

Adopted

# Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015

## 5 Year Review

Comprehensive Plan Amendment 2022

## Policy Plan Chapters



City of Eau Claire Wisconsin

**ORDINANCE NO. 7459**

**ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY OF EAU CLAIRE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AS PART OF THE FIVE-YEAR REVIEW.**

**THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EAU CLAIRE DO ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:**

**WHEREAS**, the City's current Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the City Council on September 22, 2015, and is a guide to the City's decisions about long-term growth and physical development of the Eau Claire community; and

**WHEREAS**, the Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015 encompasses geographical areas of the community as well as the major public functions and services and identifies a coherent and fiscally responsible development pattern for the Eau Claire community and is intended to encourage consistent public and private decisions about future development; and

**WHEREAS**, the Comprehensive Plan is the basis for the City's subdivision regulations, official maps and amendments to the zoning ordinance and zoning map and is a guide for the Council, Plan Commission and other advisors when they review development proposals and budget for improvements and also guides public spending for roads, utilities, parks, housing and business growth; and

**WHEREAS**, Chapter 66 of the Wisconsin Statutes requires that all City actions that affect official mapping, subdivision regulations and zoning ordinances must be guided by a comprehensive plan adopted by the City Council but leaves decisions about the timing and location of development to local communities; and

**WHEREAS**, based on the direction provided by Objective 3 – Regular Reviews, Policy 1 – Formal Reviews as listed in the Plan Implementation Program, the Plan states that “once every five years, the City will instruct its Planning Commission and staff members to conduct a formal review of the Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, as part of that review process, City staff designed, maintained and populated a City of Eau Claire webpage dedicated to the Comprehensive Plan and related presentations, meeting notes and amendments in order to receive public input; and

**WHEREAS**, the Plan Commission had opportunities for public input and held nine work sessions from September 2020 to August 2021 to host and guide discussion on the five-year review; and

**WHEREAS**, the Plan Commission directed City staff to gather input and recommended revisions from the Redevelopment Authority, Waterways and Parks Commission, Housing Opportunities Commission, Landmarks Commission, Transit Commission, Sustainability Advisory Committee, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee; and

**WHEREAS**, the Plan Commission has recommended the City Council adopt the attached amendment to the Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan; and


**WHEREAS**, it is the City Council’s belief that this amendment to the Comprehensive Plan reflects the long-term goals for development of the City.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EAU CLAIRE DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:**

***SECTION 1.** The City Council does hereby enact this ordinance to amend the document entitled “Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015,” pursuant to Wis. Stats. §66.1001(4)(c). The amendment changes Chapter 15: Plan Implementation Program provisions and other narrative text within Chapters 2 through 14 in alignment with the amended provisions found in Chapter 15, and as attached in Exhibit 1.*

***SECTION 2.** The City Council adopts these amendments for the purpose of guiding future land use decisions.*

***SECTION 3.** This ordinance shall take effect upon passage by a majority of the members-elect of the City Council and publication as required by law.*

(SEAL)   
\_\_\_\_\_  
President Terry L. Weld

(SEAL)   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Interim City Manager David A. Solberg

(ATTESTED)   
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk Carrie L. Riepl

First Reading	January 25, 2022
Final Reading	February 8, 2022
Adopted	February 8, 2022
Published	February 14, 2022

**RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING ADOPTION OF THE UPDATE OF THE  
EAU CLAIRE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2015**

**September 14, 2015**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PLAN COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF EAU CLAIRE AS FOLLOWS:**

**WHEREAS**, the State of Wisconsin adopted the 1999 Wisconsin Act 9 and subsequent changes from Assembly Bill AB 872, known as Wisconsin's Smart Growth Law, which provides the framework for developing comprehensive plans; and

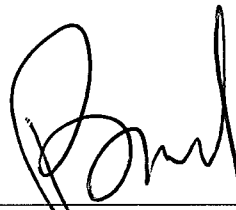
**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Sec. 66.1001(4)(a), Wisconsin Stats., the City Council of the City of Eau Claire adopted by Resolution No. 2014-190 written procedure designed to foster public participation in the preparation of the Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Citizens Advisory Committee, which was formed by the Plan Commission, provided input in the drafting of the Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Sec. 66.1001(4)(b), Wisconsin Stats., the Plan Commission of the City of Eau Claire, after holding a public hearing on September 14, 2015 regarding the proposed Comprehensive Plan, and after careful study and review of the proposed Comprehensive Plan, finds that said plan constitutes a suitable, logical, and timely plan for the future development of the City of Eau Claire over the ensuing twenty years.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that pursuant to Sec. 66.1001(4)(b), Wisconsin Stats., the City of Eau Claire Plan Commission recommends approval of the draft document consisting of text, maps and tables, entitled "EAU CLAIRE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2015" to the City of Eau Claire City Council.

Adopted,  
September 14, 2015



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Terry Weir  
Plan Commission, Chairperson



# City of Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015

## City Council

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Eric Larsen  
Monica Lewis  
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## City of Eau Claire, Wisconsin

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**Adopted September 2015**

## Citizens Advisory Committee on the Plan

Kate Beaton	Citizen member
Aaron Brewster	Third Ward Neighborhood Assn
Julie Bunke	Chippewa Valley Museum Board
Paul Canfield	Realtors Assn of NW WI
Mike Carlson	DECI Board
Jason Craig	Mayo Health System
Mike DeRosa	Redevelopment Authority
Ann Dohm	North Riverfronts Neighborhood Assn
Jim Dunning	Eau Claire County Board
Jenny Ebert	Plan Commission
Jennifer Eddy	Randall Park Neighborhood Assn
Bob Eierman	Bike & Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Cody Filipczak	Chippewa Valley Homebuilders Assn
Dave FitzGerald	Real estate agent
Anthony Fox	Eau Claire Building Trades Council
Tom Giffey	Volume One
Jeremy Gragert	Sierra Club
Gregory Granlund	Plan Commission
Kyran Hamill	Citizen member
Collin Hawkins	Western Dairyland
Janelle Henning	Town of Washington
John Hibbard	Plan Commission
Tom Huffcutt	Chippewa Valley Technical College
Linda John	Visit Eau Claire
Keith Johnathan	Housing Authority
William Kampf	Eastside Hill Neighborhood Assn
Rick Kayser	Citizen member
Casey Knollmaier	Waterways & Parks Commission
Eric Larsen	Plan Commission
Brian Larson	Advisory Commission - Sustainability
Andrew Martin	Chamber of Commerce
Julie McCloud	Citizen member
Maureen McRaith	Citizen member
Kathy Mitchell	Plan Commission
Donald Mowry	Clear Vision Eau Claire
Diane Paulsrud	Buffington Neighborhood Assn
Jackie Pavelski	Transit Commission
Terry Pederson	Plan Commission
Mary Pica-Anderson	L.E. Phillips Senior Center
Dennis Pope	Police and Fire Commission
Merey Price	Board of Health
Jamie Radabaugh	Plan Commission
Ben Richgruber	Confluence Counsel
Matthew Rick	Citizen member
Mike Rindo	UWEC
Kevin Rosenberg	Third Ward Neighborhood Assn
James Seymour	Plan Commission
Mike Shea	Citizen member
Rich Spindler	Eau Claire School Board
Pa Thao	Hmong Association
Terry Weld	Plan Commission
Ken Ziehr	Landmarks Commission

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# EXHIBIT 1. EAU CLAIRE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 5-YEAR REVIEW

## Chapter 15: Plan Implementation Program

### Objective 3 – Regular Reviews

Continue to conduct a formal review of the plan at least once every five years.

#### Policies

##### 1. Formal Reviews of the Plan:

At least once **every five years**, the City will instruct its Planning Commission and staff members to conduct a formal review of the entire plan, changing those features and sections that are judged to be out of date and/or not serving their purpose.

## Land Use and Growth Management Plan

### Land Use Policies

#### Objective 1 – Sustainable Growth

##### Policies

##### 10. Jurisdictional Changes

Use boundary agreements and annexation to help create a compact, attractive, and sustainable urban area distinct from the rural areas of adjacent Towns. Consider future expansion areas within the surrounding area.

#### Objective 2 – Planned Land Use Map

##### Policies

##### 1. Planned Land Use Map and Categories

Use the Future Land Use Map shown by Figure 2-1 and the land use categories further defined in Table 2-2 as the general pattern of future continued physical development for the City of Eau Claire. Table 2-2 provides a more detailed description of each category, along with criteria to evaluate the appropriateness of specific uses relative to each land use category.

The land use patterns shown on Figure 1-1 are generalized and do not represent precise demarcations on the ground or specific sites. For areas within existing developed neighborhoods, the Planned Future Land Use Map shows areas based on streets, blocks or existing use. For areas that are vacant land, the Planned Future Land Use Map shows transitions from one land use category to another and is not based on defined boundaries.

Likewise, locations shown for future parks, or other public facilities are approximations or search areas.

Consequently, the City will use the Figure 2-1, Planned Future Land Use, in conjunction with related objectives and policies in the *Comprehensive Plan* in reviewing rezoning and development proposals, plats, site plans, annexation petitions and other requests regarding future land use.

However, major departures from the Planned Future Land Use map will be considered only in the context of an amendment to the *Comprehensive Plan*. The City will generally allow rezonings to more intensive land uses consistent with the Planned Future Land Use map provided that adequate safeguards are made to ensure that the more intense development will not adversely affect the use and enjoyment of nearby land uses as a result of excessive traffic, noise or light, inappropriate site planning or excessive or unwarranted impact on the natural environment.

In areas designated as Commercial and Industrial on the Planned Future Land Use Map, the city will consider residential zoning based on the following:

- An attractive urban residential environment is created.
- A comprehensive and holistic approach is key to planning the vicinity that may result over time in additional retail, office or residential investments.
- The commercial and residential components of the area are designed to appear and function as an integrated whole through building location, size, orientation and materials, access, parking, sidewalks, landscaping, and lighting.
- Negative effects on nearby existing housing are mitigated.
- Nearby roads and intersections can accommodate the increased traffic while maintaining an acceptable level of service.
- Surface water is managed according to the requirements of the City.

## **Objective 3 – Perimeter and Regional Growth**

### **Policies**

#### **1. Growth Management Areas**

Manage growth in and around Eau Claire using the following growth management areas:

- Existing Urban Area
- Urban Sewer Service Area
- Extra-Territorial Plat Approval Jurisdiction.

Follow a pattern for future land use that is consistent with the objectives of this plan and with the Intergovernmental Agreements. Consider future park land and open space within the growth areas.

**Objective 4 – Residential Neighborhoods**

**Policies**

**5. Context-Sensitive Redevelopment and Infill**

Encourage infill development in older traditional neighborhoods that respects the characteristics of those neighborhoods, as described under Established Neighborhoods in the Urban Design chapter and in keeping with the prevalent housing styles in each neighborhood.

This principle does not imply that all housing will be of the same type (i.e., detached or duplex) but that older and newer housing will share many design elements. Redevelopment and infill are keys to strengthening older neighborhoods and will always be done in a manner that responds to and builds on the strengths of those neighborhoods.

Continue to review zoning regulations that apply to the older neighborhoods so as to accommodate the nonconforming status of dwellings that were caused by setback or area requirements. Current zoning regulations sometimes create difficulties for property owners to properly maintain or upgrade houses. Consider public input, in part through formally established neighborhood associations, to guide zoning regulation changes that will encourage revitalization of older neighborhoods and increase density and diversity of housing throughout the community.

**Plan Action Steps**

The City will take the following steps to implement the recommendations of the Land Use and Growth Management Plan.

**Table 2-3  
Land Use and Growth Management Plan Actions**

Action	Timing
Use the <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> when reviewing land development or zoning <b>applications</b> .	Continuous
Consider <b>annexation</b> applications that are consistent with the Land Use Plan Map and Policy 11-2.	Continuous
<del>Create a new zoning district for the regional <b>airport</b>.</del>	Continue to work with Airport to seek a new zoning district
<b>Monitor development</b> and adjust forecasts of land needs, traffic generation and sewer or water flow accordingly.	Continuous
Seek to incorporate the <b>peninsulas</b> of the Towns of Washington, Union, Wheaton and Seymour that jut into the City’s geographic area through boundary agreements.	2016– 2025 = <u>2031</u> <u>The Intergovernmental Agreement was continued in February 2021 for 10 years and the</u>



Action	Timing
	<u>Town comprehensive plans to be updated in 2025</u>
Negotiate with the City of <b>Altoona</b> a long-term mutual boundary line.	2016 <u>Ongoing; coordinated with City Council Strategic Plan</u>
Continue to review applications for land division throughout the <b>Extra-Territorial Plat Approval Jurisdiction</b> ; enforce the regulations for minimum parcel size; protect planned rights-of-way.	Continuous
Use intergovernmental agreements or cooperative boundary plans to aid construction of public <b>utilities</b> in the Urban Sewer Service Area.	Continuous
Continue to provide municipal <b>utilities</b> only to properties in the City or subject to a cooperative boundary plan.	Continuous
Refer to the <b>design guidance</b> of this chapter and the Urban Design Plan chapter when reviewing plats and site plans.	Continuous
Prepare commercial development <b>design guidelines</b> for downtown and another set for perimeter locations.	2016 <u>Ongoing; coordinated with City Council Strategic Plan</u>
Promote the creation of mixed-use <b>activity centers</b> in present commercial areas.	Continuous
Follow the recommendations of the <b>Waterways Plan</b> .	Continuous
Prepare a plan for the eastern half of the <b>North Barstow</b> District.	2015— 2025 <u>Redevelopment to occur in the coming years but a plan has been moved back to 2020-2025</u>
Promote redevelopment of the <b>Oxford Avenue</b> corridor by creating a linear riverfront park and continued land assembly and clearance.	2015 – 2025 <u>Continue process, all land has been assembled and cleared for redevelopment</u>
Negotiate the mutual <b>boundaries</b> of the Extra-Territorial Plat Approval Jurisdiction with the Village of Lake Hallie.	2015— 2020 <u>Ongoing</u>
Continue to prepare <b>plans</b> for developed neighborhoods and for future urban areas on the perimeter of the community.	Continuous

Plan Implementation Program

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Continue to convene <b>meetings</b> of community and government leaders to discuss regional growth issues.	Continuous
Seek to enhance the <b>Code Enforcement</b> activities of the city.	2015 <u>Continuous</u>
Continue to review <b>zoning regulations</b> to accommodate the non-conforming status of dwellings in older neighborhoods.	Continuous

# Parks, Greenways and Trails System Plan

## Objective 2 – Park Improvements and Maintenance

### Policies

#### 2. Land Acquisitions included in the 2018 – 2022 Park and Open Space Plan

Pursue these land acquisitions as recommended in the 2018 to 2022 Park and Open Space Plan:

- The houses southeast of hockey rink at **Roosevelt Playground**
- Land for a trail on the south side of **Chippewa River** from the University property west to Clairemont Avenue
- The remaining two residential properties abutting lower **Mount Simon Park** area
- ~~The western shoreline of the **Chippewa River** between Madison and Anderson Streets as recommended in the *West Riverside Neighborhood Plan*~~
- Any remaining properties necessary for a continuous trail along the northern side of the **Eau Claire River**
- The **Half Moon Lake** shoreline as needed to complete a trail around the lake – may be acquired in fee or as an easement
- Houses east of **First Avenue** from Fulton to Randall Street as recommended in the *West Riverside Neighborhood Plan*.
- Neighborhood Park ~~or Playground~~ near **Gateway Drive**
- Neighborhood Park ~~or Playground~~ near **Sherman School**
- Land or easement, for trail on the south side of the Eau Claire River from S. Hastings Way to River Prairie.

## Objective 3 – Waterfront Access

### Policies

#### 1. Waterfront Linear Parks

Seek to acquire land in the form of continuous linear open space corridors called greenways along the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers, Dells Pond, Half Moon Lake, and portions of Otter Creek and Sherman Creek.

Continue to implement the recommendations of the 2012 *Waterways Plan*, which recommends where to acquire waterfront land. Of particular importance is the opportunity to create a continuous greenway along the northern side of the Eau Claire River and a connection of the south sides of the Eau Claire River to River Prairie.

The Otter Creek corridor between the Eau Claire River and Southeast Community Park also has untapped potential, and that effort should be coordinated with the City of Altoona.

### **3. ~~The Confluence~~**

~~The redevelopment occurring at *The Confluence* in the South Barstow District of Downtown presents an opportunity to extend and improve the path system along both riverfronts. As the site plan and financial partnership are negotiated, seek to create a public plaza on the waterfront between the mixed use and the performing arts components. Take advantage of this highly visible central location with design and materials that will express community pride.~~

### **4. The Menomonie Street Sonntag Event and Recreation Center**

Work with the University and the YMCA to redevelop the ~~County Materials~~ Sonntag Center site in a way that enhances the adjacent greenway and Chippewa Valley State Trail. Additional open land along the trail would be helpful, and the new building should both complement and benefit from the greenway and the path.

## **Objective 4 – Bicycling and Walking Network**

### **Policies**

### **3. Major Greenway Initiatives**

#### **Creating the Northwest Greenway**

Build multi-use paths and bike lanes that link Jeffers Road Fields, Northwest Community Park, Dells Pond, Domer Park, the planned Cannery and the Chippewa Valley State Trail. A section of the trail should also be considered west along Highway 312 to the City limits and south along Kane Road.

Some of this system will be on land owned by Xcel Energy for its power lines, which will require negotiating easements and related agreements. Locating the path along Xcel Energy power lines offers the opportunity for it to meander through open settings.

#### **Completing the Eau Claire River Greenway**

The City owns nearly all of the land it needs to build a continuous riverfront path along the northern bank from the confluence to the eastern City border. The next task will be to improve the land as park and build the path(s), which should be budgeted through upcoming capital improvement programs.

The path along the southern bank from Haymarket Plaza to S. Hastings Way ~~should be studied~~ ~~will be extended west during the *Confluence* development.~~ ~~There is an informal foot path along the face of the steep slope between Boyd and Archery Parks.~~

~~Acquiring more than one or two of the houses along Grand Avenue for additional greenway is not likely in the foreseeable future even though the 2006 *East Side Hill Neighborhood Plan* recommends the idea.~~

Also, a trail connection further east to River Prairie should be studied.

### **Linking the High Bridge to the Chippewa Valley State Trail**

Create a safe on-street bicycling route linking the High Bridge path, Mt. Simon Park, McDonough Park and the Chippewa Valley State Trail near Starr Avenue.

~~Extend the route south to connect Forest Street and Phoenix Parks.~~

~~Use Forest Street, Sheridan Road and Omaha Street. Widen Forest Street under the Union Pacific Railroad bridge when that structure is eventually rebuilt; presently, that passage is narrow and hazardous.~~

~~The previously planned scheme to build a continuous waterfront path among those points is probably not feasible because of land ownership and topographic limitations. Refer to Figures 5-14 and 5-15 in the Transportation Assessment chapter or Figure 7-5 in the Parks Assessment for depictions of the waterfront alignment.~~

### **The Lower Chippewa River Greenway**

Follow the guidance of the parks element of the Waterways Plan, page 30, as it pertains to riverfront greenways and paths between the Clairemont Avenue and I-94 bridges. That plan recommended maintaining the current route of the Chippewa River State Trail and/or negotiating space for a riverfront greenway and path during the redevelopment process. ~~That change is not expected to occur for several decades, however.~~

## **Objective 7 – City-Wide Facilities, Programs and Services**

### **Policies**

#### **1. Recognize Diverse Needs**

Seek to recognize and accommodate the diverse recreational needs of the community:

- Neighborhood-level recreation facilities should be made available to each household in the City at either a neighborhood ~~playground~~ park or through the joint use of school properties.
- Facilities provided at sites classified as Neighborhood Parks should reflect the needs of the particular neighborhood or user group within the service area.
- Park and open space facilities should be designed to serve all ages and ~~the disabled~~ abilities.
- Use the standards in this plan as flexible guidelines.

#### **~~4. Complete Jeffers Park~~**

~~Complete the Jeffers Park softball and baseball fields in 2015.~~

~~Jeffers Park is planned to feature a five-field baseball and softball complex and include a playground, pavilion and trails. The project is a collaboration of two youth sports leagues, the Eau Claire National Little League and Eau Claire Fastpitch, plus the City of Eau Claire.~~

The ball field complex would be the first joint boy and girl ball fields in the City and expand limited access to fields. The fields would be the first City softball fields for girls outside of Carson Park, now used primarily by UWEC and the high schools, and allow both the boys and girls improved league and tournament opportunities. Jeffers Park will also provide the neighborhood and northwest side of Eau Claire much needed access to a community park offering a variety of active and passive outdoor recreational activities. Accomplishing this project will address actions that were included in the *2005 Comprehensive Plan*.

#### **4. Active Aging Facilities**

Work with volunteer groups to develop an active aging program at McDonough Playground Park. Plans have been approved and fund raising is in progress.

#### **5. Football**

Maintain the Carson Park football field and stadium seating to meet community needs. The Carson Park Field was upgraded to artificial turf using donations from the private sector, University of Wisconsin Eau Claire and the school district along with income from the beverage sales. The artificial turf allows the field to be used more intensively without degradation. It also provides a consistently better and safer playing surface. Anticipate replacing the present surface by 2020.

#### **5. Carson Park Master Plan**

Follow the guidance and implement the 2021 Carson Park Master Plan.

## **Natural Resources Plan**

### **Objective 1 – Water Resources**

#### **Policies**

#### **4. Half Moon Lake Water Quality Management**

The City will continue to implement the recommendations of the ~~2002~~ 2020 Report on Half Moon Lake Water Quality Improvement Plan and the 2010 Plan Update. This plan updates the initial plan from 2002 and an update in 2010.

The ~~2002~~ plan ~~called~~ calls for coordinating ~~five~~ groups – the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, City Parks, Recreation and Forestry, City ~~Public Works~~ Engineering Department, ~~Ski Sprites Waterski Club~~ and the Friends of Half Moon Lake -- to advocate for the changes recommended. ~~It also~~ The original plan called for relocating the Ski Sprites from Half Moon Lake, cutting weeds to improve swimming and boating experiences, implementing motor boat restrictions, improving stormwater management in the lake watershed, improving the fish habitat and reducing the invasive plants that dominated the lake.

The groups have worked with the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to apply herbicides to reduce Eurasian water milfoil and

curly leaf pondweed from the lake. The herbicide treatments ~~conducted in 2009, 2010 and 2011~~ in recent years have been very effective at controlling curly leaf pondweed and Eurasian water milfoil. The Corps and WDNR will determine if additional herbicide treatments are necessary.

~~An alum treatment~~ Alum treatments were applied in 2011, 2017 and 2019 to control the release of phosphorus into the lake and will be continually monitored ~~during the next several years~~ to measure ~~its~~ their effectiveness.

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

## Economic Development Plan

### Objective 2 – Target Enterprises

**Focus economic development support on target enterprises that attract an educated and trained labor force to Eau Claire.**

### Objective 4 – Site and Asset Readiness

#### Policies

#### 3. Sites for Small Industries, Support Businesses and Building Contractors

Act to promote the private development of industrial areas that are suitable for smaller, industrial service, construction or distribution operations. Such lots should be in the range of 1.5 to 3 acres and have no additional design requirements beyond those of the zoning ordinance. These lots would be similar to those found in the Chippewa Valley Industrial Park, which allows outdoor storage and basic industrial buildings. Sewer and water lines may be needed to support such businesses, ~~which may require annexation of land from a Town as there were few, if any, suitable tracts available within the City as of 2015.~~

## Urban Design Plan

### Objective 2 – Regional Setting

#### Policies

#### 3. Community Entrance Corridors

Design major entries into the City with attractive gateway features such as overstory trees, ground or monument signs and public art. Opportunities for major gateway enhancements exist at:

- Hendrickson Drive, State Highway 37
- West Clairemont Avenue, US Highway 12
- Hastings Way

- Old Wells Road and Third Street
- Birch Street
- Cameron Street/Madison Street
- Brackett Avenue

### **Objective 3 – Site and Building Design**

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Design Guidelines for Commercial Development**

Prepare and adopt design guidelines or standards for new commercial development in perimeter, corridor and downtown locations.

The guidelines may address the subjects described under this Objective as well as these points:

- Placement of buildings and building entrances close to the sidewalk to enhance visibility and pedestrian access
- Locating parking lots to the side and rear of buildings, not in front
- Screening of parking lots from the street using plantings, low walls or decorative fences; increasing and enhancing parking lot landscaping
- Providing many front windows to provide both natural surveillance and visual interest
- Building architecture that respects the neighborhood context, with building heights and massing that are compatible with adjacent residential areas
- Pedestrian-scale lighting
- Other streetscape elements such as street trees, benches and public art that help create a distinct identity for the neighborhood center.

##### **6. Multiple-Family Housing Design**

Continue to follow the guidelines of the City's updated Multi-Family Housing Design Manual, which addresses:

- Location and context
- Access, traffic, private drives, parking, curb cuts and sidewalks
- Relationship of building to street; façade design, doors and windows; materials
- Garage design, fenestration and setback
- Density, open space and lot coverage
- Landscaping, screening, fencing, lighting and trash handling
- Surface water management
- Affordability and mixed-income
- Mixed Use Residential Model



## Objective 4 – New Neighborhoods

### Policies

#### 4. Street Trees

Strengthen the ordinance and practice regarding the planting of trees along public streets and roads. The intention will be to adopt methods that ensure that trees will be planted in the public right-of-way of every residential street and major municipal thoroughfare, including existing and future streets. Emphasize the concept of “the right tree in the right place” and pursue a city-wide tree cover/canopy goal.

## Neighborhoods and Districts Plan

### Summary of Neighborhoods and Districts Issues

- 7. What should be done, if anything, to coordinate the efforts of the neighborhood associations?** ~~Presently~~ In 2015 there was no coordination, but recent united efforts could be more powerful and efficient.

### Objective 1 – Municipal or County Services and Facilities

**Street maintenance and periodic reconstruction.** The City has a regular schedule of street maintenance and rebuilding but the condition of the oldest streets is considered sub-par by some. Snow plowing is adequate but always any easy target of grumbling. A major shortcoming in 2015, however, was that the City does not patch, rebuild or plow the alleys, which are public. This has in part changed with an alley reconstruction schedule in place.

**Code Enforcement by the County.** The City-County Health Department administers the Housing Maintenance and Occupancy Code throughout Eau Claire. The department conducts inspections, re-inspections and investigations in response to complaints or referrals.

The Housing Code (Section 16.08) is not the same as the Building Code (Section 16.04 of the City Code). The Housing Code sets minimum standards necessary for health and safety in any housing.

The Department also administers the city-wide Housing Inspection Program, which replaced the Intensified Housing Code Compliance Program in the Community Development Block Grant target area. The Department identifies houses with Housing Code violations through a systematic inspection schedule and works with owners to bring the properties into compliance. Many significant interior health and safety hazards have been identified and exterior maintenance improved. A map of the generalized results of the exterior survey is shown in the Housing Assessment chapter of this plan.

**Public and rent-assisted housing.** The City’s Housing Authority administers funds from the federal, state or city governments to provide a small number of public housing units for the very low income, elderly or handicapped, rent-assistance and home-buying assistance. See the Housing Chapter for more information about affordable housing policies.

**Environmental stewardship.** The City prepares plans and enforces regulations for the protection of shorelands, wetlands, floodplains, clean energy, and general sustainability.

## Policies

### 1. City Service Improvements

Consider improving these services across the City:

**Rental Housing Registration and Inspection.** The 2015 plan recommendation to start a program requiring that all rental housing be registered with the City or County has been adopted. Inspections are compliant-driven or in general done with the city-wide Housing Inspection Program. Rental housing is inspected by the City-County Health Department ~~on a periodic basis~~ for conformance to the Housing Code life safety regulations. For the sake of efficiency, follow-up inspections are focused on rental properties needing ongoing compliance, while others may be inspected less frequently. Selection criteria may include age of the building, location, prior complaints or similar factors.

