

In This Update:

- **From the City Manager:** Airport Drill, Net New Growth, Council Opportunities
- **Employee Spotlight**
- **Council Calendar**
- **Updates from:** Engineering, Community Services, Finance, Community Development

From the City Manager: Here are a few updates from this week...

Airport Drill: The Airport recently conducted training (see attached press release), and a Council Member wrote to confirm that PFAS foam is no longer used in training. Airport Director Charity Zich confirmed that: “Firefighting foam is only used for emergencies at the airport and will not be used for the training exercise.” Director Zich went on to say that the only firefighting foam currently approved by the FAA for use on aircraft fires contains PFAS. The DNR has informed the City that if there is a need to apply foam containing PFAS, there is an immediate remediation of contaminated soil thus minimizing impacts.

Given the possibility of an impact, even with remediation, Director Zich said that the military has taken the lead on finding a replacement firefighting foam and hopes to have an approved replacement by January 2023. She said: “As soon as a new spec is approved by the FAA, we will proceed as quickly as possible with eliminating the PFAS containing foam from this airport.” All other airports will be simultaneously trying to achieve this same result, though, so there may be supply chain challenges.

Director Zich referred people to an FAQ on the airport’s website. [PFAS Site Investigation FAQ | Airport News | Eau Claire County \(chippewavalleyairport.com\)](#)

Net New Growth: The City’s Net New Construction number is now official, as listed here: [2022 Net New Construction Report \(wi.gov\)](#). Our 2021 NNC looks to me to be the highest for any of the larger communities. Other larger communities that have high growth include: Mukwonago, Ashwaubenon, Harrison, Fitchburg, Pleasant Prairie, Greenville, Grafton, Stevens Point, Janesville, Hudson, New Richmond, River Falls, Sussex, Germantown, Lisbon, and Hartland. As mentioned in a Council meeting, it would be good if we had a real-time estimate of what our current net new growth generating rate is, so that with each permit pulled and each development agreement signed, we know how projects will contribute to 2022’s NNC number (which impacts our budget for 2024). Also, it would be great if we had the time and bandwidth to reach out to these high NNC communities to assemble a list of best practices. Council VP Berge has been studying the topic as part of her League work, and we look forward to hearing what she learns in terms of best practices as well.

Council Opportunities: Just a reminder that there are a number of opportunities for you to learn more about and join in on the activities of the City in the next few weeks:

- **Library Tour:** Join City staff for a behind-the-scenes sneak peek tour of the Library! The tours will occur between 8/23 and 8/31. Library staff are working very hard this month to prepare the Library for its opening. Sign up here for a 45-minute tour: [Employee & Council Member Library Tour](#)
- **League of Wisconsin Municipalities Conference:** President Weld indicated that each year some Council Members attend the annual LWM Conference. This year's will be held in La Crosse on October 19-21. Please let me know if you hope to attend so that we can determine a budget for all attendees and make sure to work out travel approvals.
- **Brush Site:** Emily Berge has expressed an interest in a brush site tour. Let me know if anyone else would like to join!
- **Landfill Open House:** On Thursday, 9/8, 11AM-2PM, Seven Mile Landfill will host an open house. Their invitation reads: "Join us for our Open House, with lunch and informational tours of our landfill and compost facility."
- **Swearing-In Ceremony:** Council Members are invited to the Eau Claire Police Department's Swearing-In Ceremony for Officer Janari Glover on Friday, September 9 at 8:30AM, in the County Board Room. Please let me know if you'd like to attend.



Employee Spotlight: Here's our next spotlight! (Highlight someone using this form: [Spotlight Form](#)).

Today we are spotlighting **Rebecca Draeger!**

One of Rebecca's co-workers said this about Rebecca: *"Rebecca is a ray of sunshine for the City. Her friendliness, above-and-beyond work ethic, and her willingness to always lend a helping hand does not go unnoticed."*

Here's a little bit more about Rebecca:

- **Position:** "I am the Administrative Associate II for the Engineering Department and I have been with the City coming up on 3 ½ years."
- **What people may not know:** "One thing most people don't know about me is that I am a Type 1 Diabetic of 12 years, and I am the only one in my family with it."



- Favorite Activity: “My family and I love sports, even more specifically we love football. You will find us watching the Packers all football season and, if we aren’t at the Badger game in person, we will be watching it! Our two kiddos enjoy yelling ‘Go Pack Go’ when they see football is on.”
- Best part about working for the City: “It may seem cliché, but the honest truth is I LOVE the team. I love my direct team in Engineering that I see each and every day. They are truly remarkable and hardworking individuals that I am blessed to work with. I love our entire City workforce also. I get to work with and get to know so many people in our workforce being in Engineering that I truly love what our people have to offer to our City, and I am thankful for them each day. My job wouldn’t be as easy as it is without everyone else!”
- Life philosophy: “I feel like I have many, but in life and in work I often say ‘Be the Change that you want to see.’”
- Rebecca also says: “I truly mean what I say about what I love about the City. I wouldn’t be half of me without all of the employees at the City. It’s truly a team effort each and every day, and even if I don’t work with people on a regular basis, I am thankful for them being here working with us because even just the loss of one person impacts us all on many different levels.”

