

Adopted
July 10, 2012

Eau Claire Waterways Plan

***Policies and Actions
Chapters***



Prepared by



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RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE EAU CLAIRE WATERWAYS PLAN.

WHEREAS, the City of Eau Claire adopted a Comprehensive Plan on September 27, 2005, in accordance with the provisions of Wis. Statutes, Section 66.1001; and

WHEREAS, the Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan calls for the City to consider an update of the 1988 Waterways Plan; and

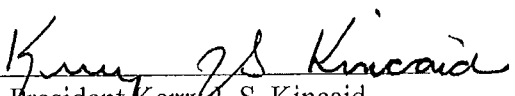
WHEREAS, the Plan Commission approved the work program for the Eau Claire Waterways Plan which included an advisory committee and coordination with the Waterways and Parks Commission and other interest groups; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds the Eau Claire Waterways Plan to be consistent with said Comprehensive Plan; specifically the Parks System Chapter, Objective 3 (Waterfront Access and Trails), which calls for the update of the Waterways Plan.

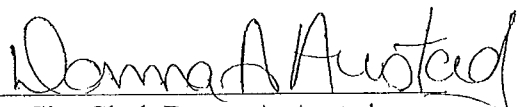
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Eau Claire that the City Council hereby approves the Eau Claire Waterways Plan as a guide to be used in consideration of future improvements and planning within the community.

Adopted,

July 10, 2012

(SEAL) 
President Kerry J. S. Kincaid

(SEAL) 
Interim City Manager Brian Amundson

(ATTESTED) 
City Clerk Donna A. Austad

Eau Claire Waterways Plan: Policies and Actions

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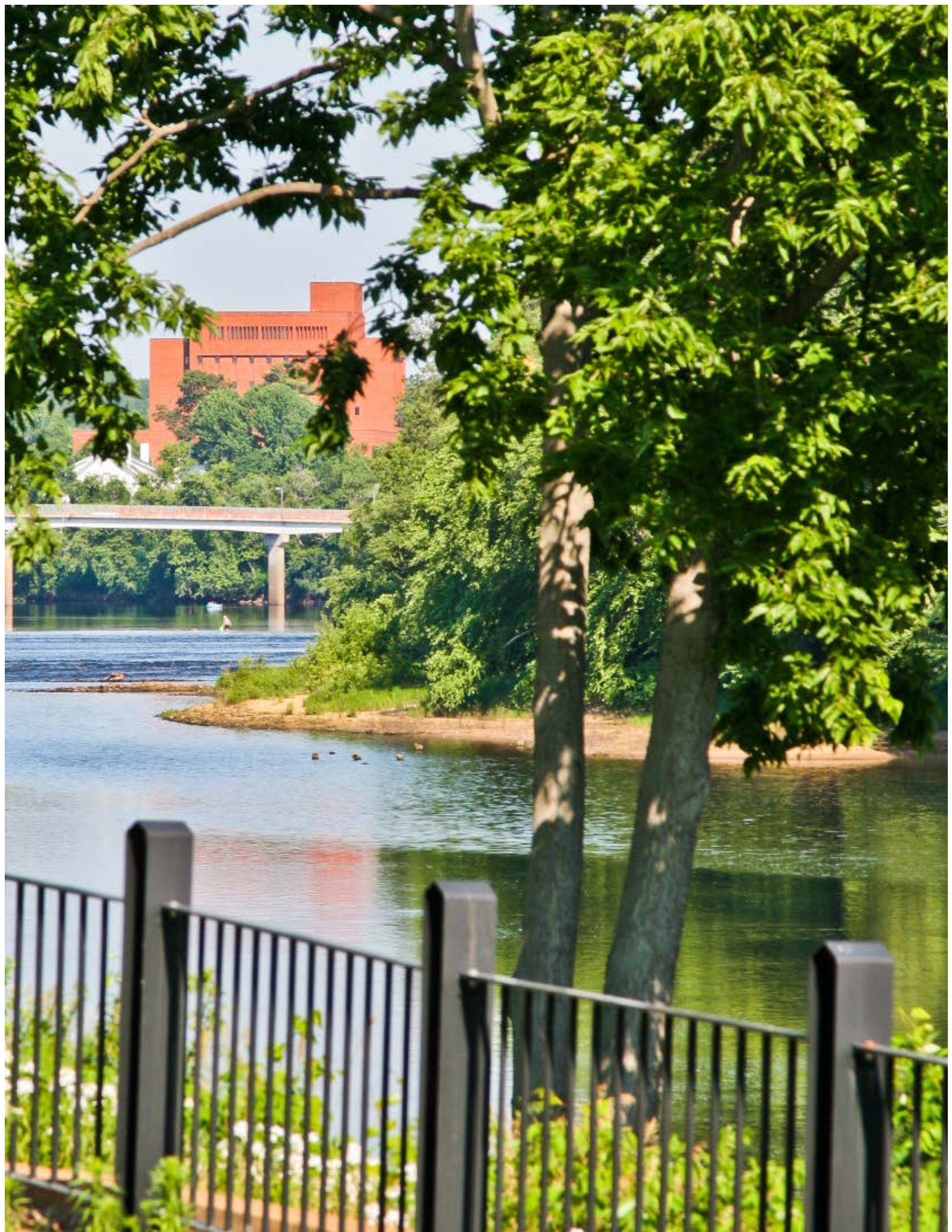
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Summary of *Eau Claire Waterways Plan*

The Eau Claire Waterways Plan is a statement of the community's goals and policies with respect to its waterways. It is a guide to City investments along the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers, the five creeks – Sherman, Lowes, Taylor, Little Niagara and Otter -- and Half Moon Lake. It is also a reference for private property owners and investors near those waterways. The plan is adopted as an element of the City's *Comprehensive Plan*, although specific decisions about City spending and ordinances will be made by the Council as the need arises.

The chapters of the *Eau Claire Waterways Plan* are:

1. **Parks and Trails:** Establishes guidelines for the acquisition of additional park land (known as the Greenway) along the waterways, the extension of multi-use paths and on-street bicycle routes, and the design of park facilities along the waterways.
2. **Land Use and Urban Design:** Provides direction for land development in the waterway corridors and offers guidelines for site planning and architectural treatments adjacent to the Greenway.
3. **Natural and Cultural Resources:** Addresses ecological stewardship along with the protection and interpretation of cultural resources near the waterways.
4. **Economic Development:** A plan to leverage the amenity of the waterways for the benefit of economic growth across the community.
5. **Plan Implementation:** A program to advance the plan that includes a list and map of the major initiatives along waterways plus ideas for funding, partnerships, regulation and education.
6. **Discovery:** Background information and a description of the major planning issues.

Central Goals for the Waterways

1. **The Greenway:** Continue to improve waterfront access and enjoyment through growth of linear parks and connections from the neighborhoods in coordination with land development.
2. **Land Use and Urban Design:** Guide land use and design in the waterway corridors in ways that enhance both the development and the Greenway.
3. **Ecology:** Protect and improve the natural functions of the waterways and their riparian environment.
4. **Economic Development:** Boost jobs and economic investment in Eau Claire through the amenity of the Greenway in conjunction with other public facilities, services and infrastructure.
5. **Achievement:** Implement this plan through sustained and continuous municipal investments aided by other public and private resources.

Principles of the Waterways Plan

Honor the natural qualities of the water ecosystems

Protect or restore the natural environment along the waterways in harmony with nearby urban development. Give first priority to nature at the water's edge. Treat the waterways with the respect they deserve.

Think at the scale of the watershed

Plan and act throughout the watershed for the benefit of the streams and lakes. Coordinate trails, parks, drainage and land use with Chippewa Falls, Altoona, the Village of Lake Hallie, the Towns and the Counties. Topography is the only boundary known by the waterways.

Connect the city to the waterways

Improve views, build connective streets and paths, and orient buildings to the waterways.

Complete the greenway

Continue to create linear parks and trails along the waterways for recreation, ecology, economic development and lasting neighborhood value.

Touch the water

Make it easier for people to get onto and into the water. Create strong personal bonds with the waterways through touch and use.

Leverage development

Use the intrinsic beauty of the waterways to attract development to the corridors. Lift neighborhood housing values with connections to riverfront parks and trails.

Promote the image

Use metaphorical and actual images of "clear water" as a long-term public relations tool in marketing and branding. Promote the idea that this is a community built around and benefiting from abundant, world-class water resources and a magnificent river confluence.

Integrate surface water

Combine the management of surface water with recreation, water quality and habitat improvement.

Design thoughtfully

Guide designers to simultaneously benefit from and contribute to the greenway.

Raise awareness and build support

Partner with other organizations to improve the public's knowledge of and support for the waterways.

Communicate with art

Use public art for path-finding, interpretation, communication, beauty and enjoyment.

Partner for success

Build partnerships supporting the implementation of the plan with industries, businesses, neighborhoods, schools, business districts, institutions and other units of government.



The ability of people to closely experience the water will help build support for proper stewardship of the Waterways.

Key Actions and Measures of Success

1. **The Greenway**

Continue to improve waterfront access and enjoyment through growth of linear parks and connections from the neighborhoods in coordination with land development.

Key Actions:

- Complete the Greenway around Half Moon Lake
- Complete the Greenway loop on both sides of the Chippewa River north of Madison Street including the High Bridge river crossing
- Acquire wooded slopes along the Eau Claire River and extend Greenway
- Complete Downtown paths and overlooks, west and east sides of Chippewa River.

Measures of Success:

- The High Bridge decking will have been connected to the existing City trail system
- A corridor of land from City-owned property along the Eau Claire River will have been dedicated as park
- A loop trail will have been completed around Half Moon Lake
- Path from Lake St. to Grand Av. along First Av. will have been upgraded
- The number of overlooks will have increased.

2. **Land Use and Urban Design**

Guide land use and design in the waterway corridors in ways that enhance both the development and the Greenway.

Key Actions:

- Complete the redevelopment of the North Barstow District
- Redevelop Haymarket Square into multiple uses and Greenway
- Continue redevelopment of the Oxford Avenue corridor following the *West Riverside District Plan*
- Develop the 21-acre City-owned site near River Prairie Drive and Galloway Street
- Adaptively re-use the industrial building at Dewey and Galloway Streets.

Measures of Success:

- Obsolete buildings will have been replaced
- Land uses will have taken advantage of and complement the Greenway
- The City's Waterways Development Guidelines will have been completed.

3. **Ecology**

Protect and improve the natural functions of the waterways and riparian environment.

Key Actions:

- Prepare an ecological assessment and management plan for the Greenway
- Protect and enhance the steep river banks according to the guidance of this plan
- Protect and improve the water quality of rivers, stream and Half Moon Lake.

Measures of Success:

- Invasive plant species will have been reduced in number and extent
- Steep riverbanks will have been protected in a visually pleasing manner
- Views to and from the water will have been improved
- Water quality of Half Moon Lake will have continued to improve.

4. *Economic Development*

Boost jobs and economic investment in Eau Claire through the amenity of the Greenway in conjunction with other public facilities, services and infrastructure.

Key Actions:

- Use the Greenway in local and regional marketing campaigns
- Achieve or complete redevelopment with new jobs, businesses and housing at key riverfront locations including the North Barstow district, Haymarket Square and the Oxford Avenue corridor.

Measures of Success:

- The number of jobs across the city will have risen
- The number of jobs near the Waterways will have increased, especially in the sectors of professional services, finance, technology, hospitality, entertainment and arts
- Private investment near the Greenway will have grown.

5. *Achievement*

Implement this plan through sustained and continuous municipal investments aided by other public and private resources.

Key Action:

The Parks and Recreation Department through the Waterways and Parks Commission will facilitate and support coordinated enhancements to the Eau Claire Waterways, including:

- Advocating for funding requests
- Forging support from the business and not-for-profit sectors to further the aims of this plan, which may include financial or in-kind assistance or compatible land development
- Convening technical advisory groups for specific subjects or needs; sources may include city, state or federal agencies, academic faculty, independent experts or others
- Accelerating implementation of the *Waterways Plan*
- Monitoring the Measures of Success for waterways enhancements
- Generally becoming “champions” of the Waterways and this plan.

Measures of Success:

- Many of the public improvements recommended by this plan will have been accomplished
- Strong and sustained private and public support will exist for Greenway improvements and resource stewardship.

Introduction and Purpose

Eau Claire, the major city and an economic leader in Western Wisconsin, is located at the junction of I-94, US 29 and US 53. But just as importantly, it is situated at the confluence of the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers, a world-class water resource. Thus, the Eau Claire region has potential to support additional growth and economic development by leveraging and protecting its natural heritage.

The 1988 *Waterways Plan* by the City of Eau Claire has served the community well but many of its ideas have been implemented, attitudes about the rivers have evolved, and fresh political energy is needed in support of the rivers and creeks.

The Contemporary Role and Importance of the Waterways

The Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers were the economic foundation and reason for urban settlement in this magnificent valley, and they remain so today – perhaps more than ever.

In the contemporary era, and moving forward, the rivers and creeks of the Lower Chippewa River Valley will play an increasingly important role in economic development. Today, they can and should be the focus of efforts to enhance quality of life, recreation and a sense of place. Those are important factors in attracting the creative class entrepreneurs, visionaries and business leaders that will nurture innovation that creates jobs in the 21st Century.

Water quality has improved in the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers to the point that tubing and fishing have become highly popular summertime escapes; the beautiful Phoenix Park has risen from the ashes of a steel fabrication plant at the rivers' confluence; downtown redevelopment proposals are now orienting housing, offices and hospitality toward the water; a recent neighborhood revitaliza-

tion plan hinges on transforming a mile of disused riverfront to park and trail; and local medical and educational institutions now are making concerted efforts to leverage the natural qualities of the rivers for healing, enrichment and growth. In short, competition for connection to the rivers has become intense from all quarters of the economic spectrum.

The waterways of the Eau Claire urban region have re-emerged as a primary driver of regional economic development, and that role is expected to grow throughout the foreseeable future. A rising percentage of future jobs requiring a college education or creative skills can be expected to be attracted to locations within a quarter mile of the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers in this urban area – but only if river corridor land use and transportation are properly managed. These resources – in combination with good-quality parks, schools, infrastructure, services and neighborhoods -- can grant the Eau Claire region a decided advantage in its national competition for the best and the brightest during the coming decades.



The Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers are leading an economic rebirth of the City of Eau Claire and the region.

Summary and Introduction

In addition, our awareness of the ecological wealth and importance of the river valleys has grown immensely. The City of Eau Claire is near the midpoint of the Chippewa River watershed, which is of continental ecological significance because it is home to such a number and diversity of fish, plant, bird and prairie species. To achieve the community's goals of economic development and quality of life, it will be essential to reverse past harms, restore lost habitat and protect river-related ecosystems through the urban area and throughout the watershed.

A New Approach to Land Use and Public Investments

A major element in the process of rediscovering the value of the rivers will be to rethink the use of nearby land. Beyond the protected floodplains and backwater estuaries, many long-term decisions will have to be made that balance natural protection, recreation, visual access and economic development. Every reach of the rivers must be carefully evaluated for its use as housing, business or public space. The economic value of the waterways is now derived from not just historic activities such as power generation, manufacturing and extraction but – perhaps more importantly -- contemporary benefits such as viewing, playing and appreciating. As our transportation and energy systems have evolved, so should our use of the rivers.



This local financial institution invested in a Downtown location to take advantage of views near the rivers' confluence.

Benefits of moving toward this more enlightened use of the waterways include:

- Improved neighborhood conditions; lasting value
- Economic development attracted by improved quality of life and desirable building sites
- Opportunities for active and passive recreation
- Increased spending by visitors
- Improved pedestrian and bicyclist circulation; enhancement of the Chippewa River State Trail and its branches
- Preservation and enhancement of natural and historic sites.

Careful river corridor planning will promote economic development, recreation and ecological stewardship. Shown here is a proposal for redevelopment and a new park in Downtown.



The Waterways Public and Agency Engagement Process

To build the political support for investments in a time of constrained budgets, the local population should be encouraged to use, enjoy, understand and appreciate the rivers. A connected system of parks, trails, access points and wild areas is building a critical mass of citizens that love and work for the waterways. Political support and sustained funding has grown as beneficial results have been shown in economic development and quality of life. This planning process has begun to rekindle political awareness and support for the river corridors.

The waterways planning process was crafted to result in ideas that can be put to work in the short term and over the decades; the proposals were broadly endorsed and engendered political support; and the process helped create “champions for the plan” who will stand up for it through thick and thin.

The process of public and agency engagement and communication was woven through each phase of the planning process. Key actions in that regard were:



A vigorous process of public and agency participation helped improve the plan and build political support.

Project Advisory Committee: A committee of citizens and officials that guided the project, offered ideas and reviewed proposals.

Meetings with Agency Staff: Met with representatives of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the US Army Corps of Engineers to understand their plans, regulations and resources and to review plan ideas.

Meetings with Commissions: Met with the Plan Commission, the Waterways & Parks Commission and City staff members and used a group process to identify opportunities, challenges and issues regarding public and private development.

Meetings with Major Landowners and Businesses: Met with major waterfront landowners and businesses to hear their thoughts on the use of the waterways and to review plan ideas.

Meetings with Economic Development Organizations: Met with representatives of the Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority and the Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation to hear their concerns and review plan ideas.

Draft Plan Reviews: Distributed and reviewed drafts of the plan chapters with all concerned groups.

Project Website: Distributed draft chapters, meeting information and contact names through a page on the City’s Website.

The Major Planning Issues

These and other planning issues were identified during the Discovery process. The issues were used to guide the preparation of the plan.

Shoreline Bank Treatments: How should the river banks be treated in terms of artificial versus natural conditions? Should all be the same? To what extent should waterfront buildings be visible either from the water or the opposite shore?

Redevelopment: To what degree should the City promote redevelopment of deteriorated, under-utilized or incompatible properties near the waterways?

Views of the Water: Should some river bank vegetation be cleared to improve views to the water? Can this be done selectively? Which locations are most important to open?

Water Access: What should be done to improve access to the water for recreationalists including anglers, boaters, and tubers? Should additional boat launches and fishing piers be built? If so, where? How important is it to be able to touch the water?

Waterfront Access: Should there be public access to the waterfront whenever feasible, including adjacent to private land redevelopment?

Additional Park Land: Should additional land be acquired for parks and trails along the upper Eau Claire or along the lower Chippewa River?

Multi-Use Paths to the Waterfronts: When and how should a multi-use path be extended all the way around Half Moon Lake? Should additional former railroad corridors be re-purposed as multi-use paths?

Creek Water Quality: What should be done to reduce harmful flows to the creeks including thermal pollution?

Water Safety: What should the City do to improve the safety of tubers and other river users?

Waterfront Zoning: How should the zoning ordinance be amended to accomplish the objectives of this plan? Should building setbacks be increased?

Invasive Species: Should the City work to rid the corridor of invasive plant species?

Industrial Development: Should industries along the river that are not dependent on the water be phased out?

Gravel Mine Areas: What should be the long-term use of the land now devoted to aggregate mining and processing?

Structures in the Flood Plain: Under what circumstances, if any, should the City attempt to buy and clear structures that are in the flood plain (e.g., for linear park and trail; for general flood impact reduction)?

Parks and Trails Plan

Introduction

This section of the *Eau Claire Waterways Plan* addresses the pattern of parks and trails, including parks designated primarily for the protection of natural resources, and the development guidelines for those lands.

These policies and the plan map build on a legacy of riverfront land acquisition for park purposes in Eau Claire that dates back to the creation of Owen Park in 1913 and Carson Park in 1914. Park system plans prepared in the 1980s, particularly the 1988 *Waterways Plan*, all advocated improving public access to the rivers and lake with parks. The extension of the Chippewa River State Trail to a trailhead in Phoenix Park was a major step forward in providing a trail system along the Chippewa River.

When the *Waterways Plan* is updated, these policies will have the same advisory weight as other policies now found in the Parks System chapter *Comprehensive Plan* (2005) and the *Eau Claire Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* (2010). When the *Comprehensive Plan* is formally updated, these policies will likely be incorporated.

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Parks and Trails Policies

Role of the Greenway

The City of Eau Claire will continue to consider acquiring land along the Chippewa and Eau Claire River, Dells Pond and Half Moon Lake for public open space and access to the waterways. This system of public open space and the City's waterways is called the Greenway.

Public ownership of certain undevelopable properties along the waterways will ensure that they are accessible to the public and managed for ecological sustainability.

Components of the Greenway

The Greenway will consist of linear City park land, paved paths for walking, bicycling and similar wheeled sports, and land managed for natural characteristics.

Width of the Greenway

The greenway will vary in width as conditions allow, ranging from the minimum necessary to accommodate a paved path (approximately 15 feet) to greater dimensions suitable for natural resource protection, steep slopes and complementary recreation facilities.

Public Access to the Waterfronts

The City will aim to maximize public access and visual connections to the rivers and Half Moon Lake via parks and trails. Waterfronts will be linked to the neighborhoods via sidewalks and dedicated multi-use paths including former railroad corridors. (Refer also to the similar policy under the Land Use and Urban Design section of this plan.)

Touch the Water

Similar to the way wilderness experience builds environmental support, the idea of being able to literally touch the water is important to creating a Greenway system that is loved and supported by the citizens of the community. Therefore, the City will seek opportunities to create locations where parks, plazas, paths and stairs allow people to walk safely into and out of the water.

Certain water access points may be added or improved including:

- A canoe and kayak launch on each side of the Eau Claire River (east of Hastings Way and west of River Prairie Drive)
- A canoe launch / landing on the Chippewa River near Short Street
- An improved shore fishing site (and better foot access) just below the Xcel Energy dam
- Improved shore fishing along the causeway to Carson Park
- Stairs down the bluff in the West Riverside District
- Improved foot access from University Drive to the Putnam Park arboretum.
- Improved access to the Chippewa River near Domer Park and/or Northwest Community Park
- Fifth Avenue at the Chippewa River for tubing
- A fishing pier on Half Moon Lake at 10th Av.



The ability to touch the water helps build emotional connections to the waterways.

Land Acquisition for Parks

The City will continue to consider acquiring waterfront land for public parks and open space according to the locations described in this plan. Sales will be voluntary except for special circumstances where the City determines that an isolated acquisition is necessary to link segments.

Means of property acquisition in order of preference are:

- Donations of land
- Purchase of property in fee through voluntary sale
- Dedication of access easements, conservation easements or property in fee as the parcel is developed or redeveloped; the method will be negotiated with the landowner and depend on the unique circumstances of the site
- Purchase of easements or property in fee through negotiation
- Use of the City’s power of eminent domain to compel the sale of property in fee or by easement.

