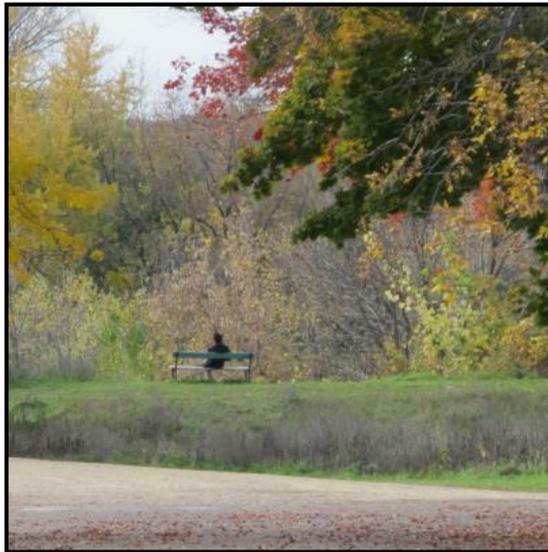


# North River Fronts Neighborhood Plan

City of Eau Claire  
Comprehensive Plan



July, 2017





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**Adopted July 25, 2017**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|             |                               |           |
|-------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
|             | <b>Executive Summary</b>      | <b>5</b>  |
|             | <b>Introduction</b>           | <b>9</b>  |
|             | Purpose & Need                | 9         |
|             | Origins & Plan Update         | 9         |
|             | Plan Authority                | 10        |
|             | Update Process                | 11        |
| <b>I.</b>   | <b>Neighborhood Profile</b>   | <b>13</b> |
|             | Boundaries & Description      | 14        |
|             | History                       | 18        |
|             | Neighborhood Association      | 19        |
|             | Demographics                  | 20        |
|             | Housing Counts                | 25        |
|             | Historic Properties           | 26        |
| <b>II.</b>  | <b>Planning Issues</b>        | <b>29</b> |
|             | Boundaries & Land Uses        | 30        |
|             | Zoning                        | 32        |
|             | Property Lots & Value         | 34        |
|             | Housing Condition             | 35        |
|             | Nuisances                     | 38        |
|             | Housing Tenure                | 38        |
|             | Housing Cost Burden           | 40        |
|             | Flooding                      | 41        |
|             | Crime                         | 44        |
|             | Healthy Neighborhood          | 45        |
|             | Transportation                | 46        |
|             | Community Services            | 46        |
| <b>III.</b> | <b>Improvement Strategies</b> | <b>51</b> |
|             | Vision, Mission, & Goals      | 52        |
|             | Housing                       | 54        |
|             | Redevelopment                 | 61        |
|             | Transportation                | 69        |
|             | Public Services               | 75        |
|             | Quality of Life               | 80        |
|             | <b>Appendices</b>             | <b>86</b> |



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the third plan update for the North River Fronts Neighborhood building upon previous plans. The neighborhood has a rich history and a promising future. It is one of the places originally settled in the City of Eau Claire; developed along the scenic banks of the Chippewa and Eau Claire rivers. It boasts a central location and borders downtown’s amenities. Housing options are diverse and affordable. The neighborhood is compact, walkable in scale and well connected to parks, trails and transit- all features of what is deemed “Smart Growth”. Promoting compact and mixed use development is a major growth strategy of the City’s *Comprehensive Plan*. The National Association of REALTORS® also recommends living in and reinvesting in places like North River Fronts under their Smart Growth initiative. Residents can enjoy a lifestyle not typical of suburban areas where driving is a must.

Like any established place, the North River Fronts Neighborhood has its challenges, but opportunities abound. Major new community reinvestment will occur with Forest Street’s reconstruction in 2019 and the addition of community gardens and a possible Veterans Tribute in Forest Street Park. As part of the tribute, a multi-use trail through the park will connect Phoenix Park northwards to the pedestrian High Bridge. These and other improvements described in the plan underscore that perceptions are changing and that more private reinvestment will occur. For example, the overview recommendations map on page 6 shows where redevelopment options are encouraged. Blocks between East Madison Street and William Streets hold mixed use development potential being adjacent to downtown. A project in this area could be catalytic for the neighborhood. The recommendations map conveys many of the highlights of this plan, but is not meant to be exhaustive. The full plan should be read to gain a wider understanding of all the opportunities and challenges that exist.

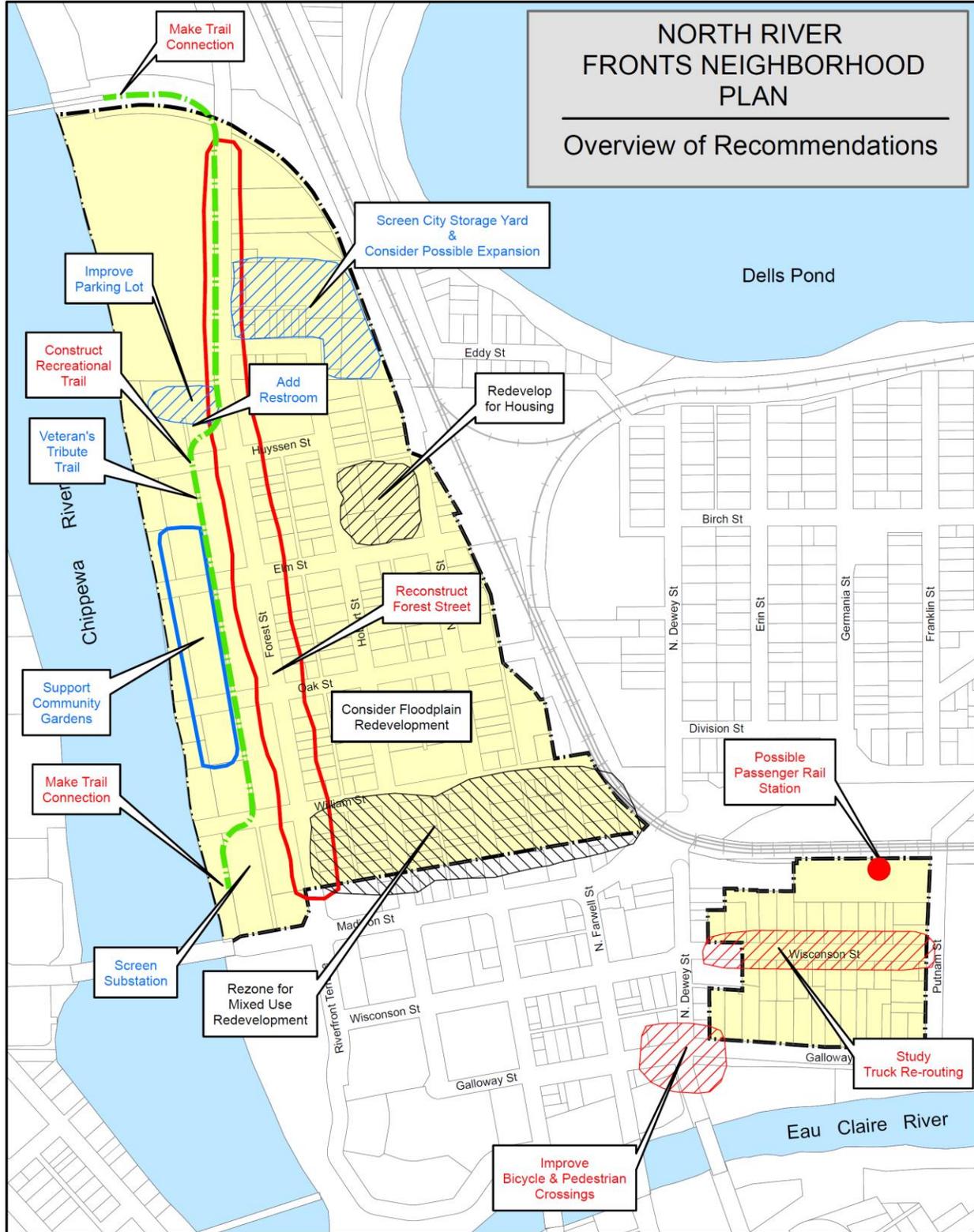
A summary of the major goals of the North River Fronts Neighborhood Plan Update are listed in the column above. They are in response to the issues the neighborhood faces. Several are not unique to North River Fronts; such as the older housing stock and high rental rates that are common in the city’s other central neighborhoods. The plan’s Steering Committee believes strongly that by addressing the quality of housing stock, encouraging new housing opportunities, and promoting financial assistance, that home ownership levels will increase. Good property upkeep, engaged residents, and a lower crime rate are also seen as key contributors to neighborhood success.

This plan’s timeframe covers 10 to 15 years. Decisions made over this time will undoubtedly last longer than 2030, and in the future, another plan update will be likely. The plan that follows serves to improve the North River Fronts and should be consulted in decision-making matters; concerning those of the association and residents of the neighborhood; the City’s official planning actions; and the larger involvement of the public and private sectors.

- 2017 Plan Major Goals**
- 1) Provide Quality Housing**
  - 2) Increase Ownership Rates**
  - 3) Encourage Growth**
  - 4) Redevelop Appropriately**
  - 5) Enhance Parks**
  - 6) Beautify Forest Street**
  - 7) Prevent Crime**
  - 8) Proactive Code Enforcement**
  - 9) Engage Residents**
  - 10) Market Place**

# NORTH RIVER FRONTS NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

## Overview of Recommendations

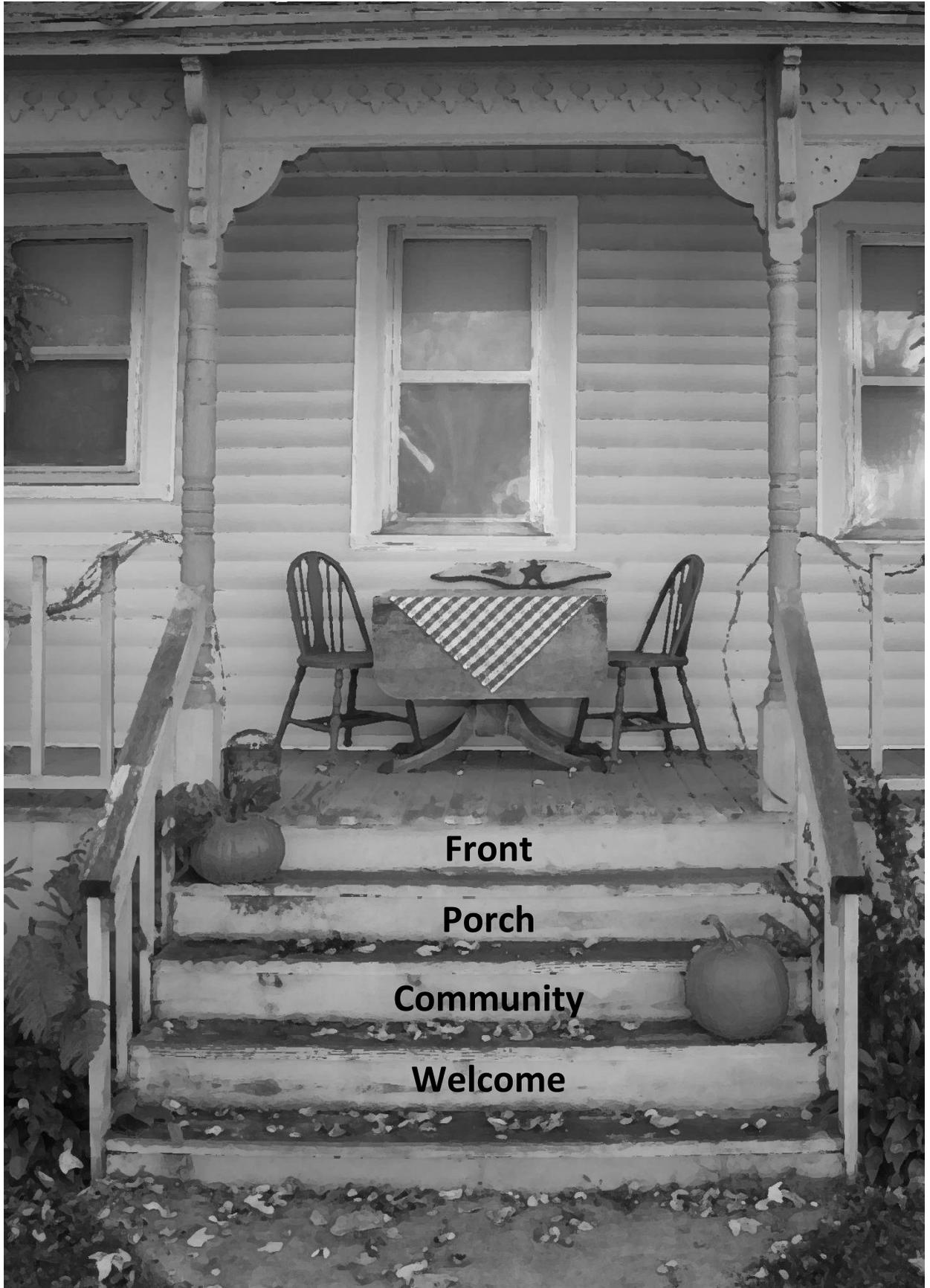


North River Fronts  
Neighborhood Boundary



Map 1





**Front**

**Porch**

**Community**

**Welcome**

# INTRODUCTION

## Purpose & Need

This is the third update of the original neighborhood plan for the North River Fronts Neighborhood. Neighborhood plans are created to plan for existing and future land uses in an orderly and harmonious manner as well as to promote people’s health, safety and general welfare. They have traditionally focused on maintaining and improving the city’s older residential neighborhoods, and thus, are prepared depending on need and appropriate cycle progressions (every 10 years or so). Plans are usually focused on a place’s physical determinates but social and economic factors are also important considerations. A neighborhood plan has a twofold purpose:



- Advance the goals and aims of a particular neighborhood
- Advance the goals and aims of the larger community

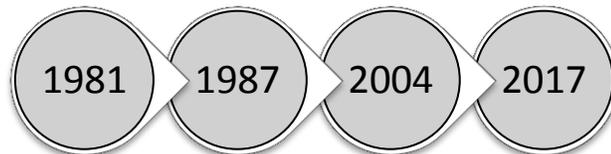
This second purpose speaks to the fact that a neighborhood plan should be consistent or fit with the City’s other plans, mainly the *Comprehensive Plan*. If it deviates, then amendments should be pursued to reconcile differences.

## Origins

Starting in the late 1970’s, Eau Claire citizens began organizing to form neighborhood associations to address common needs like deteriorated housing and lack of investment. They sought means to improve these and other conditions. This led to cooperative efforts starting in 1978 with the City to address problems and make improvements. One of the most effective tools has been the neighborhood plan. The City of Eau Claire’s Community Development Department – Planning Division provides this planning service working closely with neighborhood associations.

## Plan Update

The North River Fronts Neighborhood has had nearly 40 years of neighborhood planning, starting in the early 1980s. This fourth neighborhood plan builds upon earlier versions.



Previous plans have helped accomplish much like mitigating floods, reducing non-conforming zoning issues, improving housing and creating new green space along Forest Street and a neighborhood park. However, aging of and lack of reinvestment in housing continues to be a major problem that needs fresh ideas and sustained

momentum over this new planning period to produce the desired outcomes sought in this plan—mainly physical housing improvements, redevelopment and increased home ownership. Those who need to be committed to this ongoing effort are many, but the City and Neighborhood Association are the main players and should be



focused on fulfilling the plan’s objectives while working with other stakeholders. This plan update is meant to guide the neighborhood for the next ten to fifteen years, with expectations that the changes will last well beyond that timeframe. Therefore, it should be view as ‘generational’- or meaning proposed changes may last 30 years or more- and considered a ‘living document’- as no plan can cover or foresee everything. In time, another update will be needed.

The plan update is organized into three main chapters: Neighborhood Profile, Planning Issues and Improvement Strategies. The plan is further designed to help market the neighborhood as it tries to make evident the reasons why people should want to live and invest in such a great place.

## Plan Authority

This and other neighborhood plans become part of the City’s *Comprehensive Plan*, as an adopted neighborhood element. Thus, the neighborhood plan has legal authority as an official guide for decision-making. They are regularly consulted upon by the Planning Division, other City departments, Plan Commission and City Council to help determine imminent and long term land use and infrastructure decisions. Neighborhood associations also use it as their guide for building a better quality of life and for steering responses to development proposals.

In the 2015 *Comprehensive Plan*, the city’s central neighborhoods received special attention having a separate chapter<sup>1</sup>. It recognized that these older places are great assets and should be improved while leveraging their strategic location. A subsequent stakeholder public planning effort produced the *Eau Claire Neighborhood Revitalization Task Force Report*.<sup>2</sup> This neighborhood plan update incorporates recommendations and policies in both of these documents. It also seeks close alignment with these and other chapters of the *Comprehensive Plan* so as to be clear about development expectations for both the public and private sector. Where there may be recommendations in this plan contrary to existing plans, these are so noted.

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<sup>1</sup> *Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015 Neighborhood and Districts Plan*. City of Eau Claire. Retrieved May 19, 2017 at <http://eauclairewi.gov/home/showdocument?id=10521>

<sup>2</sup> Retrieved May 19, 2017 at <http://eauclairewi.gov/home/showdocument?id=14808>

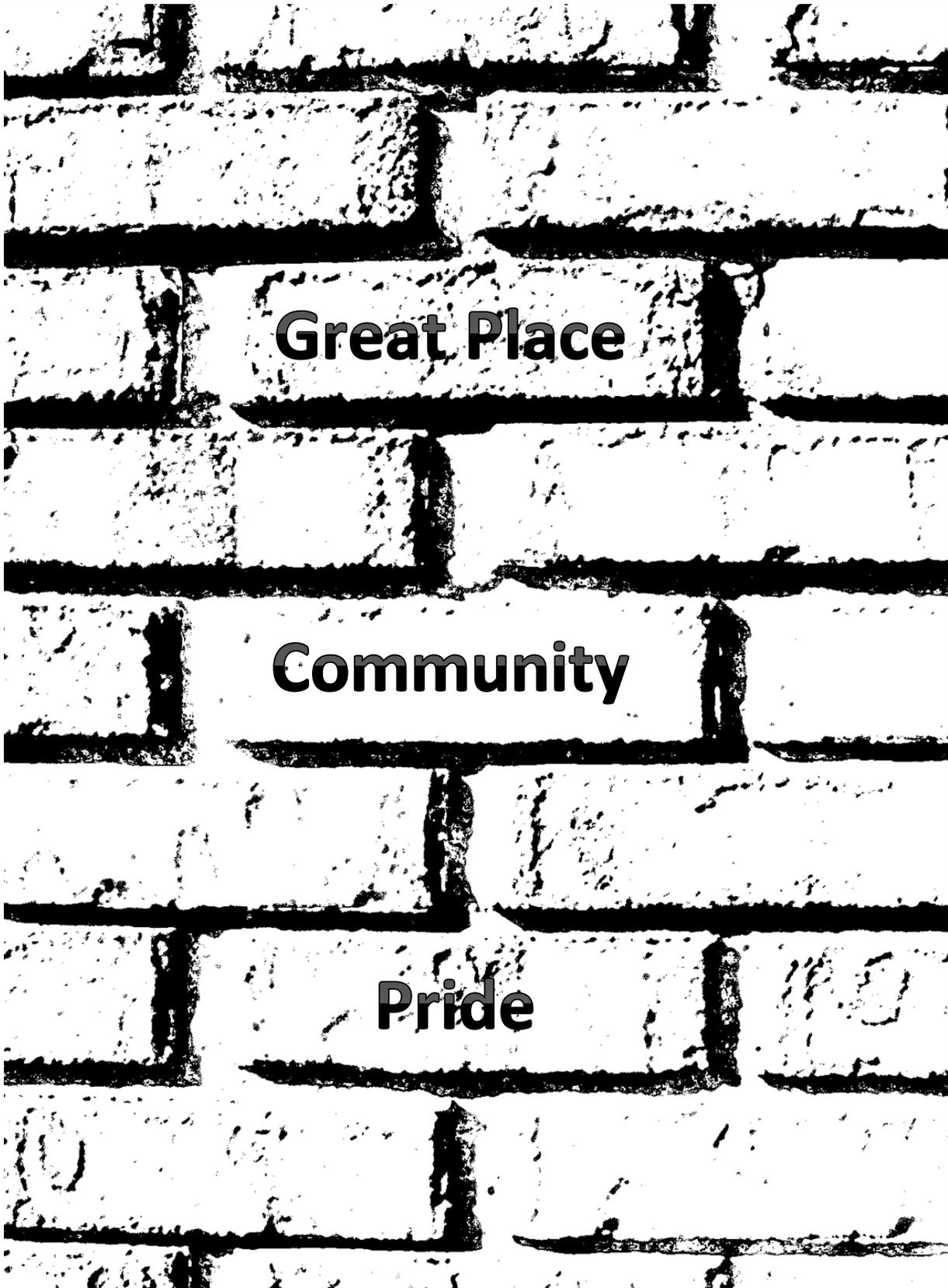
## Update Process

A plan update request was filed by the North River Fronts Neighborhood Association in January 2015. The City's Plan Commission concurred that North River Fronts' plan should be updated in 2016 after the Neighborhood Revitalization Task Force concluded. After the Neighborhood Association mailed notice to all property owners in the neighborhood, the planning process kicked-off in February 2016. The meeting was well-attended and a Steering Committee was formed by the association to provide input to City staff as they prepared the plan update. The committee represented various groups such as home owners, property owners and renters.

Planning staff met with the Neighborhood Steering Committee five times to formulate the update. The March meeting was to learn about neighborhood demographics and background. The June meeting was to identify issues. The August meeting was to learn about transportation concerns and lay out resident engagement strategies. In October a number of general public meetings were held to engage the neighborhood. Four "office hours" were held at local business establishments during various times of the day as well as a Saturday resident input meeting within the neighborhood to solicit feedback. These inclusionary methods were deliberately planned thinking they might better appeal to various people and busy families. A public online survey that was similar to the previous mailed version for the last plan was also conducted. Despite mailing notices to all residents and property owners in the neighborhood (see Appendix C for the flyer), only a few people took the survey and attended the aforementioned general public opportunities. At a November 2016 meeting, City staff and the steering committee outlined, discussed and recommended possible improvement strategies. The draft plan was developed by staff from the input and background received and then reviewed by the committee in early May 2017. Further direction was given at that time before initial discussion by the City's Plan Commission.

The Plan Commission reviewed the draft on June 5, 2017 providing direction. They held a public hearing on July 17th and then approved the plan. City Council held their public hearing and provided direction on July 24th with adopting the North River Fronts Neighborhood Plan Update on July 25, 2017.