Council Calendar

- Monday, August 22: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night
- Tuesday, August 23: Regular Council Meeting
 - Wednesday, August 31st: Final deadline for ballot question
 - Tuesday, September 20th, DOR certifies percent change in Consumer Price Index
- Monday, September 12: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night (unless no items)
- Tuesday, September 13: Regular Council Meeting
- Monday, September 25: Regular Council Public Hearing/Discussion night (unless no items)
- Tuesday, September 26: Regular Council Meeting
 - Possible check-in between City Manager and Council
 - Saturday, October 1st: City Council receives 2023 Proposed Operating Budget
- Tuesday, October 4th: Operating Budget work session #1
- Monday, October 10th:
 - Public Hearing on the Proposed 2023-2027 Capital Improvement Planning Budget
 - First Public Hearing on the Proposed 2023 Operating Budget
- Tuesday, October 11th: Operating Budget work session #2
- Tuesday, October 18th: Operating Budget work session #3
- Tuesday, October 25th: Operating Budget work session – amendment discussion
 - Tuesday, November 8th: General Election, with referendum ballot question
- TBD in November:
 - Budget amendments due
 - Second Public Hearing on 2023 Proposed Operating Budget
 - City Council action on 2023-2027 Capital Improvement Planning Budget
 - City Council action on 2023 Proposed Operating Budget

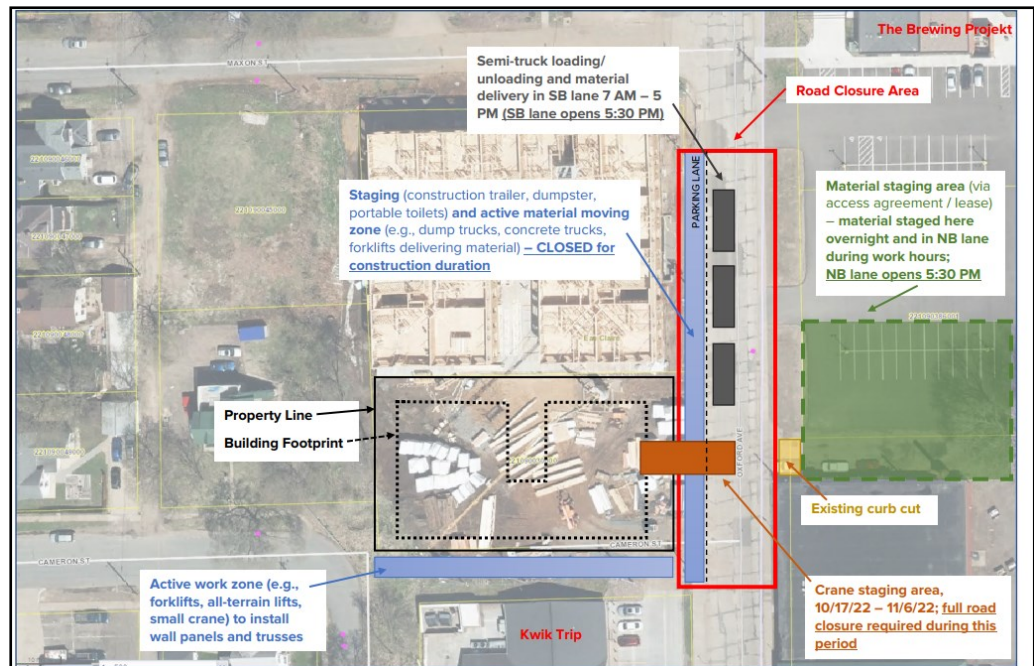
- City Council action on levy

Additional Dates

- Employee and Council Member Library Tour: Between 8/23 and 8/31. [Sign up here.](#)
- Labor Day (City Offices Closed): Monday, 9/5
- Landfill Open House: Thursday, 9/8
- Swearing-In Ceremony for Officer Janari Glover: Friday, 9/9
- City Bus Tour: Dates in September and October. Please let me or Alia Johnson (alia.johnson@eauclairewi.gov) know if you'd like to join in on a tour, if space is available.

Engineering Updates

Oxford Avenue - Street Closure Update: Engineering staff met on-site with local business owners, developers, and the contractor regarding the staging and closing of Oxford Avenue. The contractor will be revising the construction layout and operations related to when the crane work needs to be completed. The contractor proposed revised hours of construction to reduce the street closure timeframe from what originally was



proposed at the August 9th City Council meeting. The contractor will plan to work four 10-hour days, Monday through Thursday, to allow no closure on Fridays of Oxford Avenue. The new proposed encroachment will also allow the southbound and northbound lanes on Oxford Avenue to open up at 5:30PM during the weekdays. (See above for the new traffic control layout for Oxford)

To start the project, the contractor will stage all equipment in the west parking lane and on-site. This encroachment has administratively been approved by Engineering due to the time frame being less than 90-days. Look for construction to start in the coming weeks along Oxford Avenue.

2022 Capital Improvement Projects: Here are updates on projects underway or reaching completion:

Eddy Lane and Omaha Street: The Eddy Lane and Omaha Street projects are wrapping up. In the next couple of weeks, you'll see the surface pavement being placed, restoration completed, signage installed, and pavement markings placed. Both projects are expected to be complete in time for the start of school. To the right is a photo from excavation occurring on Eddy Lane, where private utilities were suspended while storm water utilities were being installed.



Jeffers Road: Starting this week on Jeffers Road, the detour was set, and Jeffers Road was closed from County Line Road south to Green Park Drive. Traffic can still access the brush site, the community gardens, and Jeffers Park from the south, using STH 312 and going northbound Jeffers Road. The contractor is currently working on water and storm water utility work.

Mill and Overlay: The final two mill and overlay projects, East Hamilton Avenue and Mercury Avenue, are underway as well, with paving expected on Thursday, August 24th.

Other Projects: Other construction projects in progress are: Marston Avenue, South Dewey Street, Folsom Street, Second Street, Belview Avenue and Maple Street.

Community Services Update:

Parks: Work on Boyd Park is underway this week. Parks staff worked with Engineering, Streets, and Utilities to prepare the site for a new skate feature and playground. Spohn Ranch will begin construction of the skate features the week of August 22nd, and they expect to take approximately eight weeks to complete that element. The new playground will be placed in early September and should take about two weeks to finish.



Utilities: Water usage has dropped thanks to the cooler, rainy weather which has relieved some strain on the Water Treatment Plant operations. Utility Division employees are still keeping very busy with the many ongoing construction projects in the City. They have also completed tank inspections at Oakwood and Folsom towers that are required by the Department of Natural Resources.

Transit: Here are some Transit updates...