## Objective 3 – Physical Improvements to Housing and Businesses

## Policies

### 1. Neighborhood Revitalization Intensified Planning Process

#### Related Services to Be Considered

The range of services for the City and the proposed community development or housing development corporation will be defined during the planning summit and subsequent deliberations. It may be decided that some of these activities are best administered by the City, another public-benefit corporation or an institution such as a college. The range of activities is wide and could include any of these or more:

- Building new housing, including units considered “affordable” or “accessible,” on sites that it buys and prepares or sites obtained from other parties
- Housing rehabilitation loans and counseling
- Counseling for home ownership, mortgage applications, personal finance and foreclosure prevention
- Home ownership down-payment assistance
- Housing maintenance advice and assistance
- Historic preservation

- Building housing designed for students
- Acting as a resource for job training.

In June 2016, the Neighborhood Revitalization Task Force Report was accepted by City Council, which fulfilled this section. Many recommendations have been integrated into recent neighborhood plans, housing policies and City activities. An example is using Water Street tax increment financing to fund the Historic Randall Park Neighborhood Revitalization Corporation's future homeownership improvement program.

## **Objective 5 – Resident Leadership and Organization**

### **Policies**

#### **1. Neighborhood Planning**

Continue to prepare and update neighborhood or district plans with involvement from residents, property owners and tenants. Implement the recommendations of each neighborhood plan through City actions, private initiatives or the proposed community development corporation.

Five neighborhoods have formal plans, all of which have been assisted by the City and adopted into the *Comprehensive Plan*. The neighborhood and district plans completed as of 2014 were described in the Assessment of Conditions. In 2017, the North River Fronts and in 2020 Third Ward plans were updated. Shawtown neighborhood is next in 2022.

#### **2. Neighborhood Organizations**

Help to form and sustain neighborhood organizations. Work to initiate an organization in any neighborhood that does not have one, such as ~~West Riverside~~. North Side Hill.

In 2015, there were five neighborhoods with organized associations, although the degree of activity varies among them. In 2021, there were 14 organized with also a master umbrella association formed to coordinate and support the associations.

Periodically host meetings of all the neighborhood associations so that they can compare efforts and ideas, resolve any differences near shared boundaries, and provide unified requests to the City.

#### **4. Role in a Community Development Corporation**

If a non-profit community development corporation is formed, include a representative sample of neighborhood residents on its board of directors. The Historic Randall Park Neighborhood Revitalization Corporation formed and has a board of directors that includes residents of the neighborhood.

## **Housing Assistance, Diversity and Design Plan**

### **Objective 1 – Housing Affordability**

#### **Policies**

## **12. Comprehensive Housing Study**

Commission a comprehensive housing study that combines data on all types of housing in the city, evaluating the current housing supply and comparing it to the current and future housing demand. Data would include all types of housing, location, price points, condition, and size of units, and demographic shifts, with a review every 5 years. Furthermore, the study would include an analysis of current housing demand and a forecast of future housing demand.

### **Objective 3 – Housing Diversity**

**Promote through plans and regulations a broad range of housing types and price levels.**

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Variety**

The City will encourage through its land use plan and zoning ordinance the construction of a variety of housing types including rental housing, narrow-lot singles, townhouses, rowhouses, apartments and live-work units.

Eau Claire also needs to attract large, high-value detached houses and will approve annexation petitions in locations with attributes such as woods, water and views suitable for those desirable houses.

The City will seek to attract new housing in central infill or redevelopment sites as well as fringe locations.

Promote and preserve naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH), including proactive safety inspections for mobile homes as NOAH and encouraging programs for improved energy efficiency and resilience. Consider ways in which manufactured housing as NOAH might be introduced in other neighborhoods.

Means of encouraging this variety will be the land use plan, zoning ordinance, plat review and publicly-assisted redevelopment plans.

##### **2. Special Needs**

The Housing Authority will continue to use federal, state and private non-profit funding to create or reduce the cost of housing for the most ~~needy~~ susceptible in the community. Those ~~people~~ groups may include:

- Large low-income families
- ~~The~~ Elderly persons experiencing low-income ~~elderly~~
- ~~The~~ Persons with disabilities experiencing low-income ~~physically handicapped or disabled~~
- ~~Those~~ Persons with HIV or AIDS
- ~~The chronically mentally ill~~ Persons with a mental health condition.

# Historic and Cultural Resources Plan

## Objective 1 -- Evaluation and Designation

### Policies

#### 3. National Register Nominations

Proactively seek and prepare nominations to the National Register of Historic Places for individual properties and districts that have been identified as eligible in the Intensive Historic and Architectural Surveys and in consultation with the Wisconsin Historical Society and the Cultural Resource Management Manual prepared by the Wisconsin Historical Society.

The City currently has 41 individually listed or eligible properties and 7 listed districts on the National Register of Historic Places. Surveys have also identified a number of additional properties that are potentially eligible for the National Register. The Assessment chapter enumerates and maps the properties and districts.

#### 4. Local Historic Designation

Consider the local designation of properties and districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. When assisting property owners in the preparation of a National Register Nominations, local designation of such properties will be a priority.

Properties and districts that have been designated by the ECLC are listed in the Assessment of Conditions and Issues report.

Study areas outside the boundaries of existing or potentially eligible National Register Districts to assess whether such areas may be eligible for local designation even if not eligible for the National Register.

Consult with the Wisconsin Historical Society to evaluate whether this additional research may warrant reconsideration of eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.

#### 7. Status of Opted-Out Local Landmark Properties

Work to restore the continuity of the two locally landmarked districts and the individually landmarked properties that were removed from their local designation in 1992 by considering the recommendations of the Commission's 2011 report to the City Manager that would restore the local designation of these properties through a phase-in process. By restoring the continuity of the two historic districts, all properties in the districts would be governed equally by the same provisions. Eau Claire is the only city in Wisconsin that allowed properties to opt out of the local designation, which has compromised the integrity of the districts and preservation of these properties.

Work with property owners and neighborhood associations to strengthen their support for the re-establishment of the local districts in their entirety and designation of all the individually significant properties. This is intended to promote the broader,

neighborhood-wide importance and benefits of the local preservation for the older neighborhoods.

The goal of the City is to restore the continuity of the two locally landmarked historic districts and the individually landmarked program.

## Downtown Plan

### Objective 3 – Redevelopment and Remodeling

#### Policies

#### 1. North Barstow District – Master Plan for East and North

Continue to prepare plans to guide the redevelopment of portions of Downtown as was done for the North Barstow District and the Oxford Street corridor.

Prepare and adopt a master plan by ~~2020 period~~ 2025 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 Madison and William Streets.

#### 4. Redevelopment and Major Remodeling Prospects

##### **Bus Transfer Site**

~~Conduct a study to determine the best alternative location and the cost feasibility of moving and improving the central bus transfer site. The site, located along Farwell Street between Main and Gray Streets, could then be re-used as parking (interim) or development.~~

#### West Madison District

##### **Oxford Avenue Corridor**

This corridor could be the next major area of change for Downtown. The Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority should continue to give a high priority to the Oxford Avenue corridor, which runs from Madison Street in Downtown north to the High Bridge. The Redevelopment Authority will continue to assemble properties and seek developers who will invest in a way consistent with the *West Riverside Neighborhood Plan*. See also the policies under Objective 11 and updated *Cannery District Redevelopment Plan* (2019).

### Objective 5 - Downtown Design and Enhancements

#### Policies

#### 4. Town Square Park

Create a “town square” style park, preferably between City Hall and the Library, or where the parking lot is currently at the northeastern corner of Barstow Street and Grand Avenue with substitute parking nearby. Please refer also to the Town Square Park policy on page 12-13 ~~and the Eau Claire Street Promenade policy on page 12-23.~~

### 8. The River Bridges

Ensure that the new bridges at Water and Madison Streets are is carefully designed to enhance the appearance of the rivers.

Consider adding **lighting** to one or more bridges.

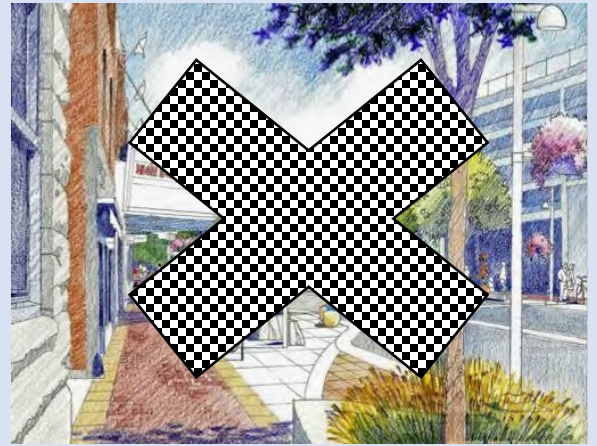
The river bridges are highly visible public features and, therefore, should be designed for beauty as well as function.

## Objective 6 – Walking and Bicycling

### Policies

#### 2. The Eau Claire Street Promenade

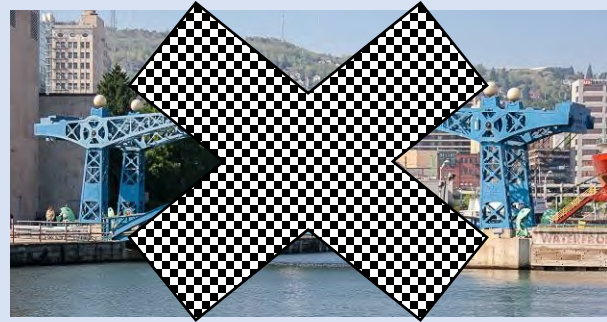
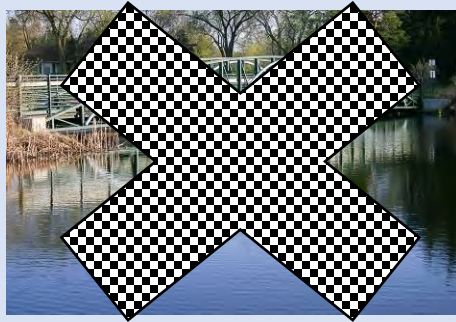
Eau Claire Street should be rebuilt as a “convertible street” from Farwell Street to Graham Avenue so that it can be temporarily closed to auto traffic and used for events, performances, celebrations and strolling. Sidewalks would be improved with special patterns, flat curbs with trench drains would be used, tent tie-down rings would be embedded, and the street pavement would be decorative.



A rendering of Eau Claire Street rebuilt with sidewalks, low curbs and other improvements.

#### 4. Confluence Pedestrian Bridge

Study the feasibility of a pedestrian bridge across the mouth of the Eau Claire River linking Phoenix Park to the plaza and trail at The Confluence. This feature would likely be wildly popular and extend the effect of the riverfront greenway.



A well-designed bridge for walking and bicycling at the mouth of the Eau Claire River could make a dramatic statement and become an icon for the community.

## Objective 7 – Street System

### Policies

#### 4. River Bridges



Accomplish the rebuilding of the river bridges at Dewey, Madison and Water Streets.  
Ensure that river bridges are beautifully designed because they are highly visible and long-lasting pieces of public investment.

## Objective 9 – Housing

### Policies

#### 1. Additional Housing Opportunities in Downtown

Look favorably on any reasonable proposal to build new housing in or around Downtown, especially along the riverfronts and in mixed-use structures. Owner-occupied housing should be given special emphasis.

Administratively support additional housing in these and other locations in Downtown:

- Block 7 – bounded by Wisconsin, Galloway, Hobart and Barstow Streets
- The Oxford Avenue corridor – refer to the *West Riverside Neighborhood Plan and Cannery District Redevelopment Plan (2019)*
- East of North Barstow Street – prepare a master plan for this area
- North of East Madison Street – prepare a master plan for this area
- Graham Avenue along the riverfront

Mixed-use buildings that include retail space on the first floor with housing above are a desired but not mandatory arrangement in Downtown.

## Governmental Cooperation Plan

### Objective 1 – Planning and Growth Management

#### 2. Boundary Agreements

Continue to encourage the use of general agreements and cooperative boundary agreements with adjacent jurisdictions to provide for the orderly transition of jurisdictional boundaries in the Extra-territorial Plat Approval Jurisdiction consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan*.

The agreements should define the boundaries, the phasing of transition and land uses and identify significant natural resources to protect. In locations with existing urban development and public utilities, consider sharing property tax revenue and the cost of upgrading roads and utilities.

Look favorably on annexation petitions that are fiscally sound, consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan* and help the City and the region manage growth wisely and efficiently.

#### 6. Alternative Resolution Strategies

As stated in the Intergovernmental Agreements, resolve governmental disagreements through methods other than ~~law suits~~ legal action.



Some governmental differences over land use, annexation, surface water management and so on might be resolved through a means other than the legal system and protracted litigation. These include cooperative planning, informal negotiation, facilitated negotiation, mediation and binding arbitration.

## **Objective 2 – Services and Facilities**

### **7. Wisconsin Department of Transportation**

Coordinate with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation on:

- ~~Transferring to the DOT the jurisdiction of County Highway T, widening the road and building a bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad tracks~~
- Bringing passenger rail to Eau Claire from the Twin Cities and siting the station
- Building an interchange on I-94 at Cameron Street
- Rebuilding Downtown river bridges
- Studying and improving problem locations such as Golf Road at US 53 or Clairemont Avenue (US 12) at ~~Hendrickson Drive (State Highway 37)~~ London Road and at Craig Road.
- Completing the transfer of Hastings Way right-of-way as a result of US 53 expansion

## **Objective 3 – Economic Development**

### **1. Coordinated Marketing and Recruiting**

Work with other bodies that assist economic development to market the region, build its image and attract employers and employees. These organizations include the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development and private non-profit groups such as the Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation, Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce, Momentum West, Downtown Eau Claire, Inc., the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and Chippewa Valley Technical College.

## Major Implementation Steps by Plan Element

**Table 15-1  
Land Use and Growth Management Plan Actions**

<b>Future Land Use Map.</b> Use the Comprehensive plan to update the future land use map as a guide for new development, redevelopment, rezoning and future growth areas.	Ongoing
<b>Development Reviews.</b> Use the <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> , the design guidance of this chapter and the Urban Design Plan chapter when reviewing land development or zoning applications.	Ongoing
<b>Airport Zoning.</b> Create a new zoning district for the regional airport.	2016 Continue to work with Airport to seek a new zoning district
<b>Boundary Agreements.</b> Seek to incorporate the peninsulas of the Towns of Washington, Union, Wheaton and Seymour that jut into the City's geographic area through boundary agreements.	2016 – 2025 = 2031 <u>The Intergovernmental Agreement was continued in February 2021 for 10 years and the Town comprehensive plans to be updated in 2025</u>
<b>Altoona.</b> Negotiate future jurisdiction with Altoona.	2016 <u>Ongoing; coordinated with City Council Strategic Plan</u>
<b>Perimeter Growth Management.</b> Continue to review applications for land division throughout the Extra-Territorial Plat Approval Jurisdiction; enforce the regulations for minimum parcel size; protect planned rights-of-way.	Ongoing
<b>Commercial Design Guidelines.</b> Prepare commercial development design guidelines for downtown and a set for perimeter locations.	2016 <u>Ongoing; coordinated with City Council Strategic Plan</u>
<b>Activity Centers.</b> Promote the creation of mixed-use activity centers in present commercial areas.	Ongoing
<b>Non-Conforming Uses.</b> Continue to review zoning regulations to accommodate the non-conforming status of dwellings in older neighborhoods.	Ongoing

**Table 15-2  
Transportation Plan Actions**

<b>Development Review.</b> Participate in the review of plats and site plans and other city planning; recommend design adjustments to private or public facilities for capacity, flow, safety and economy.	Ongoing
<del><b>Parking.</b> Implement recommendations of the 2016 Downtown parking study.</del>	<del>2016 Completed</del>
<b>Galloway Street.</b> Conduct a feasibility study for the proposed Galloway Street bridge and connecting links.	2016—2020 <u>Moved back for future study areas and consideration</u>
<del><b>State Street.</b> Conduct a feasibility study for State Street work.</del>	<del>2016—2020 Completed</del>
<b>Melby Street.</b> Conduct a feasibility study for Melby Street work.	2020—2025 <u>In design for construction moved back to a later date 2022-2025, working with the railroad</u>
<b>Traffic Studies.</b> Conduct traffic studies in these locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Menomonie Street</li> <li>▪ Clairemont – Hendrickson</li> <li>▪ Oakwood Mall area</li> <li>▪ Cameron – Madison corridor</li> <li>▪ Birch St – Galloway corridor</li> <li>▪ Harding Avenue corridor</li> </ul>	2016—2025 <u>Ongoing studies; City teamed with County and WisDOT to complete traffic study for Oakwood Mall area in 2020; other traffic studies to occur in the future 2025-2030</u>
<b>County Highway T.</b> Study and monitor County Highway T for possible improvements and possible transfer to the State.	2020—2030 <u>Conversation and public meeting held working with Eau Claire &amp; Chippewa Counties and the State of WI</u>
<b>Transit Plan.</b> Implement the recommendations of the <i>Transit Development Plan</i> ; site and build a new downtown transit center.	2016—2020 <u>Transit Plan Completed – 2021-2022 Construction for New Transit Center; Continue to work with UWEC and new facility on the campus; Add language within the plan that addresses equity as it relates to transportation to ensure access for all individuals; Transit is continue to move towards electric buses and future placement of new bus</u>

	<u>shelters throughout the community</u>
<b>Bike and Ped Plan.</b> Implement the recommendations of the <i>Bicycle and Pedestrian Systems Plan</i> .	Ongoing <u>Completed an update in 2018 and will continue to throughout the years</u>
<b>Passenger Rail.</b> Monitor the Minnesota passenger rail link study.	Ongoing <u>Continue to work with partnerships for passenger rail</u>
<b>Parking.</b> Update the Zoning Code parking requirements.	2016 <u>Part of Plan Commission work plan to be reviewed in 2022 to update parking standards</u>
<b>Intercity Transportation Hub.</b> Consider plans for a regional transit hub, including multi-modal options.	<u>2022-2030</u>

**Table 15-3  
Public Utilities Plan Actions**

<b>Wastewater Plan.</b> Complete the remaining improvements recommended by the 2007 <i>Wastewater Treatment Plan</i> .	2016 – 2030
<b>Chippewa Interceptor.</b> Study the feasibility of and budget for replacing the Chippewa River Interceptor Sewer.	2016 <u>Moved back within the CIP Replacement plan for 2021-2023</u>
<b>Water Plan.</b> Budget for the recommendations of the <i>Water System Evaluation</i> .	2016 - 2025
<b>Aging Water Lines.</b> Replace aging or break-prone water or sewer lines as streets are rebuilt.	Ongoing
<b>Inflow and Infiltration.</b> Continue to make improvements that reduce water infiltration and inflow to the sanitary sewer system.	Ongoing
<b>Plan Updates.</b> Update the two-part 2014 <i>Water Source and Distribution Study</i> every five years. Update the 2007 <i>Wastewater Treatment Plan Facilities Plan Amendment</i> in approximately 2025.	2020 – 2025
<b>USSA Boundary.</b> Study the need to amend the boundary of the Urban Sewer Service Area whenever the <i>Chippewa Falls / Eau Claire Urban Sewer Service Plan</i> is updated by the Regional Planning Commission.	Ongoing
<b>Utilities Access Policy.</b> Continue the policy of providing municipal sewer or water service only to (a) properties in the City, (b) properties subject to a cooperative boundary agreement or (c) land that is the subject of another form of intergovernmental cooperation agreement.	Ongoing
<b>Sewer System Plan.</b> Prepare a comprehensive sanitary sewer system plan comparable to the 2014 water system plan.	2016—2020 <u>Moved back to be within the 2025 FPA</u>

<b>Surface Water.</b> Continue to apply and enforce the provisions of its Surface Water Management Plan and its WPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS-4) permit.	Ongoing
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**Table 15-4  
Parks, Trails and Greenways Plan Actions**

<b>New Perimeter Parks.</b> Acquire land for the six planned Neighborhood Parks and one Waterfront Park located in perimeter locations in conjunction with land subdivision if not before; list improvement costs in the multi-year capital improvements program.	Ongoing <u>Add language to consider future park areas for growth areas that are currently outside of the city limits</u>
<b>Folsom Street Park.</b> Acquire land for the proposed Folsom Street Park and budget for improvements.	2016—2020 <u>Ongoing because not all the land has been acquired</u>
<b>Greenway Extensions.</b> Acquire land for Greenway extensions as described in Policy 4-3 of the Parks Chapter. These include the South Barstow District riverfronts, the West Riverside Greenway, the Event Center Greenway expansion, and the Otter Creek Greenway (with Altoona).	Ongoing
<b>Other Land Acquisitions.</b> Acquire other properties as listed in Policy 2-2 under the City’s five-year Parks Plan.	Ongoing
<b>Sherman Creek Park.</b> Negotiate with the Town of Union to make the existing Sherman Creek Park jointly accessible to Town and City residents.	2016—2020 <u>Ongoing</u>
<b>Existing Parks.</b> Improve existing parks as described in Table 5-3, Objective 7 and the five-year <i>Parks and Open Space Plan</i> .	Ongoing <u>Add language to consider future park areas for growth areas that are currently outside of the city limits</u>
<b>Park Land Dedication.</b> Consider adopting an ordinance requiring land or cash be dedicated with subdividing of residential lots.	2018 <u>2022 - 2023</u>
<b>Half Moon Lake Greenway.</b> Continue acquiring properties around Half Moon Lake as they become available.	Ongoing <u>One (1) property remains around Half Moon Lake</u>

**Table 15-5  
Natural Resources Plan Actions**

<b>Surface Water Plan.</b> Continue to apply and enforce the provisions of its Surface Water Management Plan and its WPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System.	Ongoing
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<b>Public Education.</b> Continue public education about water resources through the leadership of the Chippewa Valley Storm Water Forum.	Ongoing
<b>Zoning.</b> Continue to apply protective zoning regulations especially floodplain and shoreland-wetlands and Section 15.12.290.	Ongoing
<b>Lowes Creek.</b> Give special attention to surface water management and land development in the Lowes Creek watershed and apply the recommendations of the Lowes Creek watershed plan.	Ongoing
<b>Half Moon Lake.</b> Continue to work with the Department of Natural Resources to improve water quality in Half Moon Lake.	2016—2020 <u>Plan completed</u>
<b>Creek Plans.</b> Update the Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan by preparing protection plans for the Otter Creek and upper Sherman Creek sub-watersheds.	2016 – 2020 <u>2025</u>
<b>Floodplain Acquisition.</b> Acquire developed property located in the 100-year floodplains.	2016 – 2025
<b>Street Trees.</b> Prepare and implement a city-wide plan for planting street trees.	2016 <u>Ongoing</u>
<del><b>Steep Slopes.</b> Consider adopting an ordinance that regulates development on steep slopes consistent with DNR standards.</del>	<del>2016 – 2020</del>

**Table 15-6  
Economic Development Plan Actions**

<b>Target Industries.</b> Continue to target industries that may be attracted to local assets and that provide higher-wage jobs.	Ongoing
<b>New Businesses.</b> Work to attract entrepreneurs to Eau Claire who are most likely to succeed at establishing new industries and adding diverse employment opportunities to the city.	Ongoing
<b>Development Sites.</b> Continue to maintain an inventory of fully-serviced development sites. Act to promote the private development of a new location with sites for small industries and support businesses. Also work to promote the private development of an industrial area with rail service.	2016—2020 <u>Ongoing</u>
<b>Highway T.</b> Improve County Highway T to improve truck access from the north.	By 2030
<b>Passenger Rail.</b> Advocate and support the potential passenger rail service between Eau Claire and the Twin Cities.	2016 until success
<del><b>Airport Zoning.</b> Adjust zoning to enable the Regional Airport to add air cargo operations on-site.</del>	<del>2016</del>
<b>Cameron Interchange.</b> Continue to advocate for building an interchange on I-94 at Cameron Street.	2016 – 2030
<b>Redevelopment.</b> Continue to support redevelopment and adaptive re-use of contaminated, blighted, functionally obsolete and under-utilized properties, including those in and near Downtown. Support the ongoing revitalization of the greater downtown and the riverfronts to build a vibrant city center.	Ongoing
<b>Retention and Recruitment.</b> Maintain a working relationship between local employers and colleges. Continue the public and private campaign to retain existing businesses and recruit new ones. Support initiatives that help make Eau Claire a desirable place to live and work.	Ongoing

**Table 15-7  
Urban Design Plan Actions**

<b>Special Places.</b> Continue to protect, interpret and enhance the qualities of the City’s “special places” and examples of its cultural and economic heritage.	Ongoing
<b>City Entrances.</b> Design major entrances to the city with attractive gateway features.	Ongoing
<b>Wayfinding Signs.</b> Extend the Downtown wayfinding sign system.	2016 – 2030
<b>Commercial Design Guidelines.</b> Prepare and adopt design guidelines or standards for new commercial development in perimeter, corridor and downtown locations.	2022
<b>Multiple-Family Design.</b> Continue to follow the guidelines of the City’s Multi-Family Housing Design Manual and the Landscaping Manual.	Ongoing
<b>New Streets.</b> Build new streets according to the design standards presented in this plan and in the Transportation System Plan chapter.	Ongoing
<b>Street Tree Practice.</b> Strengthen the ordinance and practice regarding the planting of trees along public streets and roads.	<del>2016</del> Ongoing
<b>Street Tree Plan.</b> Adopt a city-wide plan for species and spacing.	<del>2016</del> 2023
<b>Sign Ordinance.</b> Review and consider improving the sign ordinance.	<del>2018</del> 2022
<b>Infill Development.</b> Encourage infill development in older, traditional neighborhoods that respects the characteristics and prevalent housing styles of each neighborhood.	Ongoing
<b>Activity Centers.</b> Encourage a mixture of compatible land uses in a variety of locations and scales in order to create more vital and walkable activity centers.	Ongoing
<b>Priority Streetscape Improvements.</b> Invest in a higher than normal level of tree planting and decorative lighting along certain designated roads as illustrated by Figure 8-3, Priority Streetscape System.	Ongoing
<b>Green Space Pattern.</b> Continue to build a system of green open spaces for recreation, urban beauty and natural protection that are linked by linear parks (greenways), off-road paths and on-street bicycle lanes, and generously landscaped roads.	Ongoing