The City should consider obtaining the “right of first refusal” for key properties so as to ensure their ability to negotiate for the voluntary sale of property. It will also provide time for the City to apply for grants, sponsorship and partnerships to defray the cost of acquiring such properties.



Phoenix Park was added to the park system at the rivers’ confluence as part of the North Barstow District redevelopment project. Nearby investment that made this addition possible included offices, housing, retail and mixed-use buildings.

Additional Waterfront Parks and Open Space

Additional waterfront park and open space land may be considered for acquisition:

- **Eau Claire River:** Undevelopable land east of River Prairie Drive
- **The Confluence:** The waterfront at the Haymarket parking lot and south for a plaza and a path connection (the City owns some property here already)
- **Chippewa River:** Certain bluff-top properties between Oxford Street and the river in addition to larger parcels east of First Street and north of Maple Street
- **Chippewa River:** Thirteen houses located east of First Avenue between Madison Street and the Chippewa River State Trail bridge
- **Chippewa River:** The east bank from Clairemont Avenue to I-94; work with owner on the pattern of development, parks and trails
- **Half Moon Lake:** Easements and/or acquisition to extend the multi-use path around the northern, western and southern sides of the lake; one more house may need to be acquired
- **Otter Creek** Floodplain open space through voluntary sale or donation; a trail extension is not proposed along Otter Creek
- **Menomonie Street:** The southern face of the 600 block of Menomonie Street
- **Mt. Simon Park:** Three houses surrounded by Mt. Simon Park.; consider acquiring the “right of first refusal” on these properties to give the City first priority to negotiate the purchase.

Refer to Figure 13, Existing and Planned Parks, for a map of these and other park locations.

Extending the Greenway into the Neighborhoods

Access between the waterfronts and the neighborhoods may be improved through these means:

- Creating multi-use paved paths on two former railroad corridors in the West Riverside Neighborhood
- Building river overlooks at the end of downtown streets such as Graham, Eau Claire, Gibson, Grand, Main and Gray
- Building a trail overlook at the south end of Fifth Avenue
- Enhancing the walking experience with better lighting, sidewalks and trees along such streets as Fountain, Vine, Madison and Fulton, including river overlooks or bluff stairs, in the West Riverside Neighborhood, and along Benton Street leading to Putnam Park (refer to the graphic in the subsection of this chapter titled West Riverside Reach)
- Creating a park adjacent to University Drive and building a path down the slope to the riverfront trail in the Putnam Park arboretum.

Please refer to Figure 14, Multi-Purpose Paths and Bicycle Corridors, for the alignments of paths and bicycling routes along the waterways and linking the waterways to the neighborhoods across the city.

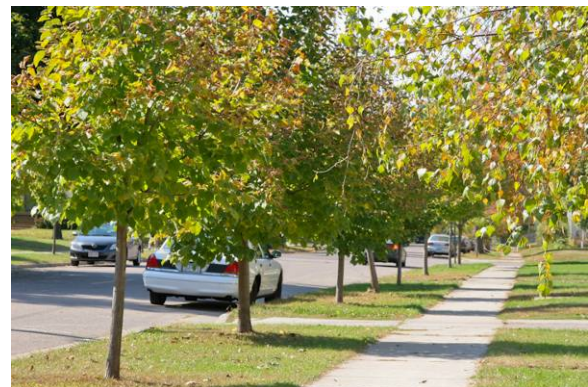
Commitment to Quality

High quality materials should be used for park and trail improvements along the Greenway and throughout the city.

Connecting Downtown and Carson Park

Related to the initiative to improve neighborhood links to the waterfronts, the link between Downtown and Carson Park may be improved by ensuring that the walking environment along West Grand Avenue from the Chippewa River to the Carson Park causeway is uniformly improved.

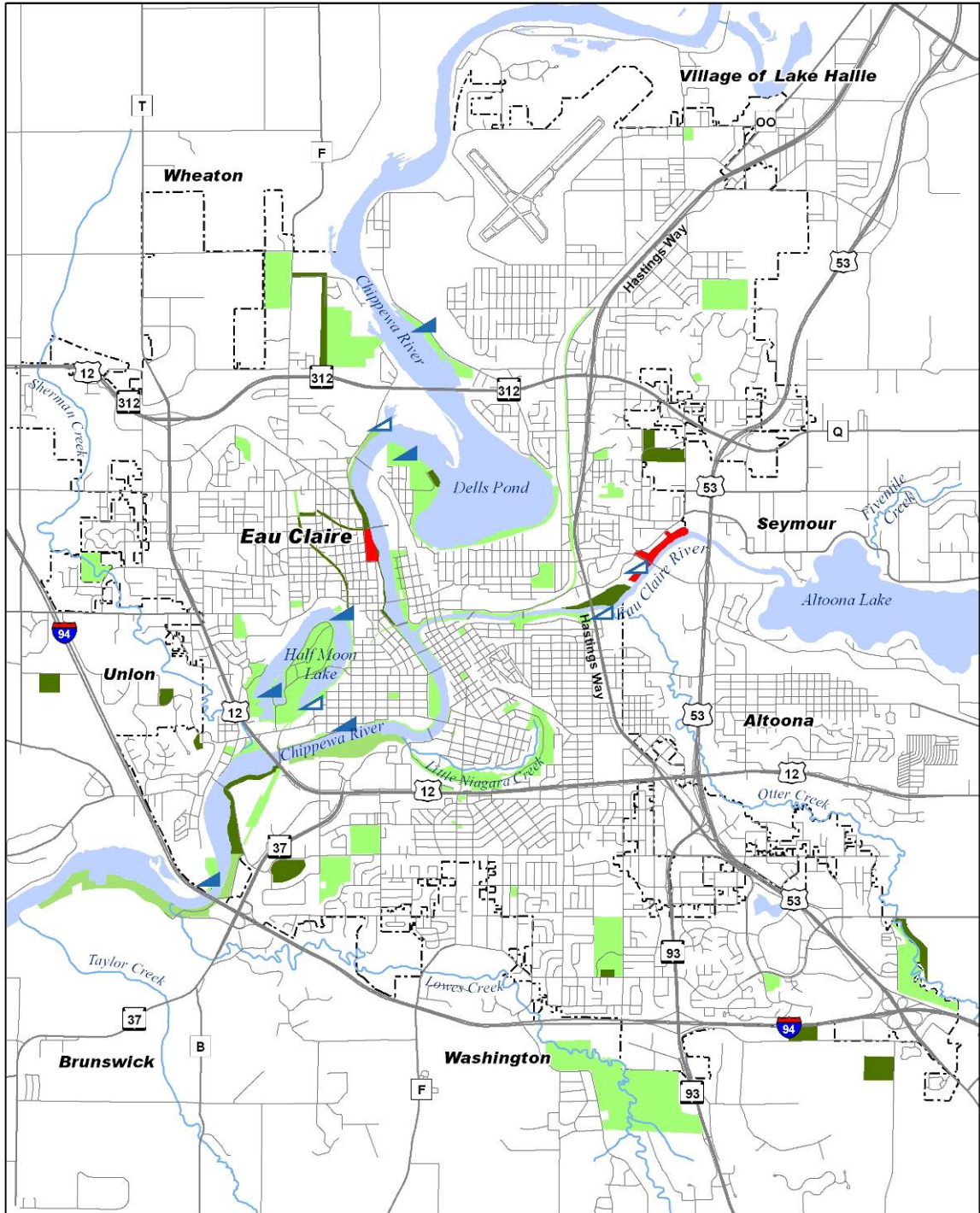
Likewise, the driving experience along the parallel Lake Street will be highlighted in a fashion similar to that proposed in the *Comprehensive Plan* for the Downtown loop of Barstow, Madison, First, Bellinger, Fifth and Lake Streets.



Grand Avenue, a visual and functional connection between Carson Park and the Downtown.

Greenway Trail Width and Markings

The Greenway walking and bicycling path will be paved with asphalt and be at least 12 feet wide. In locations with high volumes of pedestrian and bicyclist traffic, the path may either be wider or separate paths may be built for pedestrians and bicyclists. Whenever feasible, individual paths should be provided for pedestrians and bicyclists. A two foot wide clear zone should be provided on each side for safety. Trail crossings and road crossings will be announced with signs and striping consistent with the guidelines of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Centerline skip stripes and shoulder stripes should be included.



EAU CLAIRE WATERWAYS

- Parks Planned in 2005 Comp Plan
- Existing Parks
- Parks Proposed by Waterways Plan
- Existing Boat Launch
- Planned Boat Launch

Figure 13
Existing & Planned Parks

0 2,000 4,000 6,000'



The northerly of the two former railroad corridors in the West Riverside Neighborhood should be acquired for trail use.

Rails to Trails

The City will consider building a multi-use asphalt path on the former railroad corridor that it owns between Madison Street and Roosevelt Elementary School. Such paths will be at least 12 feet wide.

The City will consider acquiring the other abandoned railroad corridor in the West Riverside Neighborhood that runs from the High Bridge to Roosevelt Elementary School.

Businesses along the Greenway

Whenever feasible, the City will encourage creating businesses that benefit from views of the natural beauty of the waterfronts or earn income from waterfront foot and bicycle traffic. Such businesses may include offices, hotels, restaurants, and small shops. Of particular interest would be businesses that cater to water sports such as paddling, floating or fishing.

Please refer to the Land Use and Urban Design Plan chapter and to the Economic Development chapter for additional guidance on this subject.

Personal Security

Personal security along the Greenway will be enhanced by locating windows and doors toward the parks and trails, by installing lighting, both public and private, along the routes, and by increased numbers of users throughout the day.

Water Safety

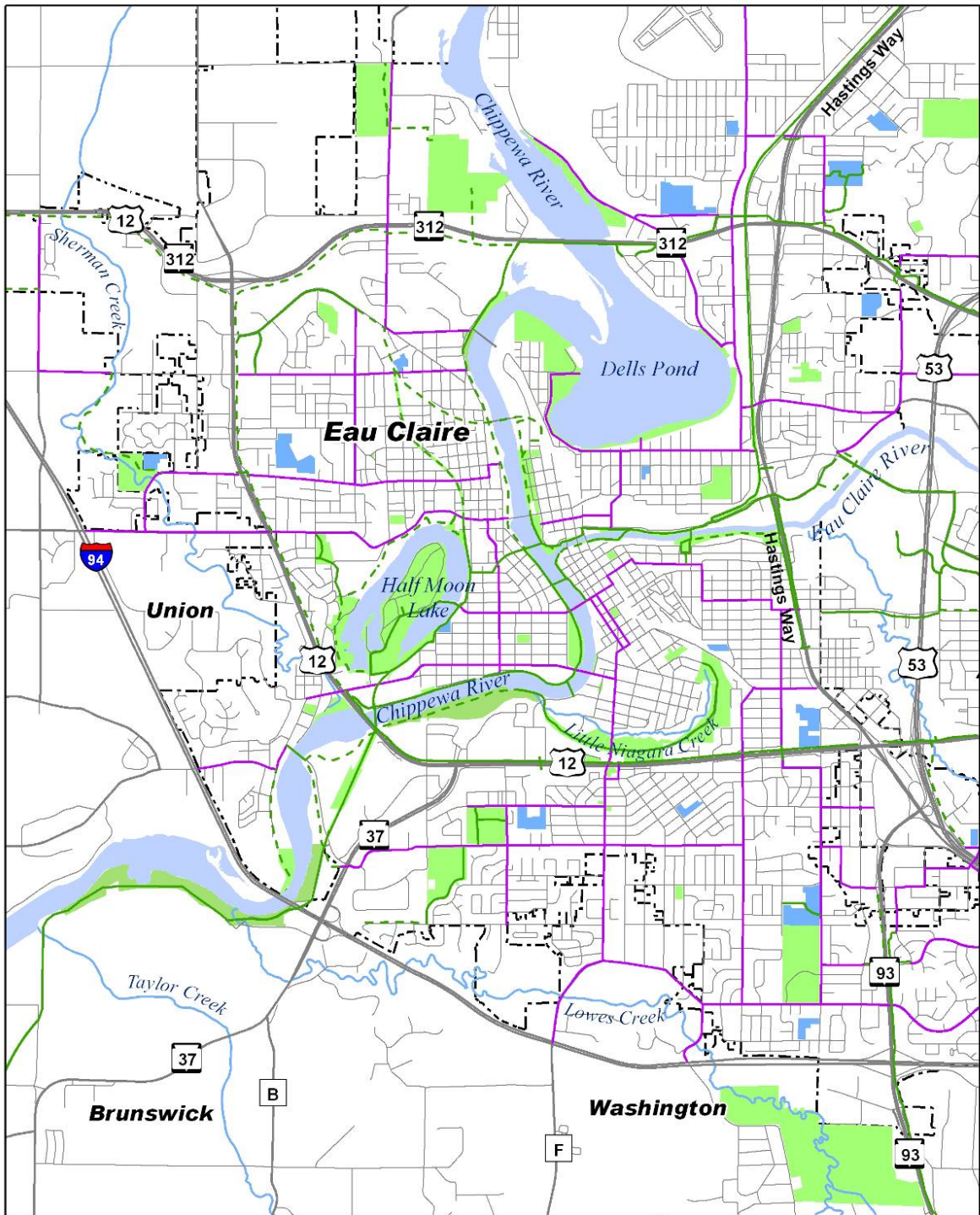
The City will work with the Wisconsin DNR, the University and local outdoor recreation groups to promote water safety through educational means such as warning signs, printed materials, Website content and presentations as well as law enforcement. Use of life jackets should be encouraged. Regulations regarding the use of glass containers should also be considered.

Wayfinding and Interpretive Signs

The City's system of park and trail identification signs will continue to be used throughout the Greenway and along key streets or paths that lead from the neighborhoods. Name signs should be installed on each river bridge for river recreationalists as well as motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians. "Leave No Trace" advisory signs could be posted to discourage littering.



A wayfinding sign along the Chippewa River State Trail.



EAU CLAIRE WATERWAYS

- Existing Multi-Purpose Path
- - - Proposed Multi-Purpose Path
- Primary On-Street Bicycle Corridors

- Existing Schools
- Existing Parks and Public Open Space

Figure 14
Multi-Purpose Paths and Bicycle Corridors

0 2,000 4,000 6,000'

Views and Vistas

Opportunities will be sought to preserve or create dramatic views to and across the water whenever feasible. Possibilities include:

- Selectively clearing trees or underbrush (especially invasive species) in waterfront parks to allow views and vistas or visual passages through the vegetation
- Selective raising of the tree canopies to improve views
- Building overlook points with benches or cantilevered decks at selected locations. An example includes the recently installed concrete pad and bench near the intersection of Lokken and Ruby Lanes that overlooks Dells Pond.

Some potentially impressive vistas are obscured by trees and could be improved without drastically harming the forested effect of the waterway edges. Existing bench sites should be cleared or the tree canopy raised to provide vistas to the waterway.



A view of Dells Pond, looking southwest.

Canoe Portage around Dells Dam

The City will investigate the potential of signing and improving a route for a canoe portage from Dells Pond to a point below Dells Dam.

Alternative routes: (1) along the westernmost edge of Mt. Simon Park then along the eastern edge of the Cascade Tissue property to Sheridan Road then south along Forest Street to the Eau Claire Public Works Department site or (2) from Domer Park then along Old Wells Road / First Street / Oxford Avenue to a point near Madison Street.



There are several trail connections from Dells Pond to the local street system that could be signed for use as a long canoe portage around the Xcel Energy dam.

Coordination with the City of Altoona

The City will coordinate the improvements recommended by this plan with the actions of the City of Altoona. That neighboring municipality has acquired land along the frontage of the Eau Claire River east of the Eau Claire Golf and Country Club to nearly the Lake Altoona Dam. That linear park will complement the proposed park and trail on the north bank in Eau Claire.

Stewardship Awareness

Contribute to the growing public awareness of the importance of caring for the earth, starting with small, local, everyday acts.

Specific Locations and Projects

The following potential improvements, actions or land acquisitions are also summarized in Table 6.

The Eau Claire River Corridor

The City Council should consider acquiring property along the Eau Claire River in these locations:

- Any undevelopable property between Dewey Street and Hastings Way on the north side of the river that is not already owned by the City
- Any undevelopable land (by virtue of the steep slope) northeast of River Prairie Drive to the City limit on the north side of the river.

Refer to Figures 26 and 27 in the Land Use Plan for aerial photographs of the Eau Claire River corridor.

Figure 14, Multi-Purpose Paths and Bicycle Corridors, illustrates the planned pattern of trails City-wide including those described below.

The City will budget funds and seek assistance from the County, the State, foundations and other private sources for these important acquisitions. The quality of these lands for park use and their natural beauty cannot be overstated.

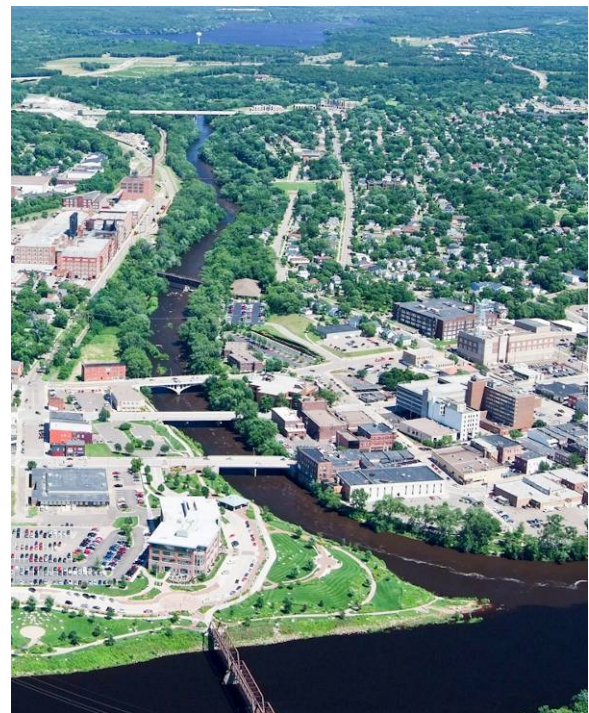
Upon acquisition, a survey and plan will be conducted to route a trail (and possibly other features), to begin to remove invasive species and to perform other environmental stewardship actions. It appears that terraces run along the face of the slopes and could nicely accommodate multi-use paths.

Proceeding east from Dewey Street, the existing path along Galloway Street to beyond the railroad track will be sufficient for movement in that area; a path closer to the river will not be sought.

On the southern bank of the Eau Claire east of Dewey Street, a linear park and path extend to the S Bridge then across the river to the Galloway Street trail.

An informal foot path snakes along the face of the bluff from Boyd Park to the northern end of Archery Park.

East of Archery Park, the trail should be extended to the planned canoe landing east of Hastings Way. There are no plans to acquire the houses along the river side of Grand Avenue. (Refer to Figure 15.)



A view of the Eau Claire river corridor looking east from the Chippewa River to the Hastings Way bridge and Lake Altoona.



Figure 15: Aerial photograph of the Eau Claire River between the Confluence with the Chippewa River (left) and Hastings Way (right). The bridges on the left are (L-R) Barstow, Farwell and Dewey Streets.

On the north side of the river between Hastings Way and River Prairie Drive, the City owns all of the land. (Refer to Figure 16.) The portion bounded by the railroad track and the river, a wooded slope of approximately 25 acres that has never been developed, will be dedicated as park. It is hoped that access can be gained via a footpath under the railroad bridge from upriver. Another alternative is to use the private crossing of the railroad track onto this land at Moore Street, and the City should seek to designate this as a public access to the parcel. (This would be subject to State Transportation Commission/Federal Railroad Administration approval.)

Immediately east of the railroad river bridge on a 21 acre tract owned by the City, a band of land approximately 200 feet wide will be saved for use as park and trail. The balance will be sold for use as housing or office buildings; the City will attach design guidelines to that sale. This site is generally flat and open, offering many design possibilities. Access from Galloway Street will have to be near the western end of the site because of the topographic constraints. (Refer to Figure 16.)

Northeast (upriver) of River Prairie Drive, a steep, wooded slope extends almost all the way to McKinley Road and may be purchased for use as public open space and trail. (Refer to Figure 32 in the Land Use Plan chapter for an aerial photograph of this portion of the river.)

An ecological assessment and management plan should be conducted for this site upon acquisition. It is anticipated that the recreation features here will be limited to trails and, possibly, water access. A path to and from Birch Street could be routed on the sanitary sewer corridor, which was recently cleared for that utility. The riverfront path should link south under the River Prairie Drive bridge; extension to the north does not appear feasible. Multiple-family housing will be allowed on the few small areas along Birch Street that are not encumbered by steep slope. The acquisition need not necessarily include the potential development areas.

City of Altoona currently owns for public park and trail purposes nearly all of the opposite bank from the railroad bridge to the Lake Altoona dam. Those green spaces will complement the park lands proposed by the City of Eau Claire. (Refer to Figures 16 and 27.)



Figure 16: Park and Trail Locations between Hastings Way Highway 53



Looking downriver from the Hastings Way bridge.



Looking upriver from the River Prairie Drive bridge.



Access to the Eau Claire River via the utility corridor that runs down the slope from Birch Street.

Northwest Community Park

The City will continue to negotiate to purchase property that will serve as access to Northwest Community Park from Jeffers Road. Presently, access is inadequate.

The master plan for this major wooded public open space is shown below. The park will include trails for hiking, skiing and snow shoeing, facilities for picnics, play equipment, and river overlooks.