- **Retirement:** Transit Manager Tom Wagener has announced his plan to retire on October 27th, 2022. The recruitment for a successive Transit Manager is underway with a planned overlap for transition. We will share more about Tom’s awesome work with Transit in weeks to come prior to the start of his well-earned retirement.
- **Transfer Center:** The sixth pour of eight major concrete pours at the Transfer Center site has been scheduled for August 26th.
- **Ridership:** Weekday Average Ridership was 1,227 for August. This is up 16% from August 2021 (1,059) and down 35% from the pre-pandemic August 2019 (1,874). Average Fare Box weekday revenues for August is \$271. Revenues are down 7% from August 2021 (\$292) and down 48 percent from the August 2019 average (\$523).



Streets: Here are some Streets updates...

- **ROADeo:** Streets Supervisor Cory Tietz has been working with the Eau Claire County Highway Department planning a City vs. County Snow Plow ROADeo on September 20-21 in Carson Park. An obstacle course will be set up in the parking lot at Carson to simulate plowing situations. Operators from the City and County will compete for the best score.
- **Police Interceptor:** A new, unmarked police interceptor went into service on Wednesday August 17th. This unit will be used by Deputy Chief Derek Thomas.
- **Zero Turn Mower:** The fleet took delivery of a new zero turn mower this past week. Safety lighting is being installed and the mower will be put into service the week of August 22nd.



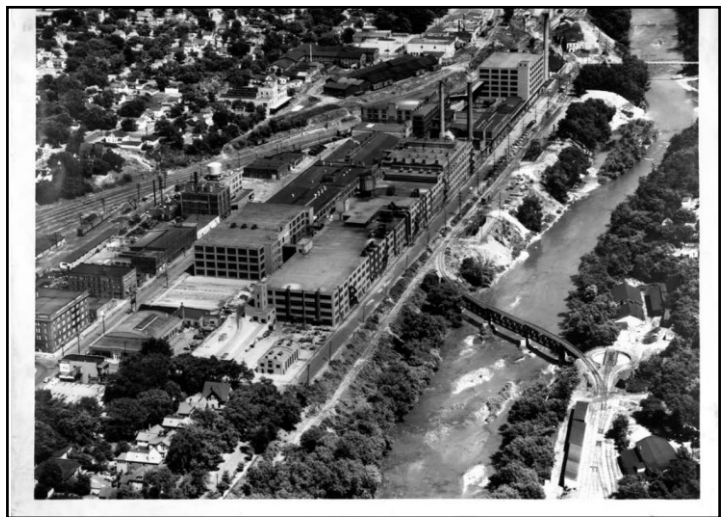
Finance Update:

Handling Appeals from Large Commercial and Manufacturing Companies: Our Assessing Department, along with our Board of Review, continues to process appeals from large commercial and manufacturing properties in Eau Claire. Most recently, Nestle Healthcare location at 1200 Nestle Ave filed an appeal. Nestle/Gerber has appealed their assessed values quite frequently. Menards, Walmart, Sam's, Scheels, Festival Grocers, Sears, Hobby Lobby, and others appeal on an annual basis as well. Nestle is valued by the State DOR as they are a manufacturing company, and the DOR issues manufacturing real estate classification decisions. The City took a more serious role in 2009 when Nestle appealed to the Court of Appeals. We assigned outside counsel, like what we intend to do with these, and worked collaboratively with the DOR. The decision was beneficial, as it stated the DOR used reasonable and correct methodologies to value the properties. Case information is here: <https://caselaw.findlaw.com/wi-court-of-appeals/1501222.html> Protecting the assessed value of our commercial properties is important work. These suits have the potential to heavily shift the tax burden onto our residential and small business classes. The Leader Telegram shared an [opinion piece on the repeated practice](#) of large companies filing appeals as a matter of course today, though there's no clear solution without legislative change at the State level. The piece is attached as well as linked.

Community Development Update:

S-Bridge Obtains National Landmark Status: The Soo Line Railroad Bridge, or more commonly known as the S-Bridge, was recently included on the National Register of Historic Places. The Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault Ste. Marie (Soo Line) Railroad once had freight and passenger depots and a roundhouse with turntable on the south bank of the Eau Claire River. The S-shaped alignment was needed to smoothen out sharp curves to transverse the river, connecting these facilities with the railroad's main track on the north bank.

The unusual bridge is recognized as significant in American engineering. Erected in 1910 by the Minneapolis Steel and Machinery Company, it replaced an earlier S-shaped wood bridge. It is composed of five spans and has a total length of 442 feet. The central three spans are steel, riveted, Warren deck trusses. Each is 100 feet long. The Warren truss, patented in England by James Warren and Theobald Willoughby Monsani, consists of diagonal members, alternately placed in tension and compression, forming a W pattern. The flanking steel deck girder approach spans are each 69.5 feet long. The bridge deck is approximately 12 feet wide. The



Warren deck trusses rest on four, rectangular concrete piers. Each pier sits on a broader, rectangular concrete foundation. Massive wooden timbers, measuring approximately seven inches by 17 inches, support the wooden planks that form the deck.

In 2002, the City of Eau Claire converted the S-Bridge for pedestrian use and a historic marker was placed. Design considerations were made to not eliminate it from National Register eligibility. Deteriorating concrete was removed from the piers, and each pier was encased in reinforced concrete. Existing timber ties were repositioned and covered with wooden planks. Timber guardrails run along both sides of the bridge. The bridge was designated as a local landmark in 2016 and has now obtained national status. Pictured below is an aerial of U.S. Rubber Plant with Soo Line Railroad Bridge, ca. 1941, Chippewa Valley Museum Collection, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT:

Charity Zich
Chippewa Valley Regional Airport
715-839-6241
charity.zich@chippewavalleyairport.com
www.chippewavalleyairport.com

Airport Disaster Drill Scheduled for August 17

Eau Claire, Wisconsin, August 16, 2022 – On Wednesday, August 17 emergency response personnel will take part in a mock airport disaster drill. The disaster drill will start around 5:00 PM on Wednesday and wrap up around 7:30 PM Wednesday evening.