**Great Place**

**Community**

**Pride**

# I. Neighborhood Profile

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# NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

This chapter includes background on the North River Fronts Neighborhood, the place and its people.

| Reference Pages          |    |                     |    |
|--------------------------|----|---------------------|----|
| Boundaries               | 14 | Households          | 22 |
| Description              | 16 | Race & Ethnicity    | 22 |
| History                  | 18 | Employment          | 23 |
| Neighborhood Association | 19 | Education           | 23 |
| General Demographics     | 20 | Income              | 24 |
| Population               | 20 | Housing Counts      | 25 |
| Age & Gender             | 20 | Historic Properties | 26 |

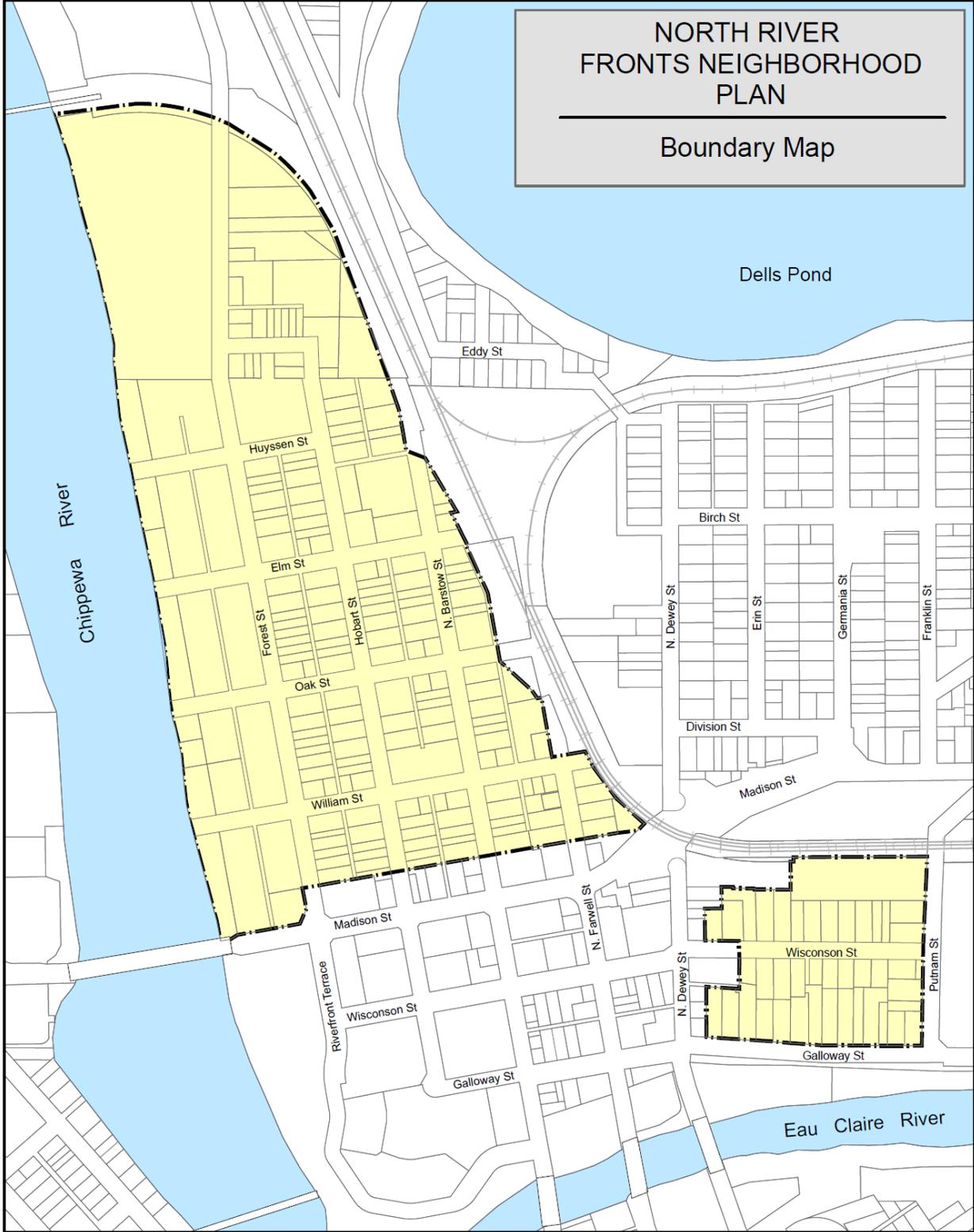
## Boundaries

The North River Fronts Neighborhood is divided into two areas (see Boundary Map 2). The majority of the neighborhood lies north of businesses fronting the north side of East Madison Street, south of vacated railroad right of way near the City’s Central Maintenance Facility, east of the Chippewa River, and west of Union Pacific’s main rail line. The smaller two block part of the neighborhood lies north of Galloway Street, south of Union Pacific’s mainline, east from the first tier of parcels facing North Dewey Street, and west of Putnam Street. These two parts are not connected due to a portion of downtown bisecting the neighborhood, although they are relatively close together and similar in character.



# NORTH RIVER FRONTS NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

## Boundary Map



North River Fronts  
Neighborhood Boundary



Map 2

## Description

The North River Fronts Neighborhood is identifiable by its mix of housing, parks, proximity to downtown and both the Chippewa and Eau Claire rivers. In 2015, about 850 people lived in the neighborhood. For physical context, see Maps 3 and 4 for terrain and aerial images.



The neighborhood is primarily located in a scenic valley and partially within the floodplain of the Chippewa River. It contains more upland along the Eau Claire River. Soils are sandy with some gravels overlying sandstone bedrock. Forested bluffs skirt its eastern and northern flanks. Land along the riverbanks are either undevelopable or have floodplain restrictions. Dells Dam, a hydroelectric plant is located just north of the neighborhood and helps control periodic river flooding.

The North River Fronts is predominately residential in character, containing modest older single-family and duplex homes with some multi-unit building exceptions. There are a few scattered commercial and industrial properties such as the former Walters Brewery site and properties along Putnam Street. There is a special area park, Forest Street Park, with its open area and large community gardens, and a smaller park called North River Fronts Neighborhood Park, with a playground, shelter and children's garden. There are presently no schools or churches. Young school-aged children go to Longfellow Elementary to the east in the North Side Hill Neighborhood. The City's Central Maintenance Facility is located within the neighborhood with the main facility on the west side of Forest Street and a salt shed and material storage yard located to the east and north of Sara Street.

The neighborhood is roughly 0.18 square miles of the city of Eau Claire. This is relatively a smaller geographical entity compared to other neighborhoods, both in land area and population. Its layout parallels the rivers and is comprised of averaged sized gridiron blocks with sidewalks and alleys. Parcel sizes for housing are mixed, ranging from 3,000 square feet or smaller to over 12,000 square feet. Many of the originally platted lots have had lot splits or lot combinations.

Major streets serving the neighborhood are Galloway, East Madison and Forest streets. A number of bus routes touch or run through North River Front. The area is very walkable with sidewalks and trails. Bike routes are either nearby or planned for the future. Union Pacific's active freight railroad runs alongside the eastern and northern edges.

As mentioned, the neighborhood borders the northern half of Eau Claire's central business district and experiences both the benefits and pressures of downtown. Many jobs, retail stores and services can be found in the downtown and are within walking distance. Some major destinations adjacent to the neighborhood are Phoenix Park and its outdoor farmers market, the post office, and the public library. Towards the east, the neighborhood fronts Banbury Place, a multi-use complex with jobs, apartment lofts and shops.

NORTH RIVER  
FRONTS NEIGHBORHOOD  
PLAN

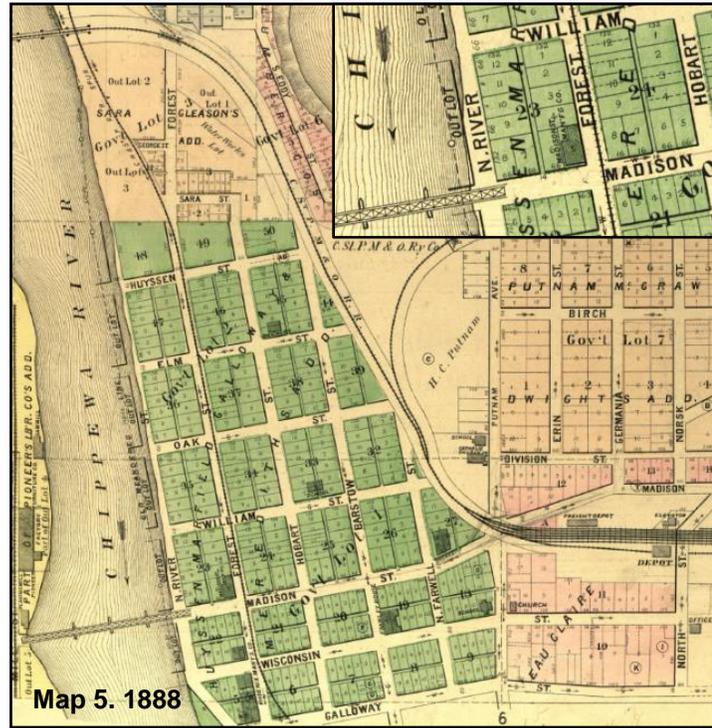
Context Aerial



Map 4

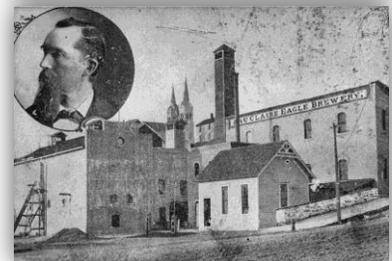
## History

The North River Fronts Neighborhood or the “lower north side” has a rich history of over 150 years. It is one of the original places settled in the city, as part of the town of North Eau Claire. The majority of the neighborhood was platted in the 1860s and 1880s. Housing was originally built before 1860s and into the late 1890s. In 1872, North Eau Claire was incorporated into the City of Eau Claire, along with West Eau Claire and the Village of Eau Claire. The confluence of the Chippewa and Eau Claire rivers separated these three places. As seen on Map 5, the 1888 Bussell's Atlas, the neighborhood appears to have received its name sake from fronting the Chippewa River. The inset notes N. River Street fronting the Chippewa River. This right-of-way eventually became the east dike of the river. The neighborhood has always had a close relationship to the rivers.



By the early 1890s, the area was mostly built up with housing and businesses and was called the 8th Ward. Housing mainly served the workforce for nearby downtown businesses and industries such as Dells Paper and Pulp Company, Phoenix Manufacturing Company, Walters Brewery, and later for Uniroyal. North River Fronts today contains much of same type of original modest housing stock and serves a similar affordable housing role, though there is more variation in occupations due to greater mobility.

The neighborhood used to contain the city's main passenger train station, the 1893 Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railroad (Omaha Road) Depot. The brownstone Richardsonian Romanesque structure at 324 Putnam Street was unfortunately demolished in 1987 to expand the now defunct Holsum Bakery. Historical photos to the right are the razed 8th Ward School, which was at the NW corner of North Barstow Street and William Street, the Eagle Brewery started by a brother of Jacob Leinenkugel, and the Omaha Road Depot.



## Neighborhood Association

Community development means more than just physical improvement. Stable and supportive social contexts- whether at the household level or community- are foundational. Outward success can be a manifestation of the relationships and accomplishments by the people who live and work in a neighborhood. This range can include many: invested residents, families, businesses, non-profits, local government and more. Neighborhood champions are also vital. When these types are organized and unified in vision, as in the case of the North River Fronts Neighborhood Association, great things can occur.

The association has been very involved in each of the neighborhood planning efforts. They have helped the City identify important planning issues and advanced ideas and goals for implementation. The relocation of and amenities in the North River Fronts Neighborhood Park is one such fine example. Their volunteers also lead and participate throughout the year in various quarterly meetings and social events. This has helped build the neighborhood's social cohesion and collective action to voice and address concerns.

The Steering Committee for this plan, which is made up of some of most active neighborhood association participants, identified the need to sustain and support the association in terms of attracting new members, sponsoring meaningful activities and fundraising. Community Development Block Grant dollars for the Neighborhood Association is currently very meager and continues to decrease. Outside funding and new ways of partnering with others who may have a stake in the neighborhood has become increasingly necessary. Ideas to support the ongoing need of leadership, funding, and participation in meetings and events are addressed in the Improvement Strategies Chapter.



## General Demographics

The following is a snapshot of the people who live in and the conditions that make up the North River Fronts Neighborhood. Factors that shape a neighborhood are complex, ranging from social and economic to natural and physical. These influence and affect a neighborhood and its population over time. They also produce a certain identity. This chapter addresses some important factors such as population, education, employment, income, race, age, households and family size. It also keys in on properties and their physical characteristics, function or use, and their assessed values. Again, demographic data is mainly found in this chapter, but other data sets will be found throughout the plan.<sup>3</sup> In general, the neighborhood has older and lower value housing stock compared to the city average, and that its total population has started to stabilize.

## Population

Table 1 shows the estimated population for North River Fronts and that it lost 6.7% from 2000 to 2010. By 2015, the population had risen again and by 2020 it is expected to match 2000 numbers. Previous plans have noted the neighborhood was experiencing a steady decline in population. In fact, 1970 Census data showed that 1,191 people then lived in the neighborhood. Part of this drop can be attributed to the homes removed from the floodplain west of Forest Street. But, it may also coincide with the slow national trend of a decreasing household size. The median age of people living in the neighborhood is relatively early mid-life range.

| <b>Table 1.</b>            | <b>2000</b>   | <b>2010</b>   | <b>2015</b> | <b>2020</b>     |
|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|
| <b>Population</b>          | <b>Census</b> | <b>Census</b> | <b>ACS</b>  | <b>Forecast</b> |
| <b>Population</b>          | 883           | 823           | 848         | 883             |
| <b>Median Age</b>          | -             | 30.4          | 31.4        | 32.0            |
| <b>Households</b>          | 373           | 353           | 368         | 384             |
| <b>Avg. Household Size</b> | 2.33          | 2.28          | 2.26        | 2.25            |

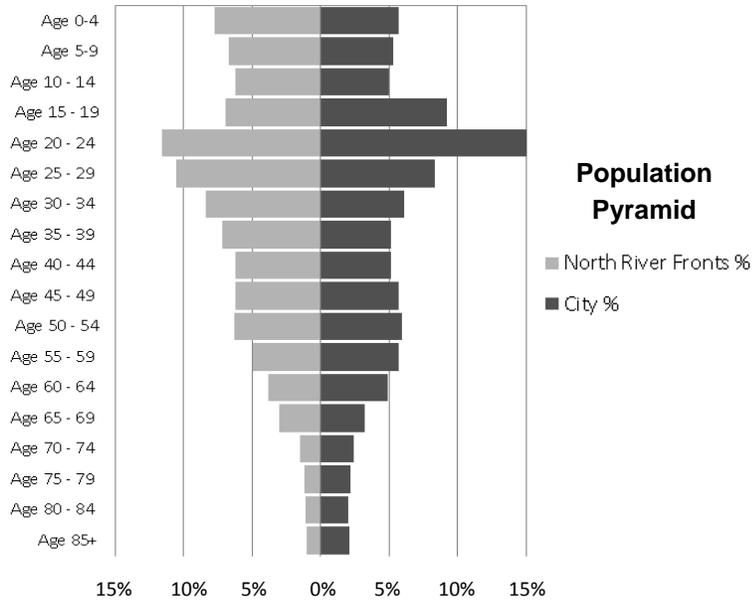
Source: U.S. Census Decennial & American Community Survey, ESRI Community Analyst

## Age & Gender

Population by age shows the neighborhood is generally close to the city age profile. Data from 2010 shows the 25-34 year old segment is the largest at 18.8% and is projected to grow. The population pyramid on the next page shows that the area has more young children and more people in the mid-20s to 40, while there are less college student ages and elderly compared to the city on whole. It is difficult to draw precise conclusions from the census data, but it may be the neighborhood with its affordable housing and lower rents is an attractive place for younger adults with less purchasing power. While not

<sup>3</sup> Neighborhood boundary lines do not match U.S. Census boundaries, whether by block group or by census tract classification. In comparing previous North River Fronts Neighborhood plans' with census data extracted using current technology- Community Analyst software from ESRI, Inc.- minor differences were found. Community Analyst was relied upon primarily because it utilizes algorithms to more precisely align demographic information with actual neighborhood boundaries. City Assessing data was used when possible as a comparison tool, and in some cases the accuracy was believed to be stronger. This was true for housing tenure and valuation over Community Analyst's data.

particularly known for student housing, the somewhat higher younger populations may represent recent graduates or those working but lacking higher education. As for gender, the 2010 Census counted 52% male and 48% female.



| Table 2. Age       | 2010 Census NRF # | 2010 Census NRF % | 2010 Census City # | 2010 Census City % |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Total</b>       | 822               | 100%              | 66,073             | 100%               |
| <b>Age 0-4</b>     | 63                | 7.7%              | 3,798              | 5.7%               |
| <b>Age 5-9</b>     | 55                | 6.7%              | 3,473              | 5.3%               |
| <b>Age 10 - 14</b> | 51                | 6.2%              | 3,316              | 5.0%               |
| <b>Age 15 - 19</b> | 57                | 6.9%              | 6,063              | 9.2%               |
| <b>Age 20 - 24</b> | 95                | 11.6%             | 10,641             | 16.1%              |
| <b>Age 25 - 29</b> | 86                | 10.5%             | 5,469              | 8.3%               |
| <b>Age 30 - 34</b> | 69                | 8.4%              | 4,036              | 6.1%               |
| <b>Age 35 - 39</b> | 59                | 7.2%              | 3,384              | 5.1%               |
| <b>Age 40 - 44</b> | 51                | 6.2%              | 3,391              | 5.1%               |
| <b>Age 45 - 49</b> | 51                | 6.2%              | 3,773              | 5.7%               |
| <b>Age 50 - 54</b> | 52                | 6.3%              | 3,897              | 5.9%               |
| <b>Age 55 - 59</b> | 40                | 4.9%              | 3,764              | 5.7%               |
| <b>Age 60 - 64</b> | 31                | 3.8%              | 3,249              | 4.9%               |
| <b>Age 65 - 69</b> | 25                | 3.0%              | 2,138              | 3.2%               |
| <b>Age 70 - 74</b> | 12                | 1.5%              | 1,578              | 2.4%               |
| <b>Age 75 - 79</b> | 10                | 1.2%              | 1,447              | 2.2%               |
| <b>Age 80 - 84</b> | 9                 | 1.1%              | 1,292              | 2.0%               |
| <b>Age 85+</b>     | 8                 | 1.0%              | 1,365              | 2.1%               |
| <b>Age 18+</b>     | 625               | 75.9%             | 53,329             | 80.7%              |
| <b>Age 65+</b>     | 64                | 7.8%              | -                  | 11.8%              |
| <b>Median Age</b>  | 30.4              | -                 | 30.3               | -                  |

Source: U.S. Census Decennial & American Community Survey, ESRI Community Analyst

## Households

The 2010 Census householder profile for North River Fronts Neighborhood (NRF) revealed more single persons, single parents, and un-married couples compared to city totals. The householder composition is less symbolic of the traditional family unit as there were less married husband-wife families.

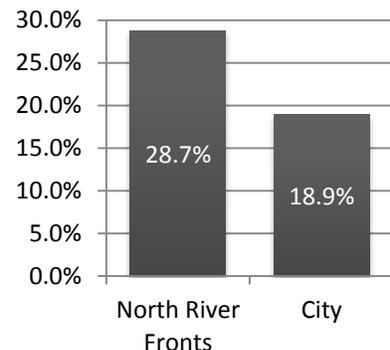
| <b>Table 3.<br/>Households by Type</b>          | <b>2010<br/>Census<br/>NRF #</b> | <b>2010<br/>Census<br/>NRF %</b> | <b>2010<br/>Census<br/>City #</b> | <b>2010<br/>Census<br/>City %</b> |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Total</b>                                    | 352                              | 100%                             | 26,877                            | 100%                              |
| <b>Households with 1 Person</b>                 | 135                              | 38.4%                            | 8,337                             | 31.0%                             |
| <b>Households with 2+ People</b>                | 217                              | 61.6%                            | 18,540                            | 69.0%                             |
| <b>Family Households</b>                        | 165                              | 46.9%                            | 14,605                            | 54.3%                             |
| <b>Husband-wife Families</b>                    | 86                               | 24.4%                            | 10,991                            | 40.9%                             |
| <b>With Own Children</b>                        | 38                               | 11.4%                            | 4,222                             | 16.2%                             |
| <b>Other Family (No Spouse Present)</b>         | 79                               | 22.4%                            | 3,613                             | 13.4%                             |
| <b>Other Family with Male<br/>Householder</b>   | -                                | 5.4%                             | -                                 | 4.1%                              |
| <b>With Own Children</b>                        | -                                | 2.8%                             | -                                 | 2.5%                              |
| <b>Other Family with Female<br/>Householder</b> | -                                | 17.0%                            | -                                 | 9.3%                              |
| <b>With Related Children</b>                    | -                                | 12.5%                            | -                                 | 6.4%                              |
| <b>Nonfamily Households</b>                     | 52                               | 14.8%                            | 3,935                             | 14.6%                             |
| <b>All Households with Children</b>             | 96                               | 27.2%                            | 6,876                             | 25.6%                             |
| <b>Multigenerational Households</b>             | 11                               | 3.1%                             | 399                               | 1.5%                              |
| <b>Unmarried Partner Households</b>             | 48                               | 13.6%                            | 2,262                             | 8.4%                              |
| <b>Male-female</b>                              | 46                               | 13.0%                            | 2,123                             | 7.9%                              |
| <b>Same-sex</b>                                 | 2                                | 0.6%                             | 139                               | 0.5%                              |
| <b>Average Household Size</b>                   | 2.28                             | -                                | 2.29                              | -                                 |

Source: U.S. Census Decennial & American Community Survey, ESRI Community Analyst

## Race & Ethnicity

The neighborhood is one of the more diverse places in the city. See the Diversity Index Chart<sup>4</sup> and Table 4. Caucasian or white population still makes up the largest percent at 86% but this is projected to drop near 82% by 2020. The Asian and Hispanic origin populations are expected to continue to grow respectively from 8.0% and 2.4% in 2000 to almost 10% and 4% in 2020. The neighborhood's affordability may be attractive to certain ethnic minorities, immigrants, or diversity may itself be a draw.