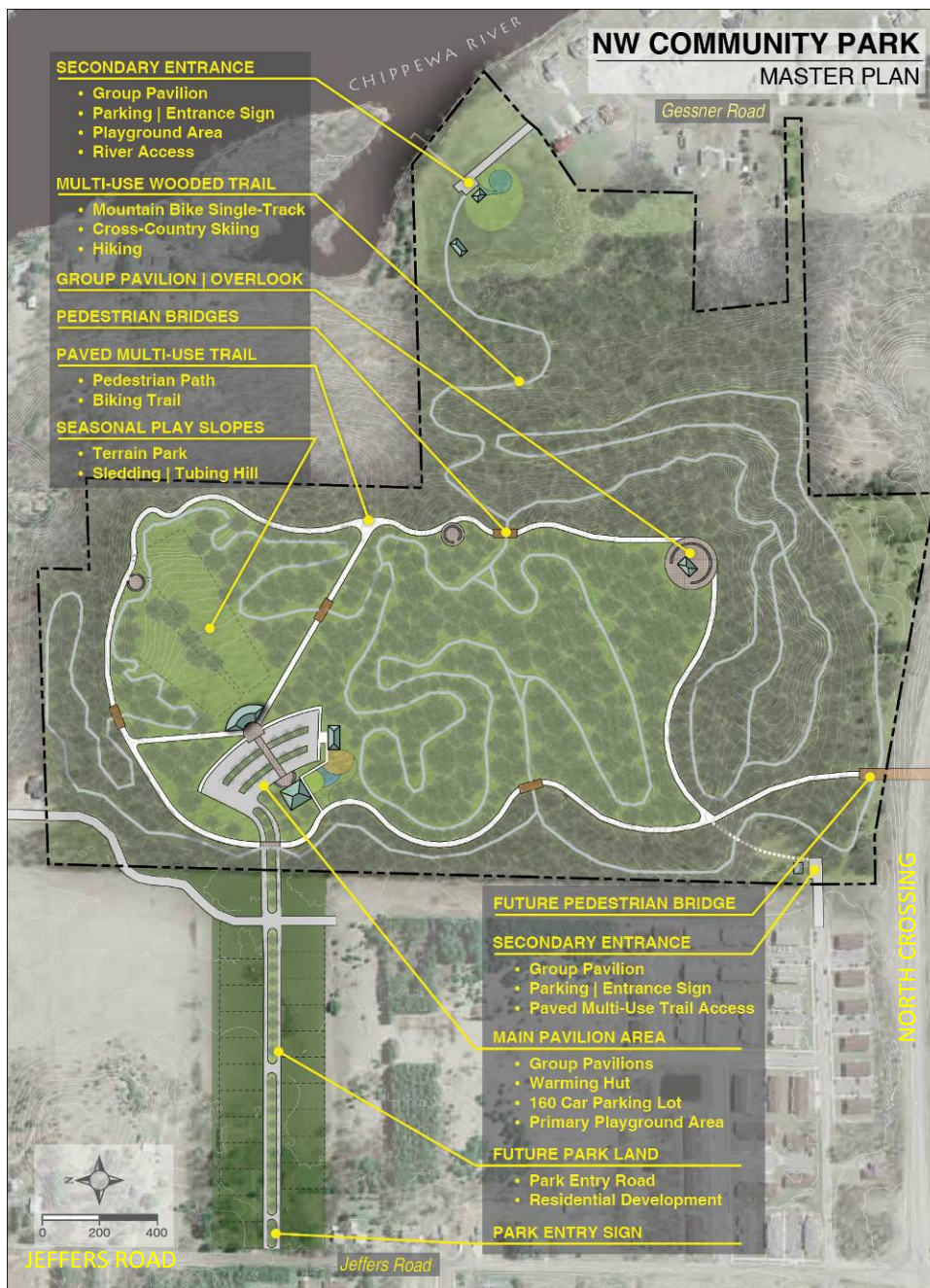


Figure 17:
Preliminary Plan for Northwest Community Park
 (North is to the left.)

Dells Pond and Perimeter

The **path from McDonough Park** down the bluff face to Dells Pond should be reconstructed and an overlook created.

Ideally the City should strive to create a **bicycling and walking route** between Mt. Simon Park on the western side of Dells Pond, McDonough Park on the southern side and Riverview Drive on the eastern side. Unfortunately, the proximity of the active Union Pacific railroad line to the steep bluff face prohibits a continuous off-road path on public land. The solution will be to use the street system.

Between Mt. Simon Park and McDonough Park, a bicycling route should follow Eddy Street to the alley along the railroad track between Dewey and Germania Streets. It is proposed that acquisition or easements be considered for four properties abutting the railroad right-of-way between Germania Street and Putnam Street that link the trail to Omaha Street.

Heading east from McDonough Park, three routes should be created:

1. Centre Street, Omaha Street and the Old Abe Trail to the bicycle bridge over Highway 312 and to Marquette Street; then across the railroad track to Riverview Drive and north to Riverview Park.

2. Omaha Street to Starr Avenue, which would be striped with bicycling lanes or share-the-road pavement markings. Starr Avenue also has a bridge over Highway 312.
3. Starr Avenue to Riverview Drive, which would receive share-the-road pavement markings. Riverview Drive has a bike-walk tunnel under Highway 312. Consider extending the on-street route beyond Riverview Park.

Thus, the bicycling route may consist of a combination of route signs, share-the-road markings, striped lanes and off-road paved paths. The walking route will consist of sidewalks.

It is not recommended that a bicycling and walking route be planned along **Sheridan Road and Forest Street to the High Bridge** unless those streets are rebuilt. The northern end of Sheridan Street and the railroad underpass are too narrow and the sight lines too short for safe passage by bicyclists and pedestrians. Long term, a tunnel under the railroad track could connect the Sheridan Road and Forest Street areas.

In the unlikely event that the railroad line around the southern edge of Dells Pond is ever abandoned, the City may buy it from the State for use as a trail. This would also allow for a trail connection from the Mt. Simon area and the City Shops / Forest Street area.



Figure 18: Relationship of Dells Pond, the Railroad Track and Housing

Domer Park

The City may negotiate with Xcel Energy to possibly build a boat landing immediately north of Domer Park on property owned by Xcel Energy.

The multiple-use path that is planned along Old Wells Road will not be extended onto the peninsula owned by Xcel Energy because of concerns about security at that electrical substation.

Instead, the path will follow Old Wells Road north to Highway 312 (the North Crossing) and across the highway to Northwest Community Park.

Mt. Simon Park

The City will consider acquiring through voluntary sale the three houses that are surrounded by Mt. Simon Park.

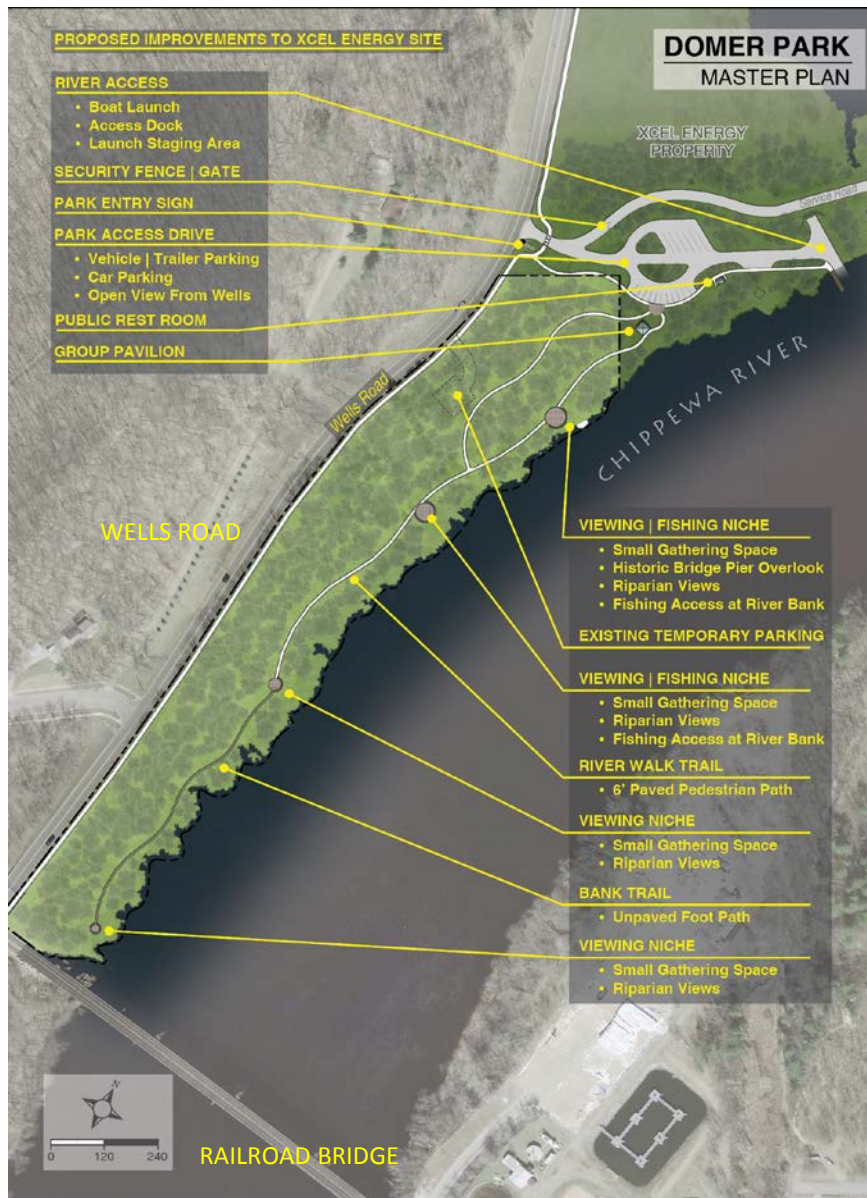


Figure 19:
Preliminary Plan for
Domer Park

West Riverside District Park and Trail

The City will pursue the land redevelopment and park development initiatives recommended in the *West Riverside District Plan, 2010*. That document included these ideas:

- Create a continuous linear park and trail(s) from the High Bridge south to the Chippewa River State Trail bridge near Fulton Street
- Build river overlooks and stairs down the steep bluff face.
- North of Maple Street, widen the park to include the land west to First Street.
- Redevelop two underutilized neighborhood parks to housing in exchange for the new park east of First Street.
- Consider acquiring through voluntary sale the thirteen houses along the east side of First Avenue and re-using the property as linear park in order to extend the Greenway trail from the Chippewa River State Trail bridge to Madison Street.
- Improve the walking environment from the neighborhood to the riverfront along Fountain, Vine, Madison and Fulton Streets. See the graphic to the right.
- Create river overlooks and open small view angles through the forest to the water.
- Convert the two abandoned railroad corridors (one already city-owned) to multiple-use paths. A path already runs from the River Trail bridge southwest to Clairemont Avenue.

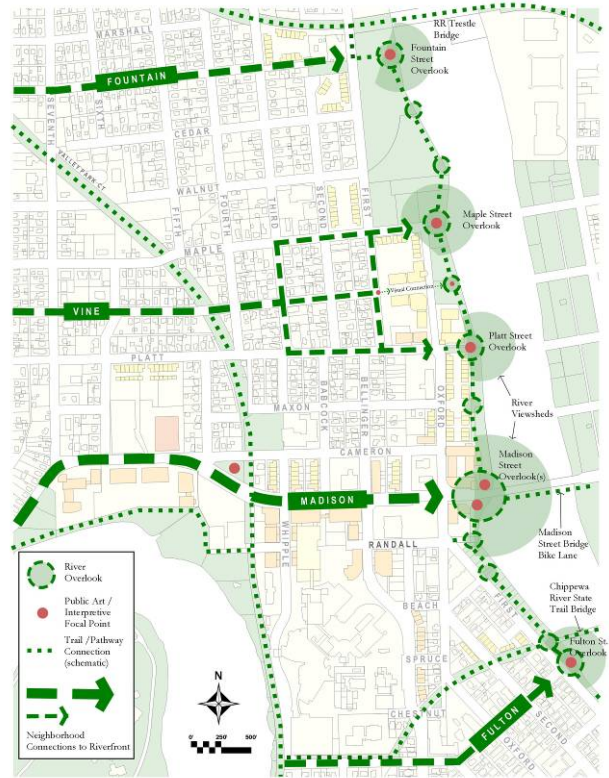


Figure 20: Links to the Neighborhood. Scheme for improving walking conditions from the West Riverside Neighborhood to the Chippewa River and extending the Greenway into the neighborhood.

Design future housing, offices or shops to exist compatibly with the traffic on the path



High Bridge Trail to Forest Street

The High Bridge (the former Chicago-Northwestern Railroad crossing downstream of Dells Dam) will be improved in 2012 to serve as a bicycling and walking bridge. This will include a new deck and safety fences. The views will be spectacular!

To the west, the City will consider acquiring the former railroad corridor, which is now privately owned, for use as a path to Roosevelt Elementary School.

To the east, three design options have been conceived.

In all options, the existing wooden railroad bridges across Forest Street would be removed, Forest Street repaved and the slopes graded flatter.

Option 1

Grade and pave a 10 foot trail from the High Bridge down to the sidewalk on Forest Street. The trail would then follow Forest Street south past the City Maintenance Facility (CMF). Remove the existing sidewalk and curb and gutter on the west side of Forest Street and narrow the street to provide for a 10 foot sidewalk and a boulevard for tree planting.



The High Bridge will receive decking and railings in 2012. The experience of crossing the river from this height will be thrilling.

Option 2

The same connection as Option 1 from the High Bridge to the sidewalk on Forest Street. Switch back to the north side of the Park and Recreation Maintenance Building, run along the connecting drive between Building A and Building B then along the top of the bank behind the CMF.

Option 3

Build a new 20 foot access drive to the Dells Dam / Hydro Plant on the north side of the former railroad right-of-way. This drive would serve as both a vehicular access road and a trail. The trail would then run north along the former access drive under the High Bridge and also connect to the southern portion of the trail as described in Option 2.

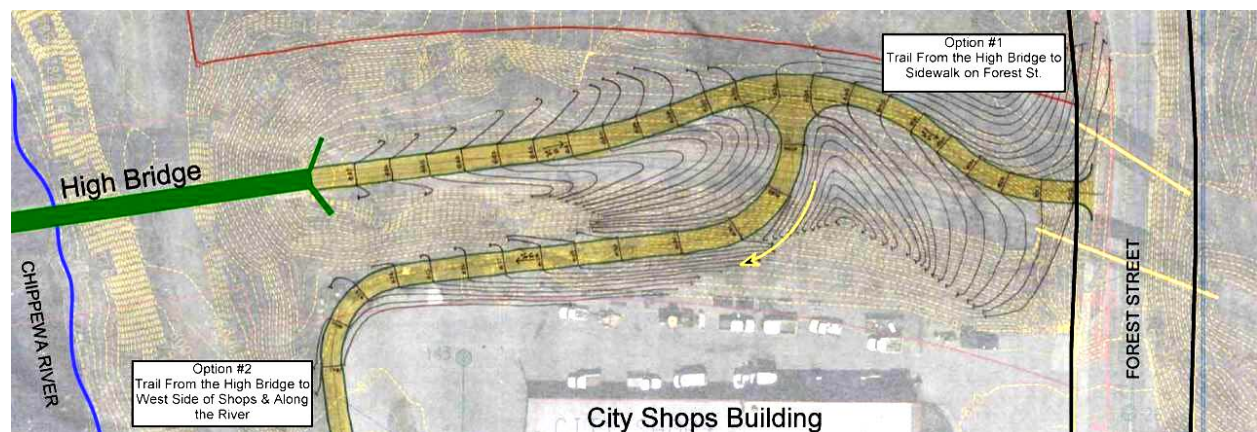


Figure 21a: Options 1 and 2 for Eastern Access to the High Bridge

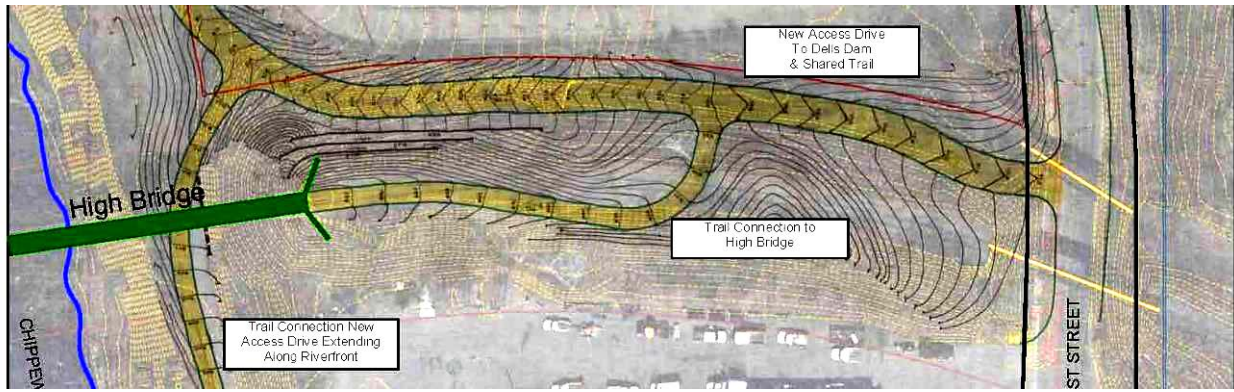


Figure 21b: Option 3 for Eastern Access to the High Bridge

Downtown Riverfront

The Downtown riverfront (south of the Eau Claire River) will benefit from the planned redevelopment of the Haymarket parking lot, which is described in the Land Use chapter of this plan (see Figure 30). A public plaza, stairs to the water, a fountain, an extension of the riverfront path and buildings that complement the confluence would all improve conditions there.

A pedestrian bridge is proposed across the mouth of the Eau Claire River. This bridge should be designed with a very high degree of aesthetic care, as it will be quite visible and could potentially

become a positive (and frequently photographed) symbol for the City.

A “town square” style park may be created between the City Hall and the library with an improved walking environment along Eau Claire Street to the confluence. The waterfront trail will be signed along Eau Claire Street between the Haymarket and the existing path at Farwell Street.

South of Gibson Street, the City may attempt to extend and improve walking conditions along the waterfront down to Lake Street with the cooperation of the property owners. (Figure 22.) Finally, river overlooks will be considered at the termini of Eau Claire, Gibson, Main and Gray Streets.



Figure 22: Downtown Riverfront Trail

Greenway from Lake Street to Grand Avenue

The City will take advantage of the changes that have occurred in conjunction with the Eau Claire County Justice Center and Owen Park to improve the setting for the State Trail and create additional park space in this highly used central location.

In Owen Park, excavation for hazardous waste remediation in 2012 will result in a better layout for the facilities and the trail. At the Lake Street bridge, a site for a veterans' memorial is planned.

North of Lake Street, the Greenway and path will be improved between Grand Avenue and Lake Street. A preliminary sketch for these improvements is shown below. An outdoor stage may be included.

At the Lake Street bridge, the trail underpass will be improved and a platform for fishing will be considered. The present condition is shown below.



Figure 23:
Greenway Improvements
between Grand Avenue
and Lake Street

Owen Park Riverfront

The City will selectively thin the riverfront vegetation in Owen Park to improve the views to the water, encourage people to walk to the shoreline, remove invasive species and encourage the growth of native plants.



Improved views to the Chippewa River from Owen Park are desired.

University Campus Frontage

The University has planned to close the campus portion of Garfield Avenue to traffic, except for emergency and service vehicles, and emphasize walking and bicycling. River overlooks are also planned. These improvements will better connect the campus and river while promoting pedestrian movement along the entire south side of the river.

As part of the changes occurring on campus in 2011, a more clear passage to Little Niagara Creek will be provided from the campus.

The City will encourage the University to revise the river bank treatment below Garfield Avenue to be more sympathetic to the natural environment and consistent with the guidelines of this plan (cover rip-rap with soil then plant appropriately).



The University has proposed that Garfield Avenue (upper left in the photo) be closed to auto traffic and improved for walking and river viewing.

Water Street Business District and State Trail Along Menomonie Street

The City should work with the Water Street Business Improvement District (BID) to finalize plans and construct an overlook at the foot of Fifth Avenue marking the historic river boat landing site. As part of the overlook, plans should be considered that would provide safe access to and from the water. Funding for the overlook is proposed to come from the Water Street BID.

This portion of state trail along the Water Street Business District and 500 block of Menomonie Street is particularly scenic with rapids and bluffs on the opposite shoreline. Views along the trail should be improved through careful thinning, pruning, and removal as discussed in the “Views to and from the Water” section on page 44 of the Land Use and Urban Design chapter and the “Waterway Forest Management” section on page 63 of the Natural and Cultural Resources chapter.

Finally, there is currently a gap in the Chippewa River State Trail along the 600 block of Menomonie Street where pedestrians are forced to use the sidewalk and bicyclists must use the street. In 2012, the City of Eau Claire will be reconstructing the 600 block of Menomonie Street. As part of this reconstruction project, the City will be replacing the existing 5-foot sidewalk with an 8-foot wide trail with a 6.5-foot wide boulevard. This new trail will match the existing width of the trail in the 500 block of Menomonie Street. The City will continue to explore options along the 600 block of Menomonie Street to accommodate a wider trail as use of the trail increases.

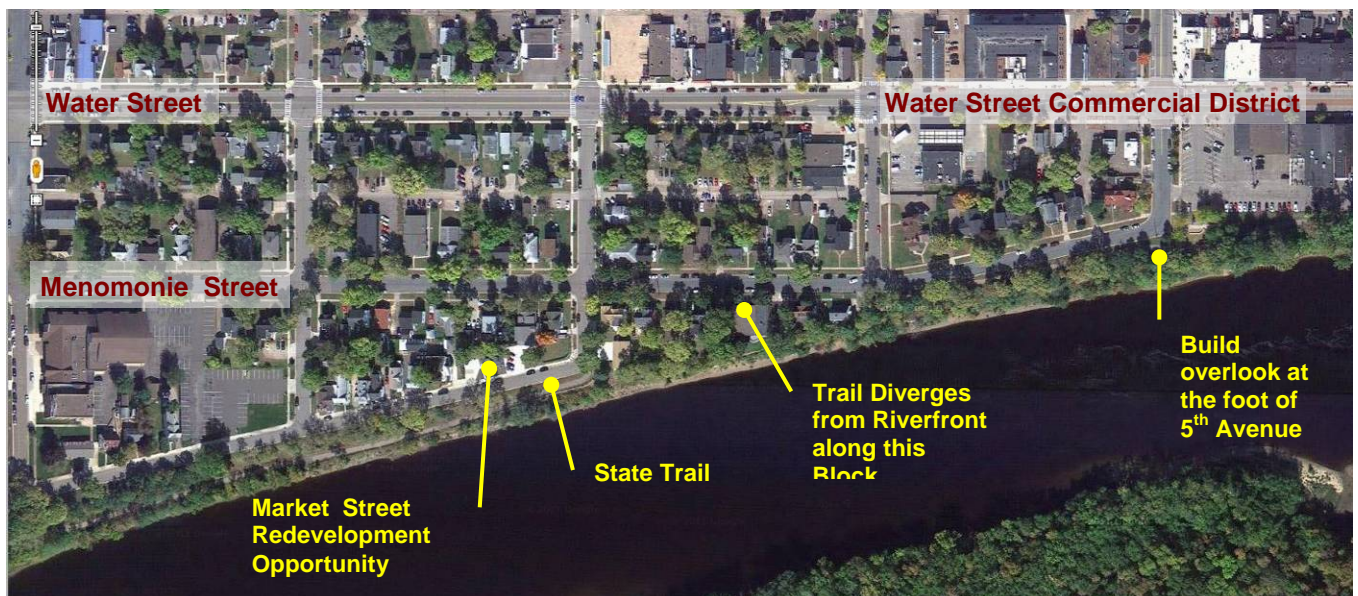


Figure 24: State Trail Alignment West of the Water Street Commercial District

Putnam Park and the Educational and Medical District

The City will work with the University, the medical community and the Putnam Park Commission to create a new park near University Drive. A path will link this park to the trail in the arboretum below.