During this event, citizens may notice increased emergency activity in the area including response personnel and emergency vehicles with warning lights activated. As this is a planned and coordinated training event, the public should not call 9-1-1 to report or ask about an incident at the airport. Additionally, no one should stop on nearby roads as that will impact normal traffic flow as well as impede emergency crews that are in the area for this training. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

This drill is in an effort to better prepare our community for a mass casualty incident involving an aircraft. The drill is a combined effort of multiple organizations including fire, EMS, law enforcement and emergency management. This disaster drill will be conducted with safety officers assigned during all phases and with a focus on identifying areas in need of improvement with regards to coordination and resource allocation.

Media interested in doing a story on the training or exercise should contact Charity Zich, Airport Director, at 715-839-6241 or charity.zich@chippewavalleyairport.com prior to 2 pm on Wednesday.

About the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport – The Chippewa Valley Regional Airport is an FAA certified commercial service airport located in Eau Claire, WI. Businesses at the airport offer commercial service flights, on-demand charter flights, emergency medical transportation, flight instruction, aircraft rental, aircraft maintenance, car rentals, and a full-service restaurant. Learn more at www.chippewavalleyairport.com.

- END -

https://www.leadertelegram.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/it-seems-to-me-its-time-to-settle-dark-store-debate/article_3fe54b07-3ce7-50c5-8e9e-92dc72f3d859.html

IT SEEMS TO ME

IT SEEMS TO ME: It's time to settle 'dark store' debate



Aug 4, 2022



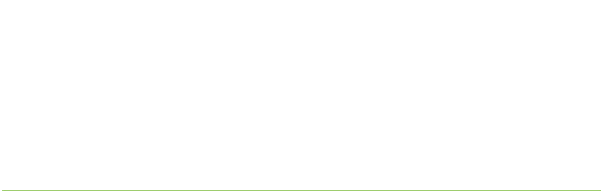
Don Huebscher

Just as autumn follows summer, we again are burdened by the annual legal challenges of local property tax bills by major retailers.

Walmart, Scheel's and Sam's Club are the latest to sue the city, according to the July 27 Leader-Telegram. The outcome of these challenges could be significant to the retailers and local taxpayers. If the retailers win, the millions of dollars in lost property taxes must be made up by the rest of us, or local services must be cut to balance the books.



For years, many large retailers in Eau Claire and around the state have claimed that they should be taxed as if their stores were vacant; it's called the "dark store" argument.



Their evidence is obvious. With e-commerce growing steadily, selling a shuttered brick-and-mortar store isn't easy. In Eau Claire, we need only look at the former Sears, Mega East and Shopko stores for proof. Also, the former local Kmart sat idle for years before Hy-Vee bought the site and started from scratch.

But there's a big hole in the "dark store" argument that the state Legislature should fix. Namely, we should treat shuttered stores differently from operating stores for tax purposes.

This makes sense for obvious reasons. After Kmart or Shopko closed, those companies' officials no longer cared if the roads were plowed or patched. They no longer needed police to patrol their neighborhoods or deal with shoplifters or cashiers with sticky fingers. They no longer needed courtrooms to prosecute such offenders. They didn't care if the local school system produced employees with the skills needed to help them flourish.



Conversely, stores that operate in our community need all of these things. To tax them as if they don't is unfair to the rest of us.

Also, most if not all large retailers came to our city with help from tax increment financing, or TIF. With TIF districts, the city pays up front for public improvements such as streets, sewers, lighting, site preparation, etc., to help lure the business. Over time, the new property taxes generated by the business pay off the initial public investment. When the TIF district costs are paid off, the property taxes generated by the business help fund local schools, city, county and tech college services.

However, losing millions of dollars a year from the repayment schedule adds to the life of the TIF district and over time leaves millions less for the aforementioned entities and creates a tax shift from commercial to residential property taxpayers.

There's proof that a shuttered store deserves a huge tax break because they are difficult to unload, unlike most homes, that if cared for can be sold at a profit, often quite quickly. And as noted, vacant stores require few public services.

But taxing an operating business as if it's closed is ridiculous. These companies clearly benefit from clear roads, police, fire and paramedic services, courts, public schools, etc. It's time the Legislature awakes from its election-year-long vacation and settles this matter once and for all.

Yeah, like that's gonna happen.

Huebscher, former Leader-Telegram editor, lives in Eau Claire.





Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)

**United States Department of Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Soo Line Railroad Bridge
other names/site number: S-Bridge, AHI # 41867

2. Location

street & number: Spans the Eau Claire River connecting Galloway Street on the north and Gibson Street on the south N/A **not for publication**
city or town: City of Eau Claire N/A **vicinity**
state Wisconsin **code** WI **county** Eau Claire **code** 035 **zip code**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets _ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _ nationally statewide locally. (_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _ meets _ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Soo Line Railroad Bridge

Eau Claire

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	contributing	noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	building(s)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	district	0	0 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	structure	0	0 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	site	1	0 structures
	object	0	0 objects
		1	0 total

Name of related multiple property listing:

(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources

previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/Rail Related

Transportation/Pedestrian Related

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Deck Truss

Foundation: Concrete

Walls: None

roof: None

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Engineering

Period of Significance

1910

Significant Dates

1910

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Minneapolis Steel Company

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Soo Line Railroad Bridge
Name of Property

Eau Claire
County and State

Wisconsin

9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than an acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 619091 4963407
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Rachel Lange, Rachel Lavender, Kendall O'Neal, Maxx Handel, Students in History 486/686:

Seminar in Public History; Megan Beer-Pemberton, Bob Newbery, Staff Historians

Organization: History Solutions – History Department, University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire; CORRE, Inc.