**Diversity Index**



<sup>4</sup> ESRI's Diversity Index measures the probability that two people from the same area will be from different race/ethnic groups.

| <b>Table 4.<br/>Race &amp; Ethnicity</b> | <b>2010<br/>Census<br/>NRF #</b> | <b>2010<br/>Census<br/>NRF %</b> | <b>2010<br/>Census<br/>City %</b> |
|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>White Alone</b>                       | 709                              | 86.1%                            | 91.7%                             |
| <b>Black Alone</b>                       | 14                               | 1.7%                             | 1.1%                              |
| <b>American Indian</b>                   | 8                                | 1.0%                             | 0.5%                              |
| <b>Asian Alone</b>                       | 66                               | 8.0%                             | 4.4%                              |
| <b>Hispanic Origin</b>                   | 20                               | 2.4%                             | 1.9%                              |
| <b>Other</b>                             | 6                                | 0.8%                             | 0.5%                              |
| <b>*Diversity Index</b>                  | -                                | 28.7%                            | 18.9%                             |

Source: U.S. Census Decennial & American Community Survey, ESRI Community Analyst

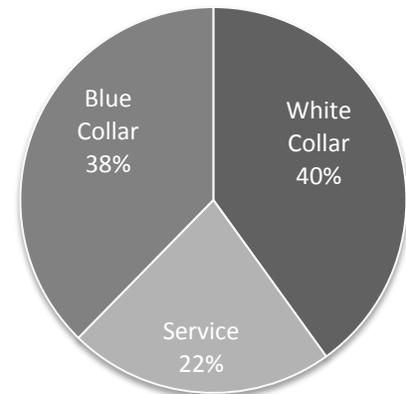
## Employment

The North River Fronts has a good mix of those in the labor force which contributes to its variety. Census American Community Survey data for 2015 shows 13% of the population are unemployed civilians over the age of 16. Of the 87% who are employed, 40% are white collar sector, 22% service sector and 38% blue collar sector.

| <b>Table 5.<br/>NRF Employment by Occupation</b> | <b>2015<br/>Age 16+</b> |
|--|-------------------------|
| <b>Total</b>                                     | 342                     |
| <b>White Collar</b>                              | 40.3%                   |
| <b>Management/Business/Financial</b>             | 10.0%                   |
| <b>Professional</b>                              | 6.8%                    |
| <b>Sales</b>                                     | 14.4%                   |
| <b>Administrative Support</b>                    | 9.1%                    |
| <b>Services</b>                                  | 22.4%                   |
| <b>Blue Collar</b>                               | 37.9%                   |
| <b>Farming/Forestry/Fishing</b>                  | 0.0%                    |
| <b>Construction/Extraction</b>                   | 10.6%                   |
| <b>Installation/Maintenance/Repair</b>           | 5.3%                    |
| <b>Production</b>                                | 16.2%                   |
| <b>Transportation/Material Moving</b>            | 5.9%                    |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2015 and 2020. Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography

**Occupations**



## Education

There are no schools in the neighborhood. The Eau Claire Area School District has open enrollment, but assigns children to attend Longfellow Elementary, DeLong Middle School and North High School. Of those who are 25 or older, data from 2015 shows that one in five or 20% have no high school diploma, 32% have only a high school degree or equivalent, 22% have some college education, while almost 26% have some level of college degree. At almost a two to one difference, college graduation levels are significantly lower than the city average.

| <b>Table 6.<br/>Population by Education</b>             |  | <b>2015 Age 25+</b> |
|---|--|---------------------|
| <b>Total</b>  |  | 536                 |
| <b>Less than 9<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>                   |  | 5.0%                |
| <b>9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade, No Diploma</b> |  | 14.9%               |
| <b>High School Graduate</b>                             |  | 22.4%               |
| <b>GED/Alternative Credential</b>                       |  | 9.3%                |
| <b>Some College, No Degree</b>                          |  | 22.4%               |
| <b>Associate Degree</b>                                 |  | 6.3%                |
| <b>Bachelor's Degree</b>                                |  | 16.0%               |
| <b>Graduate/Professional Degree</b>                     |  | 3.5%                |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2015 and 2020. Esri converted Census 2000 data into 2010 geography

## Income

Education is a strong predictor of earnings. The neighborhood's income base and purchasing ability is lower than the city. This disparity is almost two-thirds greater for households making \$24,999 or less than city wide. The same generally holds true for average and median household incomes and per capita income. The income data in Table 7 represents 2015 values, expressed in current dollars. Household income includes wage and salary earnings, interest dividends, rental income, pensions, Social Security and welfare payments, child support, and alimony. Per Capita Income represents the income received by all persons aged 15 years and over divided by the total population.

| <b>Table 7.<br/>Households by Income</b> |  | <b>2015</b> |
|--|--|-------------|
| <b>Household Income Base</b>             |  | 368         |
| <b>&lt;\$15,000</b>                      |  | 23.4%       |
| <b>\$15,000 - \$24,999</b>               |  | 21.7%       |
| <b>\$25,000 - \$34,999</b>               |  | 14.4%       |
| <b>\$35,000 - \$49,999</b>               |  | 16.8%       |
| <b>\$50,000 - \$74,999</b>               |  | 13.3%       |
| <b>\$75,000 - \$99,999</b>               |  | 6.8%        |
| <b>\$100,000 - \$149,999</b>             |  | 3.8%        |
| <b>\$150,000 - \$199,999</b>             |  | 0.0%        |
| <b>\$200,000+</b>                        |  | 0.0%        |
| <b>Average Household Income</b>          |  | \$36,290    |
| <b>Median Household Income</b>           |  | \$27,803    |
| <b>Per Capita</b>                        |  | \$15,875    |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2015.

## Housing Counts

This section covers the neighborhood’s housing features of unit counts, type and style. Housing is a major focus of this plan and its characteristics are addressed in greater detail in the following two chapters.



The North River Front’s housing is generally older, lower in value, mixed in number of units and type of dwellings, and heavy in rentals. The total unit count level has stabilized more recently. The next two tables display housing units and types. In the mid-1990s using FEMA funding, the City acquired and removed housing units in the floodplain west of Forest Street which is reflected in the reduction of units in 2000. The total number of units over the last 15 years seems to have plateaued. By 2020 it may be possible to see a slight increase in overall units. Downtown and its redevelopment may have an influence on this trend.

| <b>Table 8.</b><br><b>Housing Units</b> | <b>1970<br/>Census</b> | <b>1980<br/>Census</b> | <b>2000<br/>Census</b> | <b>2010<br/>Census</b> | <b>2015<br/>ACS</b> | <b>2020<br/>Forecast</b> |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Count</b>                            | 513                    | 526                    | 405                    | 383                    | 400                 | 417                      |

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, and ESRI

As stated, the neighborhood has a good mix of housing choices with single family, duplexes, three plus unit buildings and apartments. Lowest density housing (i.e., single family homes) are found scattered throughout whereas higher density (i.e., three plus units and apartments) are generally found closer to East Madison Street and along Wisconsin Street. These two areas are close to downtown.

| <b>Table 9.</b><br><b>Housing Type</b> | <b>2016</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| <b>Single Family</b>                   | 86          | 45.0%          |
| <b>Duplex</b>                          | 69          | 36.0%          |
| <b>3+ Unit Buildings</b>               | 28          | 14.5%          |
| <b>Apartments</b>                      | 2           | 1.0%           |
| <b>Vacant</b>                          | 7           | 3.5%           |
| <b>Totals</b>                          | 185         | 100%           |

Source: City Assessing Data (excludes exempt properties with no unit count)

## Historic Properties

North River Fronts contains some fine examples of architecture. Much of the housing appearance is residential old style, cottage, bungalow, American Four Square and Queen Anne. There are four properties that are currently listed on historic registers. Those at 527 and 605 North Barstow Street are late nineteenth-century Queen Anne style mansions related to the Walter Brewery families. Both houses are Local Landmarks and on the National Register of Historic Places. They are similar in design with gables, bay windows, a corner octagonal tower and a sweeping veranda. Little remains of the Walters Brewery site. After demolition of the brewery, the site was delisted. The other two are the 1881 Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha steel railroad “High Bridge” which was converted into a pedestrian bridge in 2015 and the Queen Anne styled Ramstad House at 627 Wisconsin Street. Both properties are registered as Local Landmarks.





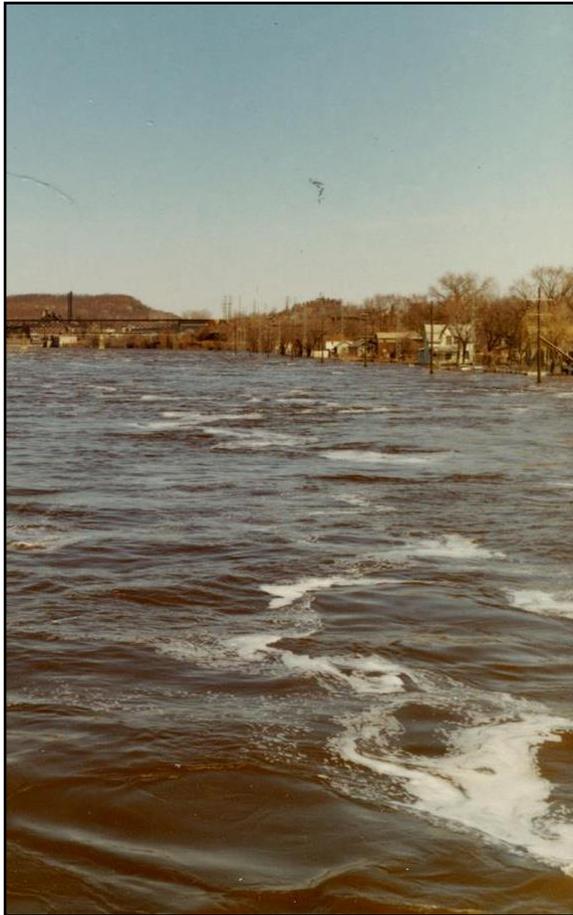
✓ Quality of Life Issues

✓ Stronger Community

✓ Aging Housing

# II. Planning Issues

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# PLANNING ISSUES

This chapter includes information related to the problems the neighborhood wants to better address.

| Reference Pages   |    |                      |    |
|-------------------|----|----------------------|----|
| Boundaries        | 30 | Housing Tenure       | 38 |
| Land Uses         | 30 | Housing Cost Burden  | 40 |
| Zoning            | 32 | Flooding             | 41 |
| Property Lots     | 34 | Crime                | 44 |
| Property Value    | 34 | Healthy Neighborhood | 45 |
| Housing Condition | 35 | Transportation       | 46 |
| Nuisances         | 38 | Community Services   | 46 |

## Summary

Major issues the North River Fronts Neighborhood faces provide good reason for undertaking a neighborhood plan. This plan update being the fourth demonstrates that there are long standing issues that need continual attention. Aging housing is among the most apparent, but other issues identified by the neighborhood Steering Committee are addressed in this chapter. The box on the right lists the issues succinctly. Taken together, all issues produce a certain image to the public. While there are many positive attributes, the Steering Committee felt much work needs to be done to overcome some of the more detrimental issues, such as lack of quality housing and crime.

The issues addressed next are not just unique to North River Fronts, as the older inner city neighborhoods face many of the same problems and the community recognizes this situation. Thus, the City's 2015 *Comprehensive Plan* had a special chapter on older neighborhoods which prompted the more detailed Neighborhood Revitalization Task Force. Stakeholders produced a report outlining several recommendations and many of these are incorporated into this plan.

### Neighborhood Issues Identified

- Aging & blighted housing
- Housing improvements
- Property maintenance
- Lack of redevelopment
- Development barriers
- Zoning conflicts
- Floodplain risk & costs
- Low home owner rate
- Higher rental rate
- Property management / absentee landlords
- Transitional neighborhood
- Image & identity
- Neighborhood participation / apathy
- Social cohesion
- Neighborhood boundaries
- Code Enforcement / nuisances
- Garbage & hauling problems
- Crime & unsafe perception
- Forest Street reconstruction
- Park improvements
- Bicycle connections
- Truck traffic
- Active railroad
- City Shop expansion

## Neighborhood Boundaries

The Plan Update Steering Committee voiced strong desire to better connect the boundaries of the neighborhood by incorporating the North Barstow area of downtown. Downtown currently bi-sects the neighborhood into two geographical sub-units and the gap between is recognizable, albeit small. For a boundary map and description see pages 14-16. In North River Fronts' case, this plan update follows the preceding three neighborhood plans, which did not include the adjacent downtown section (but see Appendix A). No changes are recommended since downtown land uses are different and more intense. Neighborhood planning focuses on main housing areas rather than on significant commercial centers.

As the North Barstow redevelopment area has seen new apartment residents locate into this part of downtown, it is acknowledged that North River Fronts residents on either the east or north side of this area may see it as an extension of their neighborhood. See the Context Aerial Map on page 17 for these adjacent built up blocks. From a social point of view this makes sense, but from a planning point of view, downtown, as stated before, is a unique destination with major concentrations of businesses, activities, parking and a growing number of residences. Downtown has its own land use plan in the 2015 *Comprehensive Plan* – Downtown Chapter, and further, the North Barstow/Medical Business Improvement District (BID) assists in the planning and physical improvements of the area.

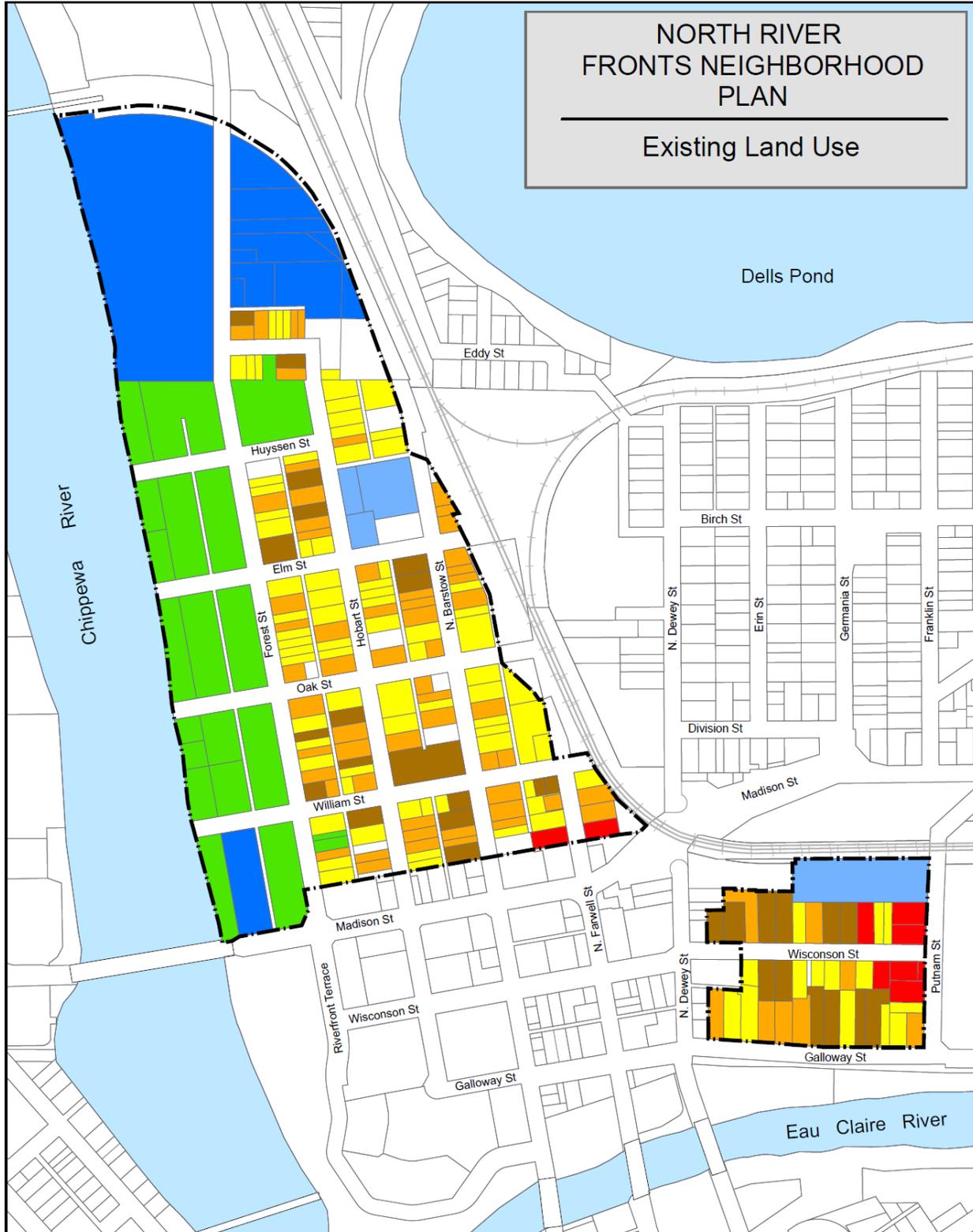
## Land Uses

The existing land use of the North River Fronts neighborhood is illustrated in the map on page 31. It shows a large mixture of residential dwellings, parkland and municipal facilities with lesser amounts of legacy industrial properties and fringe commercial adjacent to the downtown. The bulk of properties are residential comprising single family, two-units or duplexes, 3 and 4 unit multi-family buildings and small apartment buildings. The neighborhood does experience some land use conflicts (noise, odor, outdoor storage, traffic and heavy vehicles) with some residential being located close to remnant industrial uses and also the City's Central Maintenance Facility and storage yard. Other conflicts come from outside the neighborhood, whether immediately bordering such as downtown bars next to homes or traffic and air emissions moving through the neighborhood but being generated by outside land uses.

Based on the current 2015 *Comprehensive Plan's* Future Land Use Map, it is not anticipated that the neighborhood will dramatically change. It will still be primarily residential in nature but the land use intensity of residential will change as the plan calls for medium to higher density housing. Areas of particular attention are closer to the downtown edge and with a possible rezoning of the former Walter's Brewery block to residential. How this gets accomplished is important for each new project. Effects on nearby existing housing should be addressed to the extent possible so that major conflicts are ameliorated. The *Comprehensive Plan* – Downtown Plan Chapter calls for master planning efforts to better deal with the opportunities and issues related to redevelopment. Another major concern is the cost challenges associated with redevelopment. Acquisition, possible land assembly, floodplain relief, development approvals, demolition, new utilities and construction need to produce a return on investment. To date, the neighborhood has seen little interest from the private sector. Redevelopment of various land uses is discussed in greater detail in the Improvement Strategies chapter of this plan.

# NORTH RIVER FRONTS NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

## Existing Land Use



### Map 6

## Zoning

The majority of the neighborhood is zoned Residential Mixed, or RM. The mixed residential district or RM zoning district provides for the development and maintenance of a compatible mixture of single-family homes, two-family homes, townhomes, garden apartments, and small apartment buildings. It also is intended to encourage moderately dense development which is compatible with existing and future single-family development, in either older neighborhoods or developing areas.

In 2006, as the previous neighborhood plan called for, the neighborhood was ‘down-zoned’ from higher density residential, industrial and central business districts to RM-P to address various non-conformities related to inconsistent land uses with zoning and substandard lot sizes. An example was single family homes with high density residential (R-4) or light industrial (I-1) zoning. The ‘P’ or ‘Planned’ designation adopted a General Development Plan for the neighborhood (Planning File No. Z-1372-06) and addresses most of these problems. A minimum of 8,700 square foot lot sizes was approved to eliminate a number of non-conforming lots that contained 3 or 4 units despite the typical RM 10,000 square foot rule. It granted additional oversight on multi-family projects via a conditional use permit which normal RM does not require. Since there are some differences between standard RM zoning and the neighborhood’s own version of RM-P zoning it is important to make clear the expectations. Thus, the following Table 10 shows what is required per the adopted General Development Plan for North River Fronts.

**Table 10. North River Fronts Neighborhood’s General Development Plan**

The zoning of this neighborhood is intended to be a compatible mixture of single-family homes, two-family homes, town homes, and small apartments and that redevelopment is able to work together without conflicting against adjacent existing uses.

| <b>Min. lot Size RM-P Zoning per General Development Plan</b> |            |                 |  |
|---|------------|-----------------|--|
| Single Family   | 6,000 s.f. | Permitted use   |  |
| Two-Family  | 8,000      | Permitted use   |  |
| 3 or 4 units  | 8,700      | Conditional use |  |
| Additional unit over 4  | 3,000 each | Conditional use |  |
| Rooming Houses  | Depends    | Conditional use |  |

**Permitted & Conditional Uses:**

Those permitted and conditional uses allowed within a RM District may be allowed except for the following are conditional uses:

- Dwellings, 3 units or more
- Rooming houses

**Design & Dimensional Standards**

Standards of the RM District apply except as with:

- Minimum lot area for dwellings with 3 or more units shall be 8,700 square feet, plus 3,000 square feet for each additional unit over 4.

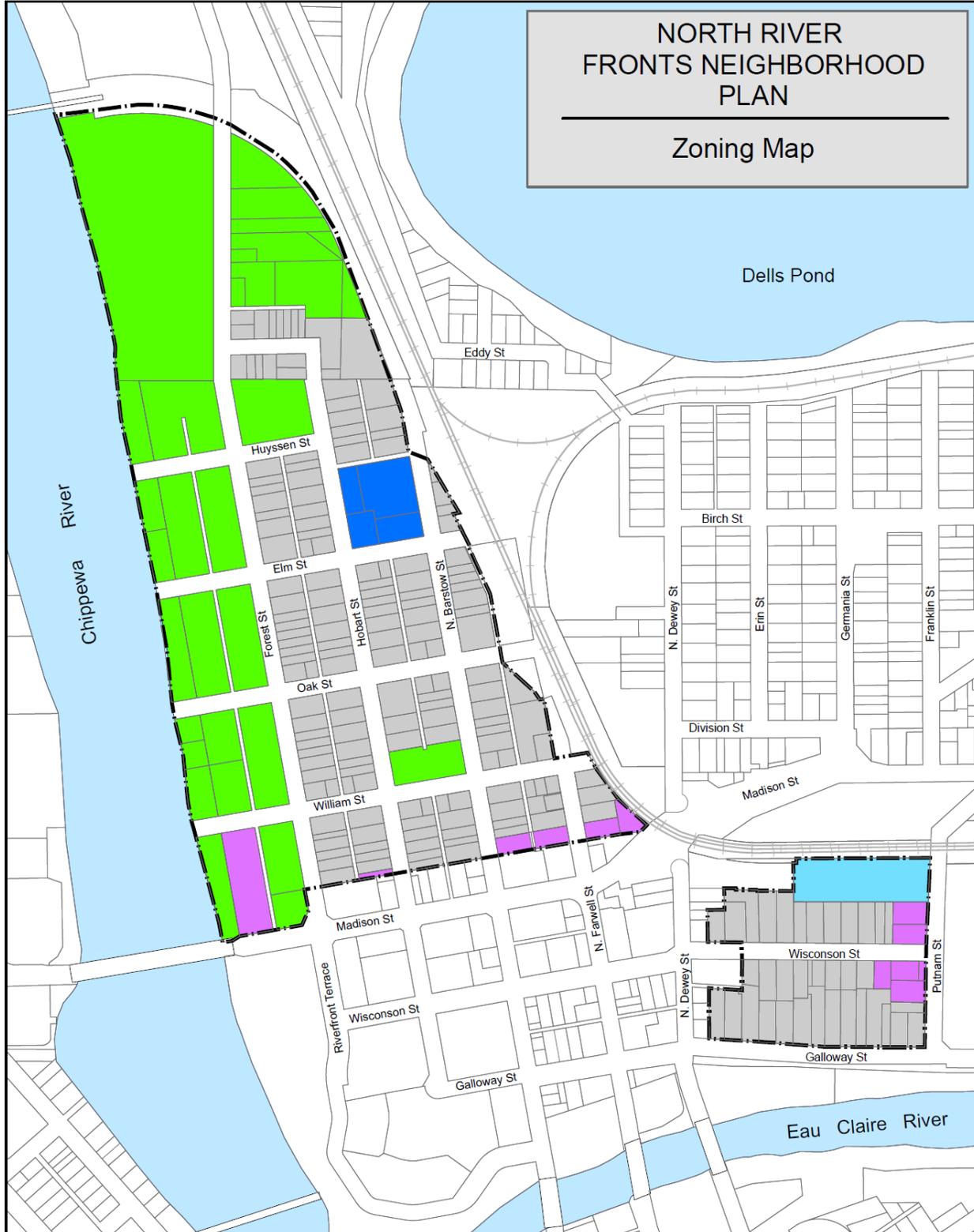
**Specific Provisions**

The Plan Commission, in its review of conditional use permits for dwellings, 3 units or more, and rooming houses, shall consider the General Provisions of Zoning Code Sec. 18.35.040 and the following provisions:

- A conditional use permit for dwellings, 3 units or more, or rooming houses, shall not be approved unless the property proposed for such use is adjacent to at least one other property with existing dwellings, 3 units or more, or a rooming house.
- New multi-family dwellings shall be designed to be compatible with the character of the neighborhood and to be consistent with the neighborhood plan.