One of the purposes of this park will be to improve the connection between the educational and medical district and the river corridor. It will also create more green space near the hospital as part of the district’s mission focused on mind and body wellness.

The map below shows the location of the proposed park and the trail to the river

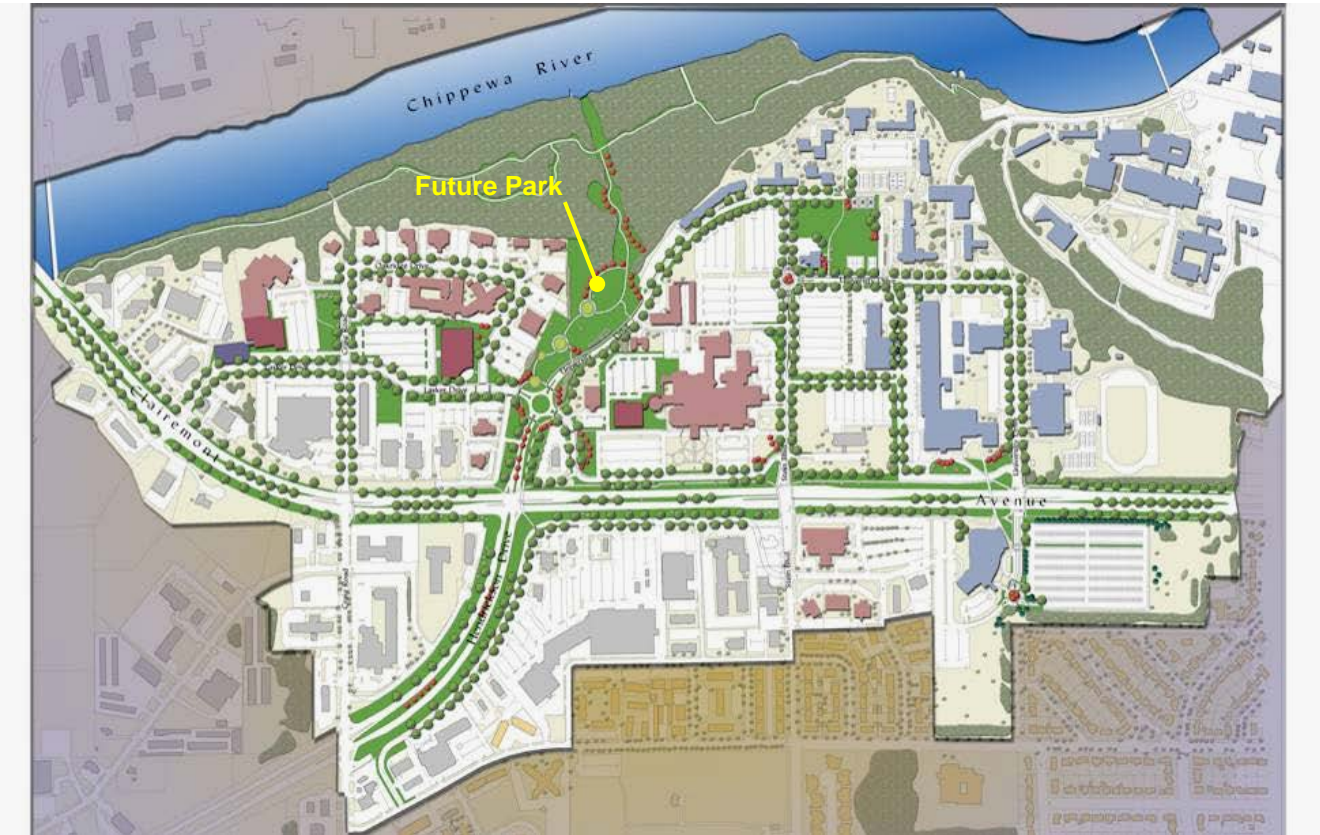


Figure 25: Putnam Park and the Educational and Medical District

This drawing shows the 2009 plan for open space, parks and streetscape improvements in the educational and medical district between the Chippewa River and Clairemont Avenue.

Clairemont Avenue to Short Street

When redevelopment is proposed, consider:

- Keeping the State Trail in its current, wooded corridor, which is owned by the City
- Working with the land owner to consider swapping the State Trail corridor for linear public opens space along the river to accommodate a relocated trail and routing the trail under the Short Street bridge
- If the State Trail stays in its present alignment, seeking to acquire one or more small park sites along the river
- Negotiating with the land owner to acquire as park the floodplain land west of Short Street and north of the State Trail corridor
- Enhancing riverfront vegetation.

Consider extending a City multi-use path across the Short Street bridge and into the Ferry Street open space. Link this path to the trail system on the east side of the river, however it may be aligned in the future.

Refer also to the Land Use and Urban Design plan.



Between the Clairemont Avenue bridge (on the left in the photo) and the Short Street bridge, the Chippewa River State Trail runs along a former railroad line and through the wooded area shown in the middle of the photo.

Eventual redevelopment of the sand and gravel business on the left descending bank may provide an opportunity to relocate the trail to a riverfront linear park. This photo was taken looking to the southeast.

Ferry Street Public Open Space

The City-owned land east and south of the City’s waste water treatment plant along the Chippewa River is designated as park and open space in the City’s Parks Plan. No formal improvements have been made to the property, but historically it has been used as a popular access to the river for canoes and small boats because of its sandy beach and minimal riverbank. It also provides easy water access for anglers and swimmers.

Because the area is quite isolated, problems have occurred with dumping, and it has been a popular late-evening hangout.

A small contaminated area also exists just south of the Interstate bridge, which is scheduled for remediation in 2012.

Recently, access was gated to address the problems occurring at the site.

The City should develop a plan to provide formalized public improvements to a portion of this site and allow public access to the river. The plan should incorporate a means for boaters, canoeists and anglers to access the river, yet provide secured areas to prevent dumping and loitering.



Ferry Street open space, looking south.

South of I-94

The Chippewa River State Trail presently runs along the river from I-94 to Porterville Road, where it turns south to reconnect with the former railroad corridor, which leads it downriver to the Red Cedar River and the City of Durand. The trail is in a corridor owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

This alignment will be maintained while the nearby aggregate and concrete redi-mix operations continue for many decades. No additional park land is proposed in this vicinity by this plan.

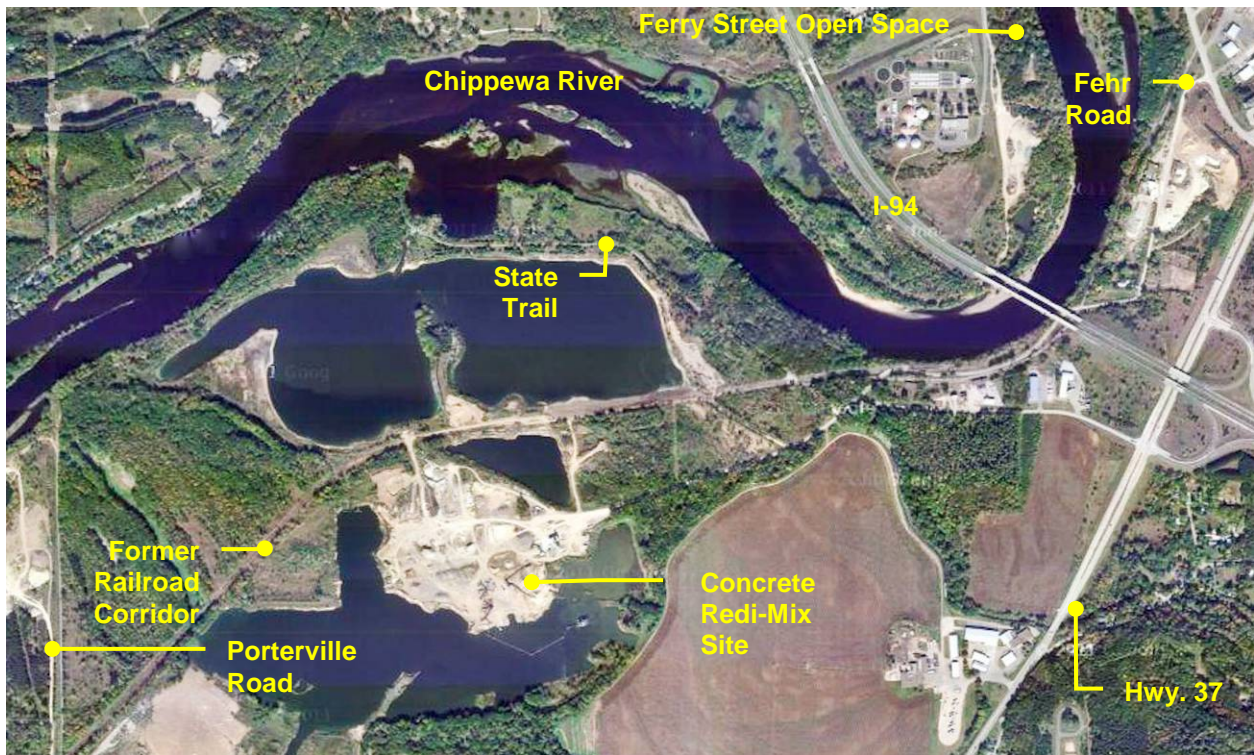


Figure 26: Aerial Photograph of the Area Downriver of I-94

Half Moon Lake and Carson Park

Carson Park and Half Moon Lake are a gorgeous treasure in the heart of the City. The City will continue to manage them to retain their appeal while providing active recreation and field sports on the interior. The green, wooded collar around the lake will be protected and managed for sustainable growth.

Refer to the aerial photograph on the next page.

The City will continue to consider acquiring properties or easements around the lake as they become available at reasonable cost.

The existing multiple-use path will be extended around the northern, western and southern sides of Half Moon Lake to complete the loop. Once linked, traffic on the path should increase greatly. A preliminary trail alignment has been drawn. It will probably be necessary to acquire one more house near the northern end of the lake to accomplish this project. Land not needed for the trail or park will be sold for development. Care will be taken to avoid the two known historic sites near Half Moon Beach and the site in the southwest corner of the lake. Views to the west arm of the lake from Cameron Street will be sought. Coordination with Luther-Mayo Hospital will also be necessary.

On the western side of the lake, the trail will share a road that forms the western perimeter of Lakeview Cemetery, which is owned by the City. The trail will continue along the westerly edge of Rod and Gun Park and along or east of Parkridge Drive.

Near the southwestern corner of the lake, the trail will use City property to pass between a commercial site and the water. Moving east toward Carson Park Drive, a strip of land has been reserved across the southern portion of the lake.

The southern entrance to this major park along Carson Park Drive should be announced and enhanced with landscaping, signage and man-made improvements that say “gateway.” Indigenous

materials such as limestone and historically-reminiscent styles should be considered in this location and throughout Carson Park.

A second fishing pier may be added in the southeastern portion of the lake to complement the pier that exists in the southwest.

Water quality in the lake has been greatly improved in recent years through the combined efforts of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the US Army Corps of Engineers and the City. Conditions will continue to be monitored.

The Causeway to Carson Park

The isthmus from Lake Street is a popular fishing spot. The causeway bridge is in poor condition but will be reconstructed in 2013. When the bridge is rebuilt, shoreline fishing terraces may be created so that anglers will not have to stand on the sidewalk. Better accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists will also be possible as a result of the bridge reconstruction.

As with the southern entrance, a prouder entry statement at the causeway would be beneficial.

See the aerial photograph on the next page for the location of the causeway.



This image shows the relationship among Carson Park, Half Moon Lake, Menomonie Street businesses and the Chippewa River, looking north.

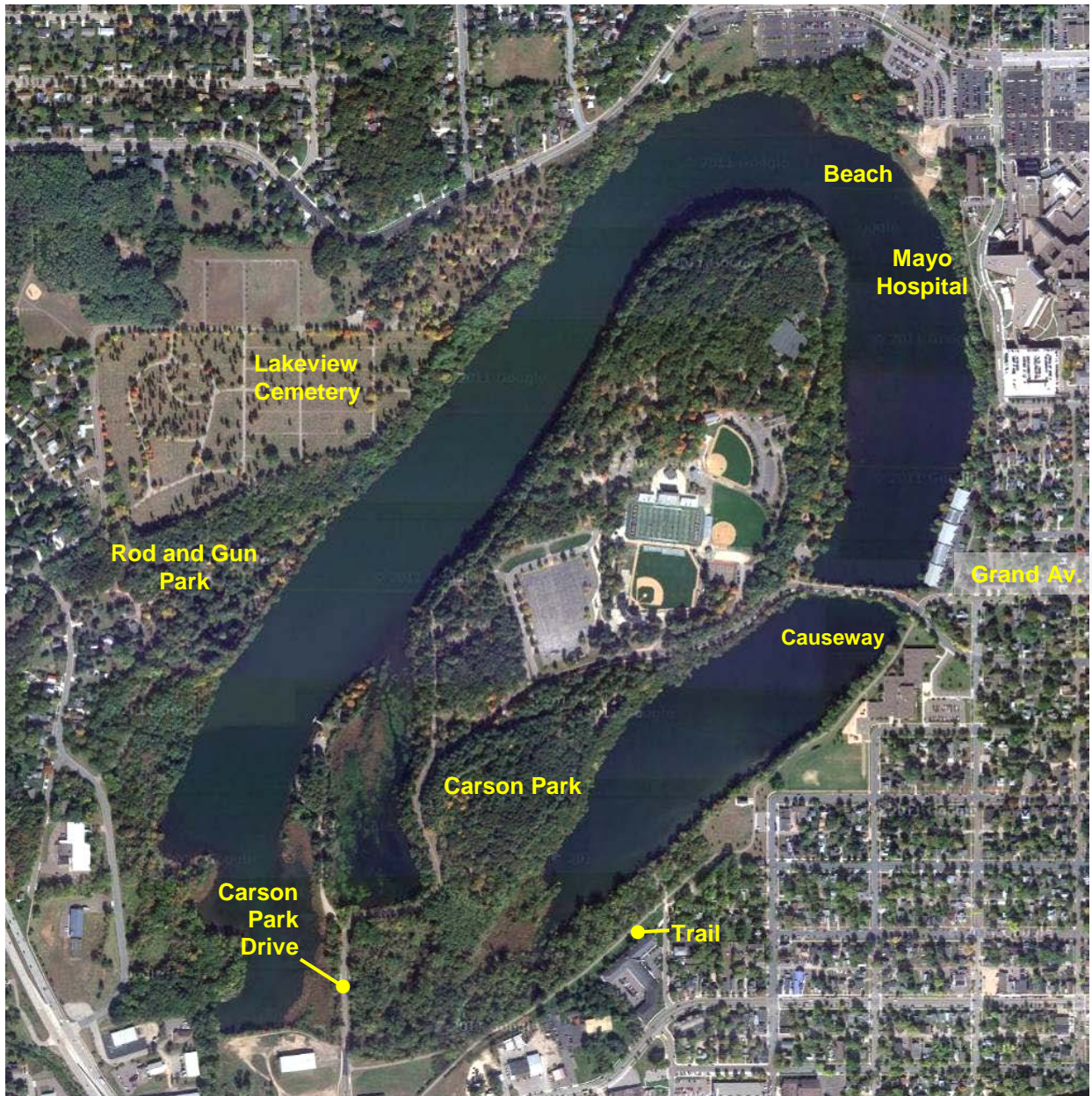
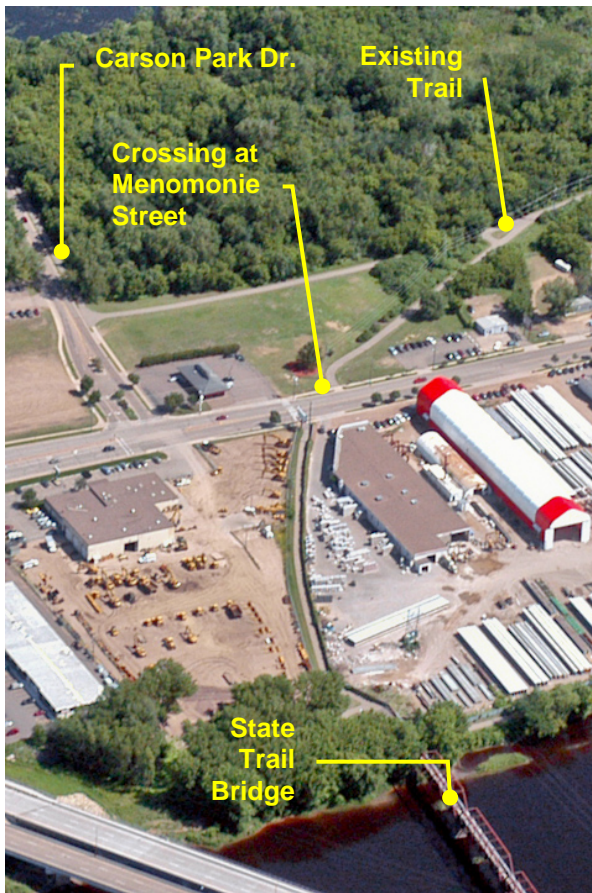


Figure 27: Aerial Photograph of Half Moon Lake and Carson Park

Carson Park South to the State Trail

The existing trail along the southeastern part of Half Moon Lake angles toward a Menomonie Street crossing before heading to the Chippewa River State Trail. This mid-block crossing of a major street is dangerous because motorists do not anticipate pedestrians and bicyclists crossing there.

Menomonie Street is planned to be rebuilt from four lanes to possibly three with bicycle lanes and a median that will serve as a pedestrian refuge. When that occurs, the safety issue can be addressed.



The City trail crossing at Menomonie Street may be relocated when the road is rebuilt.

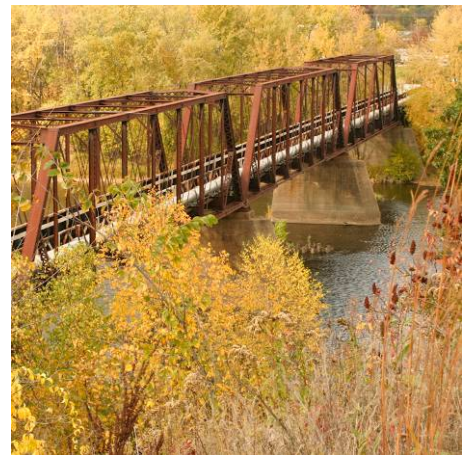
Sherman Creek and Lowes Creek

No new parks or trails are proposed along Sherman Creek or Lowes Creek.

Otter Creek Open Space

The City will consider acquiring additional public open space along its portion of Otter Creek through voluntary sale or donation of the floodplain forest. A trail is not proposed along Otter Creek because of the many private lots that would have to be crossed.

Figure 28 on the next page illustrates a preliminary plan for improvements in Otter Creek Park.



The Chippewa River State Trail bridge over the Chippewa River near Clairemont Avenue.

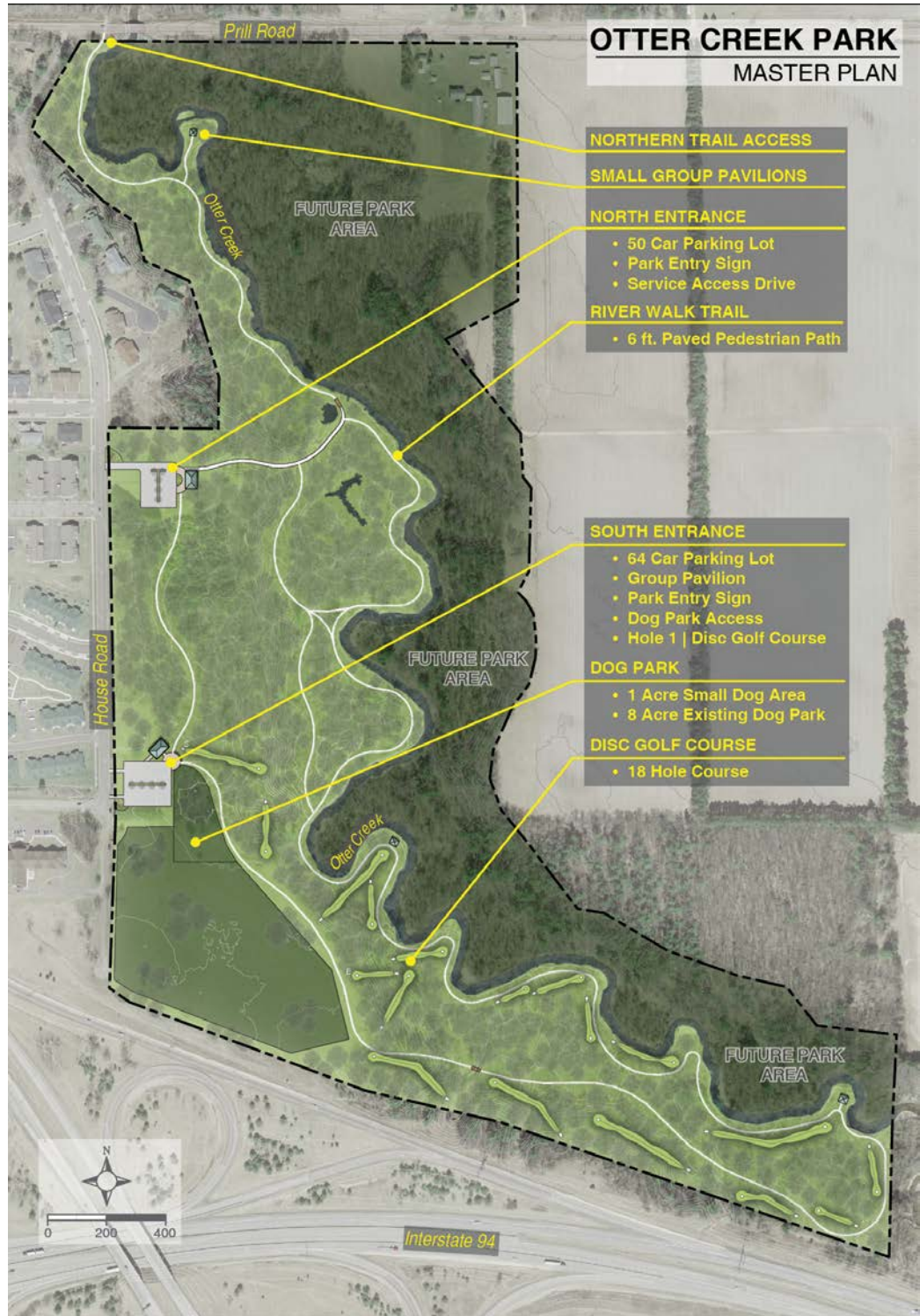


Figure 28:
Preliminary Plan
for Otter Creek
Park

Land Use and Urban Design Plan

Introduction

The planned pattern of land use is the fundamental element of the Waterways Plan since it guides private land development as well as the acquisition of land for City parks and trails. This plan will be adopted by the City as an element of the *Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan* and, thus, have the force of that City-wide plan. One of the roles of the *Comprehensive Plan* is to guide adjustments to the City's zoning map and zoning text, which regulate land development by ordinance.