Date: February 2018

Street & number: 105 Garfield Avenue, PO BOX 4004; 1802 Warden Street

Telephone: 715-836-3641

City or town: Eau Claire

state WI zip code: 54701

Soo Line Railroad Bridge

Eau Claire

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

Name/title

Organization: City of Eau Claire

Date: 2/2018

Street & number: PO BOX 5148

telephone: 715-839-4914

City or town: Eau Claire

state WI

zip code: 54702-5148

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Soo Line Railroad Bridge
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 1

INTRODUCTION

The Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault Ste. Marie Railroad (Soo Line) Bridge is a steel Warren deck truss located in the city of Eau Claire, Eau Claire County. Erected in 1910 by the Minneapolis Steel and Machinery Company, the S-Bridge, as it was called, carried the Soo Line across the Eau Claire River.¹ The Soo Line abandoned the S-Bridge in 1991, and it has carried pedestrians since 2002.

DESCRIPTION

The S-Bridge crosses the Eau Claire River at Galloway (north) and Gibson (south) streets. To the north is the former Uniroyal Plant, now Banberry Place, a mix use facility of retail, residential apartments and industry space. The central business district and residential areas are found to the south.

The S-Bridge is composed of five spans and has a total length of 442 feet. The bridge crosses between tracks that run parallel on either side of the Eau Claire River. The spans were laid out with an S-bend in order to soften the sharp curves that would otherwise be needed to connect the parallel tracks.

The central three spans are steel, riveted, Warren deck trusses. Each is 100 feet long. The flanking, steel deck girder approach spans are each 69.5 feet long. The bridge deck is approximately 12 feet wide. The Warren deck trusses rest on four, rectangular concrete piers. Each pier sits on a broader, rectangular concrete foundation. Massive wooden timbers, measuring approximately 7 inches by 17 inches, support the wooden planks that form the deck. Timber guardrails run along both sides of the bridge.

ALTERATIONS

In 2002, the city of Eau Claire converted the S-Bridge for pedestrian use. Deteriorating concrete was removed from the piers, and each pier was encased in reinforced concrete. Existing timber ties were repositioned and covered with wooden planks. The current guardrail was also installed at this time.

¹ As indicated by the historical marker on the bridge.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 1

Soo Line Railroad Bridge
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

SUMMARY

The Soo Line Railroad Bridge (S-Bridge) is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, in engineering, as a good example of a Warren deck truss bridge. Its S-shaped curve, an unusual design element, enhances its significance. It was built by the Minneapolis Machinery Company in 1910 and retains a high degree of integrity. The period of significance coincides with the date of construction, 1910.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: THE CITY OF EAU CLAIRE

Its location at the confluence of the Eau Claire and Chippewa Rivers, as well as the surrounding plentiful forests, made Eau Claire a major contributor to the logging industry of Wisconsin in the middle and later half of the 19th century. Settlement began in the 1840's and depended on the growing lumber industry for growth and development. Lumber companies arrived in the area in the 1850's, spurring growth in Eau Claire and the surrounding communities.²

Three small settlements grew up near the sawmills, separated by the rivers. The village of Eau Claire was located south of the Eau Claire River and west of the Chippewa River; Eau Claire City was located south of the Eau Claire and east of the Chippewa; and North Eau Claire was north of the Eau Claire River and east of the Chippewa. In 1856, plats for the Village of Eau Claire and Eau Claire City were recorded, and Eau Claire County was separated from Chippewa County. The village of Eau Claire was made county seat. In 1861, the population of the three settlements was 3,164.³ Following the Civil War, many Norwegian immigrants settled in Eau Claire, adding to an ethnic base of Germans, Irish, Canadians, and Yankees. By this time, a fourth community had developed in the area. West Eau Claire was located north of the Eau Claire River and west of the Chippewa River. When Eau Claire incorporated as a city in 1872, the new city included what has been West Eau Claire, as well as the former communities of Eau Claire, Eau Claire City, and North Eau Claire. The population in 1880 was 9,771. By 1885, the booming lumber industry had caused the population to swell to 21,668, making Eau Claire the second-largest city in Wisconsin.

After an initial failed attempt in 1857, the railroad came to Eau Claire in August of 1870.⁴ The line through Eau Claire ran from Warrens, near Tomah, to St. Paul and connected the communities of Fairchild, August, Rodell, Fall Creek, and Eau Claire. The line was then known as the West Wisconsin

² Orry Walz, "Beginnings of a Community: Eau Claire, Wisconsin, 1860-1880," June 1985, 1.

³ Mary Taylor, "Intensive Historical/Architectural Survey of Eau Claire, Wisconsin," prepared for the City of Eau Claire (March 1983), 6-7.

⁴ Taylor, 48.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2Soo Line Railroad Bridge
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

Railway. The arrival of the railroads especially pleased the local mill owners, many of which were instrumental in bringing the lines to the city. This new form of transportation in the area allowed the lumber companies to exploit new timber resources and develop new markets. In the following years the city would acquire additional railroad connections to neighboring towns and cities.

The lumber industry reached its height in the 1880's with its decline evident by the 1890's. The city's population fell twenty percent in response, dropping to 17,415 in 1890. Eau Claire's business community moved into wood-products manufacturing, with such enterprise as the Pioneer Furniture Company (1887), the Phoenix Furniture Company (1899), the Dells Pulp and Paper Company (1894), the Linderman Box and Veneer Company (1895) and the Kaiser Lumber Company Box Factory (1905). These concerns helped stabilize Eau Claire's population.⁵ After the turn of the century the manufacturing trend continued and non-lumber related industries such as the Gillette Safety Tire Company (Uniroyal) and the Northwestern Steel and Iron Works, which later became the National Pressure Cooker Company (now National Presto Industries) opened plants in Eau Claire. At the same time Eau Claire emerged as a major regional center for west central Wisconsin. Providing trade and service facilities for the surrounding predominately rural counties, the city also houses important governmental and educational functions in particular the creation of the state normal school in 1909 later to become the University of Wisconsin- Eau Claire campus. Eau Claire's population, which hovered around 17,500 from 1890 to 1910, began to grow again in the 1910s. In 1940, the population of Eau Claire was 30,745. It reached 44,619 in 1970.⁶ Today the city of Eau Claire is a community with more than 68,000 people.