# NORTH RIVER FRONTS NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

## Zoning Map



- RMP
- I-2
- CBD
- Public
- I-1



**Map 7**

## Property Lots

The majority of the neighborhood was platted as 66 feet wide by 132 feet deep, 8,712 square foot lots. Huysen, Marfield, Galloway & Meridith’s Addition was the principle subdivision and has right-of-ways 66’ wide with 14 foot wide north-south alleys within the neighborhood. Over time some of these lot sizes have changed. Many remain the same, but others have been split, combined or split and then recombined. Quite a few corner lots were split and many interior lots were divided in half to yield lots of 4,356 square feet. Also, some lots have been vacated as in the case of blocks west of Forest Street due to floodplain issues. An analysis of average lot sizes for single family and duplex uses reveals they are under original platted lot sizes. At least for single family houses, they are still greater than the minimum Mixed Residential District – RM lot size of 6,000 square feet. As noted, the General Development Plan adopted in 2006 allows a reduction in RM minimum lot size from 10,000 square feet to 8,700 for 3 or 4 unit multi-family buildings by conditional use permit.



**Table 11.**

| Average Lot Size  | Square Feet | Acre  |
|-------------------|-------------|-------|
| Single Family     | 6,691       | 0.154 |
| Duplex            | 6,447       | 0.148 |
| 3+ Unit Buildings | 8,851       | 0.203 |
| Apartments        | -           | -     |
| Vacant            | -           | -     |

Source: City Assessing Data, 2016

## Property Values

Property and housing values in the neighborhood are generally lower than other parts of the city. As shown in Table 12, there is not much difference between the values of single family homes and duplexes, while as expected; housing of greater scale has comparatively more value. Table 13 on page 35 shows a somewhat different story using a per acre breakdown based on average lot sizes. While individual properties values are low, some compensation is made up since the neighborhood is more compact with more lots per acre than newer subdivisions of the city.

**Table 12.**

| Property Value    | Lot      | Improvements | Total     |
|-------------------|----------|--------------|-----------|
| Single Family     | \$10,510 | \$63,752     | \$74,262  |
| Duplex            | \$11,194 | \$62,016     | \$73,210  |
| 3+ Unit Buildings | \$15,629 | \$94,039     | \$107,433 |
| Apartments        | N/A      | N/A          | N/A       |
| Vacant            | \$6,657  | -            | \$6,657   |

Source: City Assessing Data non-exempt properties, 2016

| <b>Table 13.</b>         |                |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Value Per Acre</b>    | <b>Dollars</b> |
| <b>Single Family</b>     | \$483,477      |
| <b>Duplex</b>            | \$494,662      |
| <b>3+ Unit Buildings</b> | \$528,732      |
| <b>Apartments</b>        | N/A            |
| <b>Vacant</b>            | N/A            |

Source: City Assessing Data non-exempt properties, 2016

### Housing Condition

North River Fronts has some of the oldest housing in the city and this is one of the biggest concerns. Housing age and its ongoing deterioration is and will continue to be a major impediment to providing quality and attractive housing. Per City Assessment data, the oldest residential structure was built in 1841 and only two new structures were built after the mid-1930s. Almost 80% of the housing stock was built before 1900. The average age of housing is 130 years (equivalent to 1887). In some cases, housing has been replaced but much of it is either original or pre-1900s. Despite the age of housing in the neighborhood, much of it remains and there are relatively few vacant lots.



| <b>Table 14.</b>         |              |          |
|--------------------------|--------------|----------|
| <b>Housing Age</b>       | <b>Count</b> | <b>%</b> |
| <b>Pre-1900</b>          | 137          | 79%      |
| <b>1900 - 2000</b>       | 35           | 20%      |
| <b>Post 2000</b>         | 1            | 1%       |
| <b>Average Yr. Built</b> | 1887         |          |

Source: City Assessment Data non-exempt properties, 2016

If the structure was originally built well and properly maintained over that time span, a house may survive for hundreds of years. Replacement of certain components will be needed, perhaps multiple times, such as a new roof or siding to combat elements of weathering. Outward defective physical conditions like a sagging roof line or porch, curling shingles, broken windows, rotted wood siding, cracked or settled foundations, if not corrected will eventual lead to structural problems. Interior lead paint and moisture issues can raise health threats. The housing stock of the North River Fronts

experiences all these issues and presents some of the most challenging situations in the city. Yet, it is important to note that there is plenty of existing quality housing as well.

The Eau Claire City-County Health Department’s Intensified Housing Code Compliance Program (IHCCP) has developed the Residential Environmental Quality Assessment (REQA) survey to provide a method of rapidly assessing the environmental quality of a given neighborhood. The method uses objective criteria to obtain a numerical index which indicates the general level of the residential environment. Points are assigned based on descriptive factors such as residential usage, vacancy and number of units per structure along with observable housing condition defects. The score then helps to prioritize which properties need corrective action. In some cases, housing with minor defects may not incur code violations. Since the program was created in 1980, over 4,100 homes city-wide have been brought into compliance. The Health Department also seeks to work with individual neighborhood associations to obtain input and help prioritize efforts.



The map on page 37 shows the outward defect rating for blocks in North River Fronts and other adjacent proximities. The smaller section of the neighborhood was not surveyed. While success has been made, the average outward defect rating has grown slightly, as Table 15 indicates. Culprits of time, nature and weather do no justice, but as captured in following sections, lack of new housing and high rental rates contribute to this persistent problem. The Health Department and City have limited resources to address the issue. Strategies such as the new rental registration program can help, but some housing may be beyond its useful life span and will make way for new housing.

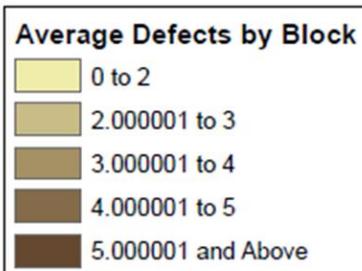
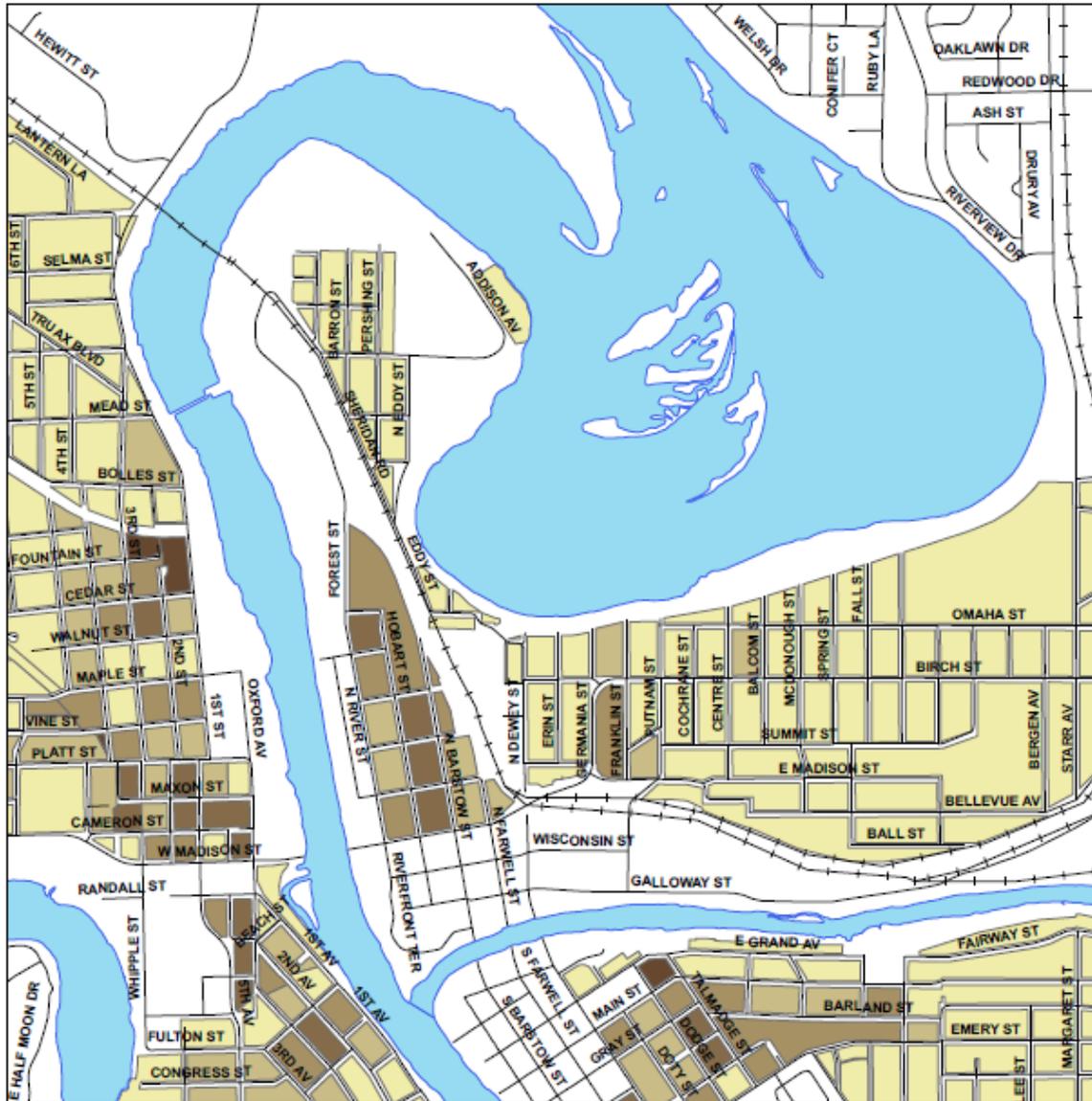
| <b>Table 15.<br/>Housing Defect<br/>Survey</b> | <b>NRF<br/>Avg.</b> |
|--|---------------------|
| <b>2010 Score</b>                              | 2.79                |
| <b>2015 Score</b>                              | 2.89                |

Source: City-County Eau Claire Health Department



# 2015 City of Eau Claire Housing Survey North Riverfronts Area

Map 8.



| Percent Totals |       | Ranking           |
|----------------|-------|-------------------|
| 0-2            | 49.7% | Excellent         |
| 3-4            | 31.7% | Very Good to Good |
| 5-6            | 10.2% | Good to Fair      |
| 7-8            | 6.0%  | Fair to Poor      |
| 9+             | 2.4%  | Poor to Blighted  |

Date: 12/7/2016

## Nuisances

Bedfellows with housing problems, other property violations causing health, safety and image concerns have been identified by the Neighborhood Plan Update Steering Committee. Persistent problems are numerous: improper outdoor storage of items such as garbage receptacles, trash, junked materials, litter, old appliances, and inoperable motorized vehicles. Also of concern are too many waste haulers, tall grass and lack of shoveling snow off sidewalks. Snow accumulation in alleys is a concern with the City not currently plowing alleys due to limited resources. The Neighborhood Association would like the City to provide this service because block-by-block coordination of private contractors is difficult. Alley condition is a lessor concern since the City Engineering Department has been improving alleys, but a few do remain in poor shape.

The Health Department’s Intensified Housing Code Compliance Program (IHCCP), Community Development, Police Department and others work with property owners and renters to correct violations. The City’s Code Enforcement position was recently restored to full-time to better address problems. Every spring, staff members work with the Neighborhood Association to tour and address issues evident after winter.



## Housing Tenure

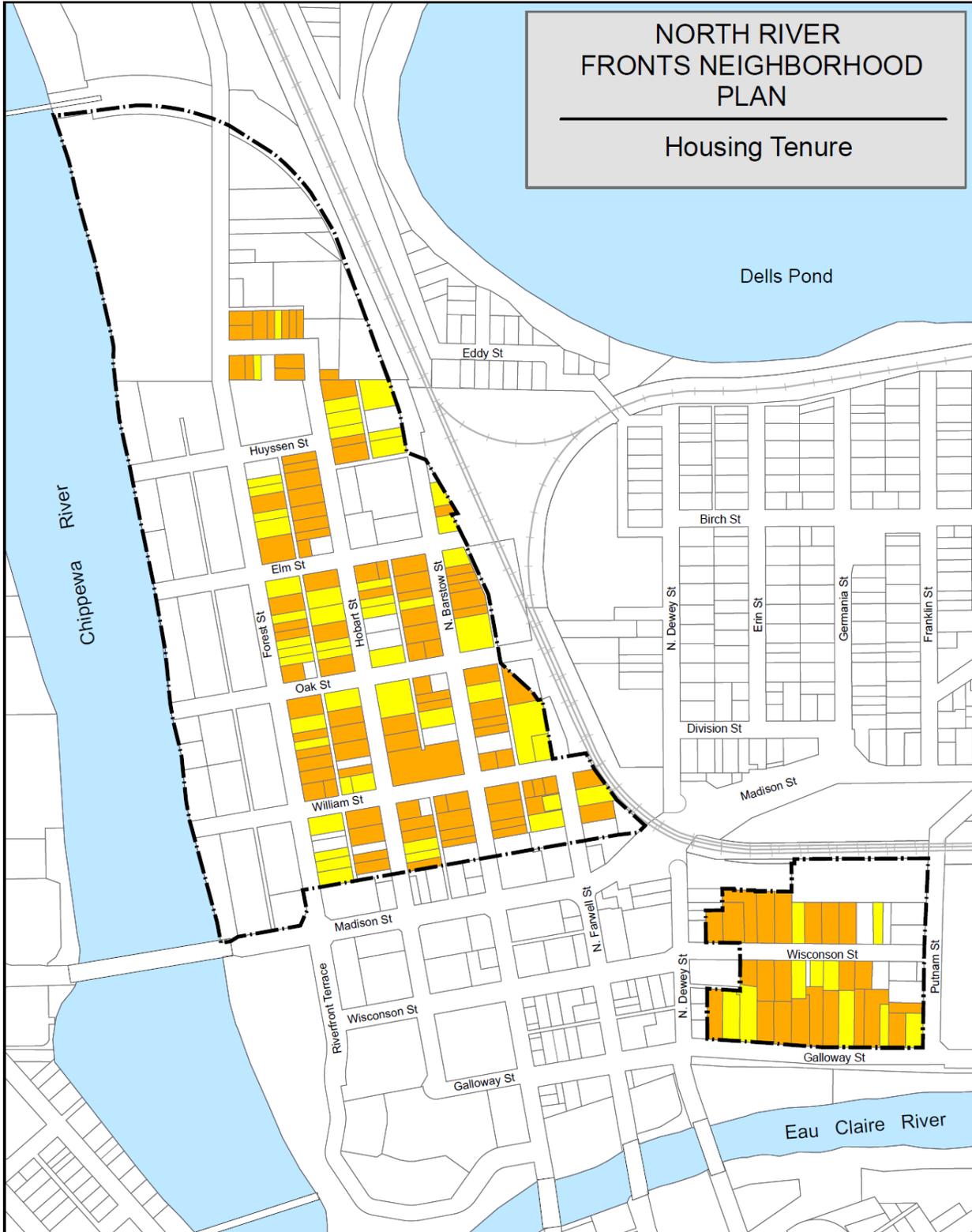
Tenure means the type of residential occupants either owners or renters. It usually follows that if property values are lower, mortgage and rent payments will tend to be more affordable. Affordability is a large factor in attracting those who cannot afford to own, and proportionally this is true of the high number of renters verses owners for the neighborhood. Although housing tenure has stabilized since 2000 with renters and ownership rates remaining similar. This shows the decades past trend of decreasing ownership has leveled, but does not guarantee rental rates will not continue to grow. While each neighborhood is different and meets different citizen needs, extremes should be avoided. The Neighborhood Steering Committee felt that the North River Fronts needs to increase home owner rates. How that might occur is outlined in the Improvement Strategies chapter (starting on page 54).

| <b>Table 16.<br/>Tenure</b> | <b>1970<br/>Census</b> | <b>1980<br/>Census</b> | <b>2000</b> | <b>2016</b> |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Owner</b>                | 34%                    | 24%                    | 18%         | 18%         |
| <b>Renter</b>               | 61%                    | 67%                    | 82%         | 82%         |
| <b>Vacant</b>               | 5%                     | 9%                     | N/A         | N/A         |

Source: City Assessing Data and Census Data

# NORTH RIVER FRONTS NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

## Housing Tenure

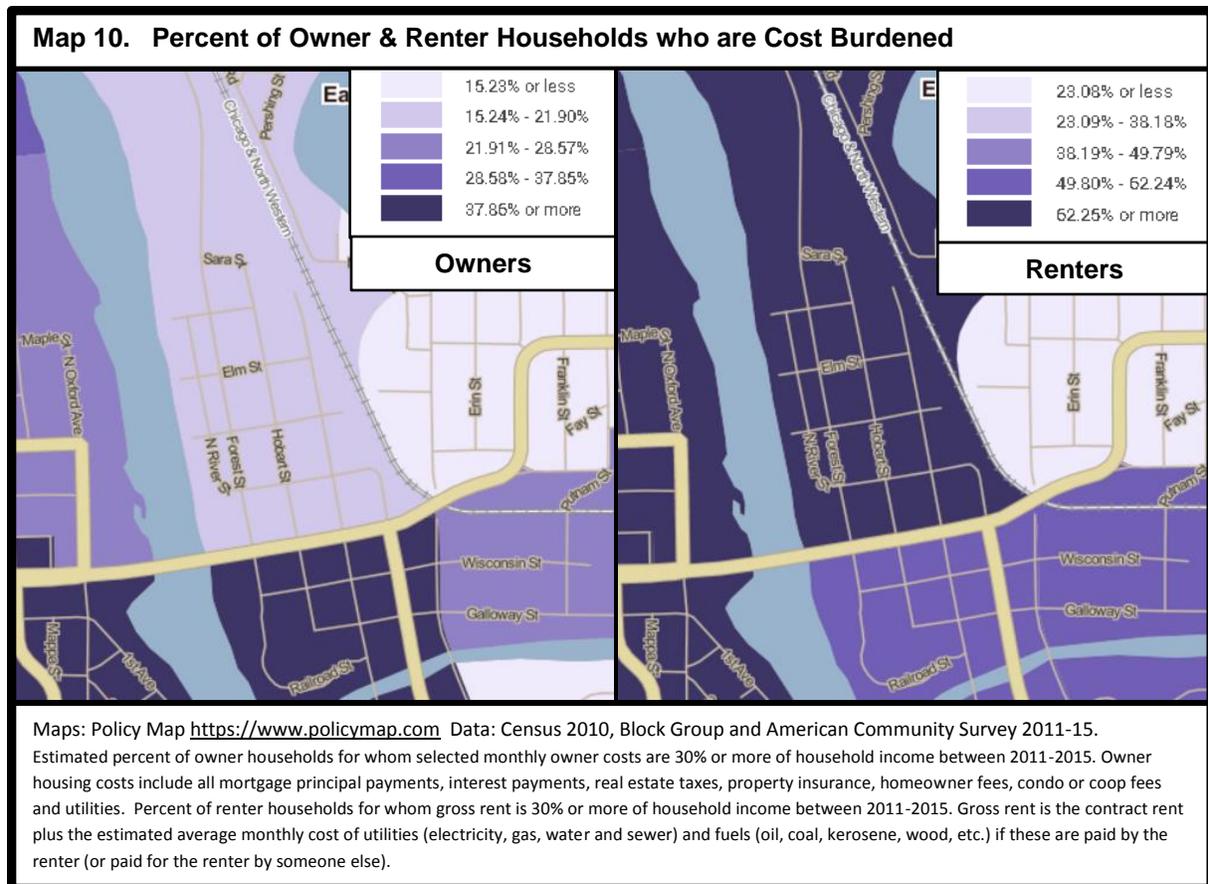


Map 9

## Housing Cost Burden

The *Comprehensive Plan* found the most significant housing problem in Eau Claire is the need for very low cost housing units, especially with two or more bedrooms. The cost of housing has risen since 1980, increasing dramatically up to the 2008 Great Recession, then down a bit and now on the rise. Housing burden is a Federal rule-of-thumb in which 30% or more of household income is spent on housing costs. The idea is if more money goes towards housing payments than less goes to other essentials like food, transportation and clothes. Housing cost burden disproportionately affects low-income households who start with less each month. The threshold is a useful benchmark in better estimating housing affordability in a neighborhood and seeing disparities between adjacent neighborhoods. As the map shows, North River Fronts' 18% of homeowners are less impacted than the 82% of renters. In fact, it is estimated more than one in two (62%) of renter households experience housing burden.

The reason for this is not all entirely clear. Are employment wages at such low levels that even with low real estate values rents are not affordable? Or, are landlords fairly renting their properties considering housing condition, tenant background, and fiscal return? Disproportionate tenure levels combined with housing cost burden are two factors that can yield a lack of reinvestment and a transient population. The Steering Committee had concern that this lack of resource situation is not ideal in promoting neighborhood improvement. This plan raises awareness but does not seek to solve these larger market questions, nor suggest a rent control alternative, which may further exacerbate housing quality and quantity in the city.



## Flooding

The North River Fronts relationship with the rivers has been a love-hate affair. While being one of the major draws in that it is located along the scenic Chippewa and Eau Claire rivers, this also presents real flood danger. Flood risk is dynamic because of physical and climatological changes. Human life and property lost are at stake. A recounting of some past historic floods makes evident there are still serious threats.

It was in September 1884 that the Chippewa River crested at an estimated 785.9 feet (a 100+ year flood event that likely was the greatest recorded flood the city has ever experienced). The flood was made more severe due to logging practices. A log boom broke sending logs down the Chippewa right into buildings. The pictures to the right show the destruction. Other major floods were in 1880 and 1905. Crest heights were estimated at or over 781 feet. Then in September 1941, a significant flood reached a recorded 781.6 foot

crest height at the Grand Avenue River Gauge. This 50-100 year event flooded the neighborhood, damaged structures and shut down Madison Street Bridge. More recently in June 1993, there was another major flood event on the Eau Claire River at 778.9 feet that caused damages around the city and impacted public infrastructure. In response to this event, the City began a more ambitious effort to address habitually flooded areas.

In the mid-1990s the City using Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grants acquired and removed 50 properties in the most flood-prone area along the five blocks west of Forest Street in the context of a downtown revitalization strategy. The 1939 aerial to the right shows the homes that were located west of Forest Street. The buyout program was for those that were most directly affected and there was 100-percent participation by owners. While the neighborhood lost housing, it did gain a large linear green space along the river.

Many neighborhood owners feel challenged due to flood risk, development protections and extra requirements placed on properties within the floodplain. Properties are required to obtain flood insurance in high-risk Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA) areas under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The City participates in the voluntary Community Rating System (CRS) so owners and renters can receive a premium discount to reduce this insurance burden. To give some idea,



FEMA says nationwide, from 2011 to 2015, the average residential flood claim amounted to nearly \$43,000 with an average policy premium in 2015 of nearly \$700. In 2014, the average claim in Wisconsin was \$16,598. The City is a Class 7 rated community making properties eligible for a 15% discount within SFHAs and 5% for moderate to low flood risk non-SFHA properties. The City may be able to obtain greater discounts on floodplain insurance if it continues in NFIP compliance and enhances education and other measures to improve the Class 7 score.