This section of the plan also addresses urban design, which is concerned with the layout and orientation of buildings for new development, landscaping, open space, roads, parking, building facades and other physical elements. Urban design is the three-dimensional application of the land use plan.

Thus, this section of the plan also guides economic development, which is reliant on land development; it guides recreation because it establishes locations for parks and trails; it helps in ecological protection because it establishes policies for site design; and it helps protect or improve neighborhood quality because it recommends means of linking the amenity of the waterways to residential and commercial areas.

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Land Use Policies

The following statements will be referenced by the City when administering the zoning ordinance or planning capital improvements.

Preferred Waterfront Land Uses

Land development along the waterways will, ideally, consist of activities that benefit from views to the water, which may include housing, offices, restaurants, hotels and parks.

A subsequent section of this plan describes the proposed pattern of future land use along the waterways, including amendments to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map, based on this policy and other elements of the *Waterways Plan*.

The waterways are a major form-giving element of the community, and City actions should enhance them. Land uses in the waterway corridors should relate to their location in a manner that enhances the riparian environment. Land uses that may be considered river-enhancing will vary depending on the location and context. The City will follow the land use guidelines of the *Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan*, which includes this document.

Appropriate waterfront land uses include:

Chippewa River above Dells Dam:

- Single-family housing
- Parks
- Energy generation and transmission

Chippewa River from Dells Dam to Clairemont Avenue:

- Housing of all kinds
- Parks and trails
- Downtown businesses, offices and hospitality
- University buildings
- Commercial buildings

Chippewa River below Clairemont Avenue:

- Housing of all kinds
- Businesses
- Parks and trails
- Aggregate businesses (as an interim use)
- Municipal wastewater treatment plant

Eau Claire River:

- Parks and trails
- Commercial buildings
- Housing
- Offices

Half Moon Lake:

- Parks and trails
- Institutional or commercial buildings

The Five Creeks:

- Low-density housing
- Floodplain open space
- Parks and trails
- Golf courses

Activities that are not water-dependent or which would have detrimental effects on the waterways environment will be discouraged from locating or expanding there.

Table 5 and Figure 29 present recommendations for amendments to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map in a small number of specific locations.

Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map is a fundamental element of this plan and the *Comprehensive Plan* for it guides the formulation of the zoning ordinance and zoning map; those documents regulate the use and improvement of land. The land use plan map also expresses the aims of the public for growth management while guiding private investments.

The City Council should consider using the following recommendations to amend the land use plan map contained in the *Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan*.

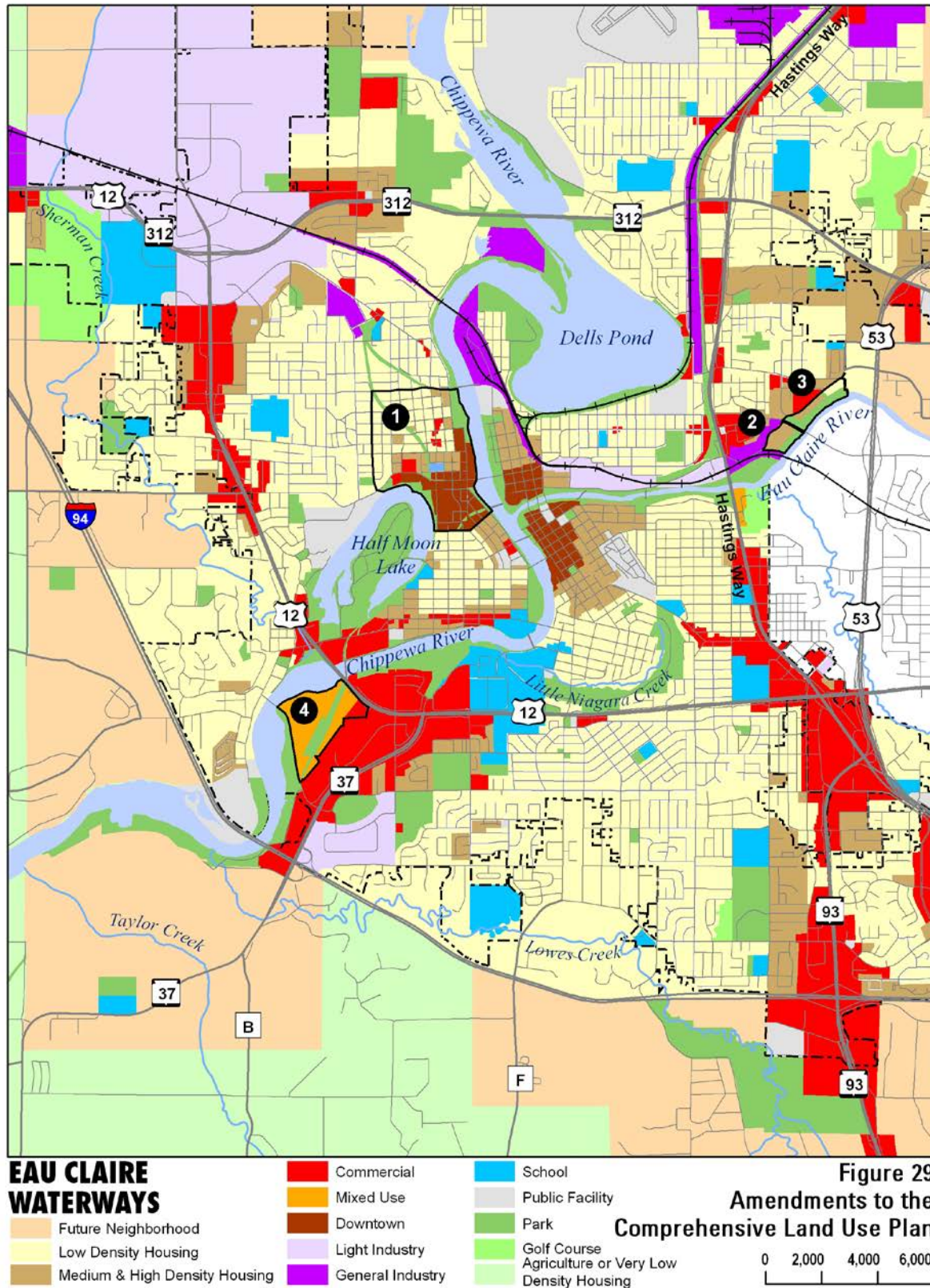
Only a few adjustments are needed to the 2005 plan map, and several of them arise from the West Riverside District Plan, which was adopted in 2011.

Figure 29, Amendments to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map, shows the locations of the proposed amendments to the *Comprehensive Plan* and their proposed land use designations.

Table 5 lists the existing and the proposed type of land use for each of the several numbered locations along with the reason for the change.

**Table 5
Recommended Amendments to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map**

Site	2005 Land Use Plan	Proposed Land Use	Reason for Change
1 West Riverside District	Downtown, a mixture of higher density retail, office and housing with a narrow linear park along the river.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wider park from Vine Street to the former railroad bridge • Commercial and/or high-density residential development south of Vine Street east of Oxford Street • Multiple-family housing between First, Oxford, Maple and Platt Streets • Conversion of two park sites to housing • A reduced area for medium-density housing west of First Street. 	To be consistent with the <i>West Riverside District Plan</i> .
2 River Prairie Drive to railroad	Industrial and park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park along the river. • Medium Density housing on the remainder of the site. Optionally, a major corporate office building instead of housing. 	The City already owns this site. The riverfront park will provide river access and extend the riverfront path.
3 River Prairie Drive to City limits	Light Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park along the river. • Medium- and High-Density Housing along Birch Street. • Low-Density Housing on the eastern end (with Park along the river). 	The site is a heavily-forested steep slope.
4 Between Clairemont Avenue and Short Street—East Side	Industrial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed Use. • The City expects to eventually review an application for a combination of residential and commercial development. • The State Trail Corridor (owned by the City) will remain in its present alignment. Otherwise, it may be swapped for a linear park along the river that includes a re-routed path. 	Land owner interest in finding the highest and best use for the site.



Public Access to the Waterways

The public will be encouraged to view the waterways, to boat, float, fish and swim in the waters, and to walk or bicycle along the waterways.

A subsequent section of this plan describes water-related park and trail improvements in greater detail.

Ideally, there would be continuous and unimpeded public access to the Chippewa riverfront via linear parks and/or trails from the Dells Dam to the Clairemont Avenue bridge; along the Eau Claire River from the confluence to nearly the Lake Altoona dam; and all around Half Moon Lake.

The waterfronts will be linked to the neighborhoods via sidewalks and dedicated multi-use paths, including converted railroad corridors. Certain streets will be specially improved to encourage that purpose. Certain streets may terminate at specially constructed river overlooks.

Access to the water will be enhanced with stairways down the steep bluffs, fishing docks, boat landings, beaches, seating and paths carved by users.

Scenic Quality

The scenic quality of the shorelines will be improved or protected by:

- Insisting on high quality architecture and site planning
- Minimizing shoreline parking and outdoor storage
- Softening the view to buildings, structures, roads, parking and storage with plantings
- Aiding the removal of visually blighted structures
- Creating linear parks
- Using native vegetation appropriate to the ecology of the river.
- Thinning, raising tree canopies or opening views to the water.

Views to and from the Waterways

The City will strive to provide views to and from the waterways with overlooks, linear parks and view corridors between buildings, including but not limited to:

- The eleven auto bridges (excluding I-94) and seven bicycle-pedestrian bridges
- The points at the rivers' confluence
- Market Street and the vicinity of Hobbs Arena
- Owen Park
- The First Avenue terrace
- The Dells Pond at Ruby and Lokken Lanes
- The Chippewa River and Dells Pond viewing platform at Domer Park
- The Riverview Park frontage
- Thorp Drive
- Half Moon Lake from Cameron Street and from the causeway
- Mt. Simon and Domer Parks
- 400 block of Water Street
- 500 block of Menomonie Street
- The ends of Downtown streets.



View of the Chippewa River and the Union Pacific railroad crossing from the old bridge landing at Domer Park.

Land Development Design

The design of sites for new development or redevelopment that abuts a waterway or a waterfront linear park will follow the following guidelines. A document titled *Waterway and Greenway Development Guidelines* (approved in 1989) has been adopted by reference through a clause of the Zoning Ordinance (18.20.100 B) for application to lake and river frontage lots.

The following guidelines build on the 1989 guidelines with modifications and additions. The City Council may consider explicitly writing them into the body of the Zoning Ordinance so that they are clear and apparent.

In all cases, the City will work with property owners to design mutually beneficial solutions to site (re)development, allowing departures from these guidelines as deemed appropriate for a particular location and proposal.

Building Setbacks

Buildings should be set at least 40 feet from the bluff line¹ in order to protect a corridor of trees and other vegetation as well as to soften the view to the building from the water; exceptions to this guideline may be granted in the Downtown. Parking areas, driveways, public streets, plazas, decks and similar land improvements may be located at a reduced setback but not less than 10 feet.

In locations where there is no bluff line, the setback should be at least 50 feet from the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM).

Buildings or other structures should be located no closer than 20 feet from the land-side edge of any public linear waterfront park.

¹ The bluff line will be located by the City Engineer. It is commonly defined as the point at which the slope changes from less than to greater than 20 percent.

Residential zoning districts along the creeks may require larger rear yard setbacks than those described above.

In locations where the City has officially mapped the boundaries of a future linear park by a detailed survey as described by State law, buildings or other land improvements should be located no closer than 20 feet from the edge of that mapped corridor.

Building Orientation and Relationship to the Greenway

Buildings on sites abutting a waterway or a riverfront linear park (the Greenway) will be designed to benefit from that location as well as contribute to the beauty of the waterway environment.

Building features that will be encouraged or considered by the City during the review of site plan applications along the waterways include:

- Equal façade treatment on all sides
- Windows facing the waterway
- Plazas, decks or balconies toward the water
- Materials such as clay brick, wood, stone, architectural accent metals and low-reflective glass.



The RCU headquarters is an example of a building along the waterfront that respects and enhances its setting.

Site design and building architecture should allow for the mutual benefit of the private development and the public open space; the design of each should complement the other while providing an apparent demarcation between the two. Means of demarcation may include:

- Horizontal separation
- Elevation differences
- Plantings
- Planted berms
- Stoops, porches, decks, plazas or balconies
- Fences that are 90 percent open (e.g., wrought iron or similar) or low masonry walls.

Private sites are encouraged to provide pedestrian links to any adjacent multi-use path in the Greenway. Public sidewalks and bicycle paths should also be provided at many locations to the waterfront trails to tie the neighborhoods to the waterfronts.



The porches, stairs and landscaped setbacks of these townhouses demarcate private, semi-private and public spaces while providing an attractive environment for walking and “defensible space.”

Building Penetration

Land development adjacent to waterways or linear waterfront parks should avoid creating buildings that form a disproportionately long wall parallel to the waterway. View and access points through river corridor development will be designed.

Development composed of two or more smaller buildings are favored over a single very long building in order to allow visual and physical penetration toward the waterway from inland sites.

Side yard setbacks prescribed in the existing zoning districts will also mandate a certain degree of building separation, particularly in lower density residential areas.

Building Height

Building height along a waterway will be limited only by the regulations of the applicable zoning district. Taller buildings may be required to provide greater setbacks.

Landscaping

Sites along the waterways will be well landscaped in order to provide a suitable transition to the more natural waterway corridor, to reflect the value of the riparian property, provide natural benefits and generally conform to the City’s standard landscaping requirements. The required setbacks described in this plan will receive particular attention especially as needed to soften the views to buildings from the water or to create a visual demarcation between public and private properties.

Screening

Visually objectionable development features such as loading docks, parking lots, overhead doors, trash receptacles or outdoor storage will be screened from public view by plantings, berms, walls or fences as prescribed by the Eau Claire Zoning Ordinance.

Fences or walls will be combined with plantings to soften their appearance. Coniferous plantings will be included to provide year-‘round effectiveness and color. Materials and plantings will harmonize

with the building and overall site plan to form an integral whole.

Lighting

Exterior lighting will be shielded from or directed away from the waterways.

Signs

Billboards (off-site outdoor business advertising signs) will not be allowed within 300 feet of the Ordinary High Water Mark of a waterway.

If visible from the waterway or Greenway, flashing signs, animated signs, electronic signs and reader board signs should be at least 300 feet from the Ordinary High Water Mark of a waterway.

Business wall signs facing a waterway on parcels abutting the waterway should be subdued and indirectly lit (not back-lit).

Pylon signs will not be allowed between a building and a waterway.

Relationship to Zoning Ordinance

Land use and development in all locations in the City of Eau Claire are regulated by one or more zoning districts including the Flood Plain Overlay District and the Shoreland-Wetland Overlay District. Those districts provide rights and restrictions in addition to those described in this plan. However, upon codification, the riparian development regulations recommended by this plan may supplement or override normal zoning regulations for those properties that abut a waterway or a linear waterway park.

Views to and from the Water

The Eau Claire community wishes to maintain the image of verdant and naturally forested river valleys, creek corridors and lake edges. At the same time, it is understood that sustained appreciation for these resources grows, in part, from the ability to view them. Seeing portions of buildings from the water or the opposite shore is not considered inappropriate or objectionable in all instances.

It is acknowledged that urban development along the Chippewa River between Dells Dam and the Clairemont Avenue bridge can, if properly designed, have a high degree of visual compatibility with the river.

Therefore, the City will allow judicious thinning and pruning of trees and brush along the waterways in order to create views and glimpses of the water as long as the overall impression of forest is maintained.

On the public Greenway lands, a greater amount of forest may be retained, particularly in locations such as Putnam Park or the upper Eau Claire River valley. But even on the Greenway, it is judged appropriate to open some views to the water from the rear as well as from trails. Openings in the canopy will be cut at street terminus points and river overlooks. Improving views from Owen Park is a prime opportunity for such thinning. In Downtown and along Water Street, a higher amount of open view is expected.

Removing aggressive and harmful invasive plant species such as Buckthorn should be the first and fundamental step in finding an acceptable median for views to and from the water.

Land Redevelopment

The City of Eau Claire, in cooperation with the Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority, will continue to assist the private redevelopment of blighted, obsolescent or severely underutilized sites along the waterways.

Locations of special interest during the foreseeable future include the Oxford Avenue corridor, the North and South Barstow Street Districts, the Menomonie Street corridor, the Market Street corridor and the Forest Street corridor.



Image of a redeveloped Oxford Avenue corridor in the West Riverside Neighborhood.

The several houses along Market Street that overlook the Chippewa River and the Greenway as well as those overlooking the river between 6th and 7th Streets could be redeveloped through private investments with little or no City assistance because of their river views. In the *Water Street Commercial District Plan* (2009), it was advocated that new housing be created in those locations at a density higher than allowed under the current Mixed Residential zone. Such development should meet a set of design guidelines if publicly assisted under a Redevelopment District.

All revitalization projects that benefit from direct or indirect public assistance will be expected to achieve high levels of conformance with this plan particularly in terms of public access to the waterfront, site design, landscaping and exterior architecture.

Structures in the Floodplain

The City will consider acquiring properties that are in floodplain for the purpose of flood protection and the extension of the Greenway.

As recommended in the *West Riverside District Plan* (2010), the City will consider acquiring the thirteen houses in the 100-year floodplain along the east side of First Avenue south of Madison Street to extend the linear park and trail north from the Chippewa River State Trail bridge.

In the recent past, the City acquired and removed several houses along the west side of Forest Street for flood mitigation.

Public Art

The City will continue to seek opportunities for public or private installations of art along the river corridors.

Such art may be both beautiful and functional, obvious or sublime, including features such as custom man-hole covers, decorative railings, murals, street inlays or vertical expressions such as sculptures, mobiles or pergolas.



Public art can take many forms including infrastructure.

Bridge Design

River bridges are highly visible public structures that may add to or detract from the beauty of the river valleys, provide or block views to the water, and mark passages or arrival.

When a river bridge is replaced, the City will seek to achieve a highly attractive structure – both top and bottom. In addition, each bridge will provide for safe crossing by pedestrians and bicyclists.

The Water Street bridge is expected to be rebuilt by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in 2015; it will include wider sidewalks that are physically protected from the vehicular traffic.

The City has budgeted money to add decorative railings and lighting. Additional consideration should be given to the aesthetic design of the piers.

Public Facilities along the Waterways

In locating and building public facilities, the City will give careful thought to their impact on the waterways and adjacent residential neighborhoods.



A rendering of Eau Claire Street rebuilt with sidewalk and other improvements.

Downtown

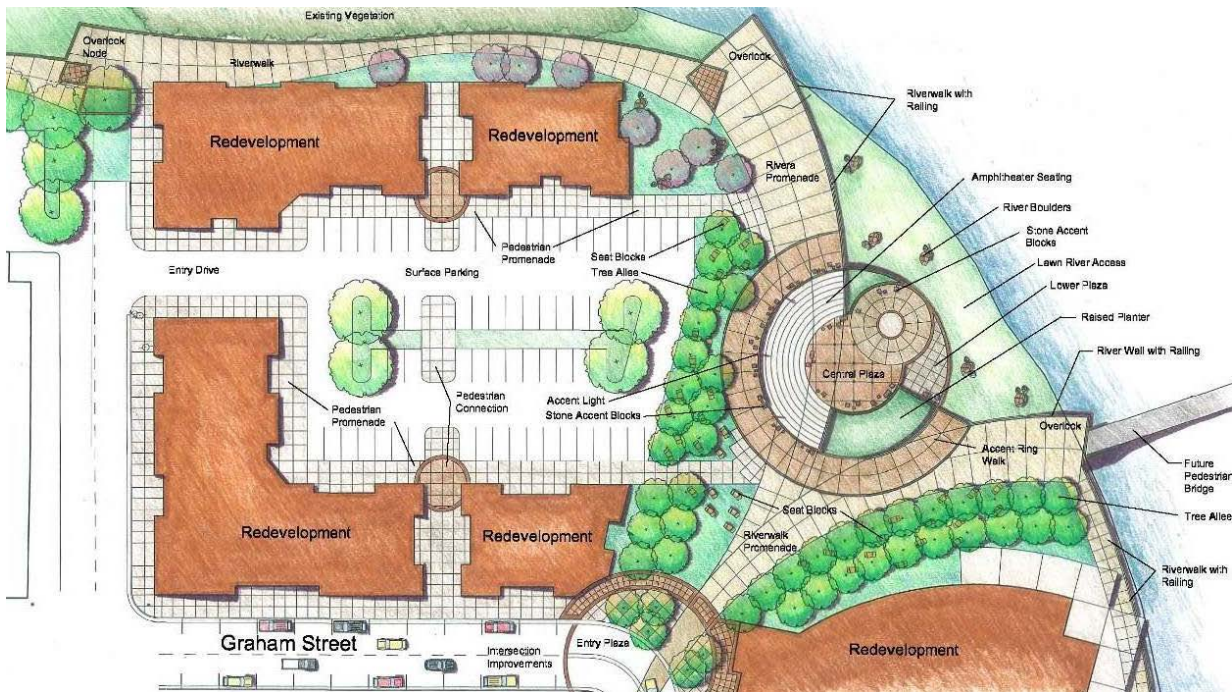
Riverfront improvements are a major opportunity to achieve something great for both Downtown Eau Claire and the two rivers. Improved views and access to the rivers, especially the confluence, can leverage significant private investments in Downtown redevelopment, boosting opportunities for housing, offices, hotels and restaurants. The rivers can benefit by improved edge treatments and surface water cleansing. The public would enjoy a more robust central business district, new outdoor gathering locations, extended walking paths and better views. The southern side of the confluence point can be designed to complement the achievements to the north.

In 2011, redevelopment alternatives were drawn for private investments at the confluence that would replace parking lots and obsolescent buildings with offices, housing, hospitality businesses, a public plaza and amphitheater, and new riverfront paths. Figure 30 illustrates that concept.