The area along the Eau Claire River where the S-Bridge was constructed was originally owned and operated by the Wisconsin Central Railroad. When Wisconsin Central acquired the Chippewa Falls and Western Railway, which gave them access to Eau Claire from Chippewa Falls, it was this area that was scouted in the summer of 1890 as the spot along the "narrow ledge of land above the south bank of the Eau Claire River" chosen to further their railroad line.⁷ Because the main track was located on the north side of the river, the railroad needed to construct a bridge to access the south side. In the fall a s-shaped wooden bridge utilizing the Howe truss design was built. In 1909 the Soo Line Railroad signed a 99-year lease with the Wisconsin Central Railroad and in 1910 the Minneapolis Steel and Machinery Company replaced the wooden bridge with the present structure.

The Minneapolis Steel and Machinery Company (MS&MC) was organized in 1902 by J.L Record, O.P Briggs and E. A. Merrill, L.S. Gillette and his brother R.P all having manufacturing experience in the

⁵ Taylor, 8-9.

⁶ Taylor, 9.

⁷ Larry Easton, "The Wisconsin Central in Eau Claire," *The Soo*, Summer 2007, 23.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 3

Soo Line Railroad Bridge
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

Minneapolis area.⁸ In its early years MS&MC manufactured engines, boilers, mining and mill machinery and operated one of the largest grey iron foundry and structural steel shops in the Northwest. One third of the plant was devoted to architectural and structural steel which fabricated steel frames for buildings, railway and highway bridges to name a few.⁹ Minneapolis Steel would later merge with the Minneapolis Threshing Machine Company and the Moline Plow Company for form the Minneapolis-Moline Company, a large tractor and machinery producer.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The railroad companies adapted truss bridge designs to carry trains with heavy loads of freight. The Warren truss, patented in England by James Warren and Theobald Willoughby Monsani and consists of diagonal members, alternately placed in tension and compression, forming a W pattern.¹⁰ A search of the Wisconsin Historical Society Architectural Inventory for railroad Warren, deck truss bridges resulted in ten results including the S-Bridge. Of these ten, it appears that four of these results have been demolished. Of the remaining the S-bridge is the only bridge in the inventory that features it's a "S" shaped curve. The S-Bridge is a good and intact example of this vanishing resource. Its S-shaped form is unusual, enhancing its significance.

⁸ Chester Peterson Jr., and Rod Beemer, *Minneapolis-Moline Farm Tractors*. (Osceola, WI: MBI Publishing Company, 2000), 19.

⁹ "Twin City Steel Products," Pioneer Productions, last modified 2010, accessed February 25, 2018, <http://twincitytractors.tripod.com/steel.htm>.

¹⁰ Cleary, 130.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Soo Line Railroad Bridge
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

Section 9 Page 1

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Soo Line Railroad Bridge
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

Section 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description:

The Soo Line Railroad Bridge is located at the crossing of the Eau Claire River between Galloway Street and Gibson Street in the City of Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, T27N, R9W, in section 20.

The Soo Line Railroad Bridge boundary is delineated by a by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points: A:15, 619152 4963466, B: 15 619168 4963462, C: 15 619048 4963350, D: 15 619031 4963356. The nomination is limited to the deck and supporting structure of the bridge as well as its approaches.

Boundary Justification:

The historic boundary includes the resources associated with the Soo Line Bridge which were delineated to encompass the bridge and approach spans and the appropriate setting.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section photos Page 1

Soo Line Railroad Bridge
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

Name of Property: Soo Line Railroad Bridge

City: Eau Claire

County: Eau Claire

State: Wisconsin

Name of Photographer: Megan Beer-Pemberton, Rachel Lange, Rachel Lavender, Kendall O'Neal,
Maxx Handel

Date of Photographs: Spring 2017, Fall 2017

Location of Original Digital Files: Wisconsin State Historical Society

WI_Eau Claire County_Soo Line Railroad Bridge_0001

West façade, camera facing southeast.

WI_Eau Claire County_Soo Line Railroad Bridge_0002

West façade, camera facing east.

WI_Eau Claire County_Soo Line Railroad Bridge_0003

North end of bridge, camera facing southeast.

WI_Eau Claire County_Soo Line Railroad Bridge_0004

South end of bridge, camera facing northeast.

WI_Eau Claire County_Soo Line Railroad Bridge_0005

Closeup of west façade, camera facing southeast.

WI_Eau Claire County_Soo Line Railroad Bridge_0006

Closeup of the west façade, camera facing south.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section figures Page 1

Soo Line Railroad Bridge
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

Figure 1: Soo Line Railroad Bridge, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, USGS Map with UTM Reference.

Figure 2: Site map

Figure 3: Soo Line Railroad Bridge, February 28, 1972, Photographed by Stan Miller, Chippewa Valley Museum Collection, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Figure 4: Soo Line Railroad Bridge, ca. unknown, Chippewa Valley Museum Collection, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Figure 5: Figure 1: Soo Line Railroad Bridge, ca. unknown, Chippewa Valley Museum Collection, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

Figure 6: Aerial of U.S. Rubber plan with Soo Line Railroad Bridge, ca. 1941, Chippewa Valley Museum Collection, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section figures Page 2