The FEMA's National Flood Hazard Layer map (digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps or d-FIRMs) on page 43 indicates that a good portion of North River Fronts properties are within the floodplain boundary (orange extent). Properties in Zone AE or the light blue areas are within the SFHA and have a higher potential of flooding. This means there is a 1% chance every year (or a 100 year flood) the area will flood. Properties in Zone X or orange areas have a 0.2% chance every year (or a 500 year flood) that it will flood. This area is not in the SFHA so flood insurance is not mandatory, but often times it is still recommended. Flood insurance is the best way to protect from devastating financial loss. The City has also performed its own local flood inundation analysis based on 2007 flight measurements and considers them superior to d-FIRMs. These are available for owners to verify flood vulnerabilities.

Besides added insurance cost, the burden of material fill is needed for new housing or garages in the floodplain. Typically this means 2 feet above flood elevation of raised material 15 feet out from the structure. See the table on page 43 for more specifics. A Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) is often also required to remove properties or structures out of the special flood hazard area (SFHA).



The *City of Eau Claire's Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan, 2013-2018*<sup>5</sup> recommends several strategies to address floodplain risk, improve conditions and provide emergency action. The following is a non-exhaustive list and the mitigation plan should be consulted for further detail. The City will monitor potential flood conditions and upstream dam failure status, enforce the floodplain ordinance for development, use hydraulic plugs in catch basins to prevent the backflow of floodwaters, continue its stormwater management plan, and improve river banks and levees.

Within the neighborhood, the Mitigation plan states: "the Forest Street Levee was built in 1968 and does not meet U.S. Corps of Engineers standards. It is currently functioning well, but serious flooding problems could occur should there be a large riverine flooding event in conjunction with heavy rains backing up water behind the levee. The levee and associated stormwater discharge needs to be brought up to current standards after engineering study and preliminary design." The City's Central Maintenance Facility could also be potentially vulnerable to flooding and may hinder rescue response.

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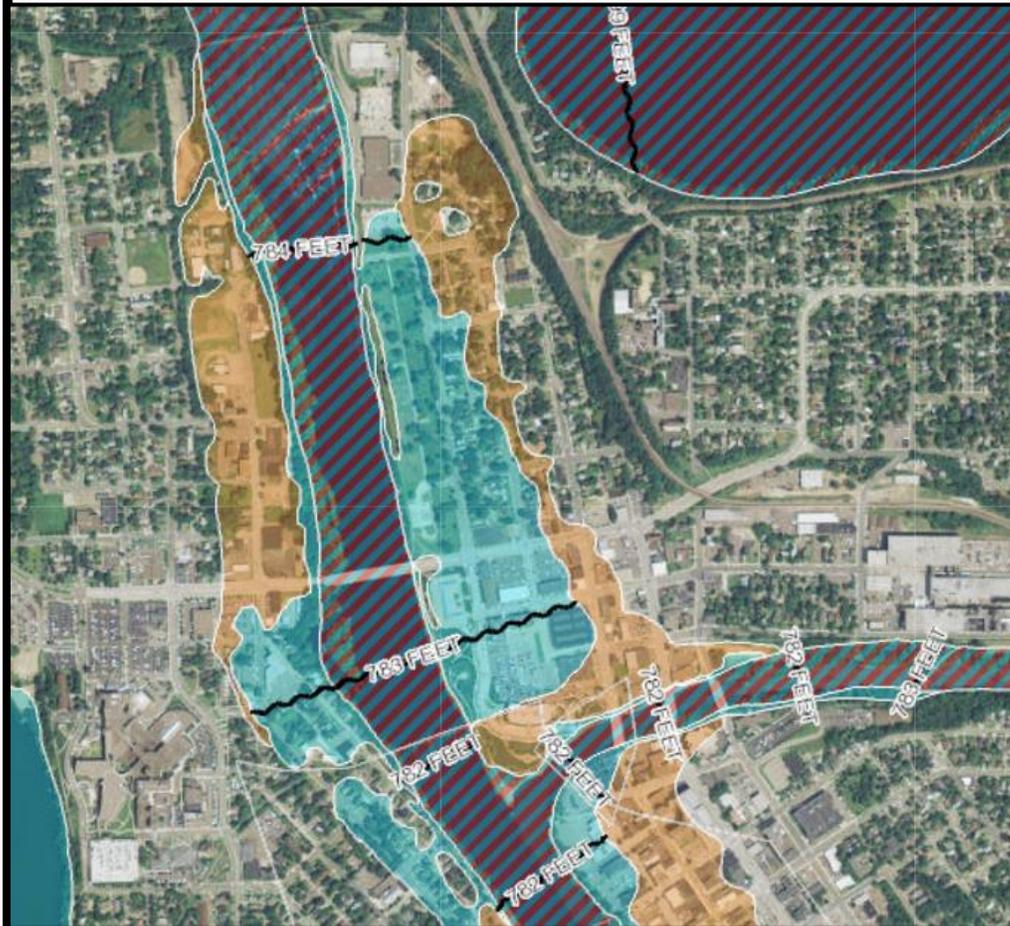
<sup>5</sup> Retrieved May 19, 2017 at <http://www.ci.eau-claire.wi.us/Home/ShowDocument?id=5500>

**Table 17. Generalized Provisions for Constructing Housing in the Floodplain**

| Flood Risk Level                    | FEMA's FIRM Zone                  | Map Color   | Overlay District                  |                   | Habitable Structures   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| 100 yr. Flood (1% chance per yr.)   | AE (flooded flowing water areas)  |  | Floodway (FW)                     |                   | Not allowed  |
|                                     | AE (flooded standing water areas) |  | General floodplain district (GFP) | Flood-fringe (FF) | Lowest floor must meet whichever is higher:<br>a. at or above the flood protection elevation (2 feet of freeboard); or<br>b. two (2) feet above the highest adjacent grade around structure; or<br>c. the depth as shown on the FIRM.<br>(fill should extend 15' around the structure) |
| 500 yr. Flood (0.2% chance per yr.) | X (floodplain)                    |  |                                   | Flood-fringe (FF) |  |
| Outside 500 yr. Flood               | X (outside floodplain)            | Aerial  | N/A                               |                   | No requirements  |

\*Consult the FEMA Flood Map Service Center and the City's Floodplain Ordinance, Chapter 18.11 for more specifics

**Map 11. FEMA's National Flood Hazard Layer map (d-FIRMs)**

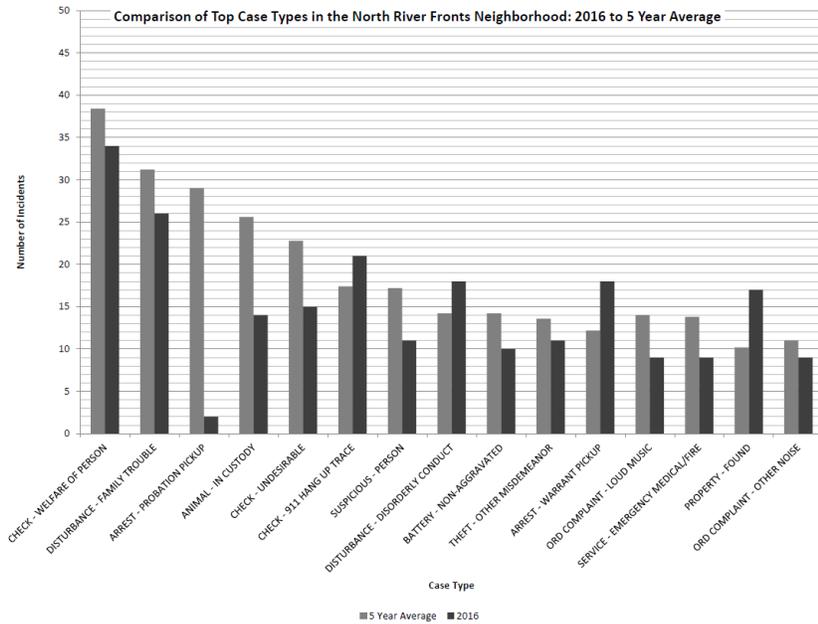
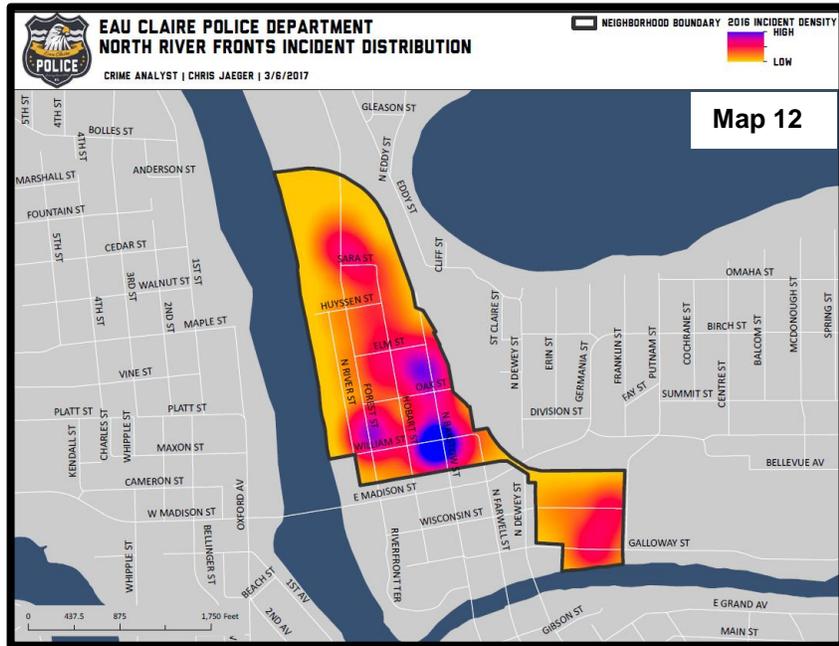


# Crime

North River Fronts experiences a higher crime rate than other areas of the city and therefore a higher police presence. This also increases the perception of the area as being unsafe, a deterrent in retaining and attracting residents. The last neighborhood plan in 2003 recommended continuing the Community Policing Office (COP). While officers located at the neighborhood office were effective in building relationships, it did not reduce

crime or lend to greater responsiveness. The decision was made to cut the program, but still remain engaged in neighborhoods via pro-active policing strategies. These include the Certified Landlord Program, as well as through beat officers and district commanders being points of contact for neighborhood associations and for other concerned groups or individuals.

As the 2016 incident density map shows, the intersection of North Barstow Street and William Street had a high concentration of activity. A compounding influence is the several nearby alcohol-selling establishments fronting East Madison Street. However, other reasons are in play along with the fact there is sub-standard rental housing in this area. The five year average graph below shows top trends. Levels on the map and graph do not always equate to crimes, but that police filed an incident report. Also for community perspective, as a common example, Disturbance-Family Trouble in 2016 was the sixth most case type in the city.



## Healthy Neighborhood

Growing evidence shows that the built environment in cities, where one lives, works and plays is an important factor towards positive or negative human health. Industrial pollution, over-crowding, physically deficient housing and improper sanitation methods are well established legal reasons for why zoning exists to protect the public health. More recent evidence-based research suggests that walkable mixed use neighborhoods with quality housing choices and access to transit, jobs, open space, fresh air, and healthy food outlets are healthier places. For example, chronic disease risk for obesity and respiratory ailments can be reduced.<sup>6</sup> Other dimensions of social and mental health may be improved as well. Though health is largely a personal decision, the various urban systems in place can help nudge residents to healthier lifestyles. Adding a new bike trail along a street is one example.

The graphic below shows the percentage of various social determinants of health that lead to quality of life and length of life outcomes. Developed by *The County Health Rankings* at UW-Madison's Population Health Institute, it serves as a national benchmark for counties.



Although lacking specificity on the neighborhood level, it can be seen as a useful method and proxy to consider

health outcomes and evaluate places. The largest percent, Socio-Economic factors, include education, employment, income, family and social support, and community safety/crime. Behaviors factors include diet, exercise, sexual activity, alcohol, tobacco and drug use. Clinic Care represents access to and quality of healthcare. Physical environment factors include housing, transit, air and water quality.



A full health assessment has not been done for North River Fronts, but despite its challenges previously noted in this chapter, the Steering Committee felt North River Fronts does have a health marketing advantage. When it comes to proximity to downtown amenities, jobs, services, healthcare, rivers, trails, parks, community gardens and the downtown farmers market, they are all within walking distance. They felt this 'walking benefit' could help attract newcomers to the area such as baby boomers, families, and young professionals who are attracted to healthier living opportunities.

<sup>6</sup> County Health Rankings. Retrieved May 22, 2017 at <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/policies/mixed-use-development>

## Transportation

Heavy traffic within the North River Fronts Neighborhood is not a problem, although near its fringes there are greater levels such as with East Madison Street, Farwell and Galloway Streets. See the map on page 47 for traffic counts and road classifications. Items that were brought up as concern by the Steering Committee were road and alley reconstruction, truck traffic, bike and pedestrian connections and infrastructure. Forest Street is due for reconstruction in 2019 and design meetings will take place beforehand with stakeholders including the neighborhood. The committee felt that Forest Street should be enhanced with traffic calming elements to promote safety, walkability and reduce speeding. It should be further enhanced with decorative lighting, street trees and provide a place for a neighborhood entrance sign or welcome feature. It may also have the opportunity to address stormwater management in innovative ways since it is located in the floodplain. See the Improvement Strategies Transportation Section for more information on this project and recommendations for other issues such as freight and passenger rail.



## Community Facilities

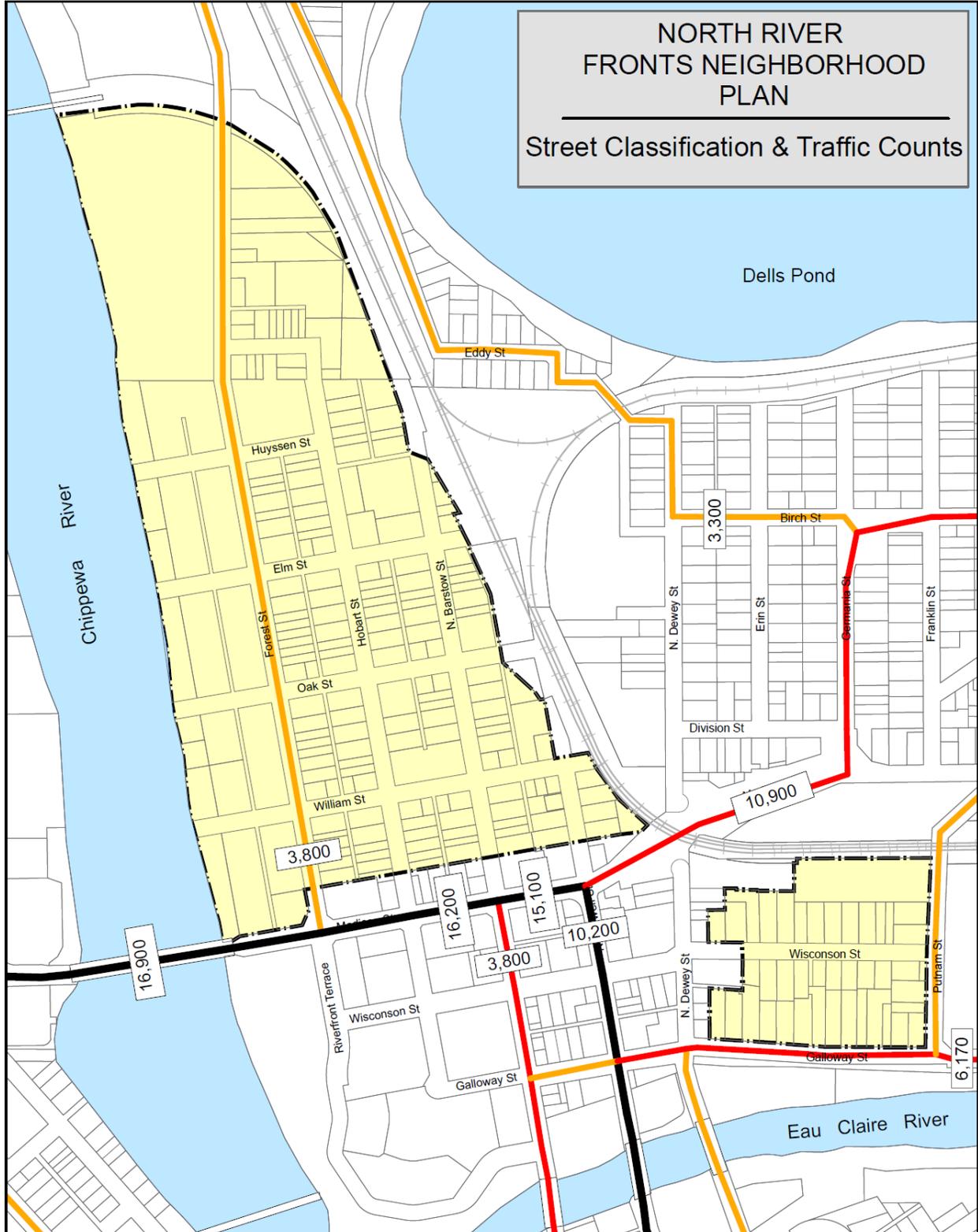
North River Fronts is a smaller neighborhood, and thus there are not many community facilities located within its boundaries. Indoor year-round public gathering places are not present. There are no schools and other places typical of social gathering opportunities such as at churches. On the north end, the City's Central Maintenance Facility (CMF) has meeting rooms, but it is a secure building serving as an operations base for Community Services' Streets, Transit, Utilities, Parks, and Forestry divisions. Being located close to downtown offers some relief. The Neighborhood Association often holds meetings at local businesses. The map on page 48 shows the location of community facilities.

As for outdoor spaces, Forest Street Park is designated as a community Special Use Park and North River Fronts Neighborhood Park is a Neighborhood Park. Issues identified with the plan update regarding these park facilities were floodplain risks, adding electrical power to Forest Street Park (so more events could take place), and taxis idling. In addition, there were concerns over how a proposed multi-use trail and a Veteran Tribute might impact the open space and community gardens that the Neighborhood Association created and operates.

The Steering Committee had concerns over CMF's gravel parking lot on the south end of the transit garage. It should be properly hard surfaced. The operations storage yard also should be screened along its southern boundary next to the Sara Street residences. Further, since this housing is sub-standard, the committee was not opposed to the City making offers to acquire these homes to expand the yard.

# NORTH RIVER FRONTS NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

## Street Classification & Traffic Counts



- Collector
- Minor Arterial
- Major Arterial



**Map 13**

# NORTH RIVER FRONTS NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

## Community Facilities



-  Parks and Open Space
-  City Maintenance Shops



### Map 14



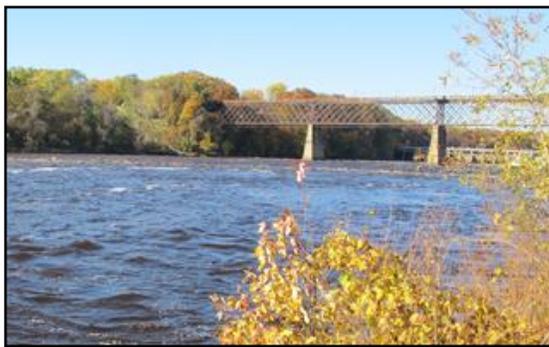
**Healthy Housing**

**Redevelopment**

**Quality of Life**

# IV. Improvement Strategies

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# IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

This chapter outlines improvement strategies the North River Front’s Neighborhood is seeking.

| Reference Page   |    |                 |    |
|------------------|----|-----------------|----|
| Vision & Mission | 52 | Transportation  | 69 |
| Goals & Values   | 52 | Public Services | 75 |
| Housing          | 54 | Quality of Life | 80 |
| Redevelopment    | 61 |                 |    |

## Summary

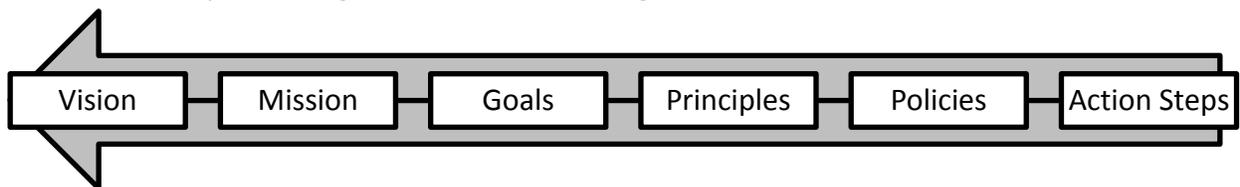
The North River Fronts Neighborhood is poised for new life. Its strategic locational advantage, being close to the center of Eau Claire and the redeveloping downtown, presents some exciting opportunities for an older area. The Steering Committee for this plan update was supportive of the concept of rezonings for more intense redevelopment closer to its fringes such as along East Madison Street but also felt reinvestment may present some challenges to existing housing and that possible adverse effects should be mitigated. They felt strongly that property-by-property reinvestment is as critical as catalytic redevelopment to enhance the neighborhood and attract more home owners.

This chapter details strategies to make North River Fronts an even better place. It follows a planning hierarchy of: vision, mission, goals with guiding principles, individual policies, and action steps.

These reflect the values, aspirations, strengths and challenges the neighborhood wants to uphold and resolve. The Plan Update Steering Committee identified several new policies, but many are rooted in past neighborhood plans, drawing largely upon the 2004 plan. Main categories include: Housing, Redevelopment, Transportation, Public Services, and Quality of Life. Improvement Strategies are also meant to build upon existing assets as noted in the right column.

### Neighborhood Assets

- Older housing Character
- Historic properties
- Unique architecture
- Front porches
- Affordable housing
- Walkable neighborhood
- Proximity to downtown jobs and amenities
- Close to Post Office
- Transit service
- Friendly neighbors
- Diversity in population
- Neighborhood Association
- Frontage on scenic rivers
- Easy access to great parks & trails
- High Bridge pedestrian bridge



## Vision & Mission

During discussion and planning meetings over consideration of improvement strategies, the Steering Committee decided that an all-embracing statement on what they wanted for the neighborhood's future should be crafted. This is reflected in the vision statement below. To operationalize this and make more certain its realization, they selected their existing North River Front's Neighborhood Association's mission statement. A key component of it is by working together. Thus, it will be important in moving forward to use these statements to motivate neighborhood action, to align with City plans and be adaptive to unforeseen changes.

### Vision Statement (FUTURE – where we want to be)

*"The North River Fronts Neighborhood will be a desirable place to live where persons and families of all backgrounds can own or rent well-maintained and diverse housing styles in a safe and sustainable location that is walkable and close to jobs, services and cultural amenities."*

### Mission Statement (UNTIL THEN – How we will get there)

*"The North River Fronts Neighborhood is dedicated to preserving and enhancing the quality of life for our neighbors by working together to maintain and improve our community."*

## Goals & Values

The set of chosen goals were condensed from the input provided after considering various improvements. They have a history in previous planning efforts for the neighborhood. They are tied to the strengths and weaknesses of this unique place, the unresolved issues and the new opportunities. They reflect city ambitions as well, since the committee well-appreciates the renewed commitment to focus and reinvest in the older neighborhoods. The plan's goals can be broken down into five main areas listed on the next page. The rest of the chapter will follow this five goal structure.