**Table 15-8  
Neighborhoods and Districts Plan Actions**

<b>Neighborhood Revitalization Task Force Report.</b> Continue to <u>implement the initial stakeholder summit ideas recommended in report.</u>	Ongoing
<b>Planning Annual Summit.</b> <u>Initiate and organize the Support growth of neighborhood associations and their annual summit to improve communication, address concerns, and share best practices.</u> <del>planning meeting(s) of representatives from the public and private sectors to advance this proposal for intensified and ongoing neighborhood</del>	2016 Ongoing

improvement, including creation of a not for profit neighborhood development corporation.	
<b>Coordinated Community Development.</b> Seek to devise a comprehensive approach to neighborhood improvement. Focus and coordinate efforts that may already be underway by local organizations other than the City. Involve representatives of allied public or private organizations in planning and implementing this campaign. [combined with other items that accomplish this]	2016– 2025
<b>Neighborhood Revitalization Corporation (NRC).</b> Support the Historic Randall Park NRC non-profit to improve reinvestment and homeownership opportunities. Implement a housing reinvestment plan within the Water Street TID #12 Project Plan.	Ongoing
<b>Code Enforcement.</b> Become more proactive in the enforcement of external and nuisance violations of the City maintenance regulations.	Ongoing
<b>Rental Housing Inspections Registration.</b> Consider program requiring that Continue the Health Department's rental registration housing program for improvements and communication. be registered with the City or County and that such housing is inspected on a regular basis for conformance to the Housing Code.	2016 Ongoing
<b>Housing Inspection Program.</b> Continue Health Department program to encourage neighborhood safety and ensure on a regular basis that the city's housing supply meets minimum health and safety standards.	Ongoing
<b>Alley Maintenance.</b> Schedule the repair, reconstruction and snow plowing of public alleys to the same level as public streets.	Ongoing
<b>Street Maintenance.</b> Upgrade the standards for the repair of potholes and cracks in local (minor) streets.	Ongoing
<b>Parking Regulations.</b> Review parking regulations in congested areas and determine if changes would reduce parking congestion.	2016 2021-2025
<b>Parking Sticker Program.</b> Consider a program in which residents of neighborhoods affected by a high number of cars parked by non-residents may receive a sticker that allows them to park on their street.	2016 2021-2025
<b>Neighborhood Plans.</b> Continue to update neighborhood plans with help from residents, property owners and tenants.	Ongoing
<b>Land Use Planning.</b> Work with the neighborhood organizations to identify specific locations that are most suited for or in need of redevelopment, including perhaps increases in density, to guide private initiatives. Consider amending the zoning map or code in response.	Ongoing
<b>Amend Zoning Regulations.</b> Consider amending zoning in older neighborhoods to accommodate the non-conforming status of dwellings because of setback requirements and area requirements that are generally applicable to newer residential neighborhoods.	2022-2025
<b>Organizational Coordination.</b> Assist or facilitate Periodically host meetings of the neighborhood associations to compare efforts and ideas, resolve any differences near shared boundaries, and provide unified requests to the City.	Ongoing
<b>University Communication.</b> Assist or facilitate annual meetings between representatives of the University and the neighborhoods to exchange ideas about topics of mutual interest and communicate them to the City.	Ongoing



**Table 15-9  
Housing Plan Actions**

<b>Housing Division.</b> The Eau Claire Housing Division will continue to administer programs supported by federal block grant money such as housing rehabilitation loans, weatherization and home ownership.	Ongoing
<b>Housing Authority.</b> The Eau Claire Housing Authority will continue to administer federal programs such as public housing and rent assistance.	Ongoing
<b>Code Enforcement.</b> Become more proactive in the enforcement of external and nuisance violations of the City maintenance regulations.	Ongoing
<del><b>Rental Housing Inspections.</b> Consider a program requiring that rental housing be registered with the City or County and that such housing is inspected on a regular basis for conformance to the Housing Code.</del>	2016
<u><b>Rental Registration and Housing Inspections.</b> Continue programs to improve rental communication and property upkeep for both rentals and owner-occupied housing.</u>	<u>Ongoing</u>
<del><b>Neighborhood Planning Summit.</b> Convene one or more meetings by representatives from the public and private sectors to advance the proposal shown in the Neighborhood Plan chapter for accelerated neighborhood improvement.</del>	2015
<u><b>Housing Summit.</b> Convene one or more meetings by representatives from the public and private sectors to advance the Housing Plan's goal and Housing Opportunities Commission's work plans for accelerated improvements.</u>	<u>Ongoing</u>
<u><b>Housing for the Homeless.</b> Continue to work with the Dairyland Coalition in helping guide the provision of homeless housing in the City of Eau Claire.</u>	<u>Ongoing</u>
<u><b>Comprehensive Housing Study.</b> Commission a comprehensive housing study that combines data on all types of housing in the city, evaluating the current housing supply and comparing it to the current and future housing demand. Data would include all types of housing, location, price points, condition, and size of units, and demographic shifts, with a review every 5 years.</u>	<u>2022</u>

**Table 15-10  
Historic Resources Plan Actions**

<b>Survey.</b> Regularly update the historic resource survey.	Ongoing
<b>National Register Nominations.</b> Prepare additional National Register nominations for properties and districts as warranted by survey results.	Ongoing
<b>Local Designations.</b> Continue to consider additional local designations particularly those properties listed on the National Register.	Ongoing
<del><b>Opt-Outs.</b> <u>Work with</u> Present options to City Council related to the status of the opted-out property <u>owners</u> from historic districts and individual properties <u>to re-designate these landmarks.</u></del>	2016 <u>Ongoing</u>
<del><b>Landmarks Ordinance.</b> Discuss possible amendments to the Landmarks ordinance with the City Manager and City Council.</del>	2016
<b>Federal Funding.</b> Update the Programmatic Agreement for HUD-funded activities between the City and the Advisory Council of Historic Preservation	2016 <u>As needed</u>

<b>Design Advice.</b> Continue to provide design advice in neighborhood and downtown planning and in the structural rehabilitation of historic and older non-historic buildings.	Ongoing
<b>Amend Zoning Regulations.</b> Consider amending zoning in older neighborhoods to accommodate the non-conforming status of dwellings because of setback requirements and area requirements that are generally applicable to newer residential neighborhoods.	<u>2022-2025</u>
<b>Markers.</b> Expand the historic markers program.	Ongoing
<b>Education.</b> Continue educational outreach and interpretative efforts.	Ongoing

**Table 15-11  
Downtown Plan Actions**

<b>DECI Activities.</b> Downtown Eau Claire, Inc., will continue to market, recruit and advocate for Downtown, working with owners, tenants, the City and the Redevelopment Authority of Eau Claire.	Ongoing
<b>The Confluence.</b> Complete performing arts center and the plaza at The Confluence, the public and private multiple use redevelopment near Eau Claire Street and Graham Avenue.	2018
<b>Block 7.</b> Accomplish the redevelopment of Block 7, possibly including additional parking in the Galloway Street ramp.	2018 <u>2022-2025</u>
<b>Graham Avenue.</b> Achieve redevelopment and remodeling along this street, particularly key riverfront parcels.	2016 - 2030
<b>Bus Transfer Center.</b> Study, relocate and improve the bus center.	2020-2022
<b>Eau Claire Street Promenade.</b> Improve the streetscape and rebuild this as a “convertible street” for use during festivals.	2020
<b>Oxford Avenue Corridor.</b> Redevelop this area consistent with the recommendations of the <i>West Riverside District Plan</i> and <i>Cannery District Redevelopment Plan</i>	2016 - 2030
<b>Riverfront Greenways.</b> Fill gaps and extend the greenway system along both rivers; improve neighborhood connector streets.	2016 – 2030
<b>Streetscape Loop.</b> Improve landscaping and lighting in the street loop of Barstow, Madison, Bellinger, Fifth and Lake.	2016 – 2030
<b>Farwell Street.</b> Study the feasibility of reducing driving lanes and adding streetscape and pedestrian amenities.	2025
<b>City Hall Plaza.</b> Redevelop the underused property between City Hall and the Phillips Library as either office or public park.	2022-2025
<b>Bridges.</b> Build beauty and interest into replacement river bridges.	Ongoing
<b>Confluence Bridge.</b> Study the feasibility of building a walking and bicycling bridge at the mouth of the Eau Claire River.	2019
<b>Master Planning.</b> Prepare a plan for the revitalization of the areas east of North Barstow Street and north of Madison Street.	2016—2020 <u>2021 – 2025</u>
<b>Parking.</b> Implement recommendations of the 2016 and 2020 parking studies.	2016 <u>Ongoing</u>

**Table 15-12**  
**Community Facilities Plan Actions**

<b>Fire Stations.</b> Prepare a study in 2016 of <u>Implement a fire station policy for improvements</u> to station locations, facilities and staffing and the advisability of any changes.	2016 <u>Ongoing</u>
<b>Schools.</b> Continue to cooperate with the School District for mutual benefit by locating schools and parks adjacent to one another.	Ongoing
<b>UW Campus Plan.</b> Consider adopting into this <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> by reference the 2011 <u>Work with UWEC on implementing their Master Plan</u> as guidance for the properties owned by the University. <u>Assist on redevelopment plans for Sonnentag Center. Work with the City Transit Commission on establishing a University Transit Hub.</u>	2016 <u>2022-2025</u>
<b>Convention Center.</b> Continue to investigate the feasibility of locating a convention center in the city.	Ongoing
<b>Airport.</b> Consider creating a new zoning district specific to the airport so that the airport's rights and responsibilities can be clearly established as they pertain to on-airport land use and development.	2016
<b>Private Landfill.</b> Continue to provide City oversight on the expansion committee of 7-Mile Creek Landfill so community waste needs are met. <u>Support City or County programs to reduce the landfill demand through material conservation, reuse, composting and recycling programs.</u>	<u>Ongoing</u>

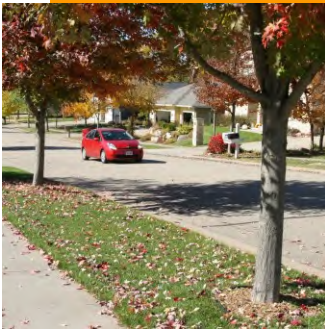
**Table 15-13**  
**Intergovernmental Cooperation Plan Actions**

<b>Intergovernmental Agreements.</b> Continue to follow the provisions of the agreements signed in 2011, <u>and renewed in 2021</u> , with each of the five adjacent Towns.	Ongoing
<b>ETJ Plat Review.</b> Continue to review all proposed plats and certified survey land divisions in the City's Extra-territorial subdivision review area to ensure compatibility with the City Subdivision Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan.	Ongoing
<b>Future Boundary with Altoona.</b> Negotiate a line to designate the areas that may receive annexation petitions to the City of Eau Claire and the City of Altoona in the Town of Washington.	2016
<b>Shared Services Initiative.</b> Continue to participate with Eau Claire County in the Joint Commission on Shared Services Initiatives.	Ongoing
<b>City-County Health Department.</b> Continue to work with the Eau Claire County Health Department on matters of public health and housing inspections, particularly in an accelerated neighborhood revitalization campaign.	Ongoing
<b>Highway T.</b> Coordinate with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation on <u>transferring to the DOT the jurisdiction of County Highway T, widening the road and building a bridge over the Union-Pacific Railroad tracks.</u>	2016 to 2030
<b>Passenger Rail.</b> Coordinate with the Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Transportation on bringing passenger rail to Eau Claire from the Twin Cities and siting the station.	2016 to 2025
<b>Lowes Creek.</b> Seek assistance from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on protecting water quality in the Lowes Creek watershed.	Ongoing

Adopted

# **Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015**

## **Introduction and Summary**



City of Eau Claire Wisconsin

## Introduction and Summary

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# Introduction and Summary

## Scope and Purpose

### Updated Guide to City Development

This plan replaces the 2005 version as a guide for decisions about the growth of Eau Claire through 2030. The plan addresses all locations that are expected to be part of Eau Claire in 2030 plus the public facilities and services that support private investment.

The plan shows a sound and responsible pattern of growth and is meant to coordinate public and private development decisions.

The *Comprehensive Plan* is the basis for the City's subdivision regulations, official maps and amendments to the zoning ordinance and zoning map. The plan is a guide for the Council, Plan Commission and other advisors when they review development proposals and budget for improvements. The plan also guides public spending for roads, utilities, parks, housing and business growth.

### Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law

The *Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015* complies with the requirements of Chapter 66 of the Wisconsin law. That law requires that all City actions that affect official mapping, subdivision regulations and zoning ordinances must be guided by a comprehensive plan adopted by the City Council. The law, however, leaves decisions about the timing and location of development to local communities.

## A Legacy of City Planning

The 2015 *Comprehensive Plan* is the most recent in a series for Eau Claire and builds on prior plans. The first comprehensive plan was completed in 1953 and focused on land use. That was followed in 1968 by a more detailed plan written under the federal requirements. In 1982, Eau Claire replaced its single comprehensive plan with a series of plans for land use, parks, roads, business and Downtown. In 1993, the City adopted a plan that included additional subjects. The 2005 plan built on the 1993 plan and included major new ideas about how to manage growth on the edge of the city.

In addition, the City has prepared plans for specific locations or topics over the past fifteen years, including:

- *Third Ward Neighborhood Plan*, 2001; Updated in 2019
- *Downtown Action Plan*, 2001
- *North River Fronts Neighborhood Plan*, 1981, updated 1987 and 2003, Updated 2018
- *East Side Hill Neighborhood Plan*, 2006
- *Clairemont Avenue Educational and Medical District Plan*, 2009
- *Water Street Commercial District Plan*, 1982, updated 2009
- *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*, 2010
- *West Riverside District Plan*, 2010
- *Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan*, DECI, 2012

- *Waterways Plan*, 1988, updated 2012
- *Parks and Open Space Five-Year Plan*, 2013
- *Sewer Service Area Plans*, 2013
- *Historic Randall Park Neighborhood Plan*, 1995, updated 2014
- *Downtown Parking Study*, 2015
- *Municipal Water System Plan*, 2015.

That legacy of planning has contributed to the quality of this comprehensive plan.

## **Planning Process**

This plan was prepared by City staff with the help of Weber Community Planning.

A committee of 40 citizens appointed by the Plan Commission helped discover issues, verify the analysis, generate ideas and refine the recommendations. That group met monthly from September 2014 through June 2015. All of their meetings were advertised and open to the public. In addition, city-wide review and comment meetings were held in January and June.

## **Document Organization**

The central elements of the *Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan* are the goals, objectives, and policies in each of the plan chapters.

The plan consists of two volumes:

- The Assessment of Conditions and Issues
- Plans and Policies.

The plan chapters each include goals, objectives, policies, maps and implementation actions and provide policy direction on:

- |                                |                                     |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2: Land use                    | 9: Neighborhoods and districts      |
| 3: Transportation              | 10: Housing                         |
| 4: Public utilities            | 11: Historic and cultural resources |
| 5: Parks, trails and greenways | 12: Downtown                        |
| 6: Natural resources           | 13: Community facilities            |
| 7: Economic development        | 14: Governmental cooperation        |
| 8: Urban design                | 15: Plan implementation.            |

## What's New in the 2015 Plan?

The 2015 plan continues many of the policies of the 2005 edition. However, this plan has not needed to emphasize perimeter growth and, instead, proposes a major new effort to improve the central neighborhoods. Other major additions and changes are described below.

### Summary of Accomplishments and Changes since the 2005 Plan

The first chapter of the Assessment of Conditions and Issues describes the major changes that occurred in Eau Claire since the 2005 plan. The biggest were:

- The agreements with the adjacent Towns regarding residential lot size in the Sewer Service Area;
- The Great Recession;
- Rebuilding Hastings Way from a State highway to a landscaped City road with four lanes instead of six;
- New buildings in all four quadrants of Downtown, including housing, offices, retail and medical buildings helped by parks, trails and street edge improvements;
- Updating the *Waterways Plan*.

### Updated List of Major Planning Issues

The list of major planning issues, or questions, was updated to reflect the changing planning environment. Many prior issues have been resolved. The most significant issues facing this plan were:

- **Household Income and Employment:** What, if anything, should the City do to promote the growth of living-wage jobs, help raise incomes and reduce the rate of poverty, unemployment and under-employment and their debilitating personal effects among Eau Claire residents, particularly households with children?  
*Response: Refer to the plans for Economic Development, Housing, Neighborhoods, Transportation and Land Use, along with the Demographic Analysis (page 2-13).*
- **Neighborhood Improvement:** What level of municipal effort should be devoted to helping improve the older neighborhoods? Should the City devote an extra measure of effort to the older neighborhoods compared to the newer areas?  
*Response: Refer to the Neighborhoods Plan, Chapter 9.*
- **Downtown Redevelopment:** What should be the next steps in the rebirth of the North Barstow District and the South Barstow District?  
*Response: Refer to the Downtown Plan, Chapter 12.*

### Major Themes of this Plan

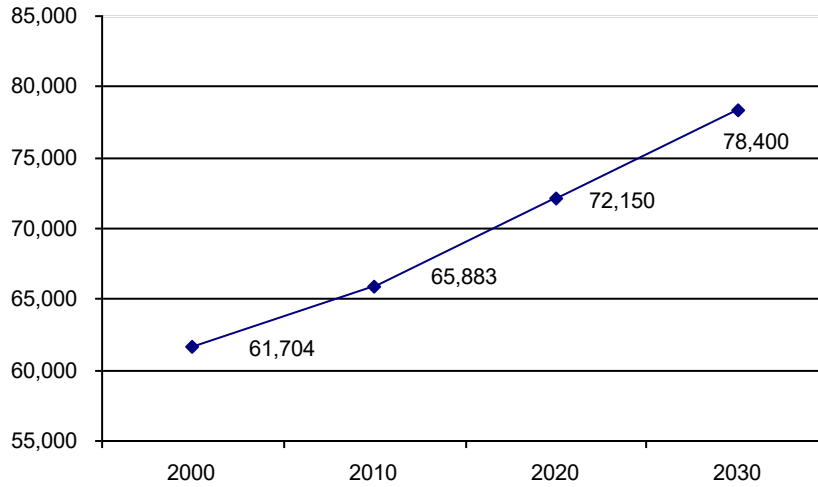
1. Be an attractive city where people want to live and work
2. Thrive as a regional center with good jobs in education, health care and manufacturing
3. Achieve compact growth; include nodes of higher intensity; build move-up housing; maintain a clear rural edge
4. Bring about redevelopment and infill growth, particularly in the older neighborhoods
5. Improve household economic well-being
6. Practice environmental stewardship.



**Growth Trends and Projections**

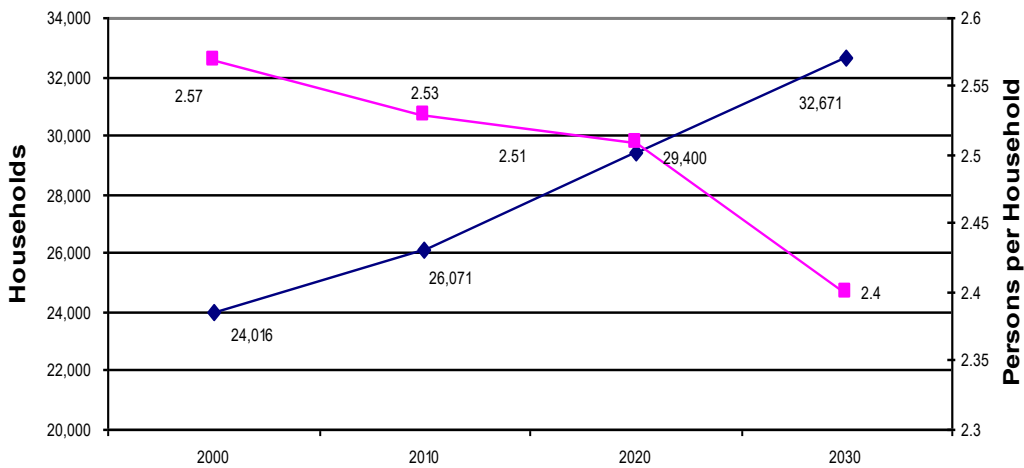
The 2015 *Comprehensive Plan* predicts that growth through 2030 will continue at about the same rate of increase as the past thirty to forty years.

**Figure 1-1: Forecast of Population to 2030**



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

**Figure 1-2: Forecast of Households and Persons per Household, 2000 to 2030**



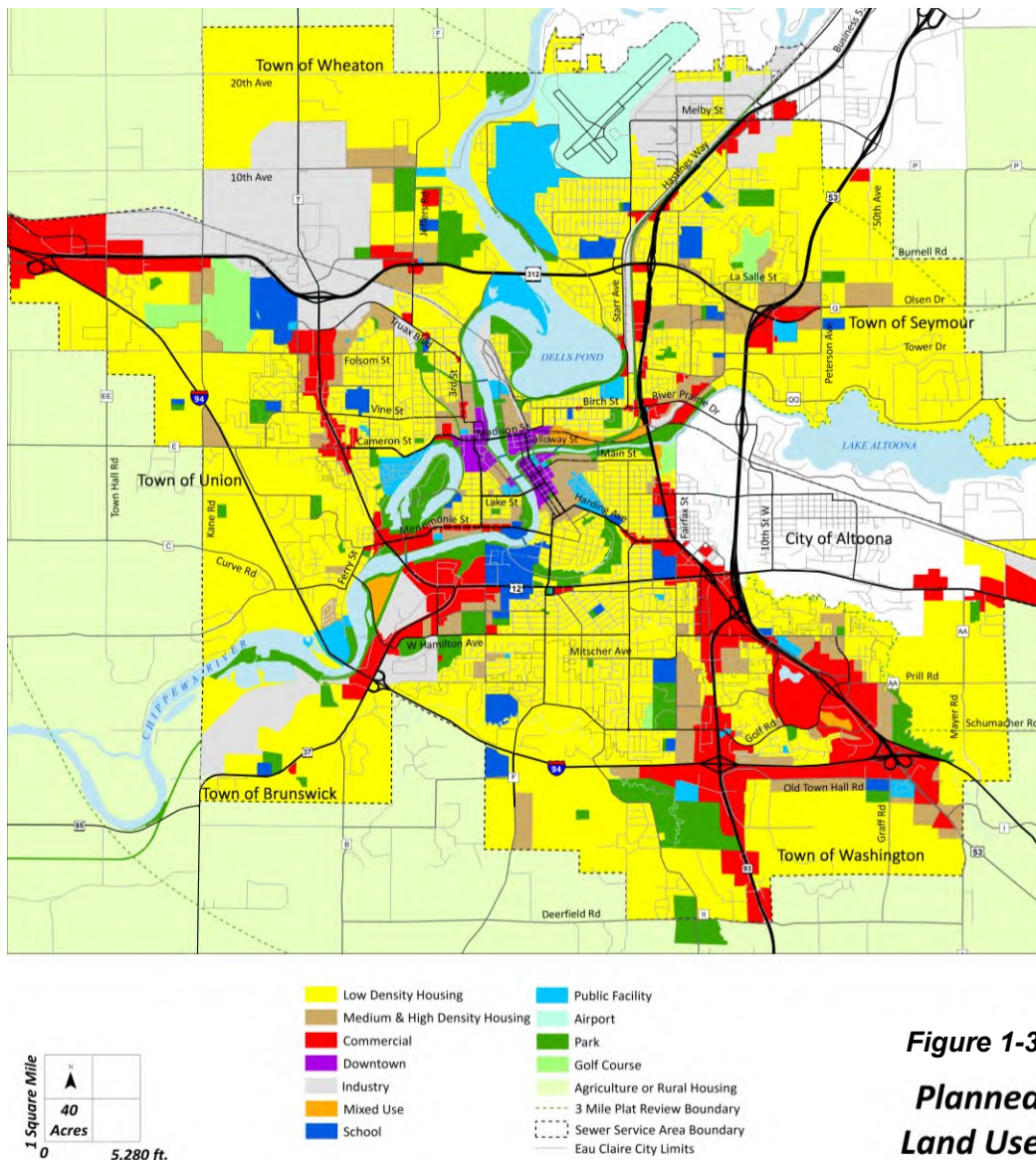
These forecasts and other assumptions indicate that Eau Claire may need approximately 1,800 acres of land between years 2015 and 2030 to accommodate residential growth, including land either inside or outside the current City boundary.

**Land Use Plan**

Minor changes were made to the land use plan map, but the land use and growth management policies are largely unchanged. The fringe growth management policies accurately reflect the Intergovernmental Agreements with the Towns. More emphasis is placed on redevelopment, infill growth and central neighborhood or downtown renewal. The recent neighborhood, district and river corridor plans are all included. The need for better commercial design guidelines or standards was noted.

Figure 1-3, Planned Land Use, illustrates a proposed general pattern of future land use for Eau Claire and its edges based on the goals, objectives and policies of the plan.

City officials and staff will use the Planned Land Use map along with the related objectives and policies to help make decisions about land development, rezonings and public works. Table 2-2 in the Land Use Plan chapter describes each category and presents ways to judge the location of various land uses.



**Figure 1-3  
Planned  
Land Use**

### **Transportation Plan**

Nearly all of the work listed in the 2005 plan has been done, and there are now few major traffic problems in Eau Claire. This plan has more emphasis on bicycling and walking than previously; the policy requiring sidewalks and trees along the streets has been retained and emphasized. The pattern of future major streets in the Sewer Service Area outside the City has been updated and reflects the regional plan.

The plan presents ways to improve movement over or under I-94 to growth areas, improve Galloway Street to complement Birch Street and reduce congestion near Golf Road and Highway 53.

### **Public Utilities Plan**

The Public Utilities Plan has benefited from the Intergovernmental Agreements.

Although the sewage treatment plant was recently upgraded, the main sewage collection pipes still need work.

Major repairs to the water system are guided by the 2015 system plan.

The approach to surface water has changed from draining it with pipes to moving it naturally, filtering it in ponds and letting some or all of it seep into the ground.

### **Parks, Trails and Greenways Plan**

This plan is a minor mid-course correction because it continues and affirms a history of parks planning and improvements.

Six new Neighborhood Parks are proposed in perimeter locations along with two new park-school sites. Also proposed is a future Chippewa River Waterfront Park near 80<sup>th</sup> Street in the current Town of Wheaton.

One new Neighborhood Playground is proposed between Folsom and Bolles Streets, just south of Roosevelt School, where two new bicycle paths intersect.

Additional Greenways with trails are planned along both the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers. Another greenway trail is proposed along the Xcel power line and Highway 312.

### **Natural Resources Plan**

The Natural Resources Plan continues to emphasize water quality and supports the features of the plan and permit approved by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Plan addresses public education, illegal discharges, runoff from construction sites, clean stormwater and water quality checks.

The City will continue to use laws, site design and land purchases to protect floodplains, shorelands and wetlands. Lowes Creek deserves special protection because it is a clear, cold trout stream.

The City should make sure that trees will be planted along every minor street and major road.

Finally, the City should adopt a law that protects trees on steep slopes and along wooded bluff lines.

## Economic Development Plan

This plan is tied more closely than ever to local leadership because it includes the 2013 Policy Priorities of the Economic Policy Advisory Committee, a private and public group.

Most of the prior programs and practices have been carried forward but now there is more weight given to re-using sites in central locations, especially in and around Downtown.

A new location that offers sites for small industries, support businesses and building contractors is needed.

Policies are included in the topics of leadership, marketing, site readiness, redevelopment, quality of place, workforce, recruitment, retention and incentives.

## Urban Design

The Urban Design chapter continues most of the 2005 policies but includes the idea of writing design guidelines for commercial development and creating diversified “activity centers.” The chapter was shortened somewhat and given better photo examples.

Topics include site and building design, new neighborhoods, established neighborhoods, activity centers, waterfronts, road corridors and parks.

Standards are presented for appropriately-narrow residential streets with trees and sidewalks. These streets are the most important visual feature of the entire city.

Traditional neighborhood design is honored.

## Neighborhoods and Districts Plan

For the first time, a *Comprehensive Plan* chapter is devoted to the older neighborhoods even though several individual neighborhood plans have been prepared. Rather than try to meld all of those separate plans into one, this chapter presents a city-wide strategy for public and private actions to improve housing and public facilities in addition to social and economic well being.

Improving the housing and the business districts in the neighborhoods around downtown will require a multi-pronged, long-term effort by many groups and individuals working together.

Residential and business district revitalization are one part of a campaign of community development, the others being jobs and job-readiness, health, and education or training. The experience of other cities shows that a campaign of physical renewal will probably be most successful if all the components are included.

The central recommendation of the plan is to convene several meetings of residents, leaders, decision-makers and specialists to plan a strategy for central neighborhood rebirth.



In particular, the community should study whether a non-profit neighborhood development corporation should be formed and what its initial charge might be.

The City and County should also consider improving some of their facilities and services in these neighborhoods.

### **Housing Assistance, Diversity and Design Plan**

The Housing Plan presents the several assistance programs provided by the Housing Authority of Eau Claire, notes how the land use plan allows for a variety of housing to serve a changing population and describes the use of the City's design guidelines for multiple-family housing.