Graham Avenue, Barstow Street and Eau Claire Street may soon be rebuilt with enhanced pedestrian features and terminal vistas across the water.

A public plaza and park may be created between City Hall and the library along Eau Claire Street as a civic focal point to complement the amphitheatre at the other end of the street.

Eau Claire Street will be rebuilt as a “convertible street” that can accommodate autos and pedestrians and occasionally be closed and used as a festival space.



Prepared by Ayres Associates
and James Faecke

Figure 30
Preliminary Design for Haymarket Plaza

Eau Claire River

The City will consider acquiring for park use and environmental protection the remaining steep, wooded bluffs along its portion of the Eau Claire River from the Dewey Street bridge to the eastern City limits. The approximate extent of the property to be acquired is illustrated by Figure 30, Amendments to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map.

Hastings Way to River Prairie Drive: As indicated by Figure 31 on the next page, the City already owns two large tracts between Hastings Way and River Prairie Drive bounded by the river and Galloway Street and divided by the railroad track.

S Bridge to Hastings Way: Between the S Bridge and the Hastings Way bridge, private land development is all but impossible above the right descending bank because the shoreland is either isolated by the railroad tracks or too steep and narrow for use.

East of River Prairie Drive: East of River Prairie Drive, the steep slope extends nearly all the way back to Birch Street, but space remains on relatively flat areas near the top of the slope for commercial and/or multiple-family residential development. A few houses are already nestled into the woods near the eastern end of Birch Street

Railroad Bridge to River Prairie Drive: Potential also exists for private development adjacent to the riverfront linear parks. The land that the City already owns along Galloway Street is relatively flat and open, making it suitable for new housing. Since the property is substantially lower than Galloway Street and not easily visible from that road, retail or office use would not be likely. There is plenty of space on that property for both a linear park and private development. The site was once a candidate to be the site of the expansion of the Eau Claire County Justice Center.

An opportunity exists at Dewey Street for adaptive re-use of an old industrial building; rebirth may be possible as retail or office and housing. Parking could be accommodated in the rear and possibly under the building. The Greenway path has been extended from the corner of Dewey and Galloway Street east to connect to the existing path near the S Bridge.



Adaptive re-use of waterfront industrial buildings helps interpret local history and provides a sense of the early role of the rivers.

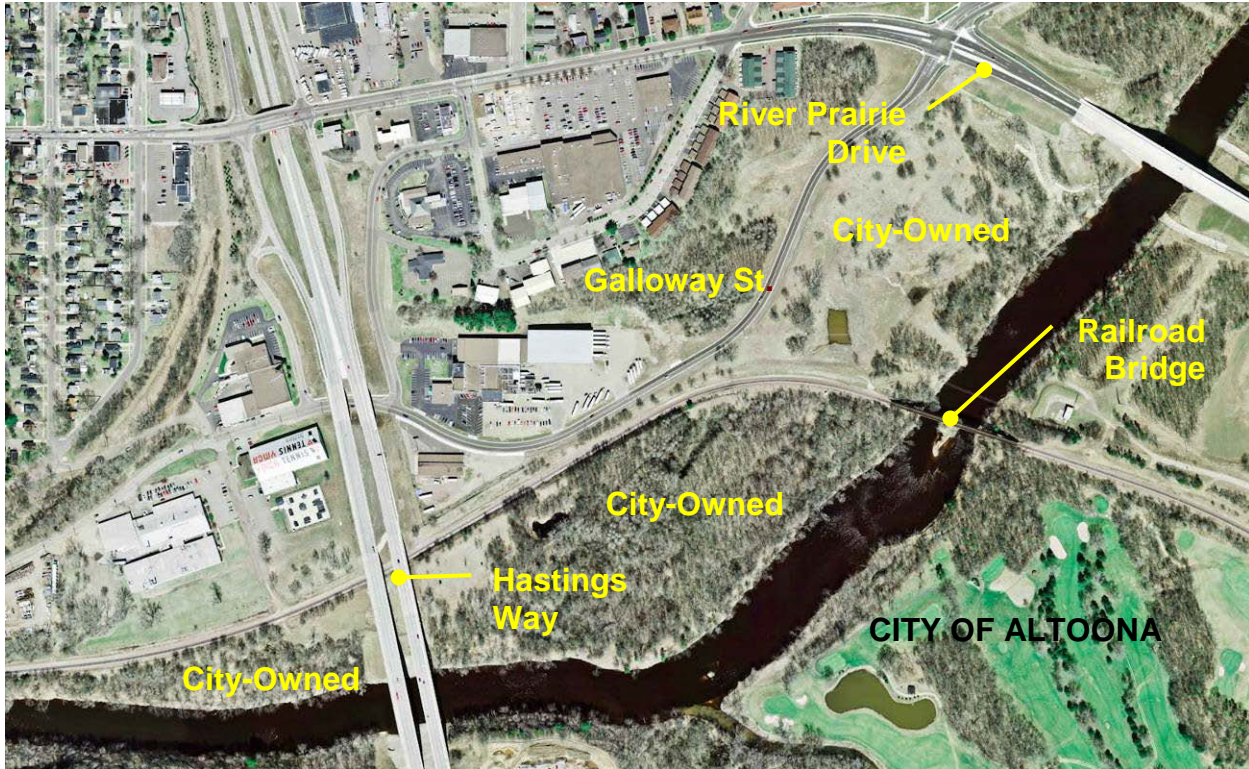


Figure 31: Aerial Photograph of Hastings Way to River Prairie Drive



Looking east (upriver) from the Hastings Way bridge toward the railroad bridge.



Looking east (upriver) from the railroad bridge toward the River Prairie Drive bridge.

The City of Eau Claire owns the property bounded by Galloway Street on the north, River Prairie Drive on the east, the Eau Claire River on the south and Hastings Way on the west except for the railroad corridor. Land west (downriver) of Hastings Way is privately owned.



Figure 32: Aerial Photograph of River Prairie Drive to Highway 53



An outstanding opportunity exists to add many acres of beautiful riverfront land to the park and trail system between River Prairie Drive (on the west) and US 53 (on the east) while leaving development opportunities along Birch Street.

Right: Looking east (upriver) from the River Prairie Drive bridge.

West Riverside Reach

A major plan for the extension of the Greenway and ambitious land redevelopment was offered by the *West Riverside District Plan, 2010*.

Property along the Oxford Avenue corridor should be redeveloped to take advantage of views to the proposed riverfront park and the river itself. Land uses may include small shops and service businesses, offices and multiple-family housing. Some housing may be located over commercial spaces. Surface parking should be minimized in favor of locations underneath buildings.

The plan also proposes that the Greenway be extended from the Chippewa River State Trail bridge near the confluence north to the former Milwaukee Road bridge (the High Bridge).

All of the land east of First Street and north of Maple Street is designated as park. Housing is shown in the middle section between Maple and Platt Streets west of the Greenway.

It was proposed that Kessler Park and undeveloped park land at First and Cedar Streets be sold for housing development and the park functions relocated to the park proposed east of First Street.

South of Madison Street, the thirteen houses in the floodplain east of First Avenue may be considered for acquisition on a willing-seller basis and the land eventually re-used as the Greenway.

Guidelines were included for the design of the major new park space proposed along the Chippewa River. Refer to page 23 of the Parks and Trails chapter of this plan.

See also the image of a redeveloped Oxford Avenue corridor on page 45 of this document and a sketch of a possible arrangement of new riverfront housing and park space on page 70 of the Economic Development chapter.



Figure 33: West Riverside District
The land use plan for the West Riverside District shows how waterfront linear parks and buildings could be arranged along the Chippewa River and Half Moon Lake. Also shown are two future rails-to-trails conversions.

Menomonie Street Reach

The City of Eau Claire owns and maintains a nearly-continuous Greenway from the State Trail bridge near the rivers' confluence to the State Trail bridge near Clairemont Avenue. In most locations along that route, the Greenway is only slightly wider than the multi-use path that it accommodates. In a one-block stretch at Sixth Avenue and Menomonie Street, the route deviates from the riverfront onto City streets because buildings block the way.

Inland from the Greenway there is a variety of commercial, residential and institutional development in a wide range of ages and styles.

Along the Menomonie Street corridor (west of the end of Water Street), the private development is

mostly commercial with one instance of heavy industry -- a yard that manufactures concrete blocks and massive bridge girders -- and a school bus maintenance facility. Neither of these activities is considered compatible with or supportive of the Greenway. Fortunately, they are separated from the Greenway by a tall, opaque fence.

The City will continue to apply its zoning and other regulations along the Menomonie Street corridor. When the owners of the land uses that seem incompatible with the river decide to relocate their facilities, it is hoped that businesses can be established that will not require complete screening. If necessary, the Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority may become involved in assisting that relocation and site re-use.



Figure 34: Aerial Photograph of the Menomonie Street Corridor and Vicinity

Clairemont to I-94 Reach

Along the eastern side of the Chippewa River below the Clairemont Avenue bridge, land is presently used for the processing and sale of sand and aggregate. The Chippewa River State Trail runs east of or through that area south of Clairemont Avenue to beyond I-94. East of the aggregate operations are a variety of commercial and industrial businesses and Hendrickson Drive. Some of the property along the river is in a flood plain. Access is via Short Street and Mondovi Road. (American Boulevard is a private road.)

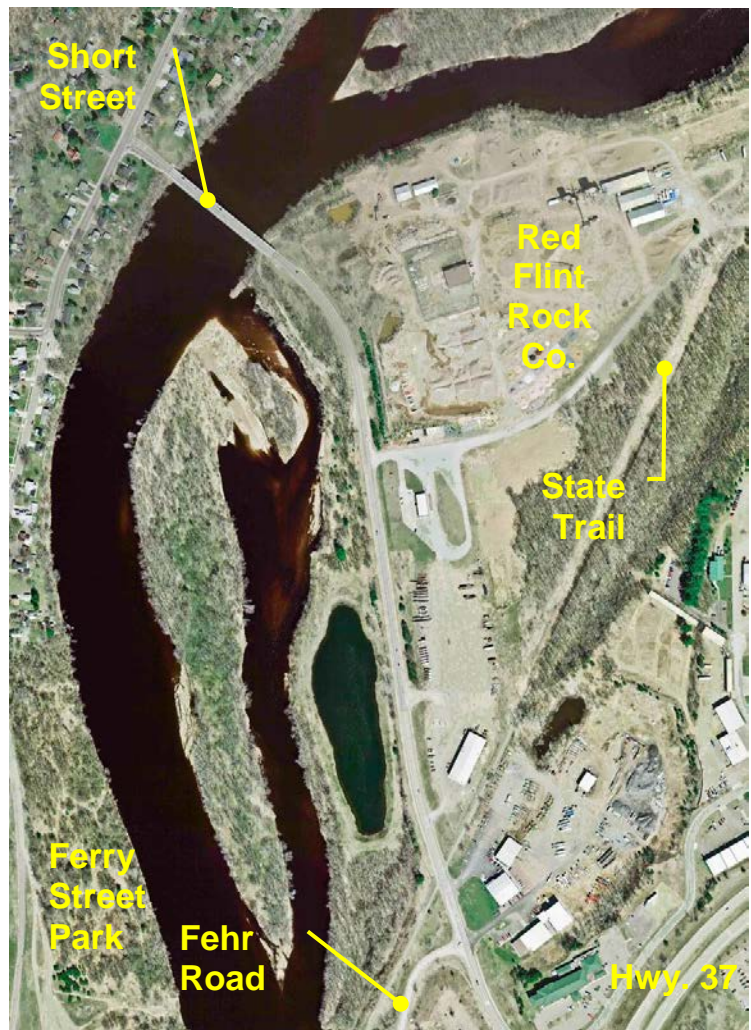
- Continue to plan commercial land use south of Short Street between the State Trail and Hendrickson Drive. This may involve additional surface sand mining to prepare the development site while leaving a buffer along Short Street and Hendrickson Drive; access should be from Fehr Road.
- Commercial and industrial development north of Short Street between the State Trail corridor and Highway 37 (Hendrickson Dr.).

The City’s approach to this area will be:

- Retain the present *Comprehensive Plan* land use designation of Mixed Use, which allows housing and businesses;
- Work with the landowner on the design of a redevelopment plan for private and public spaces;
- Retain the City-owned corridor that the State Trail runs through;
- Work with the land owner to consider swapping the State Trail corridor for linear public open space along the river to accommodate a relocated trail, in which case, the trail could be routed under the Short Street bridge (refer also to the Parks and Trails plan.)
- Negotiate with the land owner to acquire as park the floodplain land west of Short Street and north of the State Trail corridor



Figure 35: Aerial Photograph of the Reach South of Clairemont Avenue



South of I-94

Nearly the entire area south of I-94 and west of Highway 37 is mapped as flood plain and wetland. Lowes and Taylor Creeks flow through and discharge to the Chippewa River.

The aggregate mining is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. The concrete red-mix plant also has many years of life remaining. Redevelopment is not expected for many decades.

The Chippewa River State Trail runs along the river on a corridor of land owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources from I-94 to Porterville Road.

Consequently, no changes are proposed to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan for this area. The current designations are Park, Commercial and Future Neighborhood.

Otter Creek

As with the other creeks, it is recommended that the City adopt and enforce the *Waterways Plan* along Otter Creek. The City of Altoona and the Town of Washington will be urged to review and strengthen their zoning regulations along the creek.

Water quality in Otter Creek is probably harmed by its passage through two golf courses and a large agricultural watershed.

The watershed management practices listed in the Environment chapter for Lowes Creek should be applied to the Otter Creek basin by the Cities of Eau Claire and Altoona as well as the Town of Washington.

Sherman Creek

Along Sherman Creek (as well as along Lowes, Taylor and Otter Creeks), the City of Eau Claire will apply the regulations of the waterway plan.

Along Sherman Creek, the City will continue to enforce its regulations on building setbacks, flood plains and steep slopes.

Parts of Sherman Creek run through the Towns of Union and Wheaton. Those jurisdictions will be encouraged to adopt greater minimum building setbacks from the OHWM of Sherman Creek. The minimum residential lot sizes already required in the creek valley by those Towns will be sufficient.



Sherman Creek runs shady and slow through west side neighborhoods.

Lowes Creek

As with Sherman Creek, the City will apply the proposed *Waterways Plan* along Lowes Creek within the City limits. The Towns of Brunswick, Washington and Pleasant Valley will be urged to continue to apply their large-lot semi-rural residential zoning regulations, particularly with regard to building setbacks from the creek. Those Towns will be urged to adopt larger building setbacks from the OHWM of Lowes Creek.

Lowes Creek supports trout and, thus, is sensitive to thermal and other pollution. The growth of residential and commercial development throughout the watershed has reduced water quality and habitat.

Fortunately, a good portion of the watershed is planned for large-lot housing, which affords opportunities to implement the recommended management practices if the regulatory bodies take the necessary steps along the way. Those practices are listed in the section of this plan titled Natural and Cultural Resources Protection and Restoration.

A small portion of this stream runs through Lowes Creek County Park, which protects that stretch well. A future municipal park is planned along Lowes Creek near County Road II (Deerfield Road).

Taylor Creek

Taylor Creek runs mostly through agricultural and wooded portions of the Towns of Brunswick and Pleasant Valley. The City urges Eau Claire County and those Towns to do what they can to require erosion control in farming, wetland protection or restoration, stream corridor habitat improvements and rural lot sizes.

Little Niagara Creek

Land development near Little Niagara Creek is controlled principally by the surrounding Putnam Park, a steep creek gorge and the campus of the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire. Therefore, no particular actions are recommended for this corridor.



Little Niagara Creek in Putnam Park near the University campus.

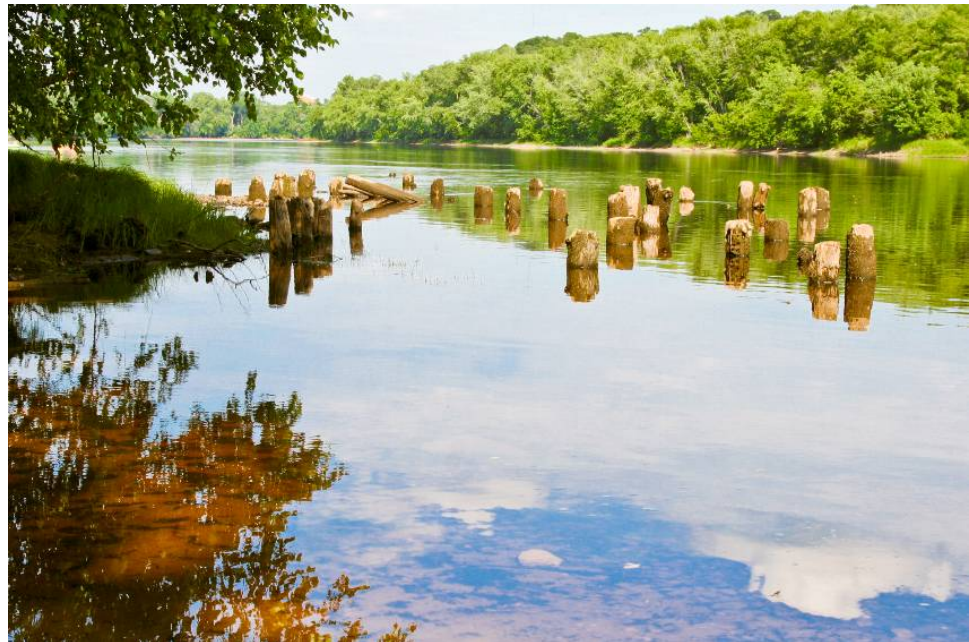
Natural and Cultural Resources Protection Plan

The natural and cultural resources of the waterways are the foundation of their intrinsic beauty and value. Thus, all of the other objectives and initiatives of this plan depend on proper stewardship of those assets.

This chapter of the *Waterways Plan* provides additional policy guidance for these resources beyond that of the Parks and Trails or the Land Use and Urban Design chapters, although the major elements of this plan are interdependent and cross-referenced.

Maintaining a high quality of ecological health and water quality along the waterways – indeed, across the entire community – are judged essential to both quality of life and economic development. The *Waterways Plan* study area benefits greatly from the fact that it has 20 miles of rivers, 26 miles of creeks and 5 miles of lake shore plus other natural resources in and near the city. The views and recreation provided by these waters have undoubtedly bolstered the community and should be likewise leveraged in the future. The policies of this chapter will contribute to that effort.

Moreover, a plan prepared by the Chippewa Valley Museum titled *The Good Life Project* (2012) documents community support for many of the same objectives espoused by the *Waterways Plan*. The Museum’s opinion survey administered across Eau Claire County demonstrated support for the intertwined aims of environmental stewardship, outdoor recreation, social interaction, sense of place, cultural heritage and economic development. It also indicated that quality of life for many people in Eau Claire is related to the waterways.



The remnants of pilings that were once used to divert saw logs on the Chippewa River combine with the verdant shoreline of Putnam Park, clear water and blue skies to express the cultural and natural histories of the valley.

Natural Resources Policies

River Bank Management

Natural methods, including “bio-engineering,” will be the primary and preferred means of waterway bank stabilization. All bank stabilization plans must be reviewed and approved by the City Engineer and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

The use of boulders (often called rip-rap) will be limited to situations where engineering analysis indicates that bio-engineering alone will not be sufficient to protect valuable structures such as bridge piers. Boulders covered with a thin layer of topsoil that is stabilized by hardy, low plants is an acceptable bank protection method in locations already “armored.” (See Figure 36 on the next page.) The Chippewa River bank at Phoenix Park is an example of this technique. Rip-rap may consist only of natural rock or materials made for that purpose, not concrete or other man-made material. In all cases, the rip-rap should be covered with soil and planted.

Existing Armored River Banks

Several banks on the two rivers have been protected from powerful currents that may cause severe erosion and possibly threaten bridge piers or other structures. Such protection consists of deposited boulders or broken concrete, which is effective but unsightly.

The City may work with the DNR to cover with a suitable planting soil and plant those locations to improve their appearance. Soil cover should consist of 8 to 12 inches of a sand and soil blend planted with herbaceous¹ or low woody plants but not trees.

¹ An herbaceous plant is one that has leaves and stems that die down to the soil level at the end of the growing season. They have no persistent woody stem above ground.

Armored riverbanks above the elevation determined to be flood-prone will remain armored rather than being revised with entirely natural treatments. Removing the boulders, even if they have been judged to be unnecessary, may do more harm than good. Instead, those locations will be covered and planted as shown by Figure 37.

Existing Natural River Banks

No management is needed of existing natural riverbanks unless an improved view from the shore is desired.

Riverbanks currently in a natural condition should not be treated with rip-rap unless engineering analysis indicates that is necessary. This is because a bank with native soil will support a more diverse and desirable set of vegetation, and sustain itself better under normal water conditions, than will a slope treated with boulders.

Central Business District River Banks

Shorelines near Graham Avenue, Eau Claire Street or other areas in the Central Business District may be stabilized with a retaining wall or a terrace made of stone and/or concrete.



An example of herbaceous plants along a water body.