The Neighborhood Association also created a set of values to convey their position and spirit towards how they will work together and with others to help carry out plan recommendations.



## North River Fronts Neighborhood Plan Goals

- Improve Existing Stock
- Increase Home Owners
- Promote Architectural Character
- Limit Group Homes

### Housing



- Encourage New Growth
- Promote Context Sensitive Design
- Provide Floodplain Relief

### Redevelopment



- Celebrate Walking & Biking
- Improve Streets & Alleys
- Promote Mass Transit

### Transportation



- Meet Basic Needs
- Enrich Parks & Recreation
- Improve Central Maintenance Operations

### Public Services



- Engage Residents
- Market Place
- Maintain Properties

### Quality of Life



## North River Fronts Neighborhood Association Values

- Organizing neighbors
- Being good neighbors to each other
- Advocating for the neighborhood and residents
- Building a sense of place, belonging and community
- Educating and empowering residents and others
- Promoting the neighborhood, its resources and opportunities
- Beautifying public and private properties
- Cleaning up areas of need
- Improving existing housing condition and balance of renter verses owner-occupied housing
- Renewing, by allowing redevelopment and appropriate density when and where needed
- Enforcing the neighborhood plan, and applicable laws so the neighborhood is safe, orderly and clean
- Ensuring the City continues to reinvest in the neighborhood
- Being sustainable in land management and lifestyle

## Housing

### Housing Guiding Principle

Improve the housing stock with new and remodeled dwellings while providing for a range in housing densities, price, rental and ownership options.

### Goals

- A. Improve Existing Housing Stock
- B. Increase Home Owners
- C. Promote Architectural Character
- D. Limit Group Homes

#### A. Improve Existing Housing Stock

The Steering Committee felt this goal covers the majority of the neighborhood's land use needs and so it is of utmost importance and immediacy. Maintaining what is there is critical not only because it can be more affordable but also to preserve architectural history. Over the decades both private market and public funding has been inadequate to meet the need of improving the aging and deteriorating housing stock. The depreciated housing has begot disinvestment and a reversal is in order. The high percent of rentals also works against reinvestment. Clearly, new approaches are needed by the neighborhood, the city and by others in all working together.

#### **POLICY #A1 Leverage existing programs to renovate or rehabilitate housing**

Though the need is large in upgrading existing housing, there are many entities already providing resources and funding to address the issue. ***Building upon existing programs that have proven effective and have the administration capacity should be utilized, and if possible strengthened with new forms of funding.*** As a starting place, the Neighborhood Association should make sure residents are aware of and understand the options available to them. This could be done in several ways such as listing them on the neighborhood's website, explaining them at a neighborhood meeting or neighborhood improvement fair, and developing educational materials like brochures or newsletters. Three of the most promising that fit the low-to-moderate income profile and eligibility requirements are from the Eau Claire Housing Division and Authority, Western Dairyland Community Action Agency (weatherization and energy assistance), and private lenders such as Community Reinvestment Act banks. The Housing Authority, for example, has a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funded rehabilitation loan program with 0% interest rates for single family homes and up to four unit apartments.<sup>7</sup> Loans are up to \$20,000 for a single family and \$4,000 per additional unit up to \$32,000. While this is a great program, only about 15 properties are rehabbed each year and there is concern that CDBG funding continues to be trimmed.

**Action Steps:** Must foster a greater willingness for change by working with existing funding

<sup>7</sup> Retrieved May 22, 2017 at <http://eauclairewi.gov/departments/housing/housing-division/homeownership-program>

sources to make sure they know about the neighborhood’s potential, and then work in partnership to help fund more improvements and educate residents to take advantage of resources.

**Responsibility:** NRF Neighborhood Association; public & private sectors to provide loans

**Timeframe:** 2018 - 2019, Ongoing thereafter

**POLICY #A2 Consider creating new funding opportunities for home improvement**

**Work with others to examine new possibilities to develop new funding sources or enhance existing programs.** The City’s *Neighborhood Revitalization Task Force Report* (NRTF Report)<sup>8</sup> provided numerous recommendations to consider. See this report for detailed explanations of the various ideas. Task Force stakeholders rated the highest:

- Creating a private non-profit Neighborhood Development Corporation (NDC) to effect change.
- Expanding the use of tax increment financing (TIF) to improve housing within ½ mile of a mature cash-positive TIF district.
- Developing a “targeted investment neighborhood (TIN) loan program that focuses on small block areas for several years.
- Pursuing grants such as from a community development financial institution (CDFI) like Forward Community Investments’ J.P. Morgan Chase’s PRO Neighborhoods (Partnerships for Raising Opportunity in Neighborhoods).

While these options are ambitious and will need support by others; researching and advocating for them sooner than later is important so opportunities are not missed. Such could be the case with a TIF district ending without its project plan including an additional 1 year of increment towards housing improvement.



The Steering Committee appreciates the City’s lead in developing greater focus and momentum around the NRTF report, but it believes the City itself should become a stronger player. A clear signal to the private sector is needed for real transformation. Some Eau Claire neighborhoods like the North River Fronts are small in population, have higher housing cost burden (see discussion on page 40) and have fledging associations that lack the capacity or resources to undertake an initiative, assist in or run a program. They also felt their Neighborhood Association should wait and learn from Historic Randall Park Neighborhood as they pursue creating a neighborhood development corporation (NDC). If it is successful after a few years, North River Fronts may want to consider the approach.

For the neighborhood’s reference, one very successful example of employing some of the above strategies is with the Layton Boulevard West Neighbors (LBWN) in Milwaukee<sup>9</sup>. This non-profit neighborhood corporation has available \$1,000 home improvement matching grants, a \$1,000 first place

<sup>8</sup> Retrieved May 22, 2017 at <http://eauclairewi.gov/home/showdocument?id=14808>

<sup>9</sup> Retrieved May 22, 2017 at <http://www.lbwn.org/homeimprovements>

prize for the most improved home, rebates of up to \$1,000 for minor homeowner repairs, a \$30,000 partially-forgivable loan for home improvements in a City of Milwaukee’s Targeted Investment Neighborhood (TIN), and partners with banks for loans up to \$5,000 with low rates for exterior and interior improvements. It has taken time however for the LBWN to reach this level and not without their city’s support.

Finally, there may be other options the neighborhood could consider. Seed money for a small loan 1:1 matching program might be sought through community foundations or via healthcare community benefit grants. Aligning with their strategic goals, such as improving population health through healthy workforce housing, is an important connection in securing resources. The neighborhood could also partner with a select number of lenders, contractors or home improvement stores who believe in neighborhood revitalization. One way may be via a “group-buy”. Pooling larger amounts of capital is often a way to create financial savings. The neighborhood could start by approaching the Chippewa Valley Home Builders Association to see if there is any interest.

**Action Steps:** Continue to monitor those pursuing a neighborhood development corporation and consider developing a new offering for residents. Reach out to possible partners like the City and others to drive awareness of the need and opportunity for change.

**Responsibility:** NRF Neighborhood Association

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

### **POLICY #A3     Support rental registration and work with landlords to improve rental housing**

A rental registration program was recommended in the NRTF Report as top priority and listed in the 2015 *Comprehensive Plan*. The Eau Claire City-County Health Department has been developing the program over the last year and a half to be respectful of all stakeholders’ points of view. The main goal is to improve those rentals that have fallen behind on basic building, health and safety codes as well keeping an informational property database for who owns the rental. The program is designed to be incentive-based and if properties are kept in good order, annual inspections are not needed. This program was recently enacted by the City Council and should be operational by 2018. With it, rental housing should improve.

***The Steering Committee was in favor of the registration program*** and to add back in the previously lost Rooming House and Lodging House rental inspection program, as well as to support the Health Department’s Intensified Housing Code Compliance Program (IHCCP) and the Eau Claire Police Department’s Certified Landlord program. The Neighborhood Association will also continue to participate in annual spring drive-around vehicle windshield tours with City staff to observe and convey feedback on housing and property conditions. Once the new rental registration program has gained traction, the association may want to obtain a list of their landlords to build relationships by listening to their concerns and work with them to improve properties. Neighborhood cleanup events like Habitat for Humanity’s Brush for Kindness could also be geared towards rental units if solid trust and reciprocity is built. Further, the neighborhood could advocate on landlords behalf for possible financial incentives.

**Action Steps:** Support rental registration program and work with landlords so housing is improved.

**Responsibility:** NRF Neighborhood Association, City

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

#### **POLICY #A4 Carefully allow demolition of obsolete housing to make way for improved stock**

Some of the existing housing in the neighborhood may not be worth improving due to age or deterioration. The average age of housing is 130 years. ***Demolition of seriously code deficient and or blighted housing should occur when appropriate***, such as with tax delinquent foreclosures, condemnation orders, major non-conformities. This may occur on a one lot basis or greater. Lots that are publically held may also present a more affordable opportunity for non-profits like Habitat for Humanity to rebuild housing in the neighborhood.

There is a chance that removed structures may yield situations where lots stand idle for some time, such as until adjacent properties can be acquired. The neighborhood felt that since there are not many existing vacant lots, they were willing to live with the tradeoff so long as they are properly maintained by property owners. For example, the City owns two vacant lots on the 400 block along Forest Street that have potential for future redevelopment. The City maintains them so they do not become eyesores.

**Action Steps:** Allow demolition of obsolete housing when warranted.

**Responsibility:** Private sector or public sector (unless NRF wants to acquire land via a future neighborhood development corporation)

**Timeframe:** Ongoing



#### **B. Increase North River Front's Home Owner Rate**

As noted in the Planning Issue chapter on page 38, there is unbalance in the neighborhood concerning the amount of renters to home owners. Currently the ratio is roughly 80% to 20%. The Steering Committee would like to see levels of home ownership increase so that there is greater owner-occupied investment in the neighborhood and to help better stabilize its transient population. Home owners may typically be stronger in property upkeep, social connectedness, and neighborhood advocacy. They also often include families with the desire to settle down and plant roots, or what is referred to as 'staying power'. The following policies are aimed at improving home ownership rates.

**POLICY #B1 Provide incentives for home ownership**

Many of last section policies such as *leverage existing programs and consider new recommendations from the NRTF Report can improve home owner rates*. Many local lenders participate in Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority's (WHEDA) income eligible housing loans such as First-Time Home Buyer (FTHB) Mortgage, down payment assistance and tax break programs. WHEDA provides home buyer education resources as well.<sup>10</sup> The Eau Claire Housing Authority has a program for first time home buyer loans but there is minimal funding. Western Dairyland also provides an income restricted program. Convention lending deals can also be secured.

The TIF strategy on page 55 could be one alternative of supplying new capital for loans that require home ownership and housing improvements. The City of Madison's Small Cap TIF program for instance provides forgivable renovation loans in small block clusters if the property remains in owner-occupied status for 10 years.<sup>11</sup> Another idea mentioned from the NRTF Report was studying rebates or deferments on property tax increases after renovations or rehabilitation. Home ownership could be required as further inducement.

**Action Steps:** Promote existing opportunities and advocate for new incentives for home ownership.

**Responsibility:** NRF Neighborhood Association

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

**POLICY #B2 Help market rentals that are for sale into owner-occupied units**

The neighborhood may want to better understand the turnover rate of its properties and the rate they become owner-occupied. An analysis to understand how many homes are sold every year over the last ten years to owner-occupied was beyond the scope of this update. However, from the tenure breakdown on page 38, housing units for speculative renting purposes have plateaued during the last 6 years. It is not clear if this trend will continue, but the high rental rate shows there is money to be made. *When rental properties become for sale, it may present an opportunity for renters to own* and stay living in the neighborhood. The Neighborhood Association should seek out and work with landlords who are open to this concept. They should also partner with realtors that are willing to serve as a similar bridge for home ownership. The neighborhood may want to develop a list of renters ready to own who would like to stay in the area or move to the area soon. Some of these now owner-occupied structures with more than one dwelling unit may also provide a revenue stream to help mortgage payment. Finally build relationships and work with the Downtown Eau Claire, Inc. and the downtown business improvement districts (BIDs) to jointly promote home ownership opportunities for downtown workers.

**Action Steps:** Work with would-be home owners, landlords, realtors and downtown partners to help market and convert more rentals into owner-occupied housing. The City will consider creating a home owner assistance brochure for the neighborhoods.

**Responsibility:** NRF Neighborhood Association, City and willing partners

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

<sup>10</sup> Retrieved May 22, 2017 at <https://www.wheda.com/Home-Buyers/Available-Programs/>

<sup>11</sup> Retrieved May 22, 2017 at <http://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/economicdevelopment/greenbush-housing-renovation-program-small-cap-tif-loan-program/1584/>

**POLICY #B3 Consider new housing styles to attract homeowners**

***New housing units and styles can be a catalyst to attract more home owners.*** New construction is always a great selling point, but among other things, purchase price can be a concern, and especially in an existing affordable neighborhood like North River Fronts. New single family homes, duplexes, rowhomes or low to medium rise apartments can all be owner-occupied. The neighborhood already has a similar mix of housing, but the condition is sometimes deficient and thus many are rentals. Another option is to consider the feasibility of cooperative housing projects. The NRTF Report discussed the feasibility of allowing such projects. These arrangements can be set up in a single building or possibly in individual units around a courtyard. Residents are shareholders in a corporation that own the properties.<sup>12</sup> The next goal will explore many of the opportunities and challenges of redevelopment, but the Steering Committee was open to new housing possibilities at all age and incomes levels for increasing home ownership in the neighborhood.

**Action Steps:** Remain open to appropriate redevelopment styles to attract ownership.

**Responsibility:** NRF Neighborhood Association

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

**C. Promote Architectural Character**

**POLICY #C1 Use traditional design elements in new or rehabilitated housing**

The Steering Committee felt ***the traditional architectural character of the neighborhood should be retained and enhanced.*** This is consistent with the Urban Design Chapter of the *Comprehensive Plan* to respect the characteristics and prevalent housing styles of each older neighborhood”, particularly noted for attached (multiple-family) housing (see page 8-17).<sup>13</sup> Common styles found in North River Fronts are Queen Anne, Victorian Stick, and Carpenter Gothic which reflect popular trends when the area was being built up. The committee was not opposed to other traditional styles such as bungalow, cottage, Cape Cod, Craftsman and also could see certain contemporary styles that could be compatible closer to downtown.



Historic landmarked housing must follow Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.<sup>14</sup> These guidelines and the City of Eau Claire Landmarks Commission’s Architectural Style of Historic Properties brochure can be referred to for existing housing as a guide. Exterior maintenance, renovation and rehabilitation work should also be at least consistent with the character and design of the building. Careful consideration should be made in terms of materials, designs and the scale of structures. In such cases where exterior work is required by the City-County Health Department, officials should work with property owners in recommending the exterior code compliance work be done in a manner consistent with the appearance of the building and not degrade the property or detract from the neighborhood.

<sup>12</sup> Retrieved May 22, 2017 at <http://coophousing.org/resources/owning-a-cooperative/buying-into-a-housing-cooperative/#paragraph2>

<sup>13</sup> Retrieved May 22, 2017 at <http://www.ci.eau-claire.wi.us/home/showdocument?id=10515>

<sup>14</sup> Retrieved May 22, 2017 at <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation.htm>

For new lower density housing, the committee generally felt more recent time periods of auto-centric construction such as ranches or overly large, no clear styled luxury “McMansion” homes would not fit in an older compact neighborhood. Further, garages should be ideally located off alleys or corner side yards. Front porches were seen as a very important iconic element to be preserved or used on new structures, especially one and two unit dwellings. Front porches help to break up the front façade; they add character and provide a welcoming social gathering function. For multi-family housing, the General Development Plan states, “*new multi-family dwellings shall be designed to be compatible with the character of the neighborhood and to be consistent with the neighborhood plan.*” In addition, certain façade design elements are required in the Multi-Family Housing Design Manual. Specifically, attached brownstones were noted by the committee and public as a desirable style of row housing.

**Action Steps:** Follow the NRF General Development Plan. Encourage but not mandate housing to keep with traditional style design. Promote existing architectural brochures or consider developing further a residential architectural patterns guide/brochure or a website gallery of images for North River Fronts or in conjunction with other similar older neighborhoods.

**Responsibility:** NRF Neighborhood Association, Community Development and Health Department

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

#### **D. Limit Concentrations of Community Based Residential Facilities & Group Homes**

##### **POLICY #D1 Carefully review new community based residential facilities (CBRFs) and group homes so concentrations do not detract from housing reinvestment**

The Steering Committee was very open to housing people of all backgrounds and abilities but had concern over concentrations of CBRFs and group homes within the neighborhood verses other areas of the city. CBRFs are similar to and larger versions of group homes where a small number of unrelated people in need of care, support services, or supervision live together. The low value of housing stock and affordability of the neighborhood makes it a target for these forms of housing. Further, there was concern that some group homes have not been well operated. Both can detract from the larger policy goals of improving the neighborhood’s housing and ownership rates. The committee recognizes that such policy must comply with State Law and local zoning, but they recommend, as in the last plan, to ***not encourage any new facilities, or to judiciously review future facilities if they meet regulations.*** As for public housing, the Eau Claire housing Authority has policy to scatter their sites across the city. Within the neighborhood, Owen Rust Apartments is designated for elderly and handicapped and there are 4 units along Hobart Street (2 public housing, 1 former public housing and 1 substantial rehabilitation), and 1 on William Street (substantial rehabilitation).

**Action Steps:** Limit or carefully review community based residential facilities and group homes

**Responsibility:** City and Plan Commission

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

## Redevelopment

### Redevelopment Guiding Principle

Encourage redevelopment when and where appropriate that offers a mix in housing densities, rental, ownership, and price alternatives.

### Goals

- A. Encourage New Growth**
- B. Promote Context-Sensitive Design**
- C. Floodplain Relief**

The 2015 *Comprehensive Plan's* Housing Assessment (page 11-8)<sup>15</sup> identified demand trends of new single and multiple family housing starts in the city since 1980 and found there was steady growth, low vacancy rates and an upward movement of rents and sale prices. Since 2010, new multi-family housing, including duplexes has outpaced single family home construction more than 2 to 1. The neighborhood would like to capture some of this new growth. As previously indicated on page 20, the 2020 forecast for new housing counts in North River Fronts is low, albeit slightly upward. This reflects the very limited opportunity for new development because almost all of the land has been built on and it is often not cost effective to redevelop on a lot-by lot basis. For example, since 2000 only one new single family home has been built in the neighborhood and no new rental buildings. To grow the neighborhood, the Steering Committee feels that allowing some redevelopment opportunity is important, especially considering the greater interest in urban living in and near downtown.



<sup>15</sup> Retrieved May 22, 2017 at <http://eauclairewi.gov/home/showdocument?id=9321>

**A. Encourage New Growth in the Neighborhood**

**POLICY #A1 Rezone properties consistent with the City’s Comprehensive Plan**

The majority of the neighborhood was “down-zoned” in 2006 to Residential-Mixed Planned Development or RM-P. This classification should largely remain across the neighborhood because it effectively preserves existing situations of single-family, duplexes and small apartments while allowing for some new redevelopment. This is consistent with the City’s 2015 *Comprehensive Plan’s* future land use map on the next page, which shows the Medium to High Density Residential. This classification will, over time, promote new investment and more residents. A detailed description of it and downtown’s Central Business District (CBD) land use categories are included in Table 18 below.

***The Steering Committee believes that some rezonings are appropriate to encourage redevelopment and housing improvement.*** There are two priority areas where they see this more likely from a development perspective. They are located on the periphery of the neighborhood, which helps to take pressure off the lower density housing in the neighborhood’s interior. They include:

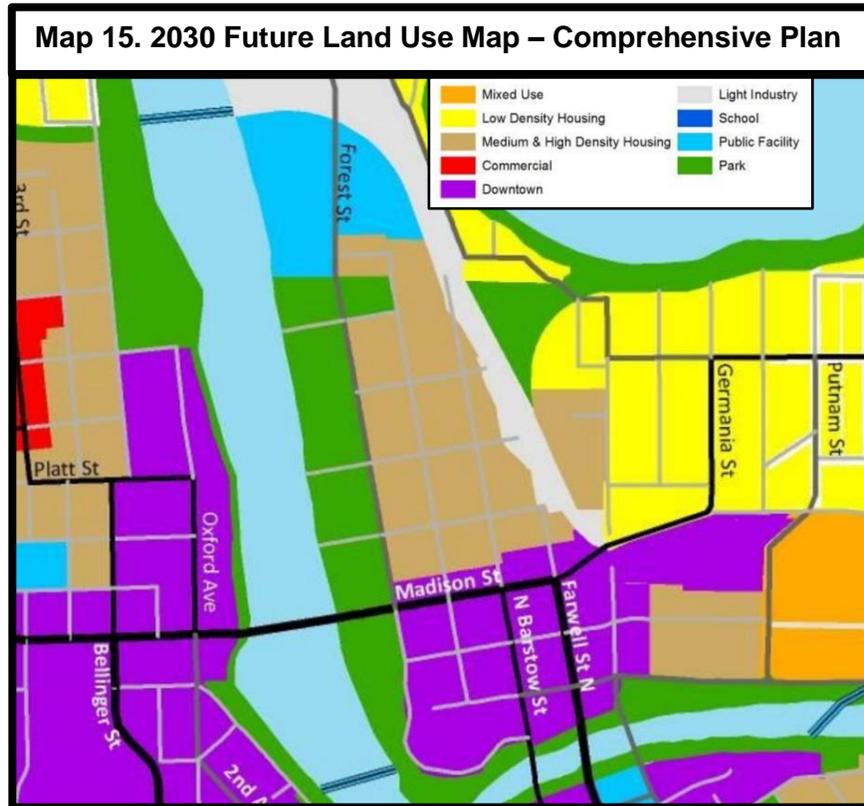
- The 3½ blocks running east to west between East Madison Street and William Street
  - RM-P rezonings could be changed to CBD, R-4 or R-3 designations depending on the project
- The industrial zoned former Walter’s Brewery block
  - I-2 heavy industrial zoning to R-3 or RM depending on the project

Both cases lend themselves to more moderate to higher density housing as the existing uses include parking lots, vacant lots, deteriorated housing, industrial uses and floodplain concerns that could be redeveloped into improved situations for the neighborhood. The situation north of East Madison Street could possibly add mixed use commercial, and be a part of a master planning effort, see Policy #A3 on page 64.



| <b>Table 18. 2030 Planned Land Use Map Categories &amp; Potential Rezoning Categories</b> |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| Medium & High Density Housing   | Small-lot detached houses, duplexes, townhouses, 4-, 6- and 8-unit buildings with individual exterior entrances, and all forms of apartment buildings are included in this category. The housing is located where there is good traffic access, between Low-Density Housing and non-residential land uses, and at high-amenity locations such as the greenways or parkways. The density is expected to be greater than 6 housing units per gross acre. | RM, Mixed Residential District<br>R-3, Low-Rise Multiple Family District<br>R-4, High-Rise Multiple-Family District |
| Downtown  | This land use category allows and promotes high-intensity office, retail, housing, hospitality, conference and public land uses, preferably in mixed-use buildings with strong pedestrian orientations.  | CBD - Central Business District   |

This plan recommends that rezonings should be private sector initiated, as part of a project’s general development proposal. In certain cases, like CBD zoning, there may be need for an amendment to the *Comprehensive Plan*. The Steering Committee felt developers requesting these various City approvals provided adequate opportunity for them to weigh in so the interests of the neighborhood would be represented.