### **Downtown Plan**

The Downtown Plan is a guide for the major public and private investments that ought to be made over the next twenty years to promote the economic and civic betterment of Downtown. The recommendations of the plan focus on the continued evolution of Downtown into a center that is active both day and night, seven days a week. The plan builds on the strengths of the Downtown location and points out the opportunities for additional retail, office, civic and housing uses, as well as the physical and public policy work needed to attract and sustain better buildings and investments.

Ideas were included from the 2001 *Downtown Action Agenda* and the 2012 *Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan*.

The plan recommends that the City prepare a plan to guide the next stage of North Barstow renewal.

It defines the roles of the several organizations working Downtown and lists the available incentives.

Several sites that appear prime for change are called out in the North and South Barstow Districts and along the Oxford Street corridor.

Design principles are recommended, particularly the importance of having many doors and windows along the sidewalk. The plan emphasizes the need to take advantage of riverfront views and public access.

Eau Claire Street should be rebuilt as a “convertible street” from Farwell Street to Graham Avenue. That would allow it to be temporarily closed to auto traffic and used for events, performances, celebrations and strolling. Sidewalks should be improved with special patterns, flat curbs with trench drains should be used, tent tie-down rings should be embedded, and the street pavement should be decorative. A new park between City Hall and the Phillips Library should anchor the eastern end.

The Barstow, Madison, Farwell, Lake and Fifth loop system should also be enhanced.



A rendering of Eau Claire Street rebuilt with sidewalks, low curbs and other improvements.



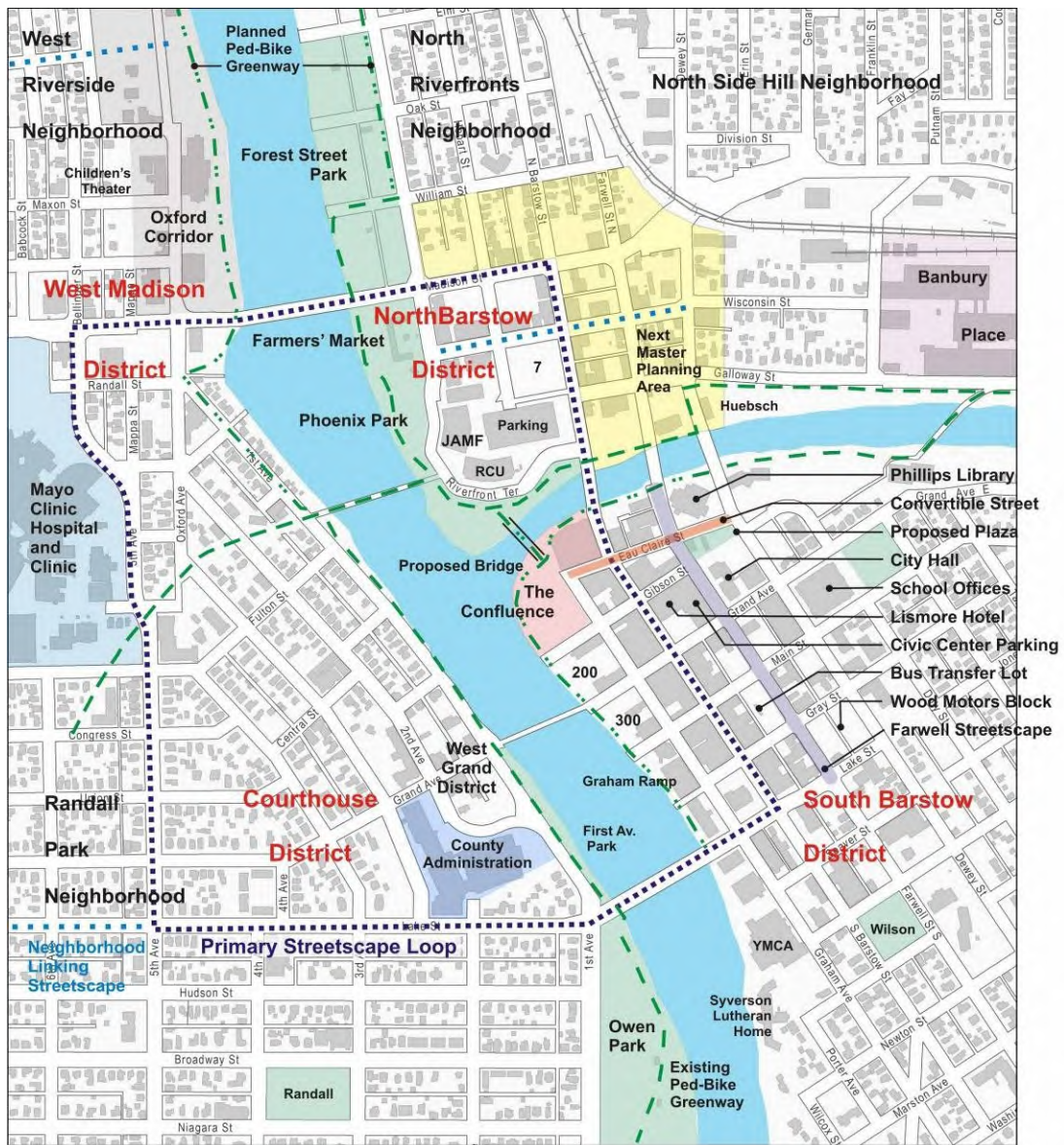
The City should study the idea of a pedestrian bridge over the mouth of the Eau Claire River linking Phoenix Park to the plaza and trail at The Confluence.

The riverfront greenway and trail system should be completed in these Downtown locations:

- Dewey Street to Lake Street and eventually south to Water Street via Thorp Drive; an interim route could include the sidewalks south of Lake Street;
- From the Chippewa River State Trail bridge north along the western bluff of the Chippewa River to the High Bridge.

The City should also study the feasibility of a new downtown bus transfer site, possibly on the former Wood Motors block. The present transfer site could then be redeveloped.

This graphic illustrates the locations of many of the Downtown Plan elements.



### **Historic and Cultural Resources Plan**

A recommendation from the Historic and Cultural Resources Plan is that the Council should restore the integrity of the two locally-named districts as well as the individually-named properties that were removed from local status in 1992. The Council should consider the 2011 proposal by the Historic Landmarks Commission to restore the local status through a phase-in process.

### **Community Facilities Plan**

The Community Facilities Plan calls for allowing retired places of public worship to be re-used for housing or small businesses as long as the neighborhood look and feel are kept.

Give a favorable reception to the Menomonie Street event and recreation center proposed by the University and its partners. In conjunction, support the idea of master-planned redevelopment along that corridor between Clairemont Avenue and the Hobbs Ice Arena that may include businesses and housing, centered on the University facility.

Planners should think about creating a new zoning district for the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport to clarify the airport's rights and responsibilities regarding non-aviation land use.

### **Governmental Cooperation Plan**

This chapter acknowledges and reiterates the agreements negotiated with the adjacent Towns.

Agreements between the City and the Towns should be used for the orderly change of boundaries in the Extra-territorial Plat Approval Jurisdiction.

The plan affirms the long-standing policy that City sewer and water lines shall not be extended without land annexation into the City of Eau Claire or a cooperative boundary agreement to that effect.

The City should enter agreements to share services or facilities with other governments when there is a clear net benefit to the City. The result should not be contrary to this *Comprehensive Plan*, particularly as it applies to fringe growth.

The City should continue to participate with Eau Claire County through the Joint Commission on Shared Services Initiatives.

The City will continue to work with the Eau Claire City-County Health Department on public health and housing inspections, particularly in a stepped-up effort to improve neighborhoods.

A line should be negotiated to show where the City of Eau Claire rather than the City of Altoona may annex land from the Town of Washington east of US 15 and south of US 12.



A growth management area in the Town of Washington near Eau Claire and Altoona.

The City should coordinate with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation on:

- Transferring to the DOT the jurisdiction of County Highway T, widening the road and building a bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad tracks
- Bringing passenger rail to Eau Claire from the Twin Cities and siting the station
- Building an interchange on I-94 at Cameron Street
- Rebuilding Downtown river bridges
- Studying and improving problem locations such as Golf Road at US 53 or Clairemont Avenue (US 12) at Hendrickson Drive (State Highway 37).

### **Sustainability Plan**

In 2009, the City adopted a plan that specifically guides its investments, ordinances and actions to promote sustainable long-term use of certain resources that it may affect directly or indirectly. This document was adopted into the 2005 *Comprehensive Plan* and supplements the policies of other chapters of the Plan. Policies throughout the *Comprehensive Plan* promote sustainable use of finite resources. Minor amendments have been drafted for review and approval during this plan update. Subjects include:

- Natural features including soil, water and vegetation
- City growth management
- Transportation
- Solid or hazardous waste
- Energy use and production
- Food production, consumption and waste
- Government purchasing.

### **Community Health Plan**

In 2013, the City Council adopted the Community Health chapter and incorporated it into the 2005 *Comprehensive Plan*. The City has worked as a convener and organizer among numerous public, private and not-for-profit groups and aligned its comprehensive planning policies with principles of healthy living.

To illustrate the breadth of this effort, the organizations involved in this broad effort include the Eau Claire Healthy Communities Council and its Chronic Disease Prevention Action Team, the Eau Claire City-County Health Department, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Mayo Clinic Health System, Sacred Heart Hospital, Marshfield Clinic, United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley, the Eau Claire County Aging and Disability Resource Center, UW-Extension, the UW-EC Department of Nursing, the Feed My People Food Bank and others.

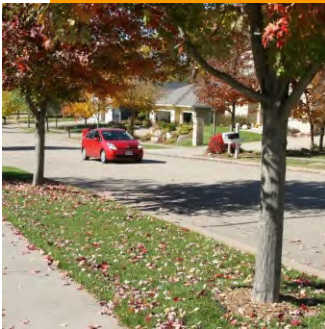
Examples of helpful City improvements or planning are its renewed attention to walking and bicycling, the Parks, Trails and Greenways System Plan, the railroad crossing “quiet zones,” a policy to attract a grocery store to the center of the city, the farmers’ market in Phoenix Park, community gardens in certain parks, and assistance to remediate sites containing hazardous waste.



Adopted

# **Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015**

## **Land Use and Growth Management Plan**



City of Eau Claire Wisconsin

# Land Use and Growth Management Plan

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## Land Use and Growth Management Plan

The Land Use and Growth Management Plan provides **guidance** for public and private decisions about the future use of land and the structures built upon the land. The chapter addresses all land within or presently outside of the City but that which may be annexed into the City in the foreseeable future or which may influence growth.

The **purpose** of the chapter is to encourage the orderly development of Eau Claire, create an attractive and efficient urban environment for the benefit of the larger urban area, and protect the City's capacity for the future expansion of its tax base.

The chapter includes both a **map** of the preferred land use pattern, and the set of related objectives and **policies** needed to achieve the desirable long-term future for the Eau Claire community. The key provisions of the other chapters of the *Comprehensive Plan* critical to the physical development of Eau Claire are integrated into the Land Use policies.

The Land Use and Growth Management plan translates the community vision for growth into a recommended **physical pattern** of neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas, roads, and public facilities.

Land use **policies** seek to influence the location, type, amount, and timing of growth through real estate development, public investment in infrastructure and facilities, and protection of natural areas.

In addition, the chapter policies are intended to ensure that the **environment** and other long-term public interests are given adequate consideration, and to prevent or mitigate the negative effects of incremental, ad hoc, and laissez-faire market decisions.

This chapter will be used by the City in making **decisions** about annexations, private development proposals, and the location, size, and timing of public improvements. The chapter will also be the basis for preparing more specific sub-area or neighborhood plans for smaller subsections of the community, such as residential neighborhoods, business districts or key perimeter future growth areas.

The objectives and policies of this plan will be **implemented** through the City's zoning and subdivision ordinances and through intergovernmental agreements with adjacent government jurisdictions. However, the Land Use Plan should not be construed as a final blueprint for specific site development nor a prospective zoning map. Identifying preferred land uses does not imply that rezoning a specific area is immediately appropriate. While the zoning and subdivision ordinances must be consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan*, the rezoning process is separate from the planning process and must consider the timing of zoning decisions, availability of similar land and the impact of the rezoning decision on other City objectives or policies.

## Major Land Use and Growth Management Issues

These are the major land use and growth management issues identified through the Assessment of Conditions and Issues. Issues are questions to be discussed, debated and resolved during the planning process in light of the other issues. Please refer to the Assessment for further explanation of each issue.

1. **Neighborhoods:** What land use changes, if any, should be pursued in order to promote continued investment and residency in the older neighborhoods of Eau Claire?
2. **Downtown:** What should be the next major step forward for Downtown? Should the City participate financially in redevelopment east of North Barstow Street or other areas?
3. **Riverfronts:** How should the remaining major potential changes be handled, such as the Oxford Avenue corridor, the Menomonie Street corridor and the vicinity of American Boulevard and Short Street? Should the City acquire additional floodplain housing on the western bank of the Chippewa River along First Avenue for a linear park and trail?
4. **Economic Development, Jobs and Income:** What land use, zoning and development policy changes should be made to help promote economic development in Eau Claire?
5. **New Neighborhood Design:** Should the City require that new residential areas be designed with many of the features of the older neighborhoods such as sidewalks, street trees, a mixture of housing types, narrow streets, short front setbacks and garages located to the rear?
6. **Commercial Growth:** How much land should be planned and zoned for retail business development? Should multiple-family housing be allowed in certain commercially-zoned locations?
7. **General Redevelopment:** How proactive should the City be in encouraging redevelopment?
8. **Oakwood Mall and Vicinity:** Should the City promote more intensive development around the shopping mall that may eventually include multi-story office buildings, multiple-family housing, mixed-use development and structured parking?
9. **Jurisdictional Boundary with the City of Altoona:** Where should the future municipal border be located between Eau Claire and Altoona east of US 53 and south of US 12.
10. **Annexation of Town Peninsulas:** Should the City act to encourage annexation of properties in the peninsulas of the various Towns?

## **Goal and Objectives**

### **Goal**

**Establish and maintain a land use pattern that achieves a desirable balance among quality of life, economic growth, protection of natural resources, and efficient delivery of public services.**

### **Objective 1 – Sustainable Growth**

Grow by investing in established areas, carefully planning new neighborhoods, providing attractive public amenities, and protecting environmental resources.

### **Objective 2 – Planned Land Use Map**

Regulate land use to ensure consistency with the Planned Land Use Map and the objectives and policies of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

### **Objective 3 – Perimeter and Regional Growth**

Achieve compact, contiguous and cost-effective perimeter growth for the long-term future.

### **Objective 4 – Residential Neighborhoods**

Reinforce or create neighborhoods with a diversity of housing, attractive public spaces, compatible land uses and a sense of identity.

### **Objective 5 – Commercial and Mixed Use Development**

Create “activity centers” that are successful, attractive and functional

### **Objective 6 – Riverfronts and Stream Corridors**

Guide waterfront land use to parks, open space, housing, offices, and similar land uses that are compatible with the rivers.

### **Objective 7 – Major Road Corridors**

Plan land use along the major road corridors in a manner supportive of the functional classification of the road.

### **Objective 8 – Environmental Resources**

Safeguard and improve environmental features as a means of promoting sustainable urban development, revitalization and quality of life.

### **Objective 9 – Redevelopment and Land Use Compatibility**

Restore underused, obsolescent or incompatible properties to viable commercial, residential or recreational opportunities.

**Objective 10 – Economic Development**

Provide an adequate and balanced inventory of planned and zoned locations for future growth needs for industrial, office, and retail.

**Objective 11 – Municipal Expansion**

Seek to maintain a well-planned and fiscally sound community by continuing to expand municipal boundaries to include areas identified for future urban development.

**Objective 12 – Public Infrastructure Investments**

Encourage state and local investments in public facilities and infrastructure that are consistent with the principles of Smart Growth and the objectives of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

**Objective 13 – Regional Planning**

Build land use planning relationships in the metropolitan area that support the principles of Smart Growth and that help accomplish the *Comprehensive Plan*.

## Land Use Policies

### Objective 1 – Sustainable Growth

**Grow by investing in established neighborhoods, carefully planning new districts, providing attractive public amenities and protecting environmental resources.**

A central idea in this *Comprehensive Plan* is that existing neighborhoods and established business areas should be maintained or renewed as new investments occur in perimeter locations. Growth on the edge of the City should be compact and adjacent to prior development, and some new housing or business should occur as redevelopment. During the coming years, the community will face many opportunities to reshape or intensify certain locations that have emerged as “activity centers.” Whether employment nodes or shopping centers, they are locations that need a new purpose.

### Policies

#### 1. Compact and Contiguous Growth

Guide growth in Eau Claire to locations either contiguous to or within presently urbanized areas. Land use should be either urban and compact or rural and very low density to preserve options for future development. This would serve to:

- Promote efficient use of serviced land
- Promote continued investment in older areas
- Limit public and private expenses
- Protect sensitive environmental resources
- Preserve rural character and prime farmland
- Conserve nearby fringe areas for future urbanization when public sewer and water service become available
- Reduce driving and enable increased use of transit and bicycling
- Preserve the distinction between urban and rural areas
- Create a stronger sense of neighborhood and community.

#### 2. New Neighborhoods

Include in new neighborhoods a variety of types of housing (both detached and attached), local streets sized to encourage appropriately slow traffic speeds, street trees and sidewalks, parks and greenways within walking distance, and small commercial areas that accommodate not just cars but also bicyclists, pedestrians and possible transit service. (Refer to the Urban Design Plan chapter for further policy direction.)

#### 3. Infill and Reinvestment

Provide various incentives for the re-use or more intensive use of locations that were not previously developed, locations that have been built upon but cleared, and locations that are underused or highly deteriorated. Some part of the future growth in jobs and housing will be captured in the older parts of the City to keep those areas vital and to use prior public investments.

Incentives may include planning and zoning, buying, preparing and reselling property, and improving roads, utilities, and parks. Prime locations for infill and redevelopment activity

include the riverfronts, the Downtown and its edges, portions of the older residential neighborhoods, and portions of the major road corridors such as Hastings Way, Clairemont Avenue, or Hendrickson Drive.

#### **4. Older Neighborhoods**

Keep existing neighborhoods, including residential and commercial areas, attractive and economically vital by providing quality streets, parks, street trees, fire, police and other public services, by enforcing local ordinances related to maintenance and upkeep, by assisting redevelopment, and by ensuring that redevelopment is compatible with the existing neighborhood.

#### **5. Activity Centers**

Work to intensify the pattern of land use in those parts of the City identified as “Activity Centers.” In those areas, apply zoning, infrastructure improvements and development incentives to create higher density development, particularly employment, shopping and multiple-family housing that are served by transit, major roads, sidewalks and bicycle routes.

Activity Centers are high-priority locations where the City will seek to encourage infill growth, use infrastructure efficiently, reduce auto trips, and create diverse, interesting urbanism.

Primary Activity Centers include:

- County Courthouse District
- South Barstow District
- North Barstow District
- Mayo Clinic Health System - Luther Campus Medical Center District
- The Clairemont Avenue Educational and Medical District consisting of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire upper campus, the Chippewa Valley Technical College, Sacred Heart Hospital, Marshfield Clinic, nearby medical offices and commercial buildings
- Oakwood Mall vicinity
- South Point Shopping Center area
- Gateway Business Park
- Water Street
- The Menomonie Street corridor
- North Clairemont Commercial Area
- Clairemont/Hastings Way Area

#### **6. Guiding Growth with Public Infrastructure**

Use public investments to support new growth and encourage continuous reinvestment in established areas.

In the growth neighborhoods, existing roads such as Cameron Street, Jeffers Road and Prill Road will be improved for access and identity.

Cooperative agreements with the Towns will be used as needed to coordinate public and private spending on arterial roads and utilities that are needed to leverage private investments in land development and local or collector roads and utilities.



Across the City, the greenways, parks and street improvements will be used to help keep neighborhoods attractive and sustain property values. (Refer also to the Parks System and the Utilities Chapters for further policy direction.)

## **7. Maintaining Growth Forecasts**

Work with Chippewa and Eau Claire Counties and the Eau Claire Area School District to update the City's forecast of population, households, and jobs for the sake of planning roads, utilities, parks and schools. The City should also periodically update its projections for housing and land use needs based on actual population growth and building construction.

## **8. Urban Sewer Service Areas**

Continue to monitor the amount of developable land available in the Urban Sewer Service Areas on the perimeter of the City. Land availability will be compared with the demand for urban land as based on the forecast of households and jobs. The Department of Natural Resources will be petitioned for adjustments to the boundary lines periodically as warranted. The City will coordinate its forecasts and requests with those of the Cities of Altoona and Chippewa Falls for metropolitan accuracy.

## **9. Leadership on Regional Land Use**

Participate in and initiate discussions with community groups and regional jurisdictions about sensible land use planning consistent with Smart Growth principles. The City will encourage local jurisdictions in the Eau Claire-Chippewa Falls metropolitan area to develop a consistent regional perspective on the future. The City will also convene meetings of community and government leaders to discuss growth issues and to jointly adopt principles that guide growth in the metropolitan area. (See also Objective 2, Growth Cooperation, in the Intergovernmental Coordination Chapter).

## **10. Jurisdictional Changes**

Use boundary agreements and annexation to help create a compact, attractive, and sustainable urban area distinct from the rural areas of adjacent Towns. Consider future expansion areas within the surrounding area.

Continue to approve annexation petitions for property within the Urban Sewer Service Area in accordance with State law.

Work to achieve intergovernmental boundary agreements as allowed by State law that will accomplish transferring property to City jurisdiction from the current Town peninsulas within the ring of I-94, Wisconsin 312, US 53, and a line to be determined with the City of Altoona.

The long-term boundary line between the Cities of Eau Claire and Altoona will be negotiated and could include these or other alignments:

- The current shared demarcation of the Cities' Extra-Territorial Plat Approval Jurisdiction, shown on Figure 2-1, Planned Land Use, as the 3-Mile Plat Review Boundary
- Otter Creek
- Prill Road

See also Perimeter and Regional Growth, and Municipal Expansion, in this chapter and Boundary Change in the Intergovernmental Cooperation Plan chapter.

**Objective 2 – Planned Land Use Map**

**Regulate land use to ensure consistency with the Planned Land Use Map and the objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.**

A community’s future land use map is intended to identify sufficient areas for future land development to accommodate at least twenty years of forecast growth.

Figure 2-1, Planned Land Use, provides sufficient land both within the current City limits and within the Urban Sewer Service Area to meet the growth needs of the community through 2030.

Development decisions regarding specific tracts and parcels will be initiated through the workings of the development market and driven primarily by private investors. As shown in Table 2-1, Forecast of Residential Land Needs, the City projects a need for approximately **318 acres** within the current City limits and **1,485 acres** outside the year 2014 City limits during the 2014 to 2030 period.

**Additional** land will also be needed for **commercial and industrial** development, most of which may occur within the 2014 City limits.

**Table 2-1  
Forecast of Residential Land Needs, 2014 to 2030, City of Eau Claire**

<b>City of Eau Claire</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>End of 2013</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>Change 2013 to 2030</b>	
Housing Units	27,507	28,301	33,605	5,304	
Detached Housing Units	15,702	16,176	19,183	3,007	
Attached Housing Units	11,805	12,125	14,422	2,297	
Total City Housing Units Growth				5,304	
Within 2012 City Border				1,591	30%
In Towns' Sewer Service Areas				3,713	
<b>Forecast Acreage Needed for Housing Growth, 2014-2030</b>					
Forecast Number of Additional Housing Units <u>inside</u> 2014 City Limits				1,591	
Assumed Units per Gross Acre				5.0	
Estimated Housing Acreage				<b>318</b>	
Forecast Number of Housing Units <u>outside</u> 2014 City Limits				3,713	
Assumed Units per Gross Acre				2.50	
Estimated Housing Acreage				<b>1,485</b>	
<b>Total Residential Acreage Needed</b>				<b>1,803</b>	

Updated December 13, 2014  
2013 housing units count from City building permit records

An analysis in 2014 by the City indicated that there were 833 residentially-zoned parcels in the City that are privately owned, undeveloped and between 5,000 square feet and 1.5 acres in size. It is assumed that many of these lots will not be developed because of natural limitations, insufficient

market demand and property owners' decisions. In addition, there are 179 private parcels zoned residentially that have an area greater than 1.5 acres. It is assumed that some of this land will be further divided into additional residential lots. Thus, there may not be sufficient land to accommodate the 1,591 additional housing units forecast to be located within the City as indicated by Table 2-11 above without successful annexation petitions from owners in the adjacent Towns.

## Policies

### 1. Planned Land Use Map and Categories

Use the Planned Future Land Use Map shown by Figure 2-1 and the land use categories further defined in Table 2-2 as the general pattern of future continued physical development for the City of Eau Claire. Table 2-2 provides a more detailed description of each category, along with criteria to evaluate the appropriateness of specific uses relative to each land use category.

The land use patterns shown on Figure 1-1 are generalized and do not represent precise demarcations on the ground or specific sites. For areas within existing developed neighborhoods, the Planned Future Land Use Map shows areas based on streets, blocks or existing use. For areas that are vacant land, the Planned Future Land Use Map shows transitions from one land use category to another and is not based on defined boundaries. Likewise, locations shown for future parks, or other public facilities are approximations or search areas.

Consequently, the City will use the Figure 2-1, Planned Future Land Use, in conjunction with related objectives and policies in the *Comprehensive Plan* in reviewing rezoning and development proposals, plats, site plans, annexation petitions and other requests regarding future land use.

However, major departures from the Planned Future Land Use map will be considered only in the context of an amendment to the *Comprehensive Plan*. The City will generally allow rezonings to more intensive land uses consistent with the Planned Future Land Use map provided that adequate safeguards are made to ensure that the more intense development will not adversely affect the use and enjoyment of nearby land uses as a result of excessive traffic, noise or light, inappropriate site planning or excessive or unwarranted impact on the natural environment.

