust. Recently, a development agreement to extend the rail spur for a transload facility in northeast Eau Claire was denied due to residential concerns.

While being open to new business and job creation, the City should be ready to deal with controversial land use industries that may affect resident health. Requiring a Health Impact Assessment might be a

wise strategy. Learn from the experience of Chippewa Falls and other West Wisconsin communities who have had plants or mines proposed/built inside or near their city limits. Also, continue to work with the County and adjacent towns on sub-area plans and extra-territorial review planning. A processing plant or mine, whether sand-related or not, could have major future land use implications to the city and adjacent towns.

Policy 6.6 Noise Issues

Develop standards on noise pollution. The City lacks any zoning on noise standards for development or transportation corridors. The City's current Noise Ordinance does allow the ability to file a complaint when noise is causing a public nuisance. Many cities have a zoning code provision that deals with sound decibel levels for various uses like industrial and commercial at the edge of the property line. This is to limit off-site noise disturbance near land use incompatibilities. The City's I-2 zoning district directs louder type industries to these heavy use areas. Some of these areas in the City have adjacent residential. The City should review other communities' codes to see what performance standards could work. Greater building setbacks, landscape buffering, etc. are some measures that can be taken.

Policy 6.7 Railroad Quiet Zones

Consider studying safety improvements to rail crossings to reduce horn noise. With the increase of freight traffic on local railroads, more horn whistles can be heard throughout residential neighborhoods. The [Federal Railroad Administration](#) allows communities to eliminate these whistles when they install safety measures at crossing (over or under bridges, four-quadrant crossing gates, raised medians, no horn signage). These Quiet Zone rules still allow a train to blow its horn if there is an emergency, but if these safety protecting measures are installed for each crossing along a railroad segment, trains are required to not blow their horns. Communities like Fargo, ND and Coon Rapids, MN have installed significant Quiet Zone infrastructure. FRA Quiet Zones do not eliminate the noise of passing train vibrations or the coupling of freight cars. From a planning and health point of view, locate future residential away from the immediacy of rail lines to avoid noise and air nuisances. Eau Claire has very limited availability of land with railroad access, so any potential capacity should be reserved for industry and economic development.

Implementation

SECTION TO COME



- A – PLANNING
- B – POLICIES
- C – PROGRAM
- D – PARTNERS

Comprehensive Plan - Health Chapter Work Program			
Item	Task	Responsible Party	Time frame w/Metric
1.1			
1.2			
2.1			
2.2			
3.1			
3.2			
4.1			
4.2			
5.1			
5.2			
6.1			
6.2			