Soo Line Railroad Bridge
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

Soo Line
Railroad
Bridge, Eau
Claire, Eau
Claire
County, WI

UTM:
15/619091/
4963407

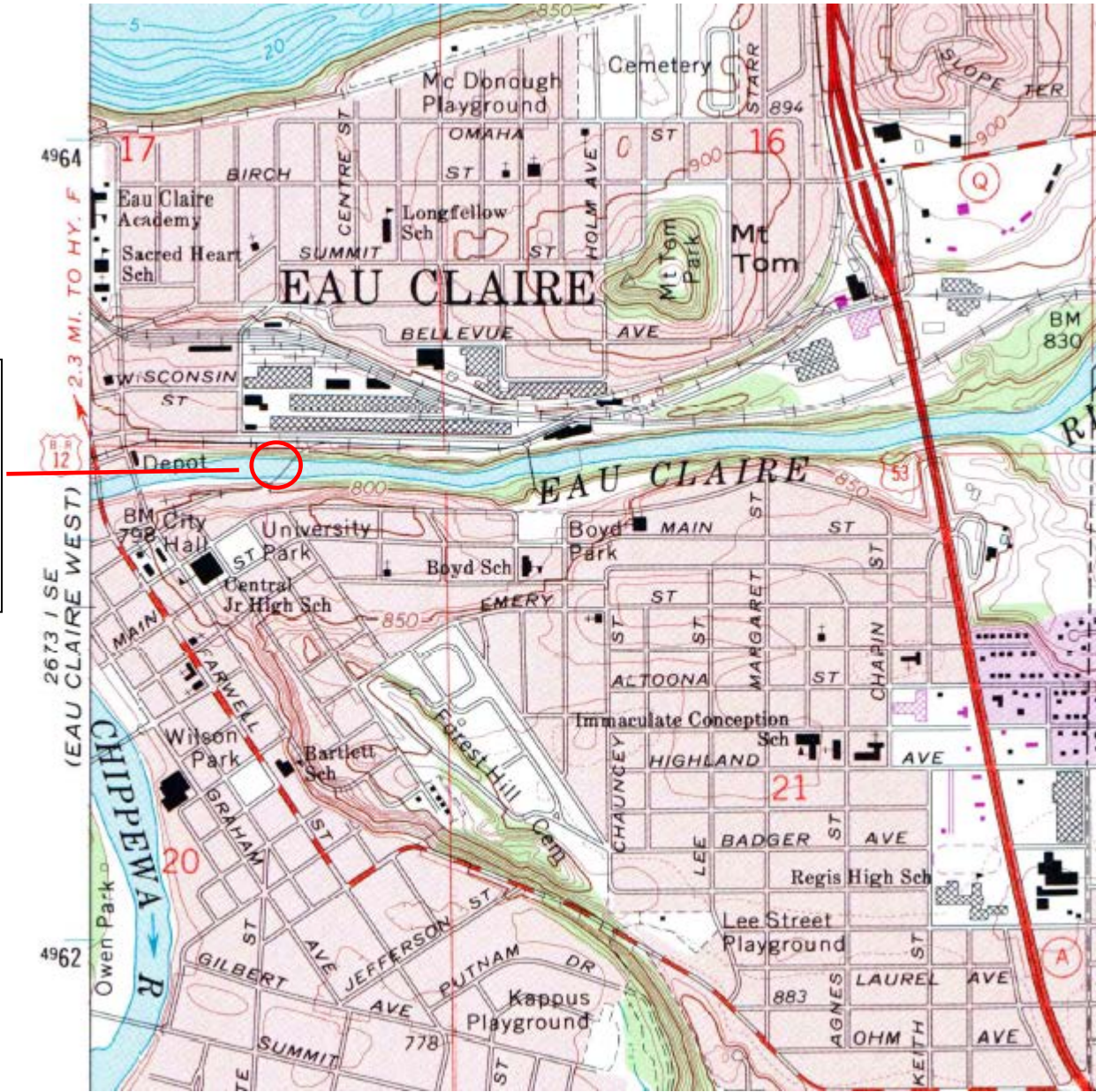


Figure 1: Soo Line Railway Bridge, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, USGS Map with UTM Reference