In areas designated as Commercial and Industrial on the Planned Future Land Use Map, the city will consider residential zoning based on the following:

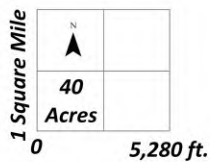
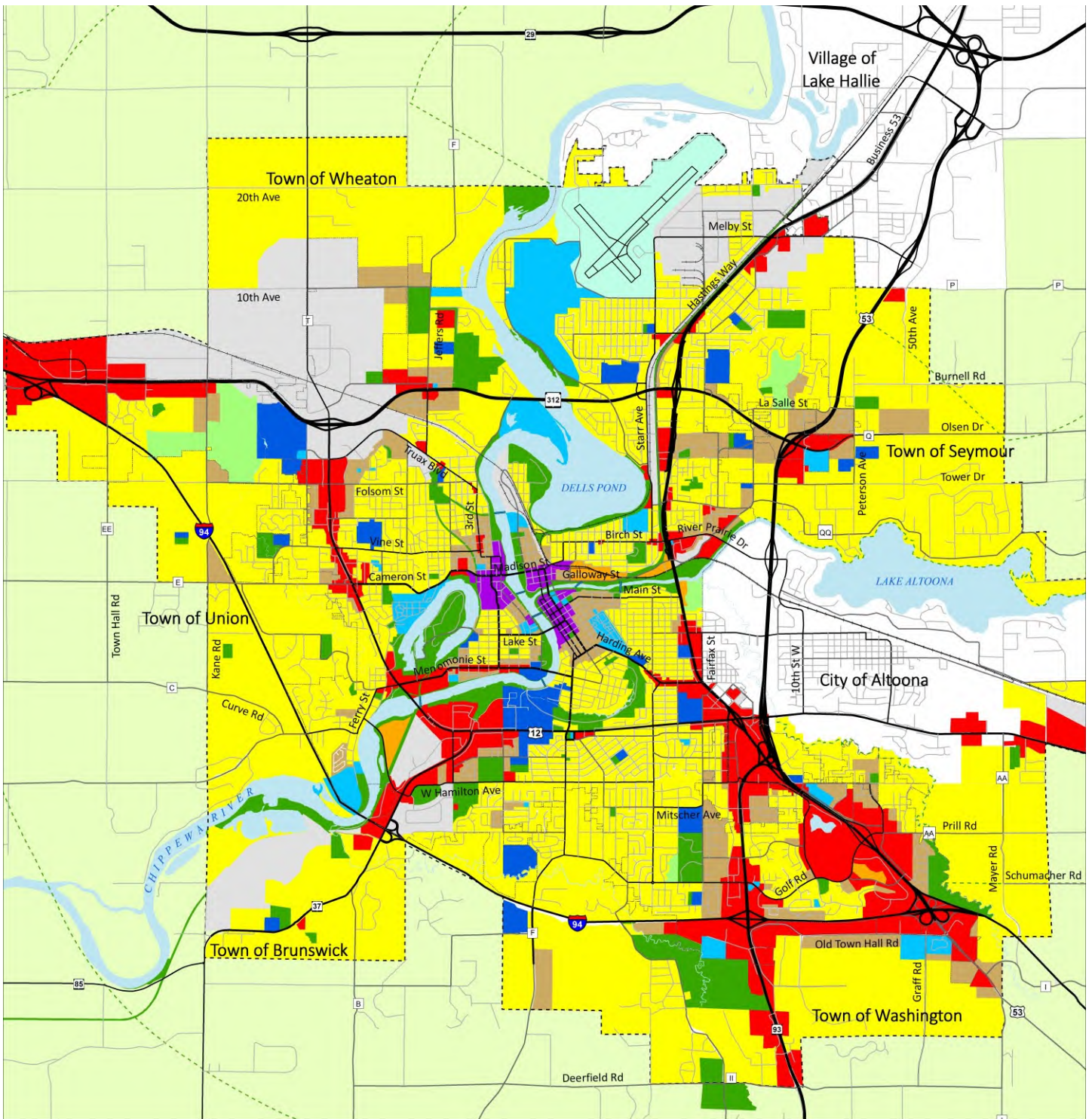
- An attractive urban residential environment is created.
- A comprehensive and holistic approach is key to planning the vicinity that may result over time in additional retail, office or residential investments.
- The commercial and residential components of the area are designed to appear and function as an integrated whole through building location, size, orientation and materials, access, parking, sidewalks, landscaping, and lighting.
- Negative effects on nearby existing housing are mitigated.
- Nearby roads and intersections can accommodate the increased traffic while maintaining an acceptable level of service.
- Surface water is managed according to the requirements of the City.

*Policy 2-1 is continued on page 2-12.*

**Table 2-2  
Planned Land Use Map Categories and Proposed Zoning Map Categories**

<b>Plan Map Categories</b>	<b>Land Uses</b>	<b>Potential Zoning Districts</b>
Low Density Housing	The Low Density Housing category includes single-family housing, two-family housing plus low-density attached housing. Allowable densities range from approximately 2.5 to 6 housing units per gross acre, with lot sizes in the range of 6,000 square feet and up. Includes places of worship.	R-1, One-Family District R-2, One- and Two-Family District
Medium and 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. Includes places of worship.	RM, Mixed Residential District R-3, Low-Rise Multiple-Family District R-4, High-Rise Multiple-Family District
Traditional Neighborhood Development	Locations for traditional neighborhood development are not shown on the Land Use Plan map but are allowed in all locations planned for housing. A zoning district for traditional neighborhoods exists in the zoning ordinance.	Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)
Mixed Use Development Medium Intensity Retail, Office or Housing	This mixed-use category indicates that a variety of commercial and/or mid- or high-density housing may be appropriate on this site.  Since these land uses may have differing impacts on adjacent low-density housing and on traffic generation, the site planning guidelines of this plan and the regulations of the zoning ordinance must be observed during the site planning process.  Consistent with the plan policy of generally increasing the compactness of urban development, housing may be combined in the same building or closely integrated on the same site with retail or office.	Mixed-Use Overlay District
Commercial	Businesses providing retail trade or services for individuals or businesses. Includes hospitals.  May include attached housing under a Conditional Use Permit in the C-1A, C-1 or C-2 Districts. May include mid- or high-density housing in certain "activity centers" under the Mixed Use District with C-3 zoning.	C-1A C-1 C-2 C-3 MX-Mixed Use
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 District





- Low Density Housing
- Public Facility
- Medium & High Density Housing
- Airport
- Commercial
- Park
- Downtown
- Golf Course
- Industry
- Agriculture or Rural Housing
- Mixed Use
- 3 Mile Plat Review Boundary
- Sewer Service Area Boundary
- Eau Claire City Limits
- School

**Figure 2-1**  
**Planned**  
**Land Use**

**Table 2-2 continued**

<b>Plan Map Categories</b>	<b>Land Uses</b>	<b>Potential Zoning Districts</b>
Light Industry, General Industry, Offices, Transportation, Utilities, Supportive Commercial Uses	Under the I-1 zoning, includes office buildings, office-showroom, light industrial buildings and manufacturing-related warehousing in landscaped “campus” settings with hidden truck docks and limited outdoor storage are allowed in this category.  Under the I-2 zoning, includes industry that involves railroad service, heavy truck traffic, extensive outdoor storage, noise or odors, and the handling of raw materials. Allow supportive businesses by rezoning to the C-3 District.	I-1, Light Industrial I-2, Heavy Industrial
Schools	Includes public and private schools and colleges. Locations of future public schools shown on Figure 2-1, Planned Land Use, are conceptual. Future schools must be in locations accessible by municipal sewer and water lines.	P, Public Properties District
Public Facility	This category includes public buildings and public facilities other than schools and cemeteries.	P, Public Properties District
Park	Public parks. Locations of future parks shown on Figure 1-1, Planned Land Use, are only conceptual.	P, Public Properties District
Airport	May include private cargo operations and non-aeronautical uses by Conditional Use Permit.	Create a new zoning district for the airport
Golf Course	Private golf courses.	R-1 District

**Policy 2-1, Planned Land Use Map and Categories, Continued**

In areas designated as **Housing** on the Planned Land Use Map, consider rezonings to C-1A or C-1 for existing non-residential buildings such as a church that is no longer intended to be used as such. The City may also consider rezonings to C-1A or C-1 in residential areas for lots at collector or arterial street intersections. The following criteria will be reviewed with these situations:

- Negative effects on nearby housing are mitigated.
- Nearby roads and intersections can accommodate the increased traffic and maintain an acceptable level of service.
- The design and function of the commercial use is integrated with the area through site design, building materials, access, parking, sidewalks, landscaping and lighting.

Criteria for rezoning portions of **Industrial** areas to C-3 could be:

- The site is on the perimeter of the industrial area, at a major street intersection and sized for a single user
- Commercial enterprises would be those used frequently by employees in the industrial area such as banks, convenience stores, child day care, restaurants or fitness centers.

### **Objective 3 – Perimeter and Regional Growth**

#### **Achieve compact and cost-effective perimeter growth for the long-term future.**

A critical planning challenge for Eau Claire has been ensuring that the City’s urban extension is compact, cost-efficient and not blocked by non-sewered semi-rural development.

The 2005 *Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan* included policies that led to a growth management agreement with each of the five adjacent Towns. The provisions of those agreements were described on pages 4-8 through 4-13 of the Land Use and Growth Management Assessment chapter of this plan and also stated below. The agreements set minimum standards for non-sewered development and provided planning incentives for desirable growth patterns.

This statement from the Intergovernmental Agreement captured the reason for and purpose of extra-territorial growth management:

“The Parties recognize and acknowledge that the City has a legitimate role in ensuring that areas within the SSA<sup>1</sup> are carefully planned and developed. It is anticipated that at some point in the future, these lands will be annexed and attached to the City’s public utility systems.

It is reasonable that the City require that residential areas within the SSA be developed in general accordance with the City’s comprehensive plan, municipal ordinances, and design standards. The Parties recognize that haphazard or premature development in these areas could prevent efficient use of the land resource and inhibit efficient and cost-effective delivery of urban services.”

The Agreements required, in essence, that land divisions for residential purposes shall be permitted based on an overall base density standard of one single family lot per 10 acres in the Sewer Service Areas unless the plat is designed for efficient conversion to city-sized lots with municipal streets and utilities. Some exceptions are allowed. Similar standards were set for commercial or industrial development. Housing proposed outside the Sewer Service Area but within the City’s three-mile Extra-Territorial Plat Approval Jurisdiction is required to be on parcels either 2 or 5 acres in size or larger.

Soon after the Intergovernmental Agreements were signed, each of the five Towns amended its comprehensive land use plan to be consistent with the Agreements, Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties amended their comprehensive land use plans accordingly, and the two Counties amended their zoning regulations to support those plans. These steps were accomplished by the end of 2011.

In 2012, the City prepared plans for land use, roads and utilities for the Sewer Service Area. Those plans would apply only to properties that successfully petition the City for annexation. These plans have been incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> The Urban Sewer Service Area. Please refer to the definition on the next page.



**Policies:**

**1. Growth Management Areas**

Manage growth in and around Eau Claire using the following growth management areas:

- Existing Urban Area
- Urban Sewer Service Area
- Extra-Territorial Plat Approval Jurisdiction.
- Future park land and open space within the growth areas.

Follow a pattern for future land use that is consistent with the objectives of this plan and with the Intergovernmental Agreements.

Apply the terms of the Intergovernmental Agreements and the Sewer Service Area Plans that have been incorporated into this *Comprehensive Plan*.

The **Existing Urban Area** represents the actual area contained within the corporate boundaries of the City of Eau Claire.

The boundaries of the **Urban Sewer Service Area** are approved by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and designate the area beyond the Eau Claire corporate limits that the City anticipates eventually could be served by the City’s wastewater treatment facility.

The **Extraterritorial Review Area** is the area within three miles of the City’s corporate boundaries in which the City exercises subdivision review authority under State law to regulate the creation of new parcels through platting or certified survey map and ensure uses of land compatible with the *Comprehensive Plan*.

The **Rural Area** includes unincorporated areas beyond the Extra-Territorial Plat Approval Jurisdiction three- mile boundary and generally maintained for very low rural residential or agriculture uses.

The City has prepared long-range plans for land use, roads and municipal utilities in the Existing Urban Area and the Urban Sewer Service Area, and these have been incorporated into this *Comprehensive Plan*. The City has gained cooperation of the five Towns and the two Counties to accomplish mutually beneficial growth management objectives consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan* and the Intergovernmental Agreements.

**2. Existing Urban Area**

Seek to maximize infill development in the Existing Urban Area. The City will encourage infill development and redevelopment in existing urban locations because those sites are already fully serviced by public facilities, are generally within one mile of an existing neighborhood park, and are within the City’s developable area as designated in the *Comprehensive Plan*.

**3. Allowable Housing Density in the Sewer Service Area**

The City of Eau Claire will continue to monitor the Intergovernmental Agreements between the Towns and the City to ensure that land in the Towns that is within the Sewer Service Area will be regulated for use at a “rural” density so that it may later be platted



and developed to “urban” density in an economical and efficient manner. To maintain rural densities prior to annexation, the Intergovernmental Agreement requires that land divisions for residential purposes shall be permitted based on an overall base density standard of one single family lot per 10 acres in the Sewer Service Area of the Town. Exceptions to this policy are listed below.

### **Exceptions to the Base Residential Density**

Exceptions to the overall base density standard of one single family lot per 10 acres may be considered based on these criteria:

- (1) **Infill Lots:** The proposed lots are infill lots that meet the following criteria:
  - a. The proposed lots are in areas that have been previously divided into smaller lots.
  - b. The proposed lots cannot be reasonably served with city utilities due to natural barriers, i.e., creeks or hills, man-made barriers, major highways, or significant existing development.
  - c. It would be cost prohibitive to serve the proposed lots with City utilities.
  - d. Creating the proposed lots is a means of lessening development pressure on larger tracts of land outside the SSA.
  - e. The proposed lots must be created by a Certified Survey Map (4 lots or fewer).
  - f. The proposed lots must be reasonably consistent in size with the existing adjacent lots.
- (2) **Shared Private Utilities:** The proposed lots will be served by a sewer connected to a common wastewater treatment system approved under COMM 83, Wisconsin Administrative Code. All sewer mains, trunk, and lateral lines must meet City of Eau Claire standards for such facilities. If the proposed lots will be served by a community water supply system approved under NR 811, all water lines and mains must meet City of Eau Claire standards for such facilities. The lots must meet the access and lot design standards of the City of Eau Claire and the respective Town. The proposed lot layout for the overall parcel must provide for efficient re-subdividing for urban densities and cost-effective and orderly extension of public streets and utilities at the time that public utilities are available to the site. In addition, the property must be part of a cooperative boundary agreement approved pursuant to § 66.0307 Wis. Stats., requiring the current owner and any future owner of the divided lots to annex to the City of Eau Claire at the time that any adjoining contiguous parcel is annexed or petitions to annex and public sanitary sewer service and public water supply are available from the City of Eau Claire.
- (3) **Cooperative Boundary Agreement:** The proposed lots are in an area subject to a Cooperative Boundary Agreement between the Towns and the City of Eau Claire that expressly permits land divisions at overall densities greater than the 1 single-family lot per 10 acres.

### **Interim Land Platting and Development**

In order to allow efficient and economical future urban growth which is consistent with the Intergovernmental Agreement, the Town must consider the following criteria in its review of proposed residential land divisions for properties in the Sewer Service Area

that are still under its jurisdiction:

- (1) The proposed lot layout for the overall parcel shall provide for the future efficient resubdividing for higher urban densities.
- (2) Each lot shall meet health code requirements for on - site sewage treatment and private water wells.
- (3) The proposed lot layout for the overall parcel shall locate houses and other structures on building sites that have the least impact on environmentally sensitive areas and are less well suited for farming and agricultural uses.
- (4) The remainder of the overall parcel not developed with lots and roads shall require a conservation easement or other form of protection precluding further development until such time as urban services can be provided.

#### **4. Possible Additional Agreements with the Towns**

Additional intergovernmental agreements with one or more of the adjacent Towns may be negotiated to help extend or improve public roads or utilities in response to private land development and annexation applications. Such agreements are allowed by state law under these Wisconsin Statutes:

- Section 66.0301, Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Section 66.0305, Political Subdivision Revenue Sharing and
- Section 66.0307, Boundary Change Pursuant to an Approved Cooperative Plan.

#### **5. Environmental Protection**

On land annexed to the City, protect or restore sensitive or unique natural resources such as flood plains, steep slopes, major wooded areas, streams, wetlands, water quality, shorelines, and riverbanks through regulation and/or City investment. Guidance is provided by this *Comprehensive Plan* and the *Sewer Service Area Plans*; land use regulation is provided by the City of Eau Claire zoning and subdivision ordinances.

#### **6. Prime Farmland**

Minimize the loss of prime farmland from premature conversion to non-agricultural uses. The City of Eau Claire will seek to protect those areas identified by appropriate federal or state agencies as prime farmland by promoting compact urban development and discouraging large-lot sprawl outside its borders. Accomplish this by applying the provisions of the Intergovernmental Agreements and the Sewer Service Area Plans.

## **Objective 4 – Residential Neighborhoods**

### **Reinforce or create new neighborhoods with a diversity of housing, attractive public spaces, compatible land uses, and a sense of identity.**

Creating attractive new neighborhoods and maintaining the better qualities of the older neighborhoods are aims that support the objective of sustainable growth. In addition, properly accommodating some townhouses and apartments in each district or neighborhood can help support these housing options avoiding the deleterious effects of inappropriate design.

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Compact Growth**

Encourage new neighborhood development that is generally more compact and dense than recent past patterns. Design each new neighborhood to include both detached and attached forms of housing.

##### **2. Variety within Each New Neighborhood**

Encourage in each major neighborhood a range of housing types, densities, and building configurations, including single-family detached, townhouses, apartments, and more specialized types, such as senior housing or live-work units. (A major neighborhood is defined as approximately one square mile in size or as demarcated by major geographic features, such as a highway or river.) During the review of planned developments, give favorable consideration to applications that include two or more types of housing without overlooking other legitimate concerns.

It is expected that the development industry will continue to respond with proposals that include more than one type of housing in the larger projects, resulting in neighborhood variety.

Locate attached and multi-family housing in transitional spaces between commercial and single-family areas, and at high-amenity locations near streams, parks, parkways and greenways. When combining housing types, it is preferable for the transition between types to occur at the rear rather than the front (i.e., across a courtyard or parking area rather than across the street).

To assist in implementing this policy, the City should prepare preliminary neighborhood sub-area plans which identify a general street layout, pedestrian connections, desirable parks and open spaces, utility needs, land uses, and potential zoning categories.

### **3. Links to Previously Established Neighborhoods**

Link new neighborhoods visually and functionally to the established portions of Eau Claire via street connections, bicycle facilities, pedestrian connections and, where possible, the greenway and parkway systems.

### **4. Neighborhood Planning**

Continue to implement the recommendations of adopted neighborhood plans consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan*. The City will continue to prepare and update specific plans for residential neighborhoods and commercial districts where a need for additional guidance is identified.

The City's neighborhood planning process engages the residents and strives to protect neighborhoods from such factors as: excessive traffic, blighted properties or land use incompatibilities. The neighborhood plans outline strategies to address those issues and capitalize on opportunities to enhance the neighborhoods.

Neighborhood plans, as well as all public improvements, shall be consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan*. (See also Neighborhood Chapter.)

### **5. Context-Sensitive Redevelopment and Infill**

Encourage infill development in older traditional neighborhoods that respects the characteristics of those neighborhoods, as described under Established Neighborhoods in the Urban Design chapter and in keeping with the prevalent housing styles in each neighborhood.

This principle does not imply that all housing will be of the same type (i.e., detached or duplex) but that older and newer housing will share many design elements. Redevelopment and infill are keys to strengthening older neighborhoods and will always be done in a manner that responds to and builds on the strengths of those neighborhoods.

Continue to review zoning regulations that apply to the older neighborhoods so as to accommodate the nonconforming status of dwellings that were caused by setback or area requirements. Current zoning regulations sometimes create difficulties for property owners to properly maintain or upgrade houses. Use public input to guide zoning regulation changes that will encourage revitalization of older neighborhoods and increase density and diversity of housing throughout the community.

### **6. Multiple Land Uses in Neighborhoods**

Identify locations for mixed-use in established neighborhoods that already have some diversity of uses, proximity to transit or major traffic corridors. Apply the policies of the Urban Design chapter regarding mixed-use in the neighborhood context.

### **7. Mixed- and Multiple-Use Development**

Seek to combine housing with retail or office uses in mixed- and multiple-use developments. In multi-level buildings, the City should seek to combine housing on the second or higher levels with commercial uses on the ground level. The City should also seek to integrate housing with retail or office uses in larger developments with several buildings, particularly in the Downtown and other designated mixed-use locations.

The City will promote the development of well-designed, moderate-density housing near shopping, recreational or cultural facilities as well as employment centers. To encourage this, the City will use its Planned-Unit Development zoning district and the new Mixed-Use Overlay District.

The City will also take a lead role in advancing the understanding and acceptance of urban density and traditional urban patterns among businesses and designers, and promote traditional mixed-use urban patterns as a means of improving business, enhancing neighborhoods, and reducing traffic congestion.

When working with mixed- and multiple-use developments and projects, the City will encourage designs with windows and doors fronting public sidewalks, interesting facade materials, multiple-story buildings, higher densities, attractive and useable public spaces, parking in secondary locations or within structures, links to green spaces and bicycle routes, and access to transit service.

## **8. Review of Medium- and High-Density Housing Applications**

Consider the following factors when reviewing development proposals for medium- and high-density housing:

- Adequate utility and street capacity
- The ability of a given area or neighborhood to absorb additional density
- Adequate access
- Transit service
- Proximity to services and employment opportunities
- Proximity to schools and natural amenities
- Compatibility with adjacent development
- Suitability of the site for construction
- Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity

## **9. Land Use Incompatibilities**

Use improved Code enforcement, buffering, and screening to reduce or eliminate problems caused by incompatible land uses. Many of Eau Claire's older neighborhoods have long been affected by incompatible land uses, such as industrial plants, materials or equipment storage, freight lines or truck routes in close proximity to residential uses.

**Objective 5 – Commercial and Mixed-Use Development**

**Create “activity centers” that are successful, attractive and functional**

The design of commercial sites in Eau Claire has evolved over the decades, as it has in all cities. The appearance and traffic function of these properties have improved during the past 25 years as a result of improved zoning regulations and development proposals. Commercial development is strongly skewed toward the southeastern part of the City, following the major road patterns and housing development; a substantial amount of land zoned for business stands undeveloped in the northwestern quadrant of the community.

Eau Claire has the potential to make better use of some of its commercially-zoned property, and land developers are adopting new approaches to design. Thus, new combinations of land use open possibilities to create more interesting and sustainable urban places.

**Policies**

**1. Design Standards or Guidelines**

Improve the appearance and function of future commercial development by preparing and adopting design standards. Determine whether these statements and graphics will be mandatory or advisory. Prepare a set for perimeter sites and another for the Downtown. Address features such as:

- Access management for autos
- Pedestrian access
- Bicyclist access
- Relationship of buildings to the street
- Landscaping and screening
- Lighting
- Signs
- Parking
- Exterior treatments
- Transitions to other sites

**2. Mixed-Use Activity Centers**

Enhance and broaden certain commercial districts using the Mixed-Use zoning district to allow multiple-family housing on commercially-zoned land and consider the following policies:

- Create an attractive, diverse and walkable urban environment
- Take a comprehensive and holistic approach to planning the vicinity that may result over time in additional retail, office or residential investments
- Design the elements to appear and function as an integrated whole through building location, size, orientation and materials, access, parking, sidewalks, landscaping, lighting and, optionally, vertical mixtures of land uses
- Celebrate higher urban density as a means of making a more interesting and sustainable community
- Mitigate any perceived negative effects on nearby existing housing
- Accommodate the increased traffic on nearby roads and intersections while maintaining an acceptable level of service
- Manage surface water according to the requirements of the City.

## **Objective 6 – Riverfronts and Stream Corridors**

### **Guide waterfront land use to parks, open spaces, housing, offices, and similar land uses that are compatible with the rivers.**

The pattern and design of land development or open space along the rivers and the lake is an important objective in Eau Claire because of the great number of miles of waterfront in the community. Since the 2005 *Comprehensive Plan*, the City updated its 1988 *Waterways Plan*, addressing land use, urban design, environmental protection, parks, trails and cultural resources along the rivers, creeks and lake. That detailed plan is adopted by reference into this *Comprehensive Plan*. A few of its major recommendations are summarized here.

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Chippewa River Land Uses**

Guide land use along the Chippewa River to take advantage of the dual benefits of the river aesthetics and water. Thus, the pattern of land use and zoning will emphasize land uses that take advantage of the river views such as mid- and high-density housing, offices, parks and trails, and hospitality businesses, such as restaurants or hotels, and industries that need water for manufacturing, such as the Cascades Group paper mill, and, above the dam, marinas. New industrial locations along the Chippewa River are not expected at this time.

Guide riverfront improvements in the South Barstow District with the *Downtown Action Agenda 2001* and the 2012 *Downtown Strategy and Vision Plan*.

In the northwestern quadrant of Downtown follow the lead of the *West Riverside Neighborhood Plan*, 2012, which encourages a linear riverfront park and redevelopment of blighted industry along Oxford Street into housing. Link the neighborhood to the river with sidewalks, paths and views.

##### **2. Eau Claire River Land Uses**

Continue to change the Eau Claire River frontage from industries and parking to a more compatible mixture of linear park, offices, housing and some industry.

Extend a riverfront path along the entire northern side of the river within the City.

##### **3. Riverfront Design**

Site and design new buildings along the rivers to take advantage of views while respecting the natural character of the setting. Follow the setbacks established by the Waterways Plan to provide appropriate spacing between the development and the waterways.

##### **4. Redevelopment Opportunities**

Continue to pursue beneficial redevelopment opportunities such as The Confluence on the Haymarket site and the joint event and recreation center at the County Materials site.

##### **5. Sherman Creek**

Seek a mixture of urban development along Sherman Creek that includes single-family housing along most of its length, occasional parks, the Chippewa Valley Technical

College, and industry (near U.S. 12). Although the edges of Sherman Creek may be subdivided for housing, the City will require setbacks and easements for flood plain protection as indicated by the Federal Flood Insurance Rate Map. The City will protect steep slopes from erosion and preserve wooded locations along the creek.

**6. Otter Creek**

Allow Otter Creek to wind through low-density residential neighborhoods and create Southeast Community Park along its western edge, south of Prill Road. Encourage the development of a public greenway system along Otter Creek consistent with the Parks System chapter.

**7. Lowes Creek**

Protect the edges of Lowes Creek from erosion and deforestation as housing is built nearby. A large stretch of the Lowes Creek edge abuts Lowes Creek County Park. Continue to follow the land use and surface water practices advocated in the *Nonpoint Source Control Plan for the Lowes Creek Priority Watershed Project*



## **Objective 7 – Major Road Corridors**

### **Plan land use along the major road corridors in a manner supportive of the functional classification of the road.**

Every community struggles with the challenge of land use and urban design in the narrow band on either side of a major road. These corridors are highly visible to all the community and contribute strongly to the image and appearance of the City.

Businesses covet the access and visibility the road provides, but the community has an interest in protecting the function of the road while avoiding the unattractive design, which sometimes characterizes linear commercial development.

Important changes are occurring along Hastings Way, the former route of US 53. Now a City street, the road has been narrowed to four lanes, land access directed to public street intersections and edge landscaping added. The private sector is responding with new investment.

#### **Policies:**

##### **1. Road Corridor Land Use Planning**

Plan the edges of arterial roads for an appropriate and acceptable variety of land uses, ranging from single-family housing to shopping centers, as long as the roadway access guidelines presented in the Transportation Plan chapter are followed. Generally, the City should seek to provide for access efficiency and visibility by locating more intensive land uses to the edge of major roads and guide land uses that generate less traffic to minor roads.

While housing developers may not view the edge of an arterial road as the most desirable environment, it is not necessary to line every stretch of arterial frontage with commercial or multiple-family development. In fact, allowing some low-density neighborhoods along arterial roads is both necessary and desirable. However, if housing is located along an arterial road, its access must conform to the spacing guidelines in the Transportation Plan chapter, which requires that intersections be widely spaced and that little or no direct driveway access is allowed.

##### **2. Site Design**

Improve the appearance of the major road corridors within the City by requiring better private landscaping, installing better public landscaping, reducing the size and number of signs, limiting the number of additional billboards, locating some parking lots beside or behind buildings, encouraging better building design, providing pedestrian and bicycle circulation to and within the site, and providing other site planning and building design improvements.(See also the Urban Design Plan chapter.)

##### **3. Redevelopment Techniques**

Pursue long-term redevelopment of existing inappropriate land use and vehicle access along arterial roads. The City will give priority to addressing inappropriate land uses through the following strategies:

### **Rezoning**

Rezone areas with inappropriate land use or access to allow alternative uses such as office, multi-family housing, small shopping centers, or similar uses that offer greater flexibility for improved spacing and control. While this option has little direct cost to the City, it also depends on a willing and aggressive private sector for implementation. Small office buildings for professionals or corporations have often succeeded in these settings and can be compatible neighbors with an adjacent residential neighborhood.