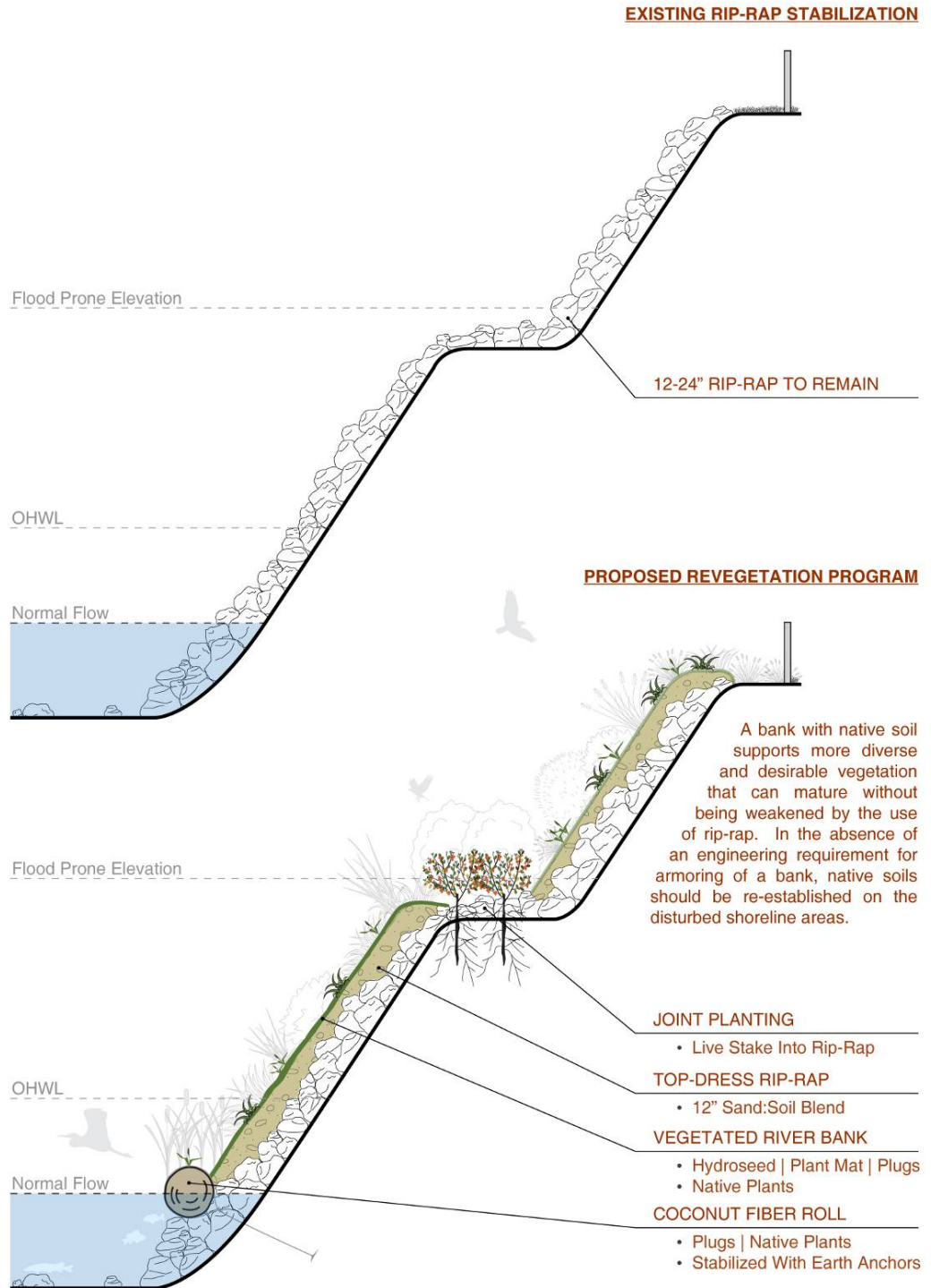


Figure 36: Remediation for an Armored Riverbank

River Bank Plantings

The stream banks and lake shoreline should be managed and planted according to the zones illustrated by Figure 37 and described below.

A short list of plants suitable for use in the Bank, Overbank and Transitional Zones is presented at the end of this chapter.

The Toe Zone

The Toe Zone, shown near the left side edge of Figure 37, is located at or below the average water elevation. It is the area most susceptible to erosion as the water level will fluctuate from the average water line to the ordinary high water mark (OHWM).

In erodible situations, this area should be treated with either bio-engineering techniques or be armored by boulders or specially engineered materials. Either scenario should have plants added to re-establish and naturalize the water's edge. This is most effective when using already-started plants that are suitable for wet conditions such as rhizomatous² plants that form a grass-like matt along the edge of the water.

Sedges (*Carex sp.*) and Rushes (*Juncus or Scirpus sp.*) are suitable for this area and should be planted first. Clump-forming plants such as flowering species that are tolerant of wet conditions can be incorporated as already-started plants or may be seeded after placing the started plants.

Plant mixes in this zone should consist of 75 percent sedges or bulrushes and 25 percent flowering plants (forbs). Grass-like shorelines are more stable and less susceptible to shoreline erosion because of the heavy matting of these plants.

² A rhizomatous plant is one with a horizontal stem that is usually found underground, often sending out roots and shoots from its nodes. If a rhizome is separated into pieces, each piece may give rise to a new plant. The Quaking Aspen is an example of a tree that propagates using a rhizome.

The Bank Zone

The next zone up the slope, the Bank Zone, is a wet meadow plant association and, thus, should be re-established as an herbaceous planting area. The Bank Zone is also susceptible to volunteer plant material gaining a foothold into the bank. If the volunteer plant material is a shrub, the potential of damage to the Bank Zone in a flood situation is low. However, if the volunteer vegetation that establishes itself here is a tree, the tree may weaken the erosion control material if the water flow uproots the tree. This can cause a breach in the engineered erosion protection and is why trees should not be allowed to invade this zone.

The Bank Zone is where a more diverse herbaceous plant community can be established. The foundation to this seed or plant mix is sedges and bulrushes and native grasses that will stabilize the bank, but forbs can form nearly 40 percent of the seed or plant mix.

The Overbank Zone

The Overbank Zone (or ledge) is where woody plant material can be used in concert with herbaceous plants.

Woody plant material can be established with individual bare root plants or by "joint planting." Joint planting is the process of embedding a woody plant into the crevices of the rip-rap or the bio-engineering material. This should be done with a native, non-invasive plant that can establish itself through planting a stem of the plant into the soil and stabilization material. The plant will grow roots from contact with the soil. Because the best plants for this purpose are naturally aggressive, care should be taken not to use undesirable species that may dominate the stream bank.

Cuttings from plants such as Red Dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*) or Alder (*Alnus rugosa*) would be suitable for the Overbank Zone. These and other shrubs will provide the best habitat for birds and small animals along the shoreline and should, therefore, be considered for use in the Overbank Zone.

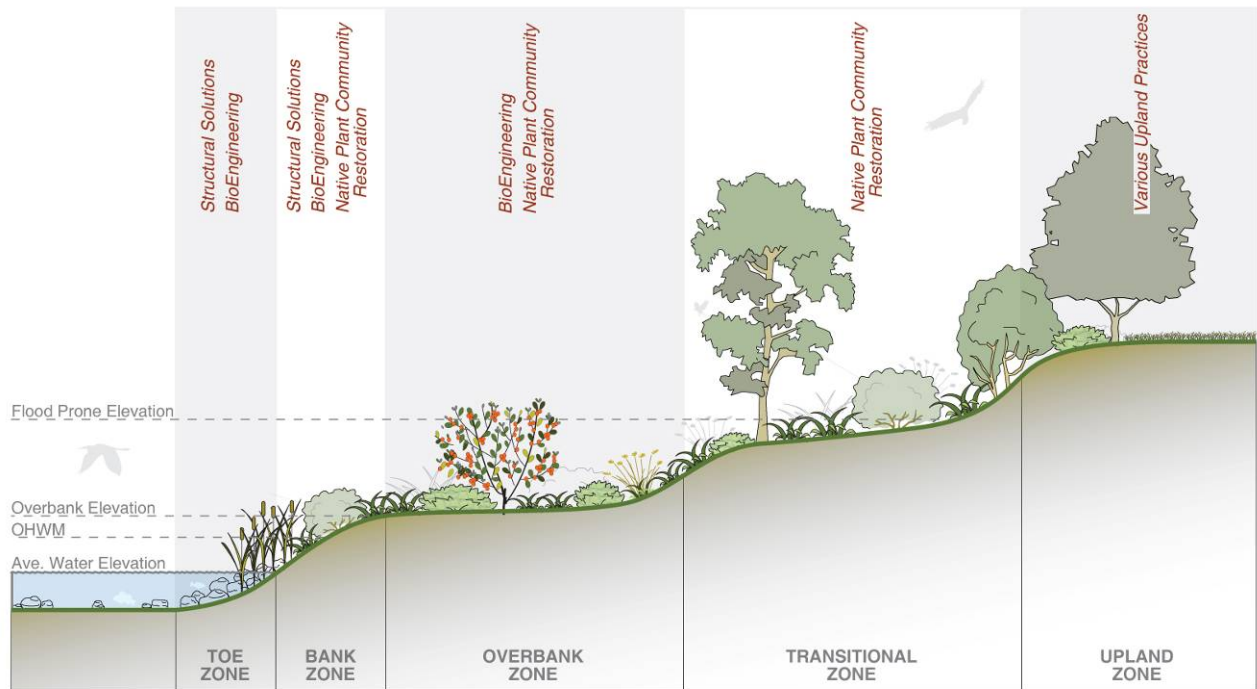


Figure 37: Plantings Techniques for Stream Bank Zones

The zones of a stream bank or lake shoreline are indicated along the bottom of this graphic while the recommended plantings for each zone are listed across the top.



Along the Eau Claire River near the Barstow Street bridge is an example of a bank that has been protected with boulders (“armored”), covered with a sand and soil mixture then planted with herbaceous species.

The Transitional Zone

The next zone up the slope is the Transitional Zone, where flooding is less likely and is typically outside the primary flow line of the river. This area can support tree, shrub and herbaceous planting and typically does not require armoring of the shoreline to provide erosion control. The Transitional Zone can be planted with more traditional plants or combined with native plants.

The Upland Zone

The Upland Zone is above the bluff line and should be planted with a variety of native trees. Flooding and root damage are unlikely in this zone.



This steep, wooded slope on the eastern shore of Dells Pond is an example of a bank that is stabilized naturally with a succession of plants in the Overbank Zone, the Transitional Zone and the Upland Zone.

Waterway Forest Management

Trees or shrubs along the waterways may be removed or thinned according to the order of priority established below:

1. Remove invasive plant species so that native plants may flourish
2. Remove trees that are in danger of falling
3. Remove the lower limbs of existing trees
4. Selectively remove individual native trees
5. Remove understory plants.

Thinning of the forest by landowners on **private property** within 40 feet of the bluff line or within 50 feet of the Ordinary High Water Mark in a floodplain is not prohibited but should be done judiciously so as to preserve this valuable resource.

Trees or shrubs may be removed or thinned on **private land** above the bluff line to improve views from the shore to the water provided that sufficient vegetative cover remains to soften the view of cars or buildings when viewed from the water or the opposite bank and that disturbed areas are stabilized against erosion. Such thinning is allowed particularly if the obstruction has been caused by invasive species. However, significantly affecting the view from the water shoreline is discouraged.

Clearing, raising the canopies or thinning on City or **public land** to provide or improve sight lines to the water may be allowed only if reviewed and approved by the City Parks Superintendent. Approval from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources may also be needed if the site is below the bluff line. Such clearing or thinning should be limited to removing undesirable or invasive species (non-native plants) and dying or other high-risk trees.

Under certain circumstances, a private property owner may be allowed to remove or thin plants on adjacent public land. Such owner should:

- Submit a formal request to the City Parks Department

- Describe the work to be done and the location
- Complete a vegetation survey of the site by an arborist certified by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) and/or registered landscape architect.
- Provide a plan for review by the City staff and the Waterways and Parks Commission; such plan must be consistent with the policies and guidelines of this chapter and other guidelines of the ISA
- Provide a plan to replace or replant appropriate native plants where the City has approved a request to thin or remove plants
- Post a cash bond that the City may use or rectify problems that may result
- Indemnify the City from liability that may arise during the work
- Agree in writing to maintain the new plants for a specified period of time
- Agree in writing to pay all costs of the work
- Conduct the work under the supervision of the City Forester.

Removing invasive plant species such as Buckthorn will aid the growth of native species and open views to and from the waterways.

Clear-cutting vegetation along the shoreline is strictly forbidden.

To protect the health of trees that are retained along the waterfront, nearby soil should be disturbed as little as possible and fill should not be placed over root areas.

Maintaining trees, shrubs and ground cover is essential to providing a stable shoreline, protecting water quality, keeping nutrients from the water, preserving native flora, enhancing the natural appearances and preserving fish and wildlife habitat.

It should be noted that tree management around Half Moon Lake is somewhat different than along the rivers. For example, the tree drops described under Fisheries Habitat (page 65) are the preferred approach to invasive, diseased or dead trees.

Surface Water Management

Water quality in the streams and lakes depends on proper practices throughout the watershed, which in the case of the Chippewa River is 6,630 square miles. The City has jurisdiction over a small portion of that watershed, and will continue to do its part to safeguard water quality.³

Thus, the City will continue to apply and enforce the provisions of its *Surface Water Management Plan* and its WPDES Municipal Storm Water Discharge Permit with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources throughout the watersheds that drain to the rivers, creeks and lakes.

Runoff from rainfall, snow melt or other activities will be collected on-site and treated with site-appropriate best management practices (BMPs) for pollutant removal prior to discharging into the public storm sewer system. New outfalls on the river and stream banks will be discouraged unless there is not a practical alternative.

³ Many tips and educational materials about maintaining or improving water quality can be found at these locations:

- Rain to Rivers ... Wise Choices for Cleaner Water, an education campaign sponsored by the Chippewa Valley Storm Water Forum (www.basineducation.uwex.edu/lowerchip/rain2rivers)
- University of Wisconsin Extension Service - Water Resources Education (www.clean-water.uwex.edu)
- US Environmental Protection Agency (www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater)
- *Rain to Rivers*: an educational video produced by the City of Eau Claire and available from the Eau Claire Department of Public Works (two versions, 20 minutes or 40 minutes in length).

Best Management Practices may include:

- Ponds to detain and filter runoff before it reaches a stream, natural lake or wetland
- Rain gardens
- Bio-filtration devices
- Vegetated swales
- Infiltration areas
- Pervious pavement
- Buried storage vaults
- Oil and water separators.

BMPs may also include “good housekeeping” practices to keep pollutants from entering site runoff. These practices may include:

- Covering dumpster or material storage areas to prevent contact with rainfall
- Nutrient management programs to prevent over-use of fertilizers and/or pesticides
- Site designs that minimize paved areas and areas exposed to vehicular traffic.

Storm water may also be captured, cleansed and released using BMPs located under parking lots.



An example of a vegetated island in a parking lot that catches and treats runoff polluted with salt, sand and automotive fluids.

Protecting Lowes Creek

Surface water management and land development in the Lowes Creek watershed will receive special attention by the City. Lowes Creek is classified as a Priority Watershed by the DNR because of its water quality and fish habitat.

Lowes Creek, a trout stream, has benefited from City improvements that catch warm urban surface water runoff then filter it into the ground water where it cools before seeping back to the creek, much to the benefit of the sensitive fish.

The City of Eau Claire will coordinate with the Towns of Brunswick, Washington, Pleasant Valley to consistently apply the protection recommendations contained in the *Nonpoint Source Control Plan for the Lowes Creek Priority Watershed Project* prepared in 1993 by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.



The ecology of Lowes Creek benefits from an undisturbed natural shoreline.

Practices recommended by the DNR plan for the Lowes Creek watershed include:

- Using generous building **setbacks**
- Adopting and enforcing regulations on the design, construction and **maintenance** of on-site sewage systems
- Leaving yards in natural **vegetation**
- Controlling stream bank and gully **erosion**
- Controlling **agricultural** manure spreading
- Planting improved natural stream **buffers**
- Using detention **ponds** for flood control and water cleansing
- Using infiltration **ponds** and swales to remove pollutants and reduce temperatures
- Using **swales** rather than pipes to convey water
- Avoiding direct **discharges**
- Controlling **erosion** on construction sites
- Protecting steep **slopes**
- Building narrow **streets**
- Applying better **subdivision** design to slow, divert and reduce discharges
- Attenuating **runoff**
- Pre-treating **runoff**
- Monitoring, inspecting and maintaining management **practices**.

Half Moon Lake Water Quality Management

The City will continue to implement the recommendations of the 2002 *Report on Half Moon Lake Water Quality Improvement Plan* and the 2010 *Plan Update* .

The 2002 plan called for coordinating five groups – the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, City Parks, Recreation and Forestry, City Public Works Department, Ski Sprites Waterski Club and the Friends of Half Moon Lake -- to advocate for the changes recommended. It also called for relocating the Ski Sprites from Half Moon Lake,

cutting weeds to improve swimming and boating experiences, implementing motor boat restrictions, improving stormwater management in the lake watershed, improving the fish habitat and reducing the invasive plants that dominated the lake.

The groups have worked with the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to apply herbicides to reduce Eurasian water milfoil and curly leaf pondweed from the lake. The herbicide treats conducted in 2009, 2010 and 2011 have been very effective controlling curly leaf pondweed and Eurasian water milfoil. The Corps and WDNR will determine if additional herbicide treatments are necessary.

An alum treatment applied in 2011 to control the release of phosphorus into the lake will be monitored during the next several years to measure its effectiveness.

The groups will work in the future to improve community education about the lake, organize clean-up campaigns, improve fish structure, diversify fish populations, complete a recreational trail around the lake, acquire private properties on the lake for public use, and monitor stormwater within the watershed.

Floodplain Management

The City of Eau Claire will continue to apply the regulations contained in its Floodplain Overlay zoning district. That district provides standards for land development in the floodway and in the flood fringe sub-districts including allowable types of land use, allowable coverage, minimum building elevations and building flood-proofing. The location of the floodplain district is based on mapped estimates of 100-year and 500-year floodplains prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Administration.

The City may acquire additional private property in the 100-year floodplain to reduce the potential of damage and to create additional Greenway. The only location for such potential acquisition that is noted in this plan are the several houses located

east of First Avenue just south of Madison Street, although there are additional endangered locations in Eau Claire. Houses west of Forest Street were previously acquired and removed for those purposes.

Fisheries Habitat Management

The City will work to enhance the fisheries habitat of the waterways, particularly in Half Moon Lake and Dells Pond. This should include working with the Wisconsin DNR to develop a plan to identify and mark shoreline trees such as invasives, diseased, dead, and those leaning and in danger of falling into the water. Once marked, the plan would provide a schedule to remove the trees from the bank and place them into the water to provide additional habitat for the fishery.



The floodplain west of Forest Street and Riverview Terrace has been cleared and transformed into park.

Steep River Bank Slopes

The *Waterways Plan* has identified several sites along the Eau Claire River for possible use as parks and others for urban development or some combination of park and development. Each of these sites is encumbered in whole or part by a slope steeper than 20 percent. Steep slopes such as those are considered undevelopable under the terms of the *Chippewa Falls / Eau Claire Urban Sewer Service Area Plan for 2025* because they meet the definition of an Environmentally Sensitive Area according to the Wisconsin DNR. These environmentally sensitive areas may not be served by public sanitary sewer according to state regulations.

Grading and Filling

Grading and filling near the shoreline should be minimized. Where permitted, such work must be reviewed and approved by the City Engineer as part of a site development plan. Approval from the Wisconsin DNR would also be needed if the location is below the Ordinary High Water Mark. Permits are required for more than 10,000 square feet of grading and filling. Erosion control, re-planting and final stabilization are essential. Any fill must be clean soil and not refuse, debris or man-made materials.

Historic Interpretation

The City recognizes that the rivers, Dells Pond and Half Moon Lake are closely tied to the early economic and social story of the community. It was along those waterways that much of the initial development of Eau Claire occurred, and it is those locations that form much of the identity of the community in the minds of its members. This connection was described in the Discovery chapter on pages 54 - 55.

Thus, the City should continue to install interpretative markers along the waterways (and other locations) that help residents and visitors understand and appreciate the vital role of the waterways in forming this community.

These plaques should explain historic features such as the riverboat landings, the sawmills, ice harvesting, the history of Dells Dam, the former uses of Banbury Place, locations of early buildings, and the two flumes into and out of Half Moon Lake.

The waterways historic interpretative program should continue to be part of its community-wide effort to raise understanding of and appreciation for the cultural heritage of the community. Other elements include the policies of the historic preservation chapter in the *Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan* and the several locally designated structures and districts.



An example of a riverfront historic interpretative marker along the Old Abe Trail.

Ecological Studies

The City should arrange for professionals to inventory and analyze the vegetation and wildlife found along the shores of the waterways, particularly on those properties that are proposed for acquisition or targeted for park and trail improvements.

The purpose of such studies would be to:

- Identify areas that should be protected
- Identify locations for the removal of invasive species
- Propose remedial actions not specified herein
- Help prepare park or trail development plans
- Recommend actions for the stewardship of the resources.

Thus, a prime location for an ecological assessment and management plan would be the steep slopes east (upriver) of Highway 53, which are proposed for acquisition as Greenway. This study could be done in cooperation with the City of Altoona, which owns land on the opposite bank.

Public Education

A public education campaign will be continued through the leadership of the Chippewa Valley Storm Water Forum, which is comprised of five cities, two counties, five towns and a village in the Lower Chippewa Basin. The campaign will deliver messages and technical information to citizens, students and public officials about ways to protect water quality through a wide variety of actions and practices. (Refer to the footnote under Surface Water Management on page 63.)

The City will install signs that explain the natural and cultural importance of various locations to raise public awareness and support for river valley stewardship.

Bird Watching

The City of Eau Claire will work with local bird watching organizations to be named a “Bird City Wisconsin” community, a program of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative. The local commitment to ecotourism, river stewardship, Greenway preservation and other habitat protection practices will be the basis for the application.



The City will then use bird watching among its efforts to promote tourism and educate the local public about their environment. Studies have shown that attracting bird watchers can be a strong element in a tourism campaign. (See www.birdcitywisconsin.org.)

Suitable Shoreline Plants

These and other species would be suitable to use when replanting river banks and shorelines in Eau Claire.

Bank Zone and Overbank Zone

Grasses, Sedges and Rushes

- Big Bluestem
- Common Hop Sedge
- Common Rush
- Switch Grass
- Cord Grass
- River Oats

Forbs

- Swamp Milkweed
- Joe Pye Weed
- Cardinal Flower
- Prairie Blazing Star
- Blue Lobelia
- New England Aster

Cover Crop

- Annual Rye
- Canada Wild Rye

Overbank and Transitional Zones

- Button Bush
- Red Osier Dogwood
- Pagoda Dogwood
- Winter Holly
- Prairie Ninebank
- Swamp Rose
- Pussy Willow
- Meadowsweet

Shrubs for Joint Planting

- Red Osier Dogwood
- Pussy Willow
- Meadowsweet

Economic Development Plan

Introduction

Economic development is one of the themes of the *Waterways Plan* because business use of the shorelines has shaped their history. The community was founded along the two rivers for industrial purposes, and the rivers powered the mills and factories that helped it grow. Now that the rivers are no longer needed for transportation and power (except at the Xcel Dam), they can be used for other economic purposes related to views and recreation. People have a natural desire to be near water because it sustains life, and nowhere in this city is water more apparent than along the shorelines of the rivers and the lake.

However, the economic benefits of the waterways extend well beyond the shoreline. Immediate and sustained access to the water and the shoreline forest are apparent from riparian sites, but people from across the community appreciate the presence of the waterways on a regular basis. Residents derive a high degree of satisfaction from the knowledge that they can enjoy the waterways, parks, trails and lively social gathering places of this city, as documented through surveys administered locally by *The Good Life Project*. Therefore, the waterways have economic benefits even when shoreline land development involves housing rather than businesses.