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section figures Page 3

Soo Line Railroad Bridge
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

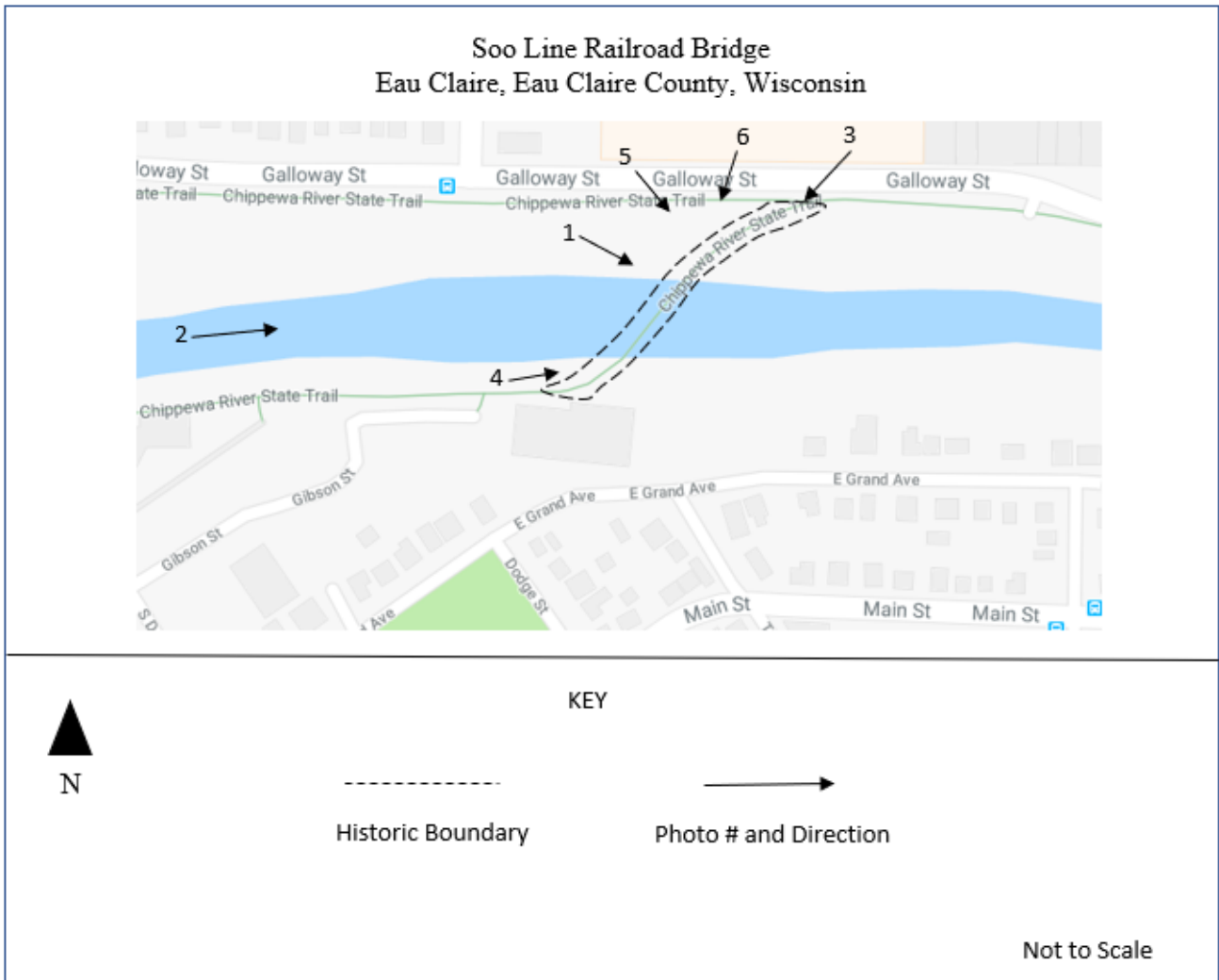


Figure 2: Site Map

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section figures Page 4

Soo Line Railroad Bridge
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin



Figure 3: Soo Line Railroad Bridge, February 28, 1972, Photographed by Stan Miller, Chippewa Valley Museum Collection, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section figures Page 5

Soo Line Railroad Bridge
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin



Figure 4: Soo Line Railroad Bridge, ca. unknown, Chippewa Valley Museum Collection, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section figures Page 6

Soo Line Railroad Bridge
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin



Figure 5: Figure 2: Soo Line Railroad Bridge, ca. unknown, Chippewa Valley Museum Collection, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section figures Page 7

Soo Line Railroad Bridge
Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin

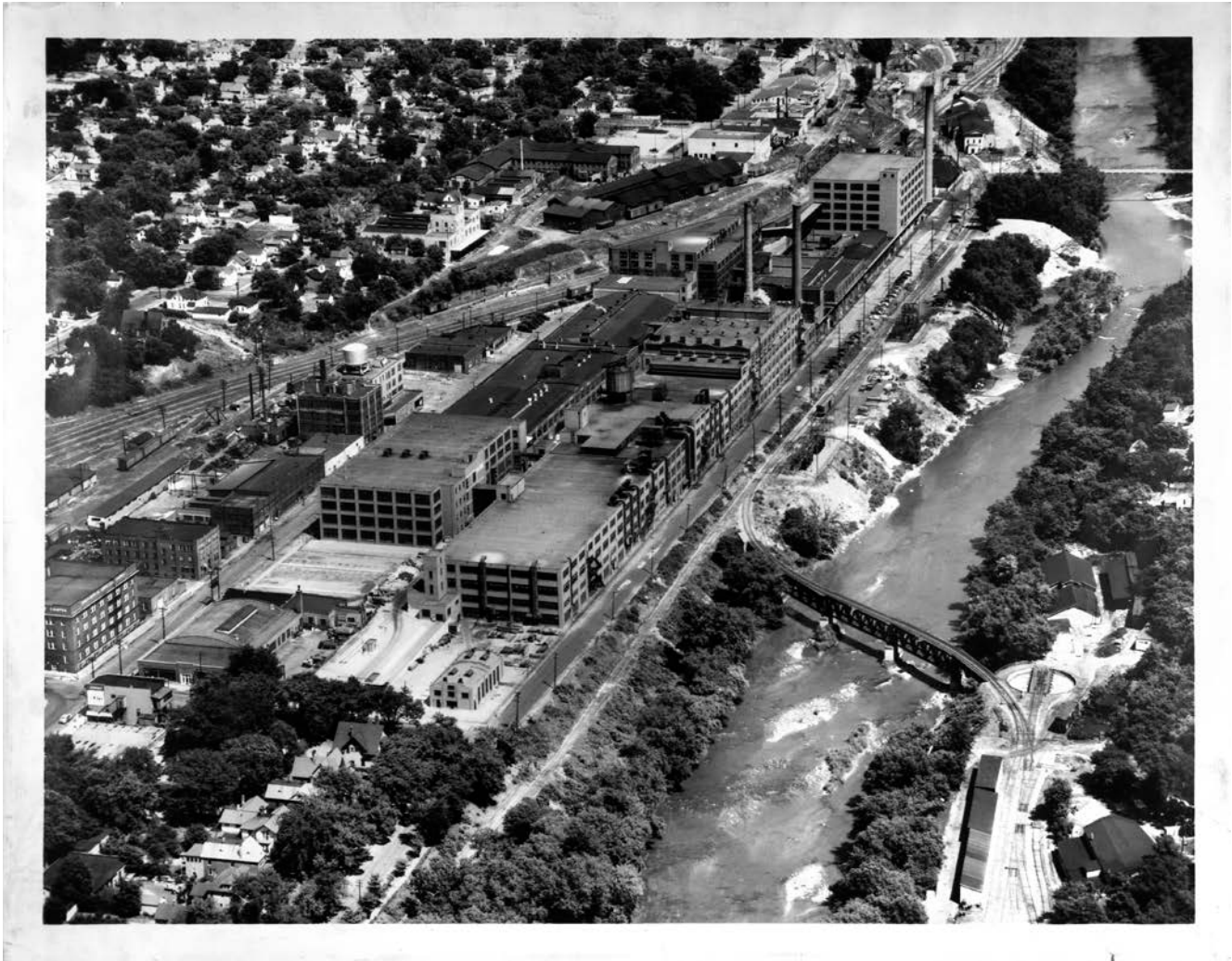


Figure 6: Aerial of U.S. Rubber plant with Soo Line Railroad Bridge, ca. 1941, Chippewa Valley Museum Collection, Eau Claire, Wisconsin.