### **Physical Improvements**

Make or require physical site improvements that reduce the conflict between housing and a major road. For example, housing may be protected from the deleterious effects of traffic, parking lots, and commercial buildings by landscaping, setback, building orientation and size. The City could protect the road function by combining or closing access points and/or changing the access design.

### **Development Assistance**

Assist private developers in acquiring property, relocating residents and/or clearing buildings in order to stimulate new development under municipal powers granted by Wisconsin Statutes. Potential financial tools available include Tax Increment Financing, special benefit district, Federal Community Development Block Grant funds, and general obligation bonds.

### **Acquisition**

Acquire and clear inappropriate land development along one side of roadway and add it to the public right-of-way. Working either alone or in conjunction with the County or Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the City could seek to obtain land along a roadway, and then devote the area to landscaped open space or pedestrian and bicycle pathways to benefit the corridor travelers and adjacent residents.

## **Objective 8 – Environmental Resources**

### **Safeguard and improve environmental features as a means of promoting sustainable urban development, revitalization, and quality of life.**

The Natural Resources Chapter of the *Comprehensive Plan* contains recommendations for the management of surface water, ground water, soil, and wildlife habitat. Some of those recommendations are included both in this chapter, as well as the Parks System Chapter.

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Wetlands**

Continue to protect wetlands by following the regulations of the City Zoning Ordinance and the guidelines of the City's *Surface Water Management Plan*.

##### **2. Flood Plains**

Protect flood plains and floodways by applying and enforcing the City flood plain regulations.

##### **3. Steep or Wooded Slopes**

Continue to regulate development on steep slopes and allow a reasonable degree of use while protecting appearances and surface water. The appearance of ridgelines and hilltops will be of special importance.

##### **4. Prime Agricultural Lands**

Seek to minimize the loss of prime agricultural lands to development by promoting compact, contiguous and sewered urban development, and reducing incentives for semi-rural sprawl on multiple-acre residential lots.

Avoiding premature development on prime farmland is an important consideration in planning for future land use and development on the City's urban fringe. The City will consider the following criteria in seeking the appropriate balance between encouraging orderly and cost-effective development and protecting prime agricultural areas:

- Maintaining a compact and regular pattern of growth and boundaries;
- Minimizing infrastructure and service costs;
- Designing neighborhoods with connecting streets and pedestrian walkways;
- Responding to market demands for development.

The City recognizes that compact urban development on farmland close to presently built-up and sewered areas can help avoid the loss of productive farmland elsewhere.

##### **5. Greenways**

Enlarge and extend greenways, as described in the Parks System Plan chapter, for recreation, non-motorized transportation and environmental protection. The greenways, being linear public open space along creeks or rivers, provide natural vegetation, flood storage and runoff filtration.

**6. Parks**

Seek to manage portions of City parks in a more natural manner, allowing some grass to grow wild, removing invasive plant species and reintroducing lost plant species.

**7. Non-Metallic Mineral Resources**

Protect through plans and regulations the limited locations where the natural mineral resource of gravel (sometimes called aggregate) can be found. Gravel is an essential component of concrete and asphalt, two fundamental construction materials important for future urban growth and development. Transporting the mined gravel and sand is a major portion of its cost. Consequently, providing for the well-managed extraction of the resource from available local sources serves to reduce overall construction costs. The City should also work with the private owners of these facilities to plan for their re-use as housing, park and public open space, industry and business or other activities.

## **Objective 9 – Redevelopment and Land Use Compatibility**

### **Restore underused, obsolescent or incompatible properties to viable commercial, residential or recreational opportunities.**

Continuous redevelopment is essential to sustaining the vitality of the community. This major task should be led by the private sector, but the City can provide incentives and guidance such as the land use plan, zoning ordinance, roads and trunk utilities. A major question over the coming years is: “How much City financial help can be provided to key sites?”

Reducing land use incompatibilities is one benefit of selective redevelopment. Some residential neighborhoods in Eau Claire have experienced physical decline and disinvestment because of conflicts among land uses or developments that are incompatible in terms of activities, size or appearance. For example, poorly maintained or deteriorating non-residential buildings and properties adjacent to residential use often results in a long-term pattern of declining investment in the residential properties.

### **Policies**

#### **1. Redevelopment Program**

Engage in a continuous process of assisting the redevelopment of key blighted or highly incompatible properties or districts.

Eau Claire will support redevelopment by planning and zoning identified target areas for more intensive or different land uses than their present use. In special circumstances, the City will use tools, such as tax increment financing, to support redevelopment when it can be demonstrated that the monetary and other benefits to the City strongly justify the investment decisions. Other benefits may include leveraging subsequent significant private investment nearby, stemming the tide of neighborhood disinvestment or remediating a major environmental concern.

The City will use its zoning regulations and site plan review process to help ensure that neighborhood appearances are protected as new buildings are introduced.

#### **2. Target Areas**

Emphasize redevelopment in select and specific locations within the following priority areas:

- Oxford Avenue corridor north of Madison Street
- The eastern half of the North Barstow District
- Certain areas of the South Barstow District (see the Downtown Chapter)
- Certain sites in older neighborhoods near the downtown (see Neighborhood Chapter)
- Portions of the Water Street corridor (see Water Street Plan)
- The Menomonie Street corridor between Clairemont Avenue and Hobbs Ice Arena.

District and neighborhood plans provide further guidance on the preferred location and nature of change. These include the Downtown Plan chapter of the *Comprehensive Plan*, the *Historic Randall Park Neighborhood Plan* and the *Water Street Commercial District Plan*.

### **3. Planning Process**

Prepare and maintain an updated redevelopment project plan or preliminary sub-area sketch plan for each of the areas listed in Policy 2 above. The plans should address market forces, land use patterns, building conditions, traffic circulation, property acquisition, relocation and clearance, public finance, urban design, and public participation.

### **4. Redevelopment Techniques**

Determine the preferred financial and other implementation techniques that the City may use to assist redevelopment by a study for each area. Current implementation strategies include: zoning, private investment, tax increment financing, street or utility improvements, general obligation bonds, state or federal roadway improvement funds, state redevelopment grants (not presently available), and state or federal brownfields remediation funds.

### **5. Zoning Regulations**

Seek to prevent the formation of new land use incompatibilities and to lessen existing incompatibilities through administration of zoning and site plan regulations. Where appropriate, and through amendment of the Zoning Ordinance if necessary, the City should seek to:

- Provide performance-based criteria to measure and determine appropriate land use intensity. Such criteria might include: traffic generation, hours of operation, building design and buffering.
- Provide landscaping and screening standards to buffer different uses and parking areas from public sidewalks and streets.
- Provide building design guidelines regarding appropriate scale and materials for new infill developments and building expansions. The Urban Design Plan chapter provides guidelines regarding site and building design.

### **6. Property Acquisition**

Consider acquisition of private property, on a case-specific basis, to eliminate land use incompatibilities or deteriorated properties, and encourage redevelopment consistent with the planned land use for the area.

In many situations, land use incompatibilities result from incremental changes that have occurred over time as economic trends and development standards have changed. In those cases, the City may need to purchase certain properties to eliminate land use incompatibilities. This should be done on a case-specific basis and will require careful scrutiny of the costs and benefits involved in such action. Financial tools the City might use for property acquisition and relocation include tax-increment financing and Federal Community Development Block Grant funds.

### **7. Neighborhood Planning**

Continue to prepare and adopt neighborhood and sub-area plans that encourage eliminating inappropriate land uses, reducing land use conflicts and seeking alternatives to resolve such issues.

## **Objective 10 – Economic Development**

### **Provide an adequate and balanced inventory of planned and zoned locations for future growth needs for industry, office, and retail businesses.**

The City should provide an adequate inventory of available and readily serviced land to meet the future growth needs of the community for industrial and business uses. Figure 1-1, Planned Land Use identifies the generalized locations for future land uses. The City should seek through detailed land use planning, capital improvements and infrastructure investments, and zoning to ensure a reasonable balance between community needs for development and the availability of land. See the Economic Development Chapter for objectives and policies specifically related to maintaining a diverse economic base.

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Industry and Offices**

Act to provide locations for industrial and office development in both central and fringe locations that have good transportation access.

Central locations may require public assistance with redevelopment and brownfields remediation, but the City recognizes the importance of keeping such locations in productive use, of providing jobs accessible to workers who may not have cars, and of removing blight that threatens housing. The City will encourage corporate offices to locate in Downtown by offering financial assistance, particularly to compensate for the added cost of downtown parking.

Examples of locations where significant employment growth is expected include:

- Downtown (all four quadrants, including the Mayo Clinic Health System – Luther Campus along Bellinger Avenue)
- The institutional campus complex including the University of Wisconsin- Eau Claire, the Chippewa Valley Technical College, Sacred Heart Hospital, and nearby medical clinics
- Gateway Industrial Park and vicinity
- Banbury Place and the Galloway Street corridor
- The vicinity of Oakwood Mall
- The Hastings Way corridor
- The Hendrickson Drive corridor

##### **2. Downtown**

Continue to support the revitalization of the Downtown as a walkable mixed-use district of businesses, housing and cultural attractions. See the Downtown Plan chapter for additional recommendations regarding redevelopment of the four Downtown districts: Courthouse, North Barstow, south Barstow and West Riverside.

##### **3. Education and Health Care Campus Area**

In 2008, the City led and coordinated the preparation of the *Clairemont Educational and Medical District Plan* for the area north of Clairemont Avenue encompassing the University

of Wisconsin-Eau Claire upper campus, Chippewa Valley Technical College, Marshfield Clinic, Sacred Heart Hospital, nearby medical buildings, state offices, and commercial buildings. That plan is incorporated into this *Comprehensive Plan* by reference.

The area master plan incorporated the plans of the individual institutions and addressed a broad range of issues and opportunities, including: traffic and access management, parking demand and opportunities for shared parking, transit service and amenities, pedestrian and bicycle movement, green space and amenities.

The City will seek to maximize land use efficiency, provide for long-term growth, improve appearances and image, and reduce incompatible relationships.

The University adopted a new master plan in 2011 that will complement some of the recommendations of the district plan. That document was summarized in the Land Use Assessment chapter of this plan.

#### **4. Gateway Industrial Park**

Continue the growth of manufacturing industries and office space while protecting the Sherman Creek flood plain. The City should emphasize growth toward Sherman Creek and along County Highway T, remaining at least one-quarter mile west of Jeffers Road. The City should also encourage site plans to use land intensively and provide a high level of building finish and landscaping.

#### **5. Banbury Place and Vicinity**

Continue to add or improve the use of this complex with businesses and housing.

#### **6. Oakwood Mall Vicinity**

Promote the redevelopment of lower-intensity land uses, especially surface parking, into offices, retail businesses, housing and/or structured parking.

#### **7. South Hastings Way**

Promote through zoning, site plan review, sign districts, and redevelopment programs, the redevelopment and intensification of the older retail areas along South Hastings Way. Encourage mixed- and multiple-use projects with pedestrian linkages and accommodations. Manage traffic access to the nearby arterial and collector roads by requiring shared access points and joint parking.

#### **8. Menomonie Street Corridor**

Support the idea of master-planned redevelopment along the Menomonie Street corridor between Clairemont Avenue and the Hobbs Ice Arena that may include businesses and housing centered on the event and recreation center proposed by the University.

#### **9. All Commercial Locations**

Continue to apply the provisions of the zoning ordinance that enhance the appearance and function of new commercial developments, such as landscaping, sign control, rear buffering, joint parking, appropriate access locations, shared access, sidewalks, facade materials, window and door orientation, and mixed- or multiple-use projects. See also the Urban Design Plan chapter.



## **Objective 11 – Municipal Expansion**

**Seek to maintain a well-planned and fiscally sound community by continuing to expand municipal boundaries to include areas identified for future urban development.**

Municipal boundaries not only determine who is included within a jurisdiction, but also define local arrangements of service provision and patterns of economic development. The City of Eau Claire expands its municipal boundaries through the annexation process prescribed by Wisconsin State Statutes. Annexations may occur only through means provided by state law. Prior annexations have occurred only through petitions initiated by the individual landowners.

In considering annexation petitions and whether to extend municipal boundaries, it is important for the City to be able to extend boundaries in areas where the City sewer and water lines can be extended to serve growth. It is also important for the City to consider the long-term municipal fiscal impact of annexations.

Well-planned and orderly annexations that are coordinated with the timely extension of utilities and subsequent business or residential development offer significant benefits for the long-term economic health of the larger metropolitan area. Orderly annexations and development will result in less duplication of services and less public spending, which will in turn enhance the economic efficiency of the region.

The fundamental rationale of the *Comprehensive Plan* for approving annexations is that a fiscally sound central city is critical to the economic well-being and sustained quality of life of the entire metropolitan community, and that annexing land for new residential, commercial, and industrial development is key to the City maintaining its long-term fiscal health.

Municipal expansion through annexation allows the City to protect its tax base and pursue continued economic growth. Municipal expansion also helps prevent the fragmentation of public services in the metropolitan area, while achieving a better trade-off between scale economies and service coordination costs. The *Comprehensive Plan* holds, therefore, that municipal services are required for sustainable and cost-effective urbanization, and that the City of Eau Claire is most capable of providing those services.

### **Policies**

#### **1. Municipal Utility Extensions into the Urban Sewer Service Area**

Provide municipal sewer or water service only to property that is annexed to the City of Eau Claire, to property that is subject to a cooperative boundary agreement, or to land that is the subject of another form of intergovernmental cooperation agreement. Follow the alignments and sizing recommended by engineering feasibility studies.

As described under Objective 3, Policy 3 of this chapter, intergovernmental agreements with one or more of the adjacent Towns may be negotiated to help extend or improve public roads or utilities in response to private land development and annexation applications. Such agreements are allowed by state law under these Wisconsin Statutes:

- Section 66.0301, Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Section 66.0305, Political Subdivision Revenue Sharing and
- Section 66.0307, Boundary Change Pursuant to an Approved Cooperative Plan.

These statutes are summarized and presented in whole as appendices to the Land Use and Growth Management Assessment chapter of this plan.

Refer also to Objective 2 of the Public Utilities Plan chapter of this plan.

## **2. Boundary Expansion**

Extend the City's corporate boundaries by approving annexations consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan* and State law.

In addition, the City will also consider the extent to which the proposed annexation:

- Maintains a compact and regular pattern of growth and boundary expansion
- Provides for the cost-effective extension of public infrastructure
- Provides for the cost-effective delivery of public services
- Fosters neighborhood development patterns with connecting streets and pedestrian walkways consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan*
- Addresses a market demand for development.

## **3. Town Peninsulas**

Seek to incorporate the peninsulas of the Towns of Washington, Union, Wheaton and Seymour that jut into the City's geographic area through a boundary agreement. If necessary, consider offering financial compensation for these properties, considering the condition of the streets and utilities (or lack of such) in addition to the tax base and condition of the private properties.

## **Objective 12 – Public Infrastructure Investments**

**Encourage state and local investments in public facilities and infrastructure that are consistent with the principles of Smart Growth and the objectives of the *Comprehensive Plan*.**

Public spending is a powerful way to influence the pattern of land use and the actions of the private land development industry. Millions of public dollars are spent annually in the Eau Claire metropolitan area on roads, utilities, parks, and other public facilities. These public investments greatly influence the value of adjoining land and shape the nature of subsequent development decisions by the private sector.

An especially important aspect of public spending for capital improvements is the relationship between transportation improvements and land development. Capital expenditures to extend or widen highways or major roads beyond the urban perimeter, or to increase the carrying capacity of existing highway corridors, while essential to our contemporary way of life and economy, may also distort land markets by facilitating development remote from presently urbanized locations and, thereby, also facilitating fragmented and sprawl patterns of development.

By the same token, road improvements in the urban core or transit routes can promote reinvestment in older neighborhoods or intensify development in priority activity areas. Because the *Comprehensive Plan* emphasizes compact and contiguous growth, all proposed road improvements in the City, as well as County and State improvements in the metropolitan area, should be reviewed to determine their impact on key *Plan* objectives for balanced fringe growth, farmland preservation and neighborhood preservation.

### **Policies**

#### **1. Consistency with the Plan**

Use the *Comprehensive Plan* as a central guiding document for reviewing proposed projects in the City's Capital Improvement Program. As part of its annual review of the proposed Capital Improvement Program, the City Plan Commission will assess the consistency of the proposed improvement program and report its findings to the City Council. Projects included in the Capital Improvement Program approved annually by the City Council should be consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan*. In addition, the City should also review County and State highway projects proposed in the metropolitan area and determine their consistency with general Smart Growth principles as well as the objectives of the *Comprehensive Plan*, especially within the City's Extra-Territorial Plat Approval Jurisdiction.

#### **2. Priorities**

Give high priority to maintenance of and reinvestment in existing streets, parks, utilities and other City and County facilities so as to maximize the use of existing public or private investments. Secondly, use public expenditures to provide municipal trunk utilities and arterial roads to annexed property in urban growth locations identified in the *Sewer Service Area Plans*.

### **3. The Role of the Public Sector**

Provide major infrastructure in an orderly and timely manner so as to promote investment and redevelopment in target areas and neighborhoods within or near the presently urbanized area. Locate and design public buildings to foster community or neighborhood identity and raise the quality of nearby private development.

Use major infrastructure investments to support investments by the private sector. However, all new local and collector streets and most new public utility lines will be privately financed and built. Trunk sewer or water lines, such as those shown in the *Sewer Service Area Plans* (2012), will be financed and built by the City with the cost assessed to benefiting property owners within the City and not in a Town, consistent with the City Code and State law. Assessments for benefiting lots outside the City would be deferred until annexation.

To select the timing and alignment of any trunk utility extension, a future feasibility study will consider costs, land development benefits and landowner participation interest.

### **4. Land Use and Transportation Relationship**

Plan and regulate land development to make relatively intensive use of sites served by minor arterial, collector and local streets. Plan and reserve adequate future road rights-of-way in advance of development for the sake of economy and good design. The City should give strong consideration to making improvements to parks and parkways and other public amenities that will be used to attract private investment.

### **5. Capital Improvement Programming**

Continue to refer to the *Comprehensive Plan* when annually updating the Capital Improvements Program. The City should consider using the *Plan's* objectives as a starting point for assessing proposed projects, and then consider legislative mandates, prior commitments, project interrelationships and cost effectiveness. While complete convergence between the *Plan* and the Capital Improvement Program is unlikely to emerge, a higher degree of consistency will result than if the *Comprehensive Plan* were not formally considered at all. In addition, this annual, disciplined process will encourage a greater recognition of the importance of the *Plan* in the minds of all staff and local public officials and lead to more thoughtful plan implementation.

## **Objective 13 – Regional Planning**

### **Build land use planning relationships in the greater Chippewa Valley region that support the principles of Smart Growth and that help accomplish the *Comprehensive Plan*.**

The City of Eau Claire has a genuine interest in seeing that sound land use planning takes place in and around its neighboring communities and among the different government jurisdictions in the metropolitan area. Eau Claire also has a stake in the success of broader multi-county efforts in the Chippewa Valley regarding land use, economic development, transportation and public safety.

Effective planning relationships among government jurisdictions do not require unanimity on every topic of interest. However, effective working relationships do require a sufficient level of mutual trust and respect, and a shared belief that the relationship will result in mutual benefit. Sound land use planning by communities in the metro area must incorporate and support cooperative intergovernmental relationships, which, in turn, require that each jurisdiction can readily answer the “what’s in it for us?” question that has to be answered before productive cooperative work can begin. Recommendations on building more effective working relationships among jurisdictions are addressed in the Intergovernmental Cooperation Plan chapter. The answer to “what’s in it for us?” is provided by the six key smart growth outcomes identified in the Introduction Chapter of the *Comprehensive Plan*:

- Neighborhood livability
- Better access, less traffic
- Thriving cities, suburbs, and towns
- Shared benefits
- Lower costs, lower taxes
- Keeping open space open.

## **Policies**

### **1. Shared Metropolitan Vision**

Encourage local jurisdictions in the metropolitan area to develop a consistent regional perspective on future growth consistent with the principles of Smart Growth. The City should convene initial meetings of local officials from area jurisdictions, as well as a broad range of stakeholders in the metropolitan area, to discuss Smart Growth issues and to begin to develop a statement of Smart Growth principles to guide future growth in the Eau Claire- Chippewa Falls metropolitan area.

### **2. Sustainable Development**

Encourage growth in the City of Eau Claire and the broader metropolitan area consistent with the concept of sustainable development that emphasizes the interdependent relationship between economic vitality and environmental quality. The City should lead by example in promoting the concept of a sustainable metropolitan region that can support a diverse and vibrant economy, while still protecting the integrity of the natural air, water, and land systems that support life.

**3. Area-Wide Planning Meetings**

Host an initial meeting of planning leaders and officials to discuss metropolitan planning and growth and to consider implementing regular schedule of meetings among interested jurisdictions. Such meetings could include an annual all-day meeting of public and private sector leaders from the Eau Claire-Chippewa Falls metropolitan area to discuss planning, service delivery, economic development, and quality of life issues.

**4. County Comprehensive Plans**

Support the efforts of Eau Claire County and Chippewa County to adopt and implement county comprehensive plans encompassing the principles of Smart Growth.

**5. Other Municipality Comprehensive Plans**

Support the efforts of neighboring cities, villages, and towns to adopt and implement comprehensive plans encompassing the principles of Smart Growth.

**6. Area-Wide Planning**

Support and participate in area-wide or regional planning efforts related to the goals and objectives of the *Comprehensive Plan*. The City will encourage area jurisdictions to participate in ongoing efforts to address transportation system and surface water management issues. The City will continue to participate as a member of the Metropolitan Planning Organization and work with the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in addressing issues of a broader regional impact in western Wisconsin. The City will also continue to coordinate with the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Transportation, the Governor’s office and other state agencies regarding local planning issues.

The City should actively support or initiate joint planning collaborations with the appropriate county agency and other local jurisdictions to prepare detailed sub-area land use plans for major interchanges, highway corridors or other growth areas in the City’s Extra-Territorial Plat Approval Jurisdiction. Such sub-area plans should include future land use recommendations, proposed utility extensions, street networks and significant public facilities.

**7. Adjustments to the Extra-Territorial Plat Review Jurisdictions**

Negotiate the boundary of the Eau Claire Extra-Territorial Plat Approval Jurisdiction where it overlaps with that of the Village of Lake Hallie and the City of Altoona.

The Extra-Territorial Plat Approval Jurisdiction (ETJ) is all of the land within three miles of the border of the City of Eau Claire except that in the City of Altoona and the Village of Lake Hallie and these jurisdictions ETJ’s areas.

The ETJs of the City of Altoona and the Village of Lake Hallie overlap with part of the ETJ of Eau Claire in the Town of Seymour.

Under State law, when overlap exists with two jurisdictions’ ETJ, a line is drawn to split the difference. This line is on the maps in the Utilities System Plan chapter of this plan.

The ETJ consists of two general classes of land:

- The Sewer Service Area (SSA)
- The balance of the ETJ

Parts of the SSA for the City of Eau Claire in the Town of Seymour lie outside the ETJ because of the overlap with the ETJ boundaries between the City and Village of Lake Hallie. The City should work with the Village and the Town of Seymour to resolve this issue. The City resolved a similar issue between the City’s ETJ and Altoona’s ETJ a number of years ago.

## Plan Action Steps

The City will take the following steps to implement the recommendations of the Land Use and Growth Management Plan.

**Table 2-3  
Land Use and Growth Management Plan Actions**

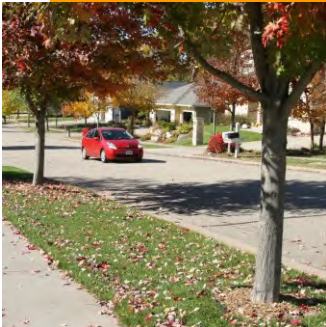
Action	Timing
Use the <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> when reviewing land development or zoning <b>applications</b> .	Continuous
Consider <b>annexation</b> applications that are consistent with the Land Use Plan Map and Policy 11-2.	Continuous
<del>Create a new zoning district for the regional <b>airport</b>.</del>	<del>2016. <u>Continue to work with Airport to seek a new zoning District</u></del>
<b>Monitor development</b> and adjust forecasts of land needs, traffic generation and sewer or water flow accordingly.	Continuous
Seek to incorporate the <b>peninsulas</b> of the Towns of Washington, Union, Wheaton and Seymour that jut into the City’s geographic area through boundary agreements.	2016 <u>2025-2031</u> <u>The Intergovernmental Agreement was continued in February 2021 for 10 years and the Town comprehensive plans to be updated in 2025</u>
Negotiate with the City of <b>Altoona</b> a long-term mutual boundary line.	2016 <u>Ongoing; coordinated with City Council Strategic Plan</u>
Continue to review applications for land division throughout the <b>Extra-Territorial Plat Approval Jurisdiction</b> ; enforce the regulations for minimum parcel size; protect planned rights-of-way.	Continuous



<b>Action</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Use intergovernmental agreements or cooperative boundary plans to aid construction of public <b>utilities</b> in the Urban Sewer Service Area.	Continuous
Continue to provide municipal <b>utilities</b> only to properties in the City or subject to a cooperative boundary plan.	Continuous
Refer to the <b>design guidance</b> of this chapter and the Urban Design Plan chapter when reviewing plats and site plans.	Continuous
Prepare commercial development <b>design guidelines</b> for downtown and another set for perimeter locations.	2016 <u>Ongoing;</u> <u>coordinated with</u> <u>City Council</u> <u>Strategic Plan</u>
Promote the creation of mixed-use <b>activity centers</b> in present commercial areas.	Continuous
Follow the recommendations of the <b>Waterways Plan</b> .	Continuous
Prepare a plan for the eastern half of the <b>North Barstow</b> District.	2015— 2020 <u>Redevelopment to</u> <u>occur in the</u> <u>coming years but a</u> <u>plan has been</u> <u>moved back to</u> <u>2020-2025</u>
Promote redevelopment of the <b>Oxford Avenue</b> corridor by creating a linear riverfront park and continued land assembly and clearance.	2015 – 2025 <u>Continue process;</u> <u>all land has been</u> <u>assembled and</u> <u>cleared for</u> <u>redevelopment</u>
Negotiate the mutual <b>boundaries</b> of the Extra-Territorial Plat Approval Jurisdiction with the Village of Lake Hallie.	2015— 2020 <u>Ongoing</u>
Continue to prepare <b>plans</b> for developed neighborhoods and for future urban areas on the perimeter of the community.	Continuous
Continue to convene <b>meetings</b> of community and government leaders to discuss regional growth issues.	Continuous
Seek to enhance the <b>Code Enforcement</b> activities of the city.	2015 <u>Continuous</u>
Continue to review <b>zoning regulations</b> to accommodate the non-conforming status of dwellings in older neighborhoods.	Continuous

# Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015

## Transportation System Plan



City of Eau Claire Wisconsin

# Transportation System Plan

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## Transportation System Plan

The purpose of the Eau Claire Transportation System Plan is to guide public policy in regard to the evolution of the overall transportation system, and specifically recommend objectives and actions that are consistent with the land use and urban design components of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

While private interests take the lead role in the development of land, most of the transportation system is in the public realm. Those portions of the system for which the City of Eau Claire is responsible, including local streets, sidewalks, local trails and public parking lots, are maintained and constructed by the City through its capital and operating budgets.

The Transportation System Plan identifies major issues that arose from the earlier citizen input and analysis process. These issues were evaluated in light of other planning issues, and from this process were prepared objectives, policies and recommended actions to address each issue. The Transportation System Plan presents this information.

Please note that the **Transportation Assessment of Conditions and Issues** chapter contains background material that supports this plan.

### Summary of Issues

The following questions summarize the major transportation issues as identified in the Assessment of Transportation Conditions and Issues that should be addressed by the Transportation System Plan.