Projected longer term, and only if the proper proposal is made, there may be other areas desirable for rezonings. These might include:

- The western half blocks along the east side of Forest Street, running north of William Street to the neighborhood park for housing
- Property along Sara Street, perhaps both sides, if acquired by the City for yard operations and park expansions
- West of the railroad crossing at Putnam Street, if a passenger rail station locates there
- Western property fringes of the two blocks along Wisconsin Street

**Action Steps:** Allow rezonings for redevelopment consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan*

**Responsibility:** Private Sector, City and NRF Association

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

**POLICY #A2 Implement the General Development Plan**

The Steering Committee felt that the neighborhood, residents, landlords, realtors, developers and builders *should be more aware and take advantage of the provisions approved in the last major rezoning of the neighborhood*. The standards (case file Z-1372-06) are summarized in Table 10 on Page 32. These were specifically tailored for the neighborhood. They provide zoning direction for improvement to existing properties and for redevelopment. Per the General Development Plan, a 8,700 square foot minimum lot size for a new three and four unit housing with RM-P zoning is allowed, whereas usually is 10,000 square foot is required. A conditional use permit is also required so the location is adjacent to similar type structures. For housing greater than four units, 3,000 square feet is needed for each additional unit.

**Potential Development Scenario**

- Combine two original platted 8,700 s.f. lots with using 1/2 of an alley to yield 18,324 total s.f. of lot area
- RM-P zoning could potentially allow up to 7 units via a conditional use permit
- All setbacks, hard surface, parking and other provisions must be met

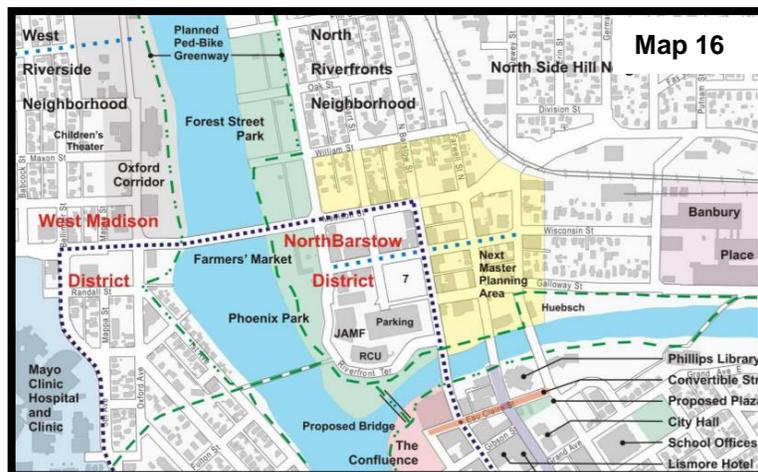
- Action Steps:** Allow development consistent with the adopted NRF General Development Plan
- Responsibility:** Private Sector, City and NRF Association
- Timeframe:** Ongoing

**POLICY #A3 Master plan neighborhood edges adjacent to downtown**

The *Comprehensive Plan* Downtown Plan Chapter, page 12-10 states *“Prepare and adopt a master plan by 2020 period for the revitalization of the perimeter of the North Barstow District. This would include the area from North Barstow Street to the Dewey Street frontage plus the blocks between East Madison and William Streets.”* The map inset shows this area in light yellow.

The Steering Committee agreed that since some of these blocks (200 - 400 East Madison St.) are in Tax Increment District #8, the City or Redevelopment Authority may be in a better position to facilitate redevelopment. Currently, the City owns two vacant properties and the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) is not active in acquiring other properties since their current priority is the Cannery Redevelopment District along Oxford Avenue.

If the RDA decides to master plan and or assembles properties, it should improve chances of quality redevelopment so it is coordinated and not piecemealed. The North Barstow/Medical Business Improvement District (BID) shares a boundary along William Street and there may be additional support and future BID improvements if and when redevelopment occurs.



**Action Steps:** Work with the City or Redevelopment Authority if they decide to master plan neighborhood fringes

**Responsibility:** City and or RDA

**Timeframe:** 2020



## B. Promote Context-Sensitive Development Design Techniques

### POLICY #B1 Encourage building massing on the 'Gentle Density' scale

'Gentle Density' is the idea that building size, mass and design reinforce the prevalent pattern of existing housing. For example, a proposed 5-story building in the middle of a highly concentrated single family and duplex area would not be appropriate. The graphic below illustrates a sort of idealized housing typology, with denser development at the edge transitioning to lower density deeper into the neighborhood. However, every neighborhood is different, and older existing areas usually tend to have more diversity. This is true within North River Fronts, where there are small apartment buildings mixed with duplexes and single family homes. The footprint, height and volume of these apartments are generally small though and fit with the overall pattern. **The Steering Committee believes properties when rehabbed, infilled or redeveloped should follow this general pattern** (consistent with RM-P zoning), while recognizing that over time the neighborhood will grow slighter denser on average. **They also felt that since the neighborhood's shape is narrow rather than wide, that its edges are the most appropriate locations for greater density** (these areas are noted in the rezonings policy #A1). The edges along downtown and major transportation corridors lend themselves better to higher density and mixed uses than the blocks within the interior. They held exception for the former Walters Brewery site, since that block if redeveloped, would be a good location for a larger apartment building.

**Action Steps:** Allow development consistent with the two general policies above and in the General Development Plan.

**Responsibility:** Private Sector, City and NRF Association

**Timeframe:** Ongoing



**POLICY #B2 Allow more middle housing styles**

As depicted on the last page graphic, there are many middle housing styles between single family and mid-rise apartments to consider in improving reinvestment chances. Often these housing styles are missing or not encouraged, but the neighborhood already has some of these types scattered within such as tri/four-plexes and small apartments. Other complimentary styles could be courtyard apartments, townhomes or row houses, multiplexes (5 to 10 units) and live/work structures (home occupations or with proper CBD zoning). ***The neighborhood's RM-P General Development Plan zoning works well with this policy and future rezonings may as well.***

**RM - Mixed Residential Description**

The mixed residential district provides for the development and maintenance of a compatible mixture of small single-family homes, two-family homes, townhomes, garden apartments, and small apartment buildings; and to encourage moderately dense development which is compatible with existing and future single-family development, in either older neighborhoods or developing areas.

It is important to note that medium density housing does not always equate to rental housing and some of these options may be very attractive to purchase by people desiring to live near downtown. They could be set up as condominiums or could share a zero-foot side lot line (firewall required). For example, RM-P allows up to 4 units potentially on 8,700 square foot lots via a conditional use permit. If the lot is 66 feet wide, a condo plat could create a stacked 2 by 2 unit arrangement that shares interior halls/ stair-wells. RM-P's 35 foot maximum height requirement would help keep the building in portion. A 4-car detached garage could be positioned off the alley and a landscaped courtyard could be shared in between.

- Action Steps:** Allow middle housing styles if proper zoning and General Development Plan provisions are met
- Responsibility:** Private Sector, City and NRF Association
- Timeframe:** Ongoing

**POLICY #B3 Use established site and building design criteria so development fits the neighborhood**

***The Steering Committee agreed that the following list of criteria are good examples that should be utilized for the their review of residential and possible mixed use projects and would also be useful for applicable City staff, Plan Commission, City Council and others when reviewing projects. Development should in each case:***

**Generally:**

- Reflect any relevant Comprehensive Plan policy or land used designation (e.g., context sensitive redevelopment/infill, see page 8-17 in the plan)
- Abide by any pertinent zoning district or



ordinance chapter (subdivision, building, site plan, floodplain, off-street parking, lighting, conditional uses, etc.)

- Follow required guidelines or design manuals (Multi-family housing, landscape, etc.)

**NRF Specific:**

- Be designed, whether rehabbed or new, to be compatible with and build on the strengths of the neighborhood’s traditional housing styles (architecture, materials, mass, height, etc.)
- Shall not be a mandate where creativity is hampered or dominated to any one style architecture or dwelling arrangement (i.e., all craftsman-styled single family homes)
- Be carefully planned, transitioned, and designed in accord with, not dwarfing, adjacent housing. Roof configuration or vertical building step backs may be required (such as between a new apartment building and a single family home)
- Shall if zoned RMP and for 3 or more units, follow the General Development Plan’s RMP provision of needing a conditional use permit; and that the project must be adjacent to at least a similar type structure
- Highly encourage front porches on one and two-family dwellings; balconies, rooftop patios, courtyards or other communal gathering features for housing of greater units
- Locate or orientate garages to utilize existing alleyways as much as possible so as to not introduce a suburban style to a traditional neighborhood.
- Ideally locate on-site parking lots behind buildings using alleys. Landscape parking/trash handling areas so they are screened or softened in appearance.
- Provide in conjunction with rezonings to greater density (R-3, R-4 or CBD) durable building materials of lasting permanence, quality and design. Also provide building and site amenities for occupants, public or customers (e.g., underground parking, green roof, solar, fitness gym, bike lockers, pedestrian streetscape furniture, transit shelter, outdoor dining, etc.)

**Action Steps:** Use the above criteria on all development projects. Consider developing a guide or brochure with gallery examples of housing/development styles that would be deemed compatible and desirable to provide developer and stakeholder direction.

**Responsibility:** NRF Association and City

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

**C. Assist on Floodplain Relief**

**POLICY #C1 Continue in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) community rating program**

In order for redevelopment to occur, or even in some cases rehabilitation of existing structures and new additions, there needs to be some relief on floodplain requirements while meeting related laws. ***The City should continue in and seek to improve its rating for flood insurance discounts to property owners.*** Greater public information, mapping and flood preparedness are some categories where more discount credits could be earned. A fuller explanation of this situation can be found back on pages 41-43 in the Issue chapter. By doing so, the burden of carrying this insurance may be reduced.

**Action Steps:** The City will continue in its efforts to maintain and possibly improve its Community Rating System (CRS) status

**Responsibility:** City

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

**POLICY #C2 Improve the Chippewa River east bank levee to protect property and reduce redevelopment risk**

***The levee in Forest Street Park helps to hold back flood waters and is in need of upgrade*** per the City's current *Natural Hazard's Mitigation Plan*. The City's *Waterways Plan* says to use natural methods, including "bio-engineering," as the primary and preferred means of bank stabilization, unless it will not be sufficient to protect valuable structures such as bridge piers. The mitigation plan also recommends many strategies from the City monitoring potential flood conditions and upstream dam failure status, to using hydraulic plugs in catch basins to prevent the backflow of floodwaters and continuing its stormwater management plan requirements.



**Action Steps:** The levee and associated stormwater discharge needs to be brought up to current standards after engineering study and preliminary design.

**Responsibility:** City

**Timeframe:** 2018-2020

**POLICY #C3 Mitigate floodplain risk when projects are proposed**

There is little the City can do to change FEMA or State requirements for fill and floodplain removal requests (LOMRs). When redevelopment does occur in the neighborhood's floodplain, ***the City will require stormwater drainage calculations, plans, and on-site infrastructure best management practices (BMPs) when needed.*** Bioswales is one common example to store excess water. Depending on the event, this may help to reduce the increased floodplain risk for adjacent properties since some stormwater conveyance will be retained on site.

**Action Steps:** The City will require stormwater plans and on-site BMPs when needed.

**Responsibility:** City

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

## Transportation

### Transportation Guiding Principle

Improve transportation infrastructure, give pedestrian preference, reduce traffic and truck conflicts and promote utilization of many modes of travel.

### Goals

- A. Celebrate Walking & Biking
- B. Improve Streets & Alleys
- C. Promote Mass Transit

This section focuses on improvement strategies under transportation. It is quite possible to live in North River Fronts and not need a car to reach various daily needs by foot, bike or using transit. Not many places in the city can boast this. Its major advantage is its smaller size and being next to downtown. North River Fronts Neighborhood generally has a grid street pattern with average sized blocks and sidewalks throughout the neighborhood. This arrangement fosters walkability. It is well served by transit routes, major arterial and collector roads and is skirted by an active railroad. Multi-use trails extend out in several different directions but better connections to and through the neighborhood could be made.

#### A. Celebrate Walking & Biking

##### **POLICY #A1 Connect the multi-use trail through the neighborhood**

Bicyclist and pedestrian traffic has increased since the High Bridge Pedestrian bridge opened in 2016. With many people coming from the trails in Phoenix Park, a connection between these two destinations needs to be made. This important system link has been envisioned in the City's *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* but has faced challenges since Forest Street Park is in the floodplain and there is a security need to direct users away from entering the Central Maintenance Facility (CMF) property. ***The Steering Committee feels this improvement needs to be made near term and planned in concert with other park or Forest Street improvements.*** The committee feels that this trail will be one of the best ways for visitors to experience North River Fronts. A positive impression is important also to help attract reinvestment into the neighborhood.



The clearest option from the High Bridge seems to be using the existing west sidewalk on Forest Street to avoid CMF, following southward through the park using the old alley, to then connect with Phoenix Park under Madison Street bridge. In addition, there are preliminary plans for a possible Veterans Tribute that would be integrated with the trail. If this is the case, the trail needs to be made safe for both thru traffic and people visiting the various veteran monuments.

- Action Steps:** The City will complete the multi-use trail through or along Forest Street Park.
- Responsibility:** City with possibly other contributors
- Timeframe:** 2019-2020

**POLICY #A2 Implement the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan recommendations**

The *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* covers many topics, from new infrastructure and detour planning to enforcement, safety and education. It also covers *two specific further study problem areas the Steering Committee would like addressed*. The two that pertain to North River Fronts are noted on page 46 in the plan and captured on the inset map to the right.<sup>16</sup> The first, Area #5, deals with East Madison Street between North Farwell and Riverfront Terrace. With high vehicle traffic volumes it is difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists. Recommendations are to instead designate Wisconsin Street as the primary on-street bicycle route (purple line) rather than using Madison, and to study redesign of the intersection at Madison and Farwell streets for safety. The second, Area #6, lies just west of the neighborhood and focuses on the intersection between North Farwell and Galloway Street. A traffic signal was recently installed for improvement but local bike route signs have not been installed on this minor route (red line). More recently, there have been greater movement and visibility conflicts with the multi-use trail crossing at the intersection of Galloway and Dewey Street. The intersection continues to experience high traffic levels of vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians as the area redevelops and Galloway transitions to a minor arterial. This area will need further study and may require relocation of the trail under the Dewey Street Bridge for safety.



The *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* also notes a Safe Route to School connecting the smaller eastern section of the neighborhood to Longfellow Elementary. The route is along Galloway Street, north on Putnam Street, east on Summit Street, then to the school. This route should be promoted for those who can take advantage of it. Unfortunately, the main western portion of the neighborhood does not have a designated route due to topography and railroad access issues and through connection is not envisioned during the timeframe of this plan update. These children are bused, but may still use the Madison Street Hill to access the school.

<sup>16</sup> City of Eau Claire Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, 2010. Retrieved May 22, 2017 at <http://www.ci.eau-claire.wi.us/home/showdocument?id=1373>

**Action Steps:** Implement relevant sections of the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*; study and improve problematic areas and encourage elementary students to use Safe Routes to School

**Responsibility:** City and School District with NRF Association input

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

## B. Improve Streets & Alleys

### POLICY #B1 Enhance Forest Street to improve the neighborhood

Forest Street, a collector road, is due for reconstruction in 2019.

Improving this street is a major opportunity for the neighborhood.

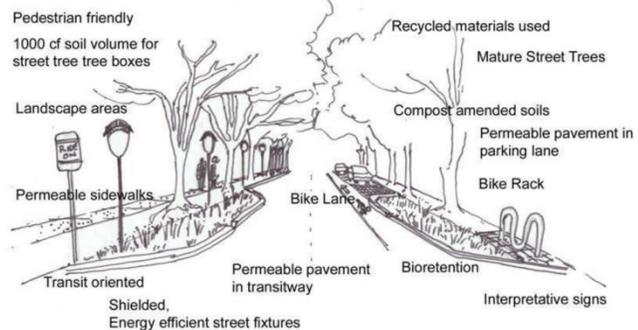
This street is a major entrance to not only the neighborhood but also downtown. It has the potential to promote a positive image of the neighborhood and stimulate reinvestment. And as such, *the*



**Steering Committee agreed that association members should participate in the public planning meetings for the project.** Key street elements to be considered are:

- Sustainable or green street infrastructure elements (see image for examples) since it is in the floodplain, to improve flood protection, river water quality and promote beautification
- Traffic calming features to reduce speeds and slow down truck traffic (e.g., bump out extensions at intersections)
- Pedestrian/ADA compliant crossings and sidewalks on both sides of the street
- Retain parking on at least one side of the street
- Plant new street trees and install decorative street lighting
- Stamped sidewalk art, poems, rain activated messages, etc.
- Allow for an easement location for a future neighborhood welcome/identification sign
- Integrate with the multi-use trail (e.g., at least a 10 foot trail section along the Central Maintenance Facility
- Consider inclusion of bike travel markings on street for faster moving bicyclist traffic instead of sending them through the park

#### Anatomy of a Green Street



**Action Steps:** Reconstruct and enhance Forest Street to produce neighborhood improvements  
**Responsibility:** City with NRF Association input  
**Timeframe:** 2018-2020

**POLICY #B2 Continue to improve streets that serve the neighborhood**

The Steering Committee feels that the City has done a good job at improving streets in the neighborhood. North Barstow, Wisconsin and Galloway streets are recent reconstructions and the surface quality of most streets is in fair to good shape. That said, maintenance will continue to be needed and ***the Neighborhood Association will act as the conduit to notify the City about major concerns and provide input on future projects.*** On a secondary level, residents can call in minor violations /issues such as on-street parking problems, potholes, broken storm gutters and street lights.

In the future, the only change to street classifications for the neighborhood is for Galloway Street; that it is reclassified from a collector to a minor arterial. Currently it carries an average of over 6,000 vehicles per day and that number is expected to rise as it becomes the principal route to downtown from the east. If the City is able to secure available federal support to grade separate the street from the railroad, it will also promote a more desired route to downtown from the east. It is not clear if or when this bridge project will occur, but it may fall within this plan’s timeframe. Related to Galloway, the Steering Committee has safety concerns with pedestrians trying to cross at Putnam Street to the lower bicycle and pedestrian trail, and that often vehicles do not stop for people at the crosswalk.

In 2018, Forest Street will be a detour route for Eddy Street as it is reconstructed. There will be more traffic along Forest and the neighborhood would like to keep updated on the plans for this project. They also have concerns about truck queuing on Wisconsin Street into Banbury Place since the right turning approach is difficult to make from Galloway Street onto Putnam Street then right into the large complex. Posting signs for a truck alternative route might be a solution after a study is done.

**Action Steps:** Work with the City to voice support and concerns about neighborhood street projects, maintenance and safety.  
**Responsibility:** NRF Association  
**Timeframe:** Ongoing

**POLICY #B3 Continue to maintain and improve alleys that serve the neighborhood**

The City has started a program to improve alleys in older neighborhoods. Many of the alleys in North River Fronts have been resurfaced but some remain in poor condition. ***The Steering Committee feels that all alleys in the neighborhood should be upgraded*** within the next 10 years. They also voiced concern that snow plowing should be a City service due to the difficulty in organizing neighbors block by block to hire private contractors.



**Action Steps:** Work with the City to improve alleys and associated maintenance

**Responsibility:** City, NRF Association

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

### C. Promote Mass Transit

#### POLICY #C1 Continue to invest in transit for the neighborhood

Eau Claire Transit's operations are located in the neighborhood at Central Maintenance Facility. Specific routes serving the neighborhood (see map inset) are numbers 3 (brown), 4 (green), 8 (red), 20 (light blue). The Steering Committee noted that current routes and stops for North River Fronts are adequate, but that service coverage on Sundays would be beneficial. U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Block Group data does not reveal how many residents use buses to commute to work, but stop locations are within short distance of residents. It is also recommended that the City promote transit oriented development if/when redevelopment occurs such as along the blocks between Madison and William Streets. Guidelines can be found in the *Comprehensive Plan* page 3-6. Potential bus shelters or on-street bus stop bays could be incorporated into the development. Likewise on-street bays could be explored to serve Forest Park, the Veteran's Tribute and High Bridge when Forest Street is reconstructed.



**Action Steps:** Continue to provide quality and cost effective transit and paratransit service to and from the neighborhood. Seek to possibly improve transit infrastructure with new projects.

**Responsibility:** City

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

#### POLICY #C2 Plan for possible high speed passenger rail

Passenger rail both intercity and commuter are options for Eau Claire. WisDOT's and MnDOT's State Rail Plans notes possible connections to Chicago, Milwaukee and the Twin Cities as does the *Comprehensive Plan*. Regaining passenger rail service has been supported by the West Central WI Rail Coalition and by the City Council for years. Recently the Council approved a resolution supporting a private-public commuter concept to the Twin Cities. This service would utilize Union Pacific's mainline with their approval.

A likely station stop for the community could be at the former Omaha Road depot (see rail crossing at Putnam Street photo on the next page). This site is in the neighborhood and close to downtown but

would have to be acquired from the current land owner. The station could also serve as a multi-modal hub and possibly stimulate greater redevelopment. However, details of this or other passenger rail planning efforts fall outside the scope of this plan update. Realization of any service remains uncertain, but next steps by the coalition are to organize sponsors and fund required studies and service modeling.

**Action Steps:** Continue to work with stakeholders to attract passenger rail. If North River Fronts is chosen for the station, the neighborhood should be given adequate opportunity to be involved.

**Responsibility:** West Central WI Rail Coalition, City, NRF Association

**Timeframe:** Ongoing



**POLICY #C3 Mitigate freight rail impacts**

Union Pacific’s mainline rail traffic has picked up in recent years due to hauling more industrial sand. While growth has been noticeable, traffic and speed levels through the neighborhood are not high. Union Pacific has made local rail, yard and safety improvements with Positive Train Control. Little can be done regarding train vibrations but required lower speeds (30 mph or less) aid in reducing vibration impacts. Reducing train horn noise is possible with federally designated train Quiet Zones, but the City has to fund safety enhancements beyond minimum standards. Currently, the plan is to create a Quiet Zone that would be beneficial to the neighborhood and other areas of the city. If grade separation at Galloway Street and superior at-grade crossing safety measures at Putnam Street can be made, then there may be a good chance to restrict train horns.

**Action Steps:** The City will continue to evaluate cost-benefits of installing infrastructure to permit a federal train Quiet Zone

**Responsibility:** City

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

## Public Services

### Public Services Guiding Principle

Continue public investment in city services, parklands and facilities to maintain and improve the neighborhood's livability

### Goals

- A. Meet Basic Needs
- B. Enrich Parks & Recreation
- C. Improve Central Maintenance Facility

Adequate public services like utilities, police and fire response coupled with community facilities like parks and schools matter greatly to neighborhood success; making them safe, functional and attractive places. This plan update focuses on the relevant services related to North River Fronts.

#### A. Meet Basic Needs

**POLICY #A1** The City will continue to meet the basic needs of the neighborhood

*Services essential to protect the public's health and welfare shall be provided to maintain and foster prosperity within the neighborhood.* The delivery of adequate and timely public services shall include but not be limited to:

- water and sewer utilities,
- police and fire coverage,
- health services,
- parks and recreation,
- code enforcement, building inspections and neighborhood planning,
- transit, street and alley repair, snow removal, and street sweepings

Currently, there are no known major deficiencies, but the Steering Committee feels strongly that their older neighborhood should receive services at no less basic level than elsewhere in the community, and that stronger investment in certain services such as police and code enforcement are needed to address issues of crime, property/building code violations and rising homelessness.