The economy of the 21st Century is expected to be driven by industries that have a choice of locations. Anecdotal and empirical evidence supports the notion that cities with a high quality of life have a better chance than others of attracting the business entrepreneurs and employees that will drive growth enterprises. Eau Claire is well on its way to being one of those desirable locations, and the initiatives recommended by the *Waterways Plan* will continue to move it forward.

The Eau Claire–Altoona–Chippewa Falls region enjoys these and other enviable economic advantages:

- **Quality of life:** Safe, clean and green, many outdoor recreational opportunities (sports and access to the North Woods), a family orientation, educational opportunities, in-town trout fishing, kayaking and tubing, and outstanding local scenery.
- **Business and industry:** A regional medical center (three hospitals and major clinics), a regional retail center, world-class manufacturers such as Nestle and Hutchinson Technology and the headquarters of Royal Credit Union and retailer Menard's.
- **Culture and education:** The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Chippewa Valley Technical College, well-supported local public schools and libraries, a thriving “artists’ colony” in Banbury Place, performing arts venues such as the Eau Claire Children’s Theater and the Haas Fine Arts Center, the Eau Claire Jazz Festival, the Chippewa Valley Symphony, the Eau Claire Chamber Orchestra and the Eau Claire Express Minor League baseball team at Carson Park.
- **Location:** Located at the triangular junction of I-94 and US Highways 29 and 53, a convenient distance from the Twin Cities and set in an idyllic dairy countryside.
- **People:** A high level of education, friendly and industrious, a small-town look and feel with many larger-city amenities, and the largest city in western Wisconsin.

River Corridor Land Use

The future pattern of river corridor land use desired by the City is illustrated by Figure 29, Amendments to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, and includes industry, offices, hospitality businesses, housing of all kinds, energy generation and transmission, institutional buildings, parks, floodplain open space, golf courses, the two wastewater treatment plants, airport open space, and the City's water well field.

Land development adjacent to the waterways should, ideally, consist of those activities that benefit from views to the water such as parks, housing, offices, restaurants and hotels.

Obviously, certain industries are dependent on the water and must have a riparian site such as the hydroelectric power plant. Aggregate mining has to be located where the resource is.

Downtown

Downtown Eau Claire, which includes the North Barstow District as well as Grand Avenue–Justice Center area, is the largest concentration of jobs in the region.

The North Barstow District was transformed from an industrial “brownfield” to offices, housing, shops and riverfront park. The southern bank of the confluence may soon witness a similar change as the Haymarket parking lot and vicinity is redeveloped into offices, hospitality, housing and park. In both cases, riverfront open space was or will be the essential ingredient that spreads economic benefits far beyond its limits.

Refer to the Land Use chapter of this document for sketches of the possible Haymarket redevelopment and park plan.

West Riverside District

The West Riverside District located around and north of Mayo-Luther Hospital, is already a location with several thousand jobs. Additional economic growth is possible through the redevelopment of a blighted industrial zone along Oxford Avenue, resurgence of the West Madison Street corridor and potential growth at the hospital and clinic.

Additional economic growth may be supported by the new housing planned near the river plus improvements that may accrue to the older neighborhood as it benefits from the planned extension of the Greenway.

Looping the Greenway from the State Trail bridge north to the High Bridge and down the eastern riverfront to Phoenix Park will magnify the value of the trail system, which, as noted, is a major indirect economic driver.



Figure 38: One possible arrangement of new housing and park space along Oxford Street shown in the *West Riverside District Plan*.

Eau Claire River Corridor

Several types of land use are possible on the tract of City-owned land along Galloway Street between the BNSF river bridge and River Prairie Drive, including offices and/or housing. Either of those land uses would seem viable in the market because the site enjoys river views and good regional access. Limited views and access to the site from Galloway Street might reduce its potential for office development but improve its potential for housing.

Space for a linear park along the riverfront should be reserved to extend the riverfront trail and provide public access to the water.

Refer to Figure 29 in the Land Use and Urban Design chapter for the location of the subject site.

Menomonie Street District

The Menomonie Street District includes one of only two active heavy industrial operations along the rivers (the other being Red Flint Rock and Stone).

The few major businesses along Menomonie Street are relatively low in their number of jobs per acre as large areas are devoted to outdoor storage. It is hoped that future use of the site will be more job intensive and more visually compatible with the nearby river valley.

Refer to Figure 34 in the Land Use and Urban Design chapter for the location of the Menomonie Street district.

Clairemont Avenue Educational and Medical District

The Clairemont Avenue Educational and Medical District runs from the University campus on the east to the Clairemont Avenue river bridge on the west. Development includes Sacred Heart Hospital, the Chippewa Valley Technical College, Midelfort, Marshfield and other medical clinics, hospitality businesses and office buildings.

A 2009 plan for this district recommended improving the connection between the Greenway (principally Putnam Park) and the medical facilities on the top of the bluff as an element of the district theme of mind and body wellness. Means of enhancing that link included creating a new park along University Drive, building a walkway from that park down the slope to the Greenway trail, and landscaping the street edges throughout the district. (Refer to the Parks and Trails Plan for text and graphics.)



Organizations such as Sacred Heart Hospital (above), the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire, Chippewa Valley Technical College, Marshfield Clinic and others provide thousands of jobs and attract many thousands of daily visitors. A bluff-top park and a better link to Putnam Park are sought.

Mining Reclamation

Former aggregate mining areas south of the Clairemont Avenue bridge are expected to eventually be transformed to other purposes when the land owners decide that another use of the land makes economic sense. Existing uses include the sand processing and aggregate sales businesses north of Short Street, the former mining area between Short Street and I-94, and the concrete batch plant south and associated properties south of I-94.

Some portion of each of those areas may be devoted to businesses. North of Short Street, the primary future land use is expected to be housing, but a business component may be included. South of Short Street, a larger business component is expected. South of I-94, in the Town of Brunswick, several options are possible in the long-term future as redevelopment is not expected for many decades.

The City of Eau Claire ideally hopes to see a continuous band of park land of varying width along or near the riverfront south of Clairemont Avenue. However, the City will work with the landowner(s) in this area to determine a mutually beneficial pattern of land development, riverfront access and trails.



Achieving a degree of riverfront parkland in mining reclamation areas would help fulfill the aims of the *Waterways Plan* for recreation, environmental protection and nearby land development.

Economic Development Initiatives

The City of Eau Claire will lead an effort to leverage the many benefits advocated by the *Waterways Plan* to build the local and regional economy through marketing and branding, mapping, outdoor recreation, and water-themed events and activities.

Land Development

The City will continue to promote property redevelopment and new investment consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan*, the Zoning Ordinance and the guidance of this plan.

Eau Claire locations that are poised to take advantage of the public investments in the Greenway include but are not limited to:

- The West Riverside Neighborhood including the Oxford Street corridor, the Madison Street corridor and the vicinity of Mayo Hospital
- The North Barstow Street District
- Haymarket Square at the confluence
- The Central Business District especially the Graham Avenue and Eau Claire Street corridors
- The Menomonie Street corridor
- The Clairemont Avenue Educational and Medical District
- Locations downriver of Clairemont Avenue
- Excess City-owned land between Galloway Street and the Eau Claire River near Hastings Way
- Banbury Place
- The Waterford office, retail and residential development
- The Forest Street neighborhood
- The Grand Avenue / Fairway Street neighborhood.

Marketing and Branding

A coordinated marketing effort is underway among the City’s Economic Development Division, the Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation, the Eau Claire Chamber of Commerce, Momentum Chippewa Valley, and the Gateway Industrial Park Corporation. Prominent features of that campaign are the theme of “clear water” and the many recreational, cultural and entertainment options available. The City’s Website slogan of “Business. Life. Balance.” reflects that idea that both can be had here.

It is recommended that the marketing campaign intensify its emphasis on the theme of “the good life” as supported by water-related outdoor recreation, natural beauty, family fun and local water access.

Water-Sports Business

Businesses that support opportunities for water sports on the rivers, lake or creeks – whether paddling, rowing, floating, sailing or fishing – help improve quality of life, attract visitors and enhance the image of Eau Claire as a city rich in water resources.

It is hoped that such businesses would serve not only local residents but, more importantly, those from out of town who might also use local restaurants, motels and shops, particularly downtown or along Water Street.



Rowing is good exercise and great fun.

Water-Themed Events and Activities

The community should consider creating a privately-led summer festival of fun outdoor events themed around the water. A major regional model would be the Minneapolis Aquatennial (<http://www.aquatennial.com>). The purpose of this ambitious, long-term endeavor would be to boost quality of life, showcase businesses and generally promote the image of Eau Claire as a community rich in water resources and outdoor recreation. All of these benefits would help attract and retain growth businesses and the skilled employees that they need.

The range of possible events and activities is limited only by people’s creativity. Some ideas that have been suggested include a canoe or kayak event down the Eau Claire River, a card board or milk carton boat race from Phoenix to Owen Park, a boat to work event, and others.

Mapping

A regional map should be published and distributed on paper and the Internet that depicts waterfront parks, multi-use paths, waterfront entertainment and eating attractions, public boat launches, fishing piers, campsites, canoe portages and water recreation equipment rental or sales shops throughout the Eau Claire–Altoona–Chippewa Falls region.

The various segments of the multi-use trail system should be named both for identification as well as promotion. Examples: the Chippewa River Trail, the Old Abe Trail, the Huskie Trail (north of Seymour Road to the City limits), the Randall Park loop, the Half Moon loop, etc.)

Waterways Implementation Program

Introduction

The remarkable success of the 1988 *Waterways Plan* bodes well for the implementation of the ideas in this document. That original plan resulted in more than 34 major public capital improvements. Moreover, it represented a sea change in the local public attitude toward the rivers, creeks and Half Moon Lake.

Some of the recommendations of the *Waterways Plan* can be accomplished by the City working on its own, but many will require coordination and cooperation between the City and other public or private partners. These may include the University of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the US Army Corps of Engineers, Xcel Energy and others. The City Parks and Recreation Department should take the lead in coordinating the work of this plan with support from the Waterways and Parks Commission and its other partners.

The tools that the City may use to carry out this plan include reviewing land development applications, receiving donations of land, administering the zoning ordinance, and applying the design guidelines of the plan. The City will also extend trails and build new parks, acquire land for park and trail expansion and market the community as having great trails and parks through its economic development efforts.

There are four key waterway opportunities that should be seized:

1. Extending the Greenway up First and Oxford Avenues corridor, across the High Bridge and down the Forest Street corridor to Phoenix Park.
2. Extending the Greenway along the Eau Claire River to the Town of Seymour
3. Creating a public space at Haymarket Square and extending the Greenway
4. Extending the Greenway around Half Moon Lake.

Each of these projects is eminently do-able.



Public involvement helped prepare this plan and public involvement will help see that its recommendations are accomplished.

Key Actions and Measures of Success

1. **The Greenway**

Continue to improve waterfront access and enjoyment through growth of linear parks and connections from the neighborhoods in coordination with land development.

Key Actions:

- Complete the Greenway around Half Moon Lake
- Complete the Greenway loop on both sides of the Chippewa River north of Madison Street including the High Bridge river crossing
- Acquire wooded slopes along the Eau Claire River and extend Greenway
- Complete Downtown paths and overlooks, west and east sides of Chippewa River.

Measures of Success:

- The High Bridge decking will have been connected to the existing City trail system
- A corridor of land from City-owned property along the Eau Claire River will have been dedicated as park
- A loop trail will have been completed around Half Moon Lake
- Path from Lake St. to Grand Av. along First Av. will have been upgraded
- The number of overlooks will have increased.

2. **Land Use and Urban Design**

Guide land use and design in the waterway corridors in ways that enhance both the development and the Greenway.

Key Actions:

- Complete the redevelopment of the North Barstow District
- Redevelop Haymarket Square into multiple uses and Greenway
- Continue redevelopment of the Oxford Avenue corridor following the *West Riverside District Plan*
- Develop the 21-acre City-owned site near River Prairie Drive and Galloway Street
- Adaptively re-use the industrial building at Dewey and Galloway Streets.

Measures of Success:

- Obsolete buildings will have been replaced
- Land uses will have taken advantage of and complement the Greenway
- The City's Waterways Development Guidelines will have been completed.

3. **Ecology**

Protect and improve the natural functions of the waterways and their riparian environment.

Key Actions:

- Prepare an ecological assessment and management plan for the existing and planned Greenway
- Protect and enhance the steep river banks according to the guidance of this plan.
- Protect and improve the water quality of the rivers, streams and Half Moon Lake.

Measures of Success:

- Invasive plant species will have been reduced in number and extent
- Steep riverbanks will have been protected in a visually pleasing manner
- Views to and from the water will have been improved
- Water clarity of Half Moon Lake continues to improve.

4. Economic Development

Boost jobs and economic investment in Eau Claire through the amenity of the Greenway in conjunction with other public facilities, services and infrastructure.

Key Actions:

- Use the Greenway in local and regional marketing campaigns
- Achieve or complete redevelopment with new jobs, businesses and housing at key riverfront locations including the North Barstow district, Haymarket Square and the Oxford Avenue corridor.

Measures of Success:

- The number of jobs across the city will have risen
- The number of jobs near the Waterways will have increased, especially in the sectors of professional services, finance, technology, hospitality, entertainment and the arts
- Private investment near the Greenway will have grown

5. Achievement

Implement this plan through sustained and continuous municipal investments aided by other public and private resources.

Key Actions:

The Parks and Recreation Department through the Waterways and Parks Commission will facilitate and support coordinated enhancements to the Eau Claire Waterways, including:

- Advocating for funding requests
- Forging support from the business and not-for-profit sectors to further the aims of this plan, which may include financial or in-kind assistance or compatible land development
- Convening technical advisory groups for specific subjects or needs; sources may include city, state or federal agencies, academic faculty, independent experts or others
- Accelerating the implementation of the Waterways Plan
- Monitoring the Measures of Success for waterways enhancements
- Generally becoming “champions” of the Waterways and this plan.

Measures of Success:

- Many of the public improvements recommended by this plan will have been accomplished
- Strong and sustained private and public support will exist for Greenway improvements and resource stewardship.

Priorities for Action

The following actions should be considered by the City of Eau Claire to carry out the initiatives recommended in the Waterways Plan.

**Table 6
Major Projects along the Waterways**

Page	The Greenway	Timing
8	Improve walking routes from the neighborhoods to the waterfronts	Over time with street projects
8	Enhance the walking and the driving connections between First Avenue and Carson Park along Grand Avenue and Lake Street	With future street projects
14	Acquire steep slope along the Eau Claire River East of River Prairie Drive for use as a park	As funding and properties available
14-15	Extend Greenway trail along the Eau Claire River upriver of Hastings Way	As abutting property is developed
14-15	Coordinate park and trail improvements with the City of Altoona	On-going
16	Build Northwest Community Park	2012-2017
17	Improve a bicycling route around Dells Pond from Mt. Simon Park to Riverview Park	2015-2017
17	Rebuild the path from McDonough Park down to Dells Pond	2017
18	Acquire the three houses surrounded by Mt. Simon Park	As funding and properties available
18	Build a paved trail to the northern end of Mt. Simon Park	Long-term
18	Negotiate for a boat launch of the Xcel Energy property immediately north of Domer Park	2013
19	Extend the Greenway in the West Riverside Neighborhood from Madison Street to the State Trail bridge (near Fulton Street) through voluntary property sale	As funding and properties available
19, 47	Extend the Greenway and trail in the West Riverside Neighborhood from the High Bridge to Madison Street	2012-2017
19, 47	Consider creating a new park in the West Riverside Neighborhood near Maple Street and the river to replace Kessler Park and Kessler Bowl	2012-2017
19, 47	Acquire the privately-owned former railroad corridor that runs northwest from the High Bridge	2012
19, 47	Build multi-use path on former railroad corridors extending north by the Ager House	2012-2017
19, 47	Build multi-use path on former railroad corridor west of the High Bridge	2012-2017
20	Extend the multi-use path across a renovated High Bridge	2012
20	Extend the trail from High Bridge to Phoenix Park along the east side of the	2012-2013

Page		Timing
	Chippewa River	
21	Seek to upgrade the trail from Haymarket Square to Lake Street	Subject to timing of private redevelopment
21, 43	Provide for waterfront access at Haymarket Square in conjunction with redevelopment	Subject to timing of private redevelopment
22	Improve the greenway from Grand Avenue to Lake Street (west side of the river)	2012-2013
24	Construct a new trail along the 600 block of Menomonie Street	2012-2013
24	Construct an overlook at the foot of Fifth Avenue in the Water Street Business District	2012-2013
25	Create a park along University Drive and a walking path down the slope to the arboretum trail	2014
26, 49	Negotiate for or purchase riverfront access between Clairemont Avenue and Short Street	When the property is available
27	Prepare a development and management plan for the Ferry Street public open space	2013
27	Extend a bicycling route across Short Street to the Ferry Street open space	2014
29	Add a fishing dock on Half Moon Lake south of the causeway	2013
29	Rebuild stairs up bluff near Birch pavilion	When causeway is reconstructed
29	Rebuild and improve the causeway to Carson Park	2014
29	Extend the trail around Half Moon Lake	2013-2017
31	Relocate the trail crossing of Menomonie Street south of Carson Park	2015
31	Acquire floodplain land along Otter Creek through donation	As funding is becomes available
31, 32	Complete Otter Creek Park	2012-2017
Land Use and Urban Design		
38-40	Use the urban design guidelines of this plan when reviewing applications for land development	On-going
38-40	Update the City's Waterway Development Guidelines and reference these Guidelines in the Zoning Ordinance	2013
41	Acquire through voluntary sale certain floodplain properties for park use	On-going
41	Promote more appropriate land uses near the Greenway through the use of public improvements, the zoning ordinance, the guidance of this plan and the financial help of the Eau Claire Economic Development Authority; several target locations are suggested in this plan	On-going
41	Seek opportunities for public art	On-going
60	Follow "best management practices" along the creeks and throughout all	On-going

Page		Timing
	watersheds under the City's jurisdiction	
Environmental and Cultural Resources		
10	Install interpretative and wayfinding signs along all segments of the Greenway	On-going
23	Thin the riverfront forest along Owen Park of invasive plant species and dead or dying trees	2013
37	Continue to improve views of the river, particularly in Downtown and in the Water Street area	On-going
61	Continue to work with the DNR to improve water quality in Half Moon Lake	On-going
63	Protect and enhance the steep river banks according to the guidance of this plan.	On-going
63	Prepare a natural resources assessment of the Greenway	2013
Economic Development		
41	Achieve the private redevelopment of properties along Market Street	Long-term
42	Complete the redevelopment of the North Barstow District	2012-2017
42-43	Achieve the private redevelopment of Haymarket Square with City or Redevelopment Authority assistance; acquire land for riverfront park and trail	Subject to the timing of redevelopment
44-46	Achieve the private redevelopment of excess City property along Galloway Street	On-going
47	Achieve the private redevelopment of the Oxford Street corridor with Redevelopment Authority assistance; acquire land to extend the Greenway	2012-2017
48	Achieve the private redevelopment of industrial properties along Menomonie Street	Long-term
69	Continue to prominently feature outdoor recreation, access to nature and quality of life in local marketing campaigns	On-going
Achievement		
Throughout Plan	Designate high priority public improvement projects from this plan for the annual and multi-year capital improvements program	On-going
41, 48, 49	Continue to form public/private partnerships to fund waterway improvements	On-going
63-64	Continue public education about natural and cultural resource stewardship along the waterways.	On-going
73	Enhance funding for the maintenance of facilities	On-going
77	Coordinate planning efforts with other implementing agencies (see the table on the next page)	On-going

Implementation Partners and Their Roles

Officials of the City of Eau Claire are experienced in the process of accomplishing improvements along the Waterways, as evidenced by many prior years of success along the Waterways and across the community.

Based on that experience, the following table lists the principal actors in plan implementation and their roles.

Table 7
Implementing Partners and their Roles

Organization	Role in Plan Implementation
City of Eau Claire	
Community Development Department	Update and administer the zoning ordinance Review development applications Coordinate efforts of other departments and outside groups or agencies Prepare district and neighborhood plans Expand historic interpretative opportunities Lead continual public involvement
Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department	Propose capital improvements for parks and trails Lead in design and construction of park and trail improvements Lead in natural resource management
Economic Development Department	Help attract new companies and property investment
Public Works and Engineering Department	Lead or coordinate on all City capital improvements Lead on surface water management
Administration	Approve annual departmental work programs Approve multi-year capital improvement program and annual budgets
City Council	Adopt the <i>Waterways Plan</i> Adopt the amended <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> Approve budgets and capital improvement programs
Plan Commission	Review development applications Oversee new or amended plans and designs
Waterways and Parks Commission	Review development applications Comment on new or amended plans and designs
Economic Development Authority	Establish Redevelopment Districts, plans and assistance programs Apply financial assistance tools
Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation	Use the Greenway in marketing campaigns

Policies and Actions: Implementation Program

Organization	Role in Plan Implementation
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Bureau of Community Financial Assistance	Provide technical assistance in resource management Provide matching grant funding for conservation projects, land acquisition, water access and outdoor recreation projects
US Army Corps of Engineers	Assist in flood plain management
Federal Emergency Management Administration	Lead in flood plain management and flood insurance
University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire	Provide expertise in natural and cultural resource management
Local recreational organizations	Advocate for the parks and trails and their funding Comment on plans and programs
Local environmental organizations	Advocate for sound ecological stewardship Comment on plans and programs
Local foundations	Provide funding help on major projects
Major local businesses and industries	Provide funding help on major projects Invest in Waterways locations

Potential Sources of Funding Assistance

Table 8
Potential Funding Sources

Source	Program	Uses
City of Eau Claire	General Fund / Departmental budgets	Planning, design, construction
	General obligation bonds	Land acquisition, major capital projects
	Tax increment financing	Land redevelopment assistance
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources * Bureau of Community Financial Assistance	Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund Recreational Boating Facilities Fund River Protection Management Fund	Land acquisition, outdoor recreation capital improvements, resource conservation
Wisconsin Department of Transportation *	Transportation Enhancements	Trail construction
Major local corporations *	Charitable giving	Specific park or trail projects, public art, land acquisition or donation
Xcel Energy Company *	Chippewa River Natural Resources Fund / Dam Relicensing Agreement	Capital improvements related to invasive species or water quality
Local or regional foundations *	Charitable giving	Specific park or trail projects, public art, land acquisition or donation, natural resource education

* Most state, federal or foundation grants require a local match, usually 50 percent or more.