- 1. Affordable Movement for All:** What should the City do to help all members of the community, particularly those without cars, travel to jobs and other destinations?
- 2. Movement across I-94:** What should be done to provide access over I-94 to growth areas presently in the Towns of Union and Washington?
- 3. Galloway Street Improvements:** Should a bridge be built on Galloway Street over the railroad track so that traffic may be reduced on Birch Street?
- 4. Golf Road Interchange:** What should be done to relieve the growing traffic congestion at the interchange of Golf Road and US 53?
- 5. Railroad "Quiet Zones":** Should the City invest in railroad crossing improvements at selected locations so that trains do not sound their whistles?
- 6. Transit Alternatives:** Should the City adopt the changes recommended in the 2014 *Transit Development Plan*? Should the City continue support for passenger rail service?
- 7. Cameron Street Interchange:** Should the City continue to request that WisDOT build a new interchange along I-94 at Cameron Street? Should the City pay part of the cost?
- 8. Sidewalk Requirements:** Should the City continue to require sidewalks on both sides of new streets or should amendments to this requirement be made?

## **Goal and Objectives**

### **Goal**

**Improve the City transportation system to ensure the safe and efficient movement of people and goods, and provide a variety of mode choices, while enhancing neighborhood livability and resident quality of life.**

### **Objective 1 – Balanced and Efficient Transportation System**

Provide a balanced and efficient transportation network that offers viable alternatives to driving and maximizes use of existing investments.

### **Objective 2 – Transportation Smart Growth and Land Use**

Coordinate the provision and improvement of transportation infrastructure with revitalization projects and compact, directed growth as defined in the Land Use Plan.

### **Objective 3 – Thoroughfare System**

Work with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties, and the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to maintain a thoroughfare system that ensures:

- Safe and efficient movement of people and goods
- Efficient and cost-effective use of public resources
- Minimal negative impacts to adjacent land uses and the community
- Consistent, predictable and comfortable driving environments

### **Objective 4 – Traffic Forecasting and Management**

Mitigate traffic congestion when and where necessary to maintain traffic flow and minimize travel delays with a balanced approach that respects community values.

### **Objective 5 – Neighborhood Streets**

Design neighborhood streets with features for automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian travel while limiting the impacts of traffic.

### **Objective 6 – Walking**

Improve pedestrian connections to create a continuous and seamless pedestrian system, and enhance the pedestrian environment to create a more walkable community.

### **Objective 7 – Bicycling**

Continue to build a connected bicycle route and trail network that is viable, convenient, and safe, and which will encourage both utilitarian and recreational bicycling.

**Objective 8 – Transit and Paratransit**

Sustain and improve the local bus system so that it not only serves the transit-dependent population but also attracts riders who have a choice of travel modes.

**Objective 9 – Parking Management**

Require only the amount of parking necessary to avoid problems and maintain viable businesses, considering transit and on-street spaces.

**Objective 10 – Passenger Rail**

Help bring high-speed passenger rail service to Eau Claire.

**Objective 11 – Freight Railroads**

Work with private railroads to ensure safe crossings and mitigate impacts to neighborhoods.

**Objective 12 – Truck Traffic**

Provide for the safe and efficient movement of truck traffic through Eau Claire while minimizing negative impacts to neighborhoods.

**Objective 13 – Regional Airport**

Coordinate efforts with the management of the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport in their effort to maintain and improve passenger and freight services while minimizing impacts to adjacent residential neighborhoods.



The Transportation Plan seeks to provide efficient and safe movement for motor vehicles while fully accommodating walking, bicycling and riding the bus.

## A Complete and Balanced System

Eau Claire’s transportation system is comprised of all the infrastructure and services in the city devoted to moving people and goods. The transportation system includes:

- Roads
- Bus services including local and intra-city routes
- Sidewalks
- Bicycle lanes and paths
- The regional airport
- Freight or passenger railroad lines including, potentially, high-speed rail

Issues specific to each of these transportation system components will be addressed under individual subheadings. However, transportation frequently depends on connections between the modes in the system. Therefore, the policies begin with system-wide policies.

### Objective 1 - Balanced and Efficient Transportation System

**Provide a balanced and efficient transportation network that offers viable alternatives to driving and maximizes use of existing investments.**

#### Policies

#### 1. Accommodate Walking, Bicycling and Riding the Bus

With each road improvement, proactively seek to accommodate walking, bicycling and riding the bus so as to create a system that supports alternatives to the drive-alone automobile trip. Ensure that all members of the community can affordably and safely get to essential or frequent destinations such as jobs or shops.

Consistently ask questions such as: Are sidewalks included on both sides of all local, collector and minor arterial streets? Can pedestrians cross the street safely? Can space be reserved for a pair of striped bicycling lanes? Is the street system as interconnected as feasible? If the road is a bus route, is space reserved for bus pull-outs and passenger waiting areas? Is there space for trees in the public right-of-way? Are people with restrictions to sight, hearing or mobility safely accommodated?

In some cities, this approach is known as **“Complete Streets.”** The term implies that the entire public right-of-way will be designed for safe movement by all users regardless of age, ability or means of travel. There is no single design for a “complete street,” as each is unique and should be designed in context with its role in the system and the district. For instance, not every street must or should have bicycling lanes but bicyclists ought to be considered in some way.

#### 2. Mode Connectivity

Work to bridge gaps that exist in the transportation system for some modes, particularly for the transit, pedestrian and bicycling networks. The City will:

- Maintain an inventory of maps indicating road, pedestrian, bicycle and transit routes
- Identify gaps in the system for each mode and problems with connectivity
- Develop criteria for ranking system connectivity issues and determining costs from which to assess the cost versus benefit tradeoff for improving the connection.



## **Transportation and Land Use**

Because land use and transportation are intricately linked, land use decisions can have a dramatic impact on travel behaviors and traffic volumes. By implementing the land use plan's policies, the City will be creating a city with:

- More viable transportation choices
- Higher percentages of transit, walking, and bicycle trips and a lower percentage of drive-alone automobile trips
- Shorter average travel distances
- Lower vehicle-miles traveled per person.

The land use plan should be viewed as integral to the transportation plan. By increasing transportation choices and reducing the need for more and longer trips through the land use plan recommendations.

### **Objective 2 – Transportation, Smart Growth and Land Use**

**Coordinate transportation with revitalization projects and compact, directed growth as defined in the Land Use Plan.**

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Compact and Contiguous Growth**

The City will maximize the efficiency of its transportation network by seeking compact development patterns, which also make walking, bicycling or riding the bus a viable choice and reduce costs for individuals and the public.

##### **2. New Neighborhoods**

The City will work with developers to create new neighborhoods organized on a network of local streets interconnected to the maximum extent possible. A mix of land uses should be planned, including commercial nodes, to promote walking, bicycling and riding the bus.

##### **3. Infill and Redevelopment**

The City will promote infill and redevelopment in major transportation corridors and along transit routes. Example locations include downtown, Hastings Way, Clairemont Avenue, Menomonie Street, Water Street, Madison Street, Oxford Avenue, London Road and the vicinity of Oakwood Mall.

##### **4. Older Neighborhoods**

The City will help revitalize older neighborhoods near downtown and other employment sites, which will encourage employees to live close to their jobs and thereby reduce the amount of driving and promote walking, bicycling and riding the bus.

##### **5. Activity Centers**

The City will require major activity centers to include sidewalks, bicycle parking and bus amenities such as pull-outs and shelters.

## 6. Transit-Supportive Development

Promote development in corridors and districts that encourage transit ridership. Appropriate development near bus stops and along bus lines can increase system ridership, help create interesting, sustainable neighborhoods or districts, help guide regional growth and broaden the range of choices in travel, residence and shopping.

### Guidelines for Transit-Supportive Development

The Land Use Plan recommends the evolution of locations that are more intense and mixed in order to create higher-density development, particularly employment, shopping, and multi-family housing that is supportive of walking and served by transit, major roads and bicycles facilities. These guidelines will help create environments that make walking, bicycling and transit use more viable alternatives while still accommodating auto traffic.

- Orient buildings toward the street with short setbacks and parking behind or on the side of buildings
- Cluster buildings along the street within convenient walking distance of one another
- Design buildings that encourage walking by ensuring that ground floor space faces the street, street-level retail is included in appropriate areas, structures are built to lot lines, and building fronts have windows and doors
- Encourage a mixture of activities among and within buildings
- Eliminate minimum parking requirements that result in dedicating large areas of surface parking. Promote shared parking agreements between uses that require parking at different times of the day and days of the week, such as office and entertainment.
- Provide streets with wider sidewalks (8 to 12 feet), street trees, pedestrian-scale lights and signs, planters and benches.
- Buffer sidewalks from parking lots with landscaping or fencing.
- Create transit bays in street rights-of-way with passenger shelters placed in high activity locations.



Transit-supportive development locates housing and jobs near bus lines to build ridership, lessen auto dependence and create attractive urban places.

## Road System

The private automobile is by far the primary transportation mode in Eau Claire. Therefore, actions recommended in regard to the road system are the most prominent and influential components of the overall transportation plan.

### Objective 3 -- Thoroughfare System

**Work with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties, and the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to maintain a thoroughfare system that ensures:**

- Safe and efficient movement of people and goods
- Efficient and cost-effective use of public resources
- Minimal negative impacts to adjacent land uses
- Consistent and predictable driving environments.

### Policies

#### 1. Update the Functional Classification System

Reserve land and build roads that follow an orderly pattern with appropriate spacing, access controls, traffic capacity and speeds to accommodate planned land uses as well as space for walking and bicycling.

Table 3-1 describes the various road functional classes and their characteristics.

Figure 3-1 illustrates the proposed functional classification plan including five locations for new road segments.

Table 3-2 lists the changes to the existing functional classification.

Eau Claire will work with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (the West Central Regional Plan Commission), adjacent jurisdictions, the Counties of Eau Claire and Chippewa, and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) to implement the functional class plan shown in Figure 3-1.



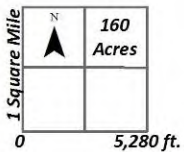
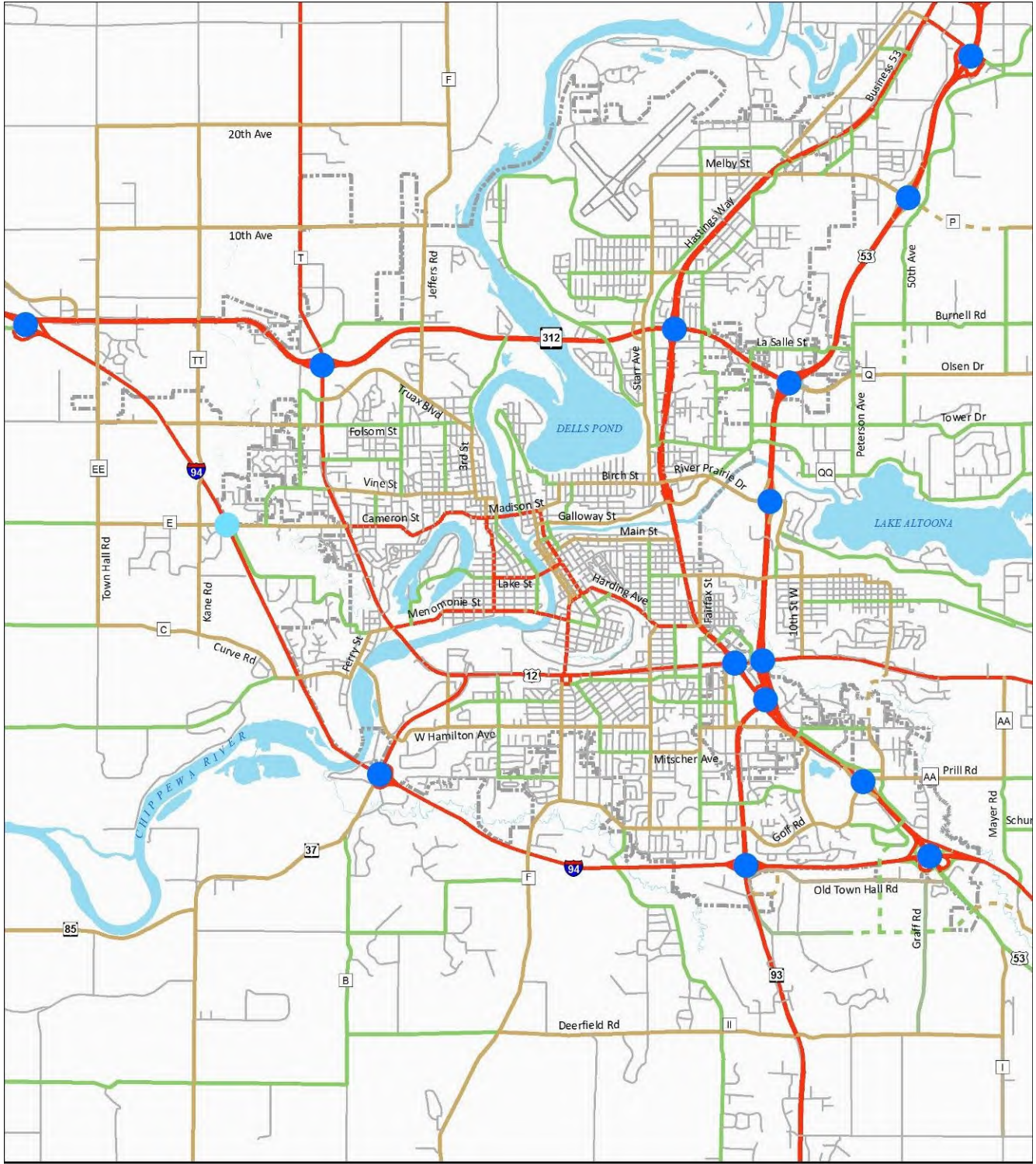
Purposes of the functional class system include providing consistent design and ensuring that enough land is reserved for various types of roads, including sidewalks, bike lanes and trees.

**Table 3-1  
Definitions of Road Functional Classes**

	<b>Principal Arterial</b>	<b>Minor Arterial</b>	<b>Collector</b>	<b>Local</b>
Examples	Interstate 94 US 53 Wisconsin 312 Clairemont Ave. Lake Street	Truax Boulevard Hamilton Avenue Golf Road Galloway Street	7 <sup>th</sup> Street Margaret Street Skeels Avenue	Emery Street Monte Carlo Drive Many others
Definition and Purpose	Connect rural and urban networks. Carry trips entering and exiting the urban area, trips bypassing the central city, and trips destined for downtown. Serve: downtown, regional shopping, university, medical center, industrial area, regional park.	Augments and feeds the primary arterial system and intended for moderate-volume, moderate-speed traffic movement. Access to abutting property is partially controlled.	Collects and distributes traffic between arterial streets and local streets. Intended for short trips while providing access to abutting properties. <i>The design may vary depending on the character and intensity of traffic generated by land development.</i>	Provides direct access to abutting property. Intended for low-speed, low-volume movement and shot trips. <i>The design may vary depending on the character and intensity of traffic generated by land development.</i>
Traffic Flow and Access Priority	Varies by location and adjacent land use	Flow : Access 45 : 55 210' spacing for accesses. Safety is higher priority than traffic flow in determining signal spacing.	Flow : Access 30 : 70 160' spacing for non-residential driveways	Flow : Access 10:90 No restrictions. 40' between access
Spacing	¼ to 3 miles	½ to 1 mile	¼ to ½ mile	As required
Trip Length	Between cities, across metro, and across cities	Between and within activity centers	Local street to arterial street (1/2 to 2 miles)	Access to individual property; less than ½ mile
Traffic Volume	Greater than 7,000	6,000 to 20,000 vpd	1,500 to 8,000 vpd	Typically under 1,000 vehicles per day
Traffic Speed	Varies by location	Under 40 miles per hour	Under 35 mph	Under 30 mph
Pedestrian Provisions	Varies by location	Sidewalks on both sides	Sidewalks on both sides	Sidewalks on both sides
Bicycle Provisions	Varies by location	Shared outside lanes, striped lanes, paved shoulders or separate paths	Shared outside lanes or striped lanes	Interconnected street system. Cars and bicycles share the road.
Bus Provisions	Varies by location	Scheduled buses, taxis and dial-a-ride service	Scheduled buses, taxis and dial-a-ride service	Rare scheduled buses. Taxis and dial-a-ride

Source: Wisconsin Department of Transportation, 2014





- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- Local
- Interchanges
- Proposed
- - - Proposed
- - - Proposed

**Figure 3-1**  
**Future Functional**  
**Classification System of Roads**

**Table 3-2  
Proposed Changes in the Functional Classification System**

<b>Road</b>	<b>Origin</b>	<b>Destination</b>	<b>City Presently</b>	<b>WCWRPC</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Galloway Street	Farwell	Birch Street	Collector	Collector	Minor Arterial
Hastings Way western ramp	Hastings Way	Galloway Street	Local	Local	Minor Arterial
Hastings Way eastern ramp	Hastings Way	Galloway Street	Local and Unbuilt	Local and Unbuilt	Minor Arterial
Oakwood Hills Parkway	Golf Road	Old Town Hall Road	Local and unbuilt	Local	Collector (bridge over I-94)
<b>Town of Washington Sewer Service Area</b>					
US 53	I-94	Continues southeast	Collector	Collector	Principal Arterial
Owen Ayres Court	Owen Ayres Court	Old Town Hall Road	Local and Unbuilt	Unbuilt	Collector – bridge over I-94
Gateway Drive	Hamilton Avenue	US 12	Unbuilt	Unbuilt	Minor Arterial
Old Town Hall Road	State 93	Graff Road	Minor Arterial	Local	Minor Arterial
Gunnes Road	Gunnes Road eastern end	US 53 and County I	Unbuilt or Collector	Unbuilt	Collector
County I	State 93	Mayer Road extended	Unbuilt	Unbuilt	Minor Arterial – vacate parallel leg
County I	Mayer Rd.	Continues east	Collector	Collector	Minor Arterial
County I	State 93	County II	Collector	Collector	Minor Arterial
County II	County F	County I	Collector	Collector	Minor Arterial
County F	County F	Continues south	Collector	Collector	Minor Arterial
Graff Road	Town Hall Rd.	County II	Minor Arterial	Minor Arterial	Collector
Mayer Road	Prill Road	Schumacher	Minor Arterial	Minor Arterial	Collector
Mayer Road	Schumacher	County I	Unbuilt	Unbuilt	Collector
Schumacher Rd	Mayer Rd.	Continues east	Minor Arterial	Minor Arterial	Collector
County AA / Prill Road	State 93	Mayer Road	Collector	Collector	Minor Arterial
County AA	Prill Road	US 12	Collector	Collector	Minor Arterial
<b>Town of Seymour Sewer Service Area</b>					
Melby / County P	US 53	Continues east	Unbuilt or Collector	Unbuilt or Collector	Minor Arterial
Burnell Drive	Peterson Avenue	Continues east	Local	Local	Collector
Olsen Drive	50 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Continues east	Collector	Collector	Minor Arterial
Tower Drive	Peterson Ave.	Continues east	Local	Local	Collector
Peterson Ave.	Burnell Drive	LaSalle Street	Local	Collector	Collector

Road	Origin	Destination	City Presently	WCWRPC	Proposed
Peterson Ave.	Tower Drive	County QQ	Local	Local	Collector
50 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	County QQ	Olsen Drive	Local	Local	Collector
50 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Olsen	Burnell Drive	Collector and Unbuilt	Unbuilt	Collector
50 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Burnell Drive	Continues north	Local	Local	Collector
<b>Town of Wheaton Sewer Service Area</b>					
County T	State 312	State 29	Minor Arterial	Minor Arterial	Principal Arterial. Study class, design and owner with DOT. Transfer to state system?
County F / Jeffers Road	State 312	State 29	Collector	Collector	Minor Arterial
<b>Town of Union Sewer Service Area</b>					
20 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Town Hall Road	County F / Jeffers Road	Local	Local	Minor Arterial
10 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	Town Hall Road	County F / Jeffers Road	Local and Collector	Local and Collector	Minor Arterial
Folsom Street	Town Hall Road	US 12 / Clairemont Avenue	Collector and Local	Collector and Local	Minor Arterial (under I-94)
County E / Cameron St.	Town Hall Road	US 12 / Clairemont Avenue	Collector	Collector	Minor Arterial
County C / Curve Road	County TT	I-94	Collector	Collector	Minor Arterial
County EE / Town Hall Road	State 312	County C	Collector	Collector	Minor Arterial
County TT / Kane Road	State 312	County C	Collector	Collector	Minor Arterial

The majority of the proposed changes in the future functional classification are the result of the City’s planned expansion into the Urban Sewer Service Areas presently located in the adjacent Towns. These facilities should be actively managed in the interim for their planned future functional classification. The subject road improvements would occur in stages as the nearby land develops more intensely and generates more traffic.

It is vitally important to reserve sufficient public road right-of-way in these alignments so that there is space for the road lanes, bicycle lanes or side paths, sidewalks and trees. The needed right-of-way widths are listed in Table 3-3. The road right-of-way land should be reserved through the Official Map process and dedicated to the City or County during land subdivision. Purchases through the eminent domain process will be used only if necessary.

Likewise, it is vitally important to properly manage the access to each classification of road.



## 2. New Minor Arterial or Collector Roads

Plan for new Minor Arterial or Collector Roads to serve future land development as illustrated by Figure 3-1 and listed below. As with existing alignments, these rights-of-way should be reserved through the Official Map process and dedicated to the City or County during land subdivision. Purchases through the eminent domain process will be used only if necessary. See also Policy 3-4, below.

Planned new Minor Arterial Road segments are:

- The extension of **County Highway P** between 50<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the Town of Seymour
- The extension of **Gateway Drive** between US 12 and Hamilton Avenue in the town of Washington
- The realignment of **County Highway I** to intersect with State Highway 53 at Gunnes Road in the Town of Washington
- The realignment of a portion of **Old Town Hall Road** near State Highway 93 for the sake of traffic safety and flow.
- The Extension of **Folsom Street** west across Interstate 94.

Planned new Collector Road segments are:

- **50th Street** between Burnell Drive and Olsen Drive in the Town of Seymour
- The extension of a road in the vicinity of **Owen Ayres Court** over I-94. Additional crossings of I-94 are essential for perimeter growth. This crossing point is still a possibility as Owen Ayres Court touches the I-94 ROW.
- The extension of **Gunnes Road** from its eastern terminus to State Highway 53 in the Town of Washington
- The extension of **Mayer Road** from Schumacher Road to County Highway I in the Town of Washington.

## 3. Major Road Improvement Projects or Studies

Prepare feasibility studies for the following major road improvement projects, list them in the multi-year capital improvements program and include them in annual City budgets. Base the traffic studies on the regional travel model that was being prepared in 2015 by the West Central Regional Planning Commission.

### CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

#### Galloway Street Railroad Overpass

Construct a bridge on Galloway Street over the Union-Pacific Railroad track near Banbury Place. Relocate the Chippewa River State Bike Trail onto the overpass.

#### Northbound Hastings Way Off-Ramp to Galloway Street

Study the cost and benefit of constructing an off-ramp from northbound Hastings Way to intersect Hastings Place as a better means of linking Hastings Way to Galloway Street and increasing the use of Galloway Street as a route to downtown. Study the use of a roundabout for this intersection. This project would complement the existing western ramp from southbound Hastings Way. An origin-destination study is advised.

### **Melby Street**

Improve Melby Street to provide a better connection among US 53, Hastings Way and the Chippewa Valley Industrial Park.

### **State Street**

Improve State Street through the Third Ward and Putnam Heights neighborhoods. This project may include reconstructing the failing retaining walls, improving the intersection at Lexington Avenue (possibly with a roundabout), improving the intersection at Graham and Washington, and partnering with the University and the Third Ward Neighborhood Association to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

### **Menomonie Street between Clairemont Avenue and 10th Ave**

Partner with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to increase the traffic capacity of Menomonie Street to accommodate planned land development including the University's event and recreation center. Also, improve the intersection at Clairemont Avenue.

## **TRAFFIC STUDIES**

### **Clairemont Avenue and Hendrickson Drive Area**

Study the vicinity of Clairemont Avenue and Hendrickson Road including Craig Road and Stein Boulevard. Seek creative ways to accommodate auto traffic, improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, and enhance appearances. In particular, accommodate better bicyclist and pedestrian movement among the university, the technical college, the hospital, the medical clinics and the commercial area.

### **Vicinity of Oakwood Mall**

Coordinate with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to study traffic volume and capacity on all roads in the vicinity of Oakwood Mall, particularly the intersection of Golf Road and US 53 at peak hours. Simultaneously seek to improve access by bicyclists and pedestrians to the retail destinations and across US 53.

### **Study Cameron and Madison Streets**

Study the Cameron–Madison Street corridor from Town Hall Road in the Town of Union to the Chippewa River. Establish the width of road right-of-way needed to accommodate autos, bicyclists, pedestrians, buses, utilities and trees. Assume an interchange at I-94, growth in all quadrants of downtown, and more housing between Town Hall Road (County EE) and Clairemont Avenue. Prepare a schematic drawing of the facility and an access management plan in conjunction with Eau Claire County.

### **Study Harding Avenue Hill**

Study closing the intersections along Harding Avenue at Jefferson Street and Lee Street then removing the third lane on Harding Avenue to create two bicycling lanes. Connect the bicycling lanes to a “bicycle boulevard” on Valmont Avenue. A “bicycle boulevard” is a street enhanced for bicycling with striped lanes or painted “share-road” emblems, corner curb bump-outs, parking bays and a narrowed space for autos.

**Study Birch Street**

Model traffic flow on Birch Street after the proposed railroad bridge on Galloway Street and eastern Hastings Way ramp have been built. Study the advisability of removing the Stop signs on Omaha Street at Putnam, Balcom, Spring and Churchill Streets.

**4. Land and Design for Future Roads and Road Improvements.**

Adopt and follow an Official Map of road rights-of-way (land) based on the functional classification plan and detailed traffic studies.

Guided by those sources, acquire sufficient land in advance of or at the time of land subdivision for the expected road needs. Acquire land through dedication by the subdividers and, in some cases, purchase by the City, County or State. Use the City’s powers of Extraterritorial Plat Approval to reserve and require dedication of road rights-of-way in the three-mile-wide band outside its borders. Conduct corridor preservation activities in cooperation with the County or Town. Carefully manage access throughout the life of the road.

The City’s road right-of-way width standards should include sufficient land for the needs of the road, utilities, landscaping, lateral clearance and, in most instances, sidewalks. Space for bicycle paths or on-street lanes may increase right-of-way needs.

Eau Claire will use the guidelines presented in Table 3-3 when reviewing proposed plats or Certified Survey Maps in its three-mile Extraterritorial Plat Approval Area Jurisdiction to ensure that sufficient right-of-way is dedicated for future roads, trails, utility and drainage.

**Table 3-3  
Design Guidelines by Functional Class of Roads**

Type of Street	Street Width *	Right-of-Way Width	Parking	Boulevard / Planting Strip	Sidewalk	Utilities
Local	28 to 32	60	One or both sides	6 to 9 with trees	2 @ 5	ROW and easement behind the sidewalk for electricity, telephone, cable TV. Sewer and water under the street.
Collector (Minor)	32	66 to 76	Both sides	6 to 9 with trees	2 @ 5	
Collector (Major) **	36 to 46**	Up to 80	Both sides	6 to 9 with trees	2 @ 6	
Minor Arterial **	36 to 60	Up to 90	Both sides	6 to 9 with trees	Varies	
Principal Arterial	4 to 6 lanes	Up to 90	None	Varies	Varies	
Cul de Sac (< 8 houses)	26	60	One side only	6 minimum with trees	2 @ 5	
Cul de Sac (8+ houses)	28	60	Both sides	6 minimum with trees	2 @ 5	

\* All dimensions are in feet. Street width is measured to the back of the curb.