**Action Steps:** The City will deliver adequate essential services at no less basic level than other places in the city.

**Responsibility:** City

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

**POLICY #A2 Policing the neighborhood is important to cut crime and promote safety**

As discussed on page 44, criminal activity and the perception of lack of safety within North River Fronts is a major deterrent for would be residents, visitors and reinvestment. It has been anecdotally stated that realtors avoid showing the area to buyers because of the perception that the neighborhood is unsafe. Several drug houses were noted in the Steering Committee’s plan update mapping exercise. In addition, higher concentrations of crime not only exist near downtown but also in various spots in the neighborhood.

Changing crime levels and mindsets about North River Fronts is not going to be easy, thus focused attention is needed to reverse the current state of affairs. The Eau Claire Police Department is committed to being a partner with the neighborhood. Multiple officers attended Steering Committee meetings to get a better sense from members’ concerns. While the neighborhood police office program is no longer in effect (proven a not effective strategy), the department actually provides greater service coverage levels in North River Fronts than in many other areas of the city. It may be true this is in response to higher incident levels, but also it is to provide a proactive presence of law and order.

***The Steering Committee agreed that greater networking and partnership with the Police Department is vitally important.*** The neighborhood is within the Police’s North District territory and incident reports can be provided to the association so that they can work in conjunction to address concerns. In addition, if residents share what they are seeing to the association or to district beat officers directly on a regular basis; the information will help address activities; whether criminal, suspicious, vagrant or other. Further, the committee was supportive of continuing the Police Department’s Certified Landlord Program to help address possible criminal activity on rental properties and for the Planning Division to consider developing a Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) design manual.

**Action Steps:** The City will provide police service levels and partner with the Neighborhood Association to affect real change

**Responsibility:** Police Department, NRF Association, Community Development

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

**B. Enrich Parks & Recreation**

**POLICY #B1 Coordinate and construct investments in Forest Street Park**

Forest Street Park has become the neighborhood’s major destination and one of its best-selling points. This open space used to be occupied by flood prone houses until the City removed them in the 1990s. Thus, it has extra meaning to residents of North River Fronts. Today, the 16.8 acre open space is designated as a Special Area Park for all community



users. It offers sweeping views of the Chippewa River, fishing and canoe portage access, community gardens, a pavilion, event grounds, parking and trail access to Phoenix Park. The Neighborhood Association has been instrumental in developing and operating the community gardens, which feature rental plots, ADA compliant raised planting gardens, and a larger community shared garden. Planned improvements in the near future include a multi-use trail to connect the Phoenix Park to the High Bridge Pedestrian bridge and a possible Veterans Tribute. Fundraising would be needed for the tribute.

New investments like the Veterans Tribute are encouraged by the Steering Committee, but they feel they should be consulted during planning stages so that existing amenities are coordinated into the overall park design and organized for effective use of space. A draft master plan has been proposed but has not been finalized. ***The Steering Committee recommends the following which could be addressed in a master plan:***

- Work with FEMA to address any relevant floodplain or deed restriction issues
- For shared use, reconstruct the Central Maintenance Facility's south graveled parking lot with an improved surface
- Locate a restroom within the park and in conjunction with the proposed Veterans Tribute
- Improve appearance as more users are drawn to the park
- Maintain some open space and an vacant area or field for recreational play
- The City should continue to be supportive of the community gardens operated by the neighborhood association
- Find a solution for gardeners to continue their vehicle/ADA access to the gardens and compost area if the old alley becomes a multi-use trail (off-street parking may be possible in the old Oak Street right-of-way west of Forest Street after evaluation)
- Integrate the trail into the overall park so amenities are featured and access is easier
- Provide electricity in the park for lighting and event power
- Install more benches
- Improve the riverbank levee and consider possible seating areas on top for river views (it is difficult to actually see the river from park level)
- Improve the canoe portage and fishing landing for better access and safety
- Enhance pedestrian access improvements to and from the neighborhood when Forest Street is reconstructed in 2019 (intersection bump outs and pedestrian connection to North River Fronts Neighborhood Park)
- Add interpretive park or wayfinding signage. Also consider dedicating a location for a neighborhood welcome sign near William and Forest Streets
- Monitor the landscaping in the parking lot across from the Farmers Market so that it continues to mature and not become an eyesore
- Mitigate visually or physically future expansion of Xcel Energy's downtown substation; to protect parkland, property values and scenic aesthetics
- Improve the gravel access road into the substation to hard surface
- Discourage taxis from idling and vagrants sleeping inside the park



**Action Steps:** As the City plans Forest Street Park, the City will provide opportunities for the neighborhood's input and continue to support the community gardens. The neighborhood will continue to operate the gardens and advocate for coordinated planning whether in a park master plan or in the next 5-year *Park & Open Space Plan*. A Memo of Understanding (MOU) between the City, Veterans Tribute, and the Neighborhood Association is desired to address accessibility, ecological and other concerns of the community gardens.

**Responsibility:** City, NRF Association

**Timeframe:** 2017-2022

## **POLICY #B2 Maintain neighborhood park investments**

***The Steering Committee concurs that the City should maintain the quality investments at North River Fronts Neighborhood Park.*** This park's development was a major accomplishment from the last neighborhood plan. The pavilion, patio, picnic tables, sidewalks, playground, basketball court and children's educational garden are all in fairly good shape after a decade. Thus, no improvements are currently proposed for the 1.5 acre park in the City's *Park and Open Space 2013-2017 Plan*. A future consideration is the park could be expanded to the north to Sara Street. The houses to the north of the park would need to be acquired.



**Action Steps:** The City should continue quality investments in the neighborhood park

**Responsibility:** City

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

## **POLICY #B3 Continue to promote stewardship practices within parks**

***The Neighborhood Association prides themselves on getting residents involved in stewardship and sustainable living practice and will continue in doing so.*** As mentioned, they operate the community gardens and support the annual Chippewa Valley Sustainable Future's Festival at Forest Street Park. They also assist in park cleanups of litter and invasive species like buckthorn. They appreciate the City's Park Division leaving some areas of Forest Street Park 'no-mow' zones and that harmful pesticides are not used.

**Action Steps:** The Steering Committee recommends continuing to leverage the parks to promote stewardship and sustainable living practices and the City should as well

**Responsibility:** NRF Association, City

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

## C. Improve City's Central Maintenance Facility's (CMF) Accessory Functions

### POLICY #C1 Screen CMF's operations outdoor storage yard

The City has expanded the operations yard west of Forest Street over the last several years. ***The Steering Committee feels that the outdoor storage area should be screened or landscape buffered***; for the residents to the immediate south. In addition, this area should not be used for the storage of abandoned or damaged vehicles and equipment. The alley in between is used by both the City and residents accessing rear parking and their detached garages. Some of these improvements appear to encroach into the alley. These conflicts may be addressed in the next policy.

**Action Steps:** The City should screen the operations yard to reduce the impact on residents to the south.

**Responsibility:** City

**Timeframe:** Near term

### POLICY #C2 Consider expanding CMF's operations yard

The City should consider the feasibility and need for expanding its operations yard south to Sara Street. ***The Steering Committee is not opposed to the expansion but that any expansion would require proper buffering and screening along Forest Street and Sara Street.*** The housing in this area is substandard and expansion could help to better organize the operations, as there is already a yard access off Sara Street.



**Action Steps:** If needed, the City will make offers to acquire the land for the yard expansion.

**Responsibility:** City

**Timeframe:** No definite timetable

### POLICY #C3 Pave CMF's south parking lot

South of the transit garage, and north of the west end of Huysen Street, is located a graveled employee parking lot for the City's Central Maintenance Facility (CMF). Forest Street Park users also use this lot to access the fishing landing. This lot needs to be hard surfaced and has been deferred due to various reasons; floodplain impact, and at one point it was being considered for a possible geothermal field for CMF. ***The Steering Committee feels that the lot should be improved*** and that it could be done in conjunction with other park improvements such as with the Veterans Tribute.

**Action Steps:** The City should improve the parking lot with hard surface

**Responsibility:** City

**Timeframe:** Near term

## Quality of Life

### Quality of Life Guiding Principle

Strengthen community ties and the desirability of living in North River Fronts through social opportunities, marketing, and enhancement of the social and visual fabric of the neighborhood.

### Goals

- A. Engage Residents
- B. Market Place
- C. Maintain Properties



The City has participated in The National Citizen Survey™ every five years since 2003. The latest survey in 2016 asked residents about the overall quality of life in the city and specifically how that fared in older neighborhoods. About two-thirds of city respondents felt that revitalizing older neighborhoods, encouraging single-family home ownership, improving neighborhoods, and helping neighbors build a strong sense of community were important. This is no different than what North River Fronts wants to do. To achieve a better quality of life and a more desirable place to live, it will take sustained effort by more than just the NRF Neighborhood Association. Improvement strategies listed in the policies of the first four sections and those outlined next will work towards accomplish these ends.

### A. Engaged Residents

**POLICY #A1** Continue to run and grow an active Neighborhood Association to advocate for the neighborhood and its plan

The North River Fronts Neighborhood Association has a committed group of neighbors, who over the decades have greatly cared about their neighborhood. Four neighborhood plans is a testament to their passion. There is strong leadership and regular gatherings whether business meeting related or fun social events. That said, ***increased citizen participation in the association and general neighborhood activities is needed to sustain what has been built and to strengthen its ability. This capacity will be important when accomplishing the recommendations in this plan.*** The following is a list of actions related to quality of life within the neighborhood:

- Hold regular association meetings
- Create community between residents by holding social events that are open to the public such as block parties, pot-lucks, river floats, clean ups, driveway movie-nights, seasonal events like the Easter egg hunt, etc.
- Continue website<sup>17</sup> and social media<sup>18</sup> presence to communicate to neighbors and provide resources whether for housing improvements or government contacts
- Continue recruitment and empower residents by using democratic civic engagement strategies like Clear Vision Eau Claire toolkit<sup>19</sup>
- Provide a communication link between neighborhood residents and the City about housing issues, crime, or street condition issues
- Participate in annual spring tour of the neighborhood to look for code-related problems
- Implement the neighborhood plan and work with the City to review private and public development projects that affect the neighborhood
- Continue to operate the Forest Street Community Gardens and work with UW County Extension to run the kids garden
- Continue community garden donations to food pantries, Community Table, and homeless shelters
- Network and socially tie in with downtown residents living in the North Barstow Street area (not technically within the neighborhood boundaries, but see Appendix A)



**Action Steps:** Continue to run an active Neighborhood Association, implement the neighborhood plan, review development projects and empower new members

**Responsibility:** NRF Association, City

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

**POLICY #A2 Maintain non-profit status and consider a neighborhood development corporation**

The association has non-profit status as a 501 (c)(4) and looks out for the welfare, common good, and civic betterment of its residents and neighborhood. For the time being, this organizational set up works well, so they can facilitate operating the community gardens and collect rents, grants, donations and Community Development Block grant funds. *The Steering Committee did express interest in a future neighborhood development corporation (NDC) but wanted to wait and see* how it works out for Historic Randall Park Neighborhood. A NDC was a top priority in the *Neighborhood Revitalization Task Force Report*. It is usually structured as a 501 (c)(3) and has the ability to own and develop property if

<sup>17</sup> Retrieved May 22, 2017 at <http://www.northriverfronts.com/>

<sup>18</sup> Retrieved May 22, 2017 at <https://www.facebook.com/North-River-Fronts-Neighborhood-150893518302258/>

<sup>19</sup> Retrieved May 22, 2017 at <http://clearvisioneauclaire.org/resources/>

they so choose. Networking with Randall Park and other neighborhood associations will be important when seeking out strategies for neighborhood improvement.

**Action Steps:** Learn from and monitor other neighborhood associations' activities such as pursuing and running a neighborhood development corporation.

**Responsibility:** NRF Association

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

## B. Market Place

### POLICY #B1 Build a better sense of place

Often the little things can make a difference when trying to create a stronger sense of place. An entrance sign, iconic sculpture, or sidewalk art can be tangible ways to invoke that residents care and visitors have arrived. *The Steering Committee agreed it needed to strengthen its neighborhood identity.*

This is important because the neighborhood is small, somewhat a pass through place and segmented into two parts. The association could take advantage of the City's Neighborhood Matching Grant program to match funds for an entrance monument sign near Forest and William Streets. They could advocate for more unique street signs as neighborhood markers, or start a sidewalk poetry contest in conjunction with street reconstruction like Forest Street. Programs can be modeled off what St. Paul, MN or Appleton, WI have done. Further, interpretive signage could be installed along Forest Street or elsewhere conveying historical information. The association could also work with neighbors in sponsoring a contest or perhaps together with graphic design college students, develop a neighborhood logo and other marketing imagery. A sunburst over a river bridge could be one idea since some older housing in the neighborhood has this sunburst design within roof gables.

**Action Steps:** Consider options listed here or others to improve the neighborhood's identity

**Responsibility:** NRF Association

**Timeframe:** 2020



**Policy #B2**      **Actively work with Downtown Eau Claire Inc., realtors, lenders and builders to improve the image and livability opportunities for current and prospective residents**

***Helping realtors and builders to show more homes and invest in North River Fronts is needed.***

Many realtors and builders do not know the potential and have written off the area due to perceptions. It is hoped this plan will help bring to light North River Fronts’ positive assets and qualities. The Steering Committee is realistic in their thinking that their area does have its challenges like older housing, lack of greater purchasing ability, and floodplain restrictions, but the tide is turning. More people are seeking to live in distinct walkable places close to downtown. As a start, begin to have conversations with Downtown Eau Claire Incorporated (DECI), realtors, lenders and builders by meeting with their representatives or inviting them to come speak at a Neighborhood Association meeting. This may help clarify barriers that need to be better overcome and provide direction on how to work together in the future, such as targeting reinvestment in one block at a time or working on a neighborhood improvement project together. The picture above is one example of working with contractors to construct the Forest Street Pavilion.



**Action Steps:** Initiate conversations or meetings with development professionals to promote greater interest in North River Fronts living

**Responsibility:** NRF Association

**Timeframe:** Near term

**Policy #B3**      **Promote health and sustainability**

As mentioned on page 45, popular trends of healthy and sustainable living can be realized by residing in North River Fronts. The compact shape of the neighborhood and access to trails and rivers lends to easy walking and other physical activity. Healthcare and downtown jobs, services and amenities are within short distance. A resident may not need a car reducing their impact on the environment. There are two community gardens that operate pesticide-free and feature composting. Overall, there is a strong natural resources stewardship ethic since the neighborhood is located along two rivers. ***Because of these advantages, marketing of such trends need greater emphasis.*** The association helps to support the annual Chippewa Valley Sustainable Futures Festival at Forest Street and the Amazing Eau Claire Clean Up as well. A “no-drive day” is one idea the media could feature about the neighborhood.



**Action Steps:** Promote health and sustainability via real estate marketing materials and hold educational workshops or activities

**Responsibility:** NRF Association

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

### C. Maintain Properties

#### POLICY #C1 Continue code enforcement program

As discussed on page 56, *the Steering Committee is very supportive of continuing existing programs* like the City’s code enforcement staffing and the City-County Health Department’s Intensified Housing Code Compliance Program (IHCCP). There is support for the new rental registration and inspection program to deal with persistent code violations, such as deferred maintenance or weeds growing between landlord properties. The Neighborhood Association is also committed to attending springtime neighborhood drive-thrus to assist code enforcement staff on problems that exist.

**Action Steps:** Support and liaison with local government code enforcement staff. Provide residents with contact information and distribute the City’s “Maintaining Neighborhood Standards” brochure.

**Responsibility:** NRF Association

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

#### POLICY #C2 Promote cleanup & beautification events

**Partner with those interested in beautifying North River Fronts.** In 2015 Habitat for Humanity held their “Brush of Kindness” event in the neighborhood and this or something similar should be done on an annual basis. There are volunteers willing to clean up as well that may get paid time off from work. Focus on helping families or individuals that are in the greatest need and or in common spaces that need a makeover. Consider developing a contact list of those who want and need assistance. This list can be used not just for coordinating cleanup events, but for other volunteer opportunities. Finally, take advantage of bulk pickup days offered by waste haulers.



**Action Steps:** Seek willing partners to help beautify properties within the neighborhood.

**Responsibility:** NRF Association

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

**POLICY #C3     Reduce waste hauling impacts including litter**

***The Steering Committee expressed concerns over waste collection methods and desired to seek solutions to solve negative impacts.*** Three concerns were noted. First; the City/County minimum standard for recyclable collection is a small open container. These recycling bins often lead to litter problems if they are overfilled or the wind blows items out. The practice is outdated. Many haulers now offer larger 96 gallon carts with lids for single-stream recycling at no additional cost. The Neighborhood Association will help spread notice to residents to help correct the problem.

Second; the numerous haulers driving through the neighborhood during collection day causes noise, air and extra wear on City roads. The Sustainability Chapter of the *Comprehensive Plan* (page 15-16)<sup>20</sup> has policy considerations to evaluate if waste pick-up zones should be assigned to reduce the total number of haulers in a given neighborhood. Instead of waiting for this debated approach, the neighborhood could itself form a group subscription contract with a hauler to seek better pricing and reduce negative impacts. Something similar has been done in the Third Ward Neighborhood.

Third; haulers prefer waste containers to be located street curbside rather than alley-side. The Steering Committee felt this practice should be re-evaluated. There are a few situations where street curbside is needed, but many blocks have alleys and utilizing them may be a better solution to reduce neighbors from having to haul their containers from the house to the street. This would also improve the outward public appearance of the neighborhood.



**Action Steps:** Work with waste haulers to find solutions to problematic waste collection methods that negatively impact the neighborhood.

**Responsibility:** NRF Association and haulers

**Timeframe:** 2018-2020

<sup>20</sup> Retrieved May 22, 2017 at <http://eauclairewi.gov/home/showdocument?id=10541>

# APPENDIX A

## City Council Resolution

No. 2017-341

### RESOLUTION

#### RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE UPDATE OF THE NORTH RIVER FRONTS NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN AS PART OF THE CITY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

**WHEREAS**, the Eau Claire City Plan Commission has studied and considered the update of the North River Fronts Neighborhood Plan as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Plan Commission recommended adoption of the update of the North River Fronts Neighborhood Plan on July 17, 2017, and made a finding that said plan is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

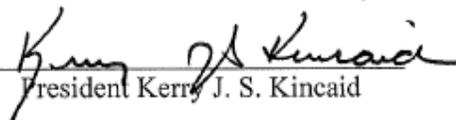
**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that pursuant to Wis. Statutes; Section 66.1001, the City Council, as an aid to the Plan Commission and the City Council in the performance of their duties, does hereby adopt the update of the North River Fronts Neighborhood Plan, a copy of which is on file in the office of the City Clerk and open to public inspection during normal business hours, as part of the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Eau Claire and is incorporated into this plan by reference.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that in adopting this update of the neighborhood plan that the City Council finds said plan to be consistent with the City's 2015 Comprehensive Plan, specifically the Neighborhoods and District Plan Chapter Objective 5, Policy 1 (Neighborhood Planning).

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Eau Claire City Council recommends the City consider amending the boundaries of the neighborhood plan during the next update to the Comprehensive Plan.

Adopted,  
July 25, 2017

(SEAL)

  
President Kerry J. S. Kincaid

(SEAL)

  
City Manager Dale Peters

(ATTESTED)

  
City Clerk Carrie L. Riepl

# APPENDIX B

## Plan Commission Resolution

### RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING ADOPTION OF THE UPDATE OF THE NORTH RIVER FRONTS NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

**WHEREAS**, the North River Fronts Neighborhood Association requested the Eau Claire City Plan Commission to update the neighborhood plan for the North River Front Neighborhood which was last updated in 2004; and

**WHEREAS**, the Plan Commission has directed the Department of Community Development to work with the North River Fronts Neighborhood Association in the update of the neighborhood plan; and

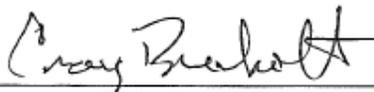
**WHEREAS**, the North River Fronts Neighborhood Association and the Department of Community Development have drafted an update for the neighborhood that includes: a neighborhood profile, identification of issues, development of goals and improvement strategies, and recommendations to address issues and problems that have been identified; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Eau Claire adopted a Comprehensive Plan on September 22, 2015, in accordance with the provisions of Wis. Statutes, Section 66.1001; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Plan Commission finds the update of the North River Fronts Neighborhood Plan to be consistent with said Comprehensive Plan, specifically the Neighborhoods and District Plan Chapter Objective 5, Policy 1 (Neighborhood Planning).

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Eau Claire City Plan Commission recommends to the City Council that the update of the North River Fronts Neighborhood Plan be adopted as part of the City of Eau Claire's Comprehensive Plan.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Eau Claire City Plan Commission recommends the City consider amending the boundaries of the neighborhood during the next update to the Comprehensive Plan.

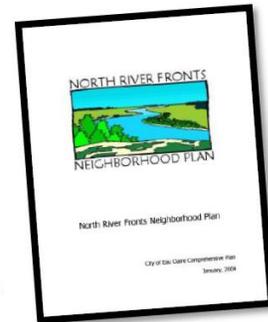
  
Secretary, Craig Brenholt

Adopted,

July 17, 2017

# APPENDIX C

## Engagement Strategies



### NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN UPDATE

Did you know your neighborhood is undergoing a planning effort to shape its improvement for the next ten years? The North River Fronts Neighborhood Association has been working with the City of Eau Claire to update the 2003 plan and your voice is important. Below are ways to share your input.

### NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY

Regardless of taking advantage of the other opportunities listed herein, all residents and property owners should take this important survey to help inform future planning efforts for how to improve the neighborhood. Go to:

<http://www.peakdemocracy.com/3979>  
or scan this QR code to take the survey.

\*If you are not able to take the survey online, please contact the City below for alternative means.



### NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT MEETING

This is your chance to come to a participation and discussion meeting for residents and property owners. Share your concerns and ideas for neighborhood improvement. The meeting will be held on: **Saturday, October 15<sup>th</sup> from 10:30 a.m. to Noon at the Transit Offices, 910 Forest St.**

### “OFFICE HOURS”

Come share your thoughts for the neighborhood to a city planner. Ned Noel, Associate Planner with the City, will hold open “office hours” for people to drop by and speak with him. Times are as follows:

- **Caffe Tempo Coffee Shop**  
315 E. Madison St.
  - 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., October 6th
  - 7 a.m. to 9 a.m., October 7th
  
- **Wigwam Tavern**  
314 E. Madison St.
  - 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., October 10th
  - 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., October 11th

### NEIGHBORHOOD WEBSITE

See the neighborhood website for plan updates, meetings and other ways to get involved. The neighborhood association is eager to have more people be active in promoting the North River Fronts. Visit: [www.northriverfronts.com/connect.htm](http://www.northriverfronts.com/connect.htm)

**CONTACT INFO:** For questions, language translation, or to provide feedback, please contact Ned Noel, Associate Planner at 715-839-4914 or by email at [ned.noel@eauclairewi.gov](mailto:ned.noel@eauclairewi.gov)