\*\* May include a pair of striped bicycling lanes at 5 feet wide each.

**5. Cameron Street Interchange**

A “folded diamond” interchange is proposed at I-94 and Cameron Street, as shown by Figure 3-1. This improvement is desired by the City to provide an alternate route to downtown from I-94 and to improve local circulation in the City’s future growth area.

There is currently a six-mile distance between the interchange at State Highway 312 (the North Crossing) and State Highway 37 (Hendrickson Drive). Although it is unlikely that the proposed interchange at Cameron Street will be justified until growth in this area occurs, the City and the Town of Union should continue to acquire or reserve land for the interchange to avoid encroaching development and incompatible land uses. The City presently owns the land needed in the northeastern quadrant for the interchange.

**6. Jurisdictional Transfer of County Highway T**

Study and monitor County Highway T for possible improvements and possible transfer to the State. Collaborate with Chippewa and Eau Claire Counties, the West Central Regional Planning Commission and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Consider level of service, safety and the factors listed below.

County Highway T will likely serve an ever-increasing role in access between Eau Claire and US 29 or Chippewa Falls. Additionally, the combination of County Highway T (possibly designated as US 12), Clairemont Avenue (US 12) and Hendrickson Drive (State 37) could serve as a parallel reliever for I-94 in the metropolitan area.

Increased traffic on this route might eventually require a bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad track near Alpine Road.

In general, roads that serve local transportation needs should be under the jurisdiction of the City. Roads that serve regional or statewide transportation needs should be the jurisdiction of either the County or State. Jurisdictional assignments should be based on several factors including:

- Functional classification
- Route continuity and connectivity
- Type of trips using route
- Level of access
- Traffic volume
- Special facilities served.

## **Objective 4 -- Traffic Forecasting and Management**

### **Mitigate traffic congestion when and where necessary to maintain traffic flow and minimize travel delays with a balanced approach that respects community values.**

Eau Claire will work with the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (the Metropolitan Planning Organization for this metropolitan area) to update the computerized regional travel forecast model during 2015.

When traffic congestion is identified, either by observation or by a forecast, there are several ways to address this problem, some of which do not involve adding lanes. Transportation system management (TSM) and access management alternatives should also be considered when evaluating future capacity solutions. These policies are presented below.

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Future Capacity Analysis**

Use the regional travel model to prepare the more detailed sub-area studies described above.

The year 2035 regional travel model for the Eau Claire–Chippewa Falls Metropolitan Area was being prepared in 2015 by the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Once the model is completed, future traffic volumes, roadway capacities, deficiencies and possible system improvements can be identified with greater certainty. The model is based on the pattern of planned land use from each local unit of government in the area served by the Regional Planning Commission.

Figure 3-2 illustrates the forecast level of service, year 2045, no-build and build scenarios.

##### **2. Travel Model Maintenance**

Help the Metropolitan Planning Organization maintain or improve the accuracy of the regional travel model by periodically providing updated maps of existing and planned land use in a geographic information system format.

##### **3. Capacity**

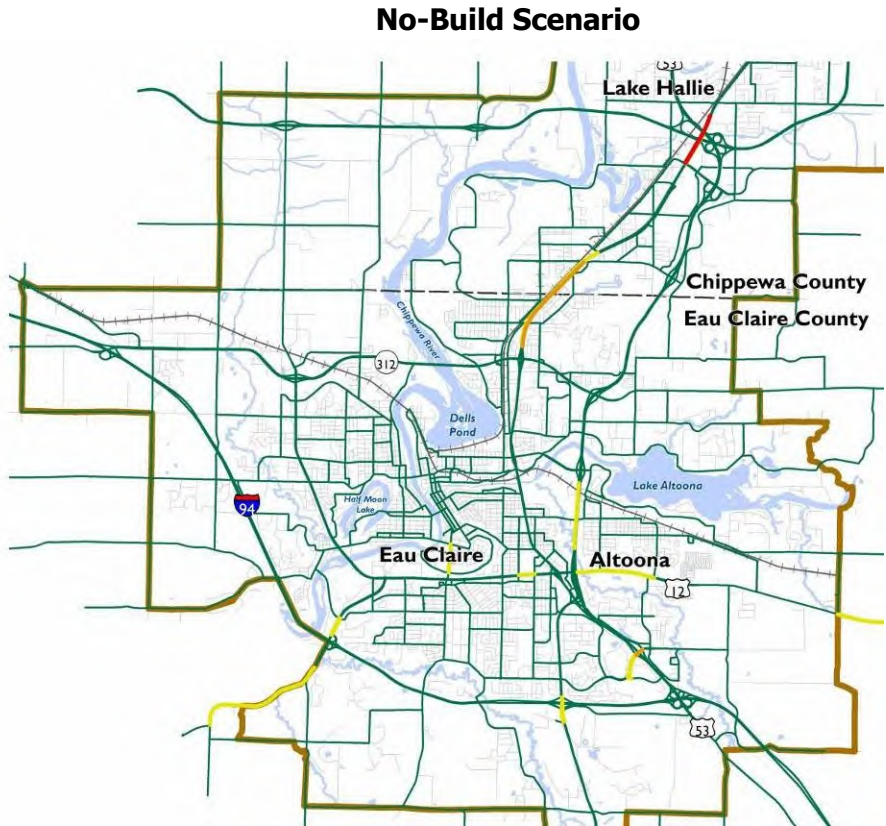
Capacity expansion is only one mitigation measure available to the City and will be used only after consideration of alternatives. Increasing capacity by building more lanes or widening roads may be counter-productive to other City objectives such as encouraging neighborhood revitalization or creating districts more friendly to walking, bicycling or riding the bus.



**Figure 3-2:  
Forecast Level of  
Service, Year 2045,  
No-Build and  
Build Scenarios**

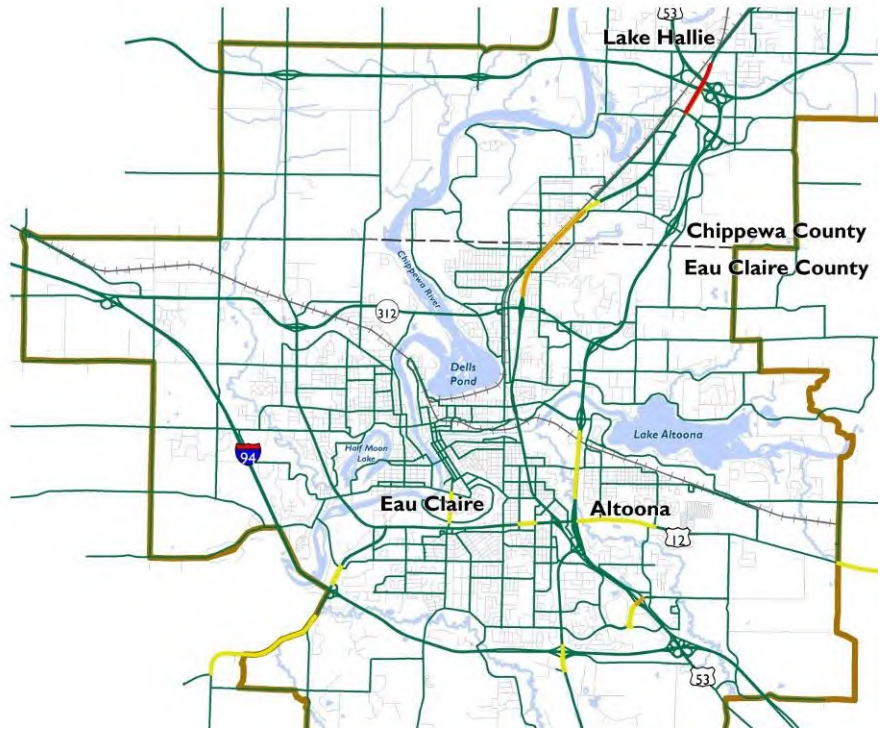
**Chippewa - Eau Claire  
Travel Demand Model:  
Future 2045 No-Build\*  
Level of Service (LOS)**  
\* includes committed projects

**Future 2045 No-Build LOS**  
— ABC  
— D  
— E  
— F



**Chippewa - Eau Claire  
Travel Demand Model:  
Future 2045 Build\*  
Level of Service (LOS)**  
\* includes committed + planned projects

**Future 2045 Build LOS**  
— ABC  
— D  
— E  
— F



**Build Scenario**

#### 4. Transportation System Management

Use transportation system management strategies on arterial roads to improve traffic flow, maximize capacity and increase overall system efficiency and safety. Transportation system management strategies include:

- **Advanced traffic signal control systems:** Traffic signal upgrades and timing adjustments are a cost-effective means of improving and optimizing traffic flow. Traffic signal timing should be a routine, ongoing activity involving a regular review of timing plans in light of actual traffic volumes and patterns.
- **Intelligent transportation systems:** WisDOT is promoting the use of technologies such as electronic message boards for cost-effectively mitigating transportation problems.
- **Intersection improvements:** Intersection improvements such as roundabouts increase capacity and safety when used at appropriate locations. There are several roundabouts in Eau Claire with more planned.

#### 5. Access Management

Adopt and follow the roadway access guidelines presented on Table 3-4 and Figure 3-3.

These guidelines specify the minimum spacing between public street intersections or private driveways along a given type of road, limit turning movements, and specify the spacing of traffic signals (such as signals instead of stop signs) on arterial facilities.

The guidelines seek to improve safety and operations by reducing vehicle conflicts, increasing the distance between conflict points and guiding drivers with respect to access locations.

Additional access management strategies that can supplement these guidelines include:

- Protect the functional area of intersections
- Ensure adequate sight distance
- Avoid offset access points
- Avoid skewed intersections that limit the line of sight
- Install left-turn lanes where appropriate
- Consider providing shared access
- Consider consolidating existing access points
- Consider partial access points to limit conflicts

Table 3-4 focuses on the future urban growth areas as defined by the Land Use Plan because developed areas are often difficult to retrofit. In already developed areas, applying an access management program usually must wait for a major reconstruction project along the target corridor. However, major existing corridors can capitalize on the access management strategies listed in the bullet points shown above.

In addition to access management policies, driveway spacing is also important for the design and function of the road. Locating driveways away from major intersections can



greatly improve the function of the intersection and increase safety. Figure 3-3 depicts federally-recommended guidelines for driveway spacing near intersections.

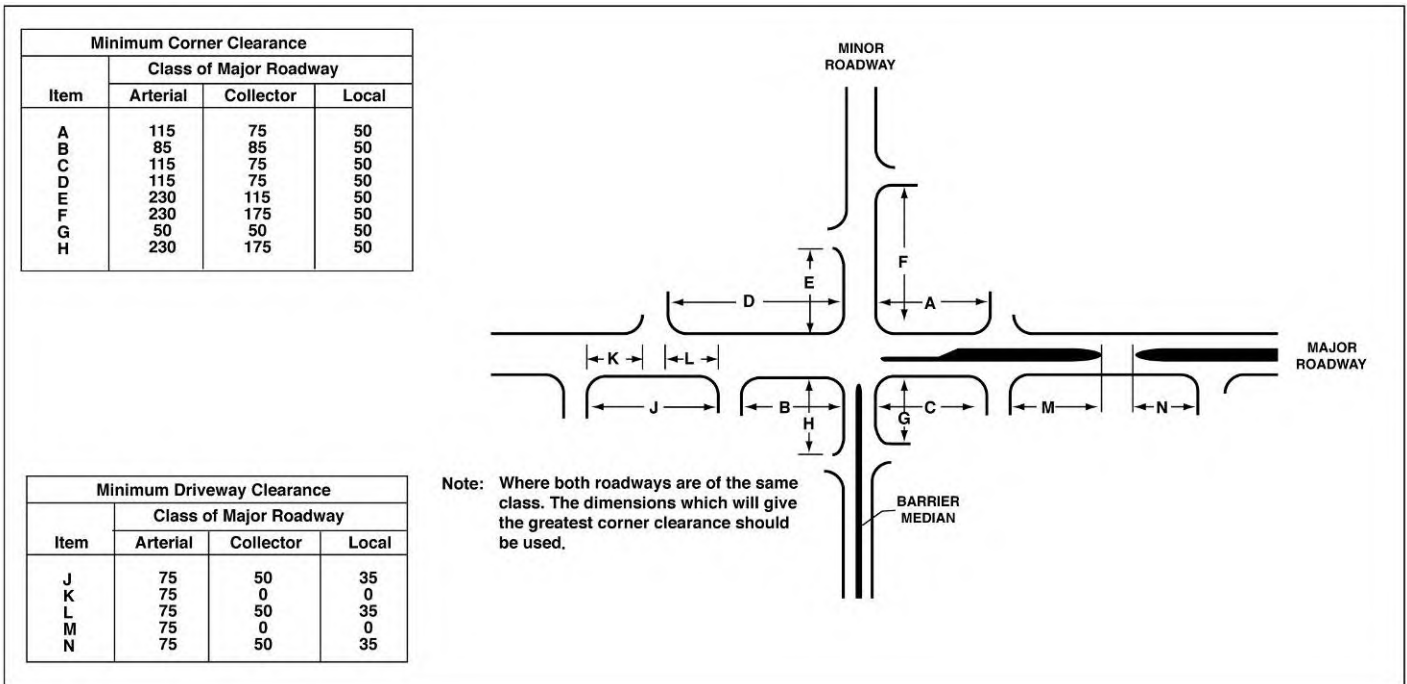
Access management and driveway spacing should be a consideration when redesigning any arterial or collector road.

**Table 3-4**  
**Access Management Guidelines for Intersections of Public Streets**

Road	Primary Full Movement Intersection Spacing	Conditional Secondary Intersection Spacing	Signal Spacing
Interstate/Freeway (ex. I-94, US 53)	1 mile	NA	NA
Expressway (ex. Hastings Way)	1 mile	1/2 mile	1 mile
Principal Arterials *	1 mile	1/2 mile	1 mile
Minor Arterials *	1/2 mile	1/4 mile	1/2 mile
Collectors	1/4 mile	1/8 mile	1/4 mile
Locals	600 feet	300 feet	Not applicable

\* May be less in central locations.

**Figure 3-3**  
**Driveway Location and Spacing Details**



Source: Federal Highway Administration.

## 6. Neighborhood Impacts

Design capacity improvements, when and where they are determined necessary, to minimize negative impacts to neighborhoods. Desirable features may include street trees, designs for appropriate speeds, and traffic calming features as described in Policy 5-3.

## 7. Traffic Studies

When the regional travel model has been updated, use it as the basis to evaluate the ability of various project options to reduce congestion in a particular sub-area. The model may also be expanded to evaluate the traffic impact of different land uses or the effect of increased transit, bicycling or walking. Such analysis can help decision makers select the appropriate mix of road improvements, land use, and alternative travel features to optimize efficiency, cost and benefit.

A list of needed sub-area traffic studies was presented under Policy 3-3.



Access management standards promote traffic safety and flow by separating intersections or driveways along a road according to the type of road, its traffic volume, traffic speed and adjacent land uses.

## Objective 5 - Neighborhood Streets

**Design neighborhood streets with features for driving, bicycling, walking and riding the bus while limiting the negative effects on adjacent land use.**

### Policies:

#### 1. Local Street Design

The design of new local streets should provide for traffic movement while ensuring a safe, attractive, and pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly neighborhood environment. The street design presented in Figure 3-4 provides 30-feet between the backs of curbs and allows for two-side parking and two-way traffic. This is the City's current practice.

**Table 3-5 lists design options** for new residential streets.

Figure 3-5 presents an **alternative** local street design that can be accomplished with only **28 feet** between the back of curbs; however, this design provides for parking on only one side of the street.

While the City's customary local residential street design calls for new local streets to be designed for a 32-foot width with two-side parking, the **City Council may approve narrower designs** in low-traffic situations at the request of the land developer.

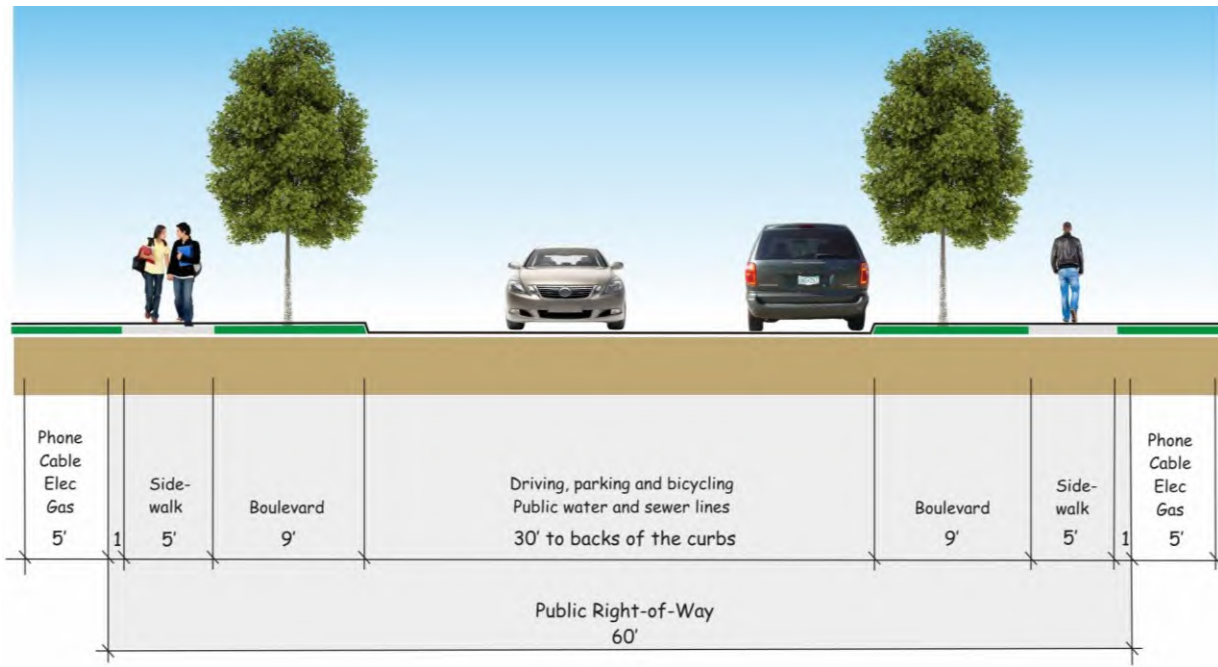
Table 3-5 includes a **minor collector street** listed as an alternative to the local street design where proposed neighborhood development is anticipated to produce more than 1,000 vehicles per day on a local street and/or have high on-street parking demand.

**Cul-de-sac streets** should only be allowed where topography limits access to properties from the interconnected street system.

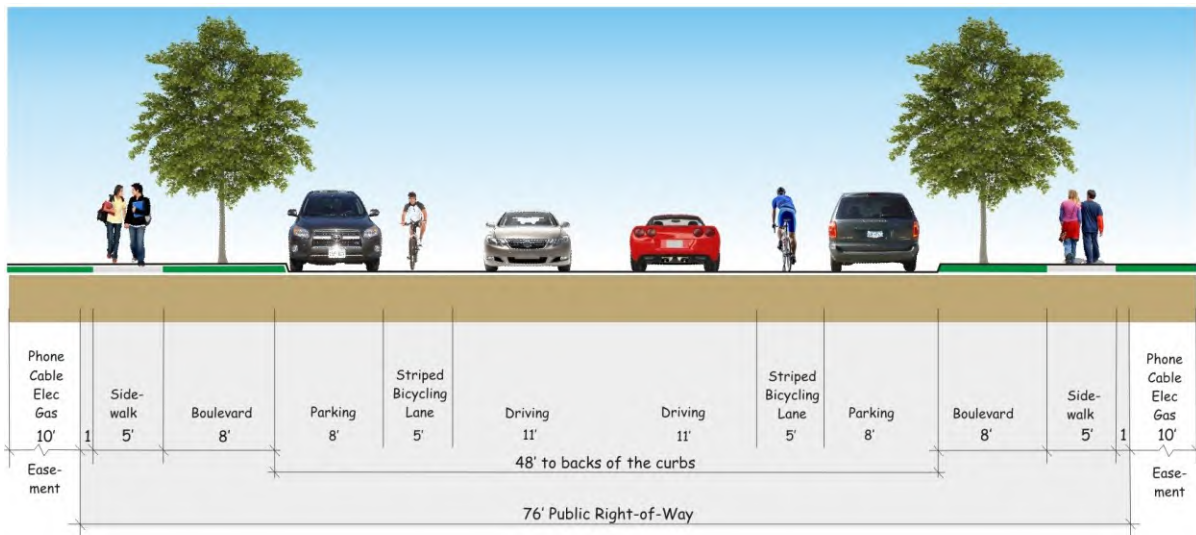
New local street design may integrate traffic-calming designs, particularly where the demand for on-street parking is light. Using traffic calming designs such as curb bump-outs at intersections and/or mid-block parking bays will help slow traffic, while still providing on-street parking on both sides of the street.

Narrow streets have been shown in other cities to reduce traffic speeds, creating a quieter, safer, and more comfortable pedestrian and bike-friendly environment. They benefit developers by reducing costs and benefit the City by reducing maintenance, snow removal and reconstruction costs.

**Figure 3-4**  
**Local Residential Street Design with Parking on Both Sides**



**Figure 3-5**  
**Minor Arterial Street Design with Parking and Bicycling Lanes**



**Table 3-5  
Design Features of New Residential Streets**

Type of Street	Street Width *	Right-of-Way Width	Traffic Direction	Parking	Planting Strip	Sidewalk	Utilities
Local	28 to 32	56 to 60	Two ways	One or both sides	6 to 9 with trees	2 @ 5	ROW and easement behind the sidewalk for electricity, telephone, cable TV. Sewer and water under the street.
Collector (Minor)	32	76	Two ways	Both sides	8 with trees	2 @ 5	
Collector (Major)	36	80	Two ways	Both sides	8 with trees	2 @ 6	
Cul de Sac (< 8 houses)	26	56 to 60	Two ways	One side only	6 with trees	2 @ 5	
Cul de Sac (8+ houses)	28	56 to 60	Two ways	Both sides	6 with trees	2 @ 5	

1. All dimensions are in feet. Street width is measured to the back of the curb.

**2. ADA-Compliant Streets**

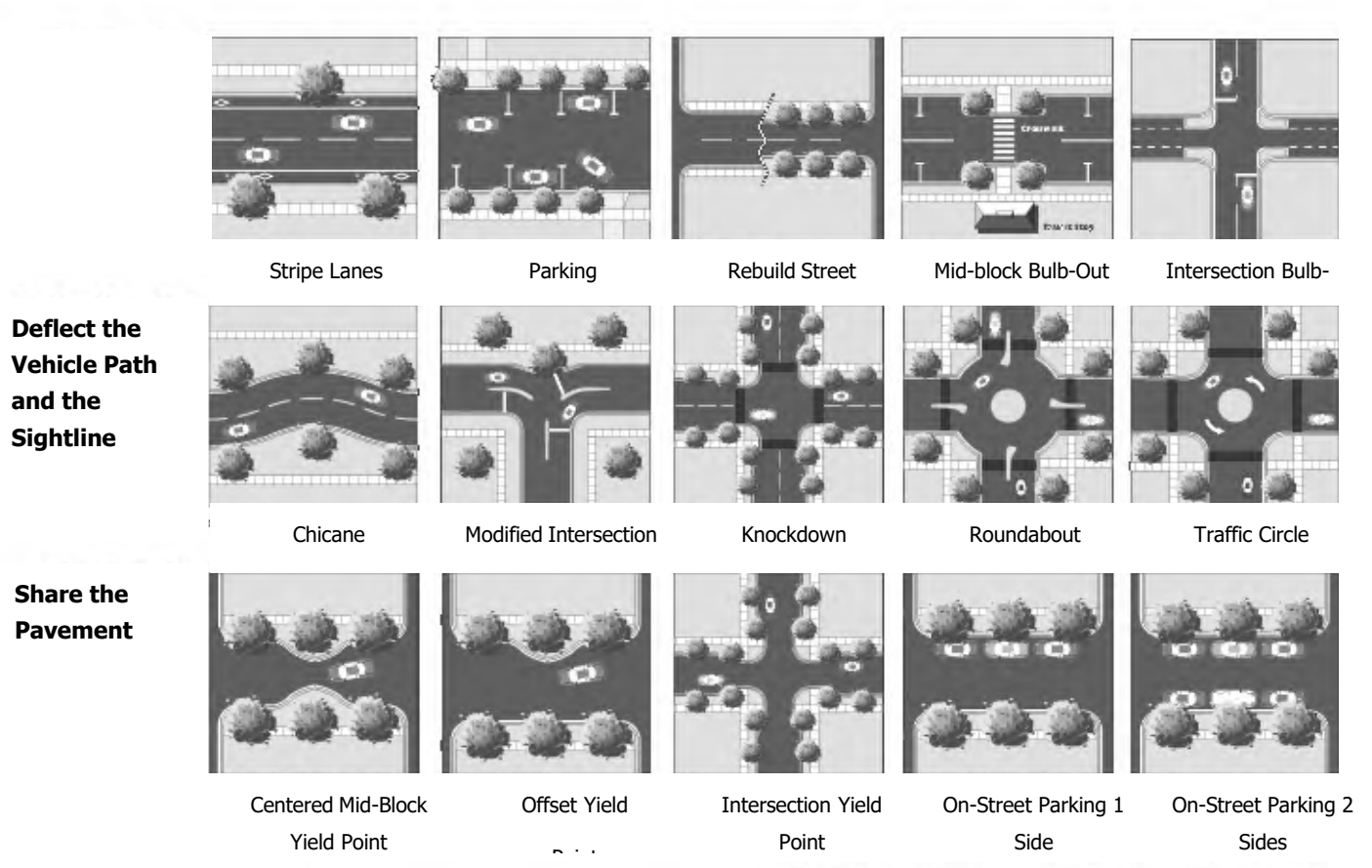
Continue to build and retrofit streets, sidewalks, traffic signals and related features to conform to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Additional costs associated with creating ADA-compliant streets during construction are minimal.

**3. Traffic Calming**

Use appropriate traffic calming strategies on local and collector streets where deemed appropriate. Measures may need to be taken to calm traffic in areas where excessive speeding is a problem, particularly where pedestrians are especially vulnerable, such as near schools and parks. A wide variety of traffic calming strategies are available as previously discussed and the City should institute a process for addressing traffic calming needs.

A traffic-calming program would provide residents with a process to work with neighbors toward addressing negative traffic impacts in their neighborhoods. Various traffic calming techniques are shown in Figure 3-6.

**Figure 3-6  
Traffic Calming Techniques**



## Walking

Walking accounted for 5 percent of Eau Claire’s commuter trips in 2012, which was much higher than transit at 1.2 percent or bicycle use at 1.2 percent.<sup>1</sup> The walking data may be skewed upward from the norm by the high number of students in Eau Claire. Virtually all trips begin and end with a walking trip, yet over the last 50 years walking as a form of transportation has generally been ignored.

Pedestrian issues should not be underestimated or undervalued. Similar to the road network, pedestrian facilities need to be viewed as a system providing for seamless and comfortable pedestrian movements throughout the community. For example, neighborhood sidewalk requirements will have only limited value if sidewalks end abruptly at the neighborhood perimeter or first major road.

In addition, sidewalks and paths should be coordinated with adjacent jurisdictions to avoid gaps in the system. It is important that neighborhoods have an interconnected sidewalk system and that major gaps from the past be retro-fitted, at least along collector and arterial streets.

Implementing the policies of the Land Use Plan in conjunction with the Transportation System Plan and urban design recommendations will be essential in creating a more pedestrian-friendly and walkable Eau Claire.

Current City policy and Subdivision Code Section 17.12.280 requires every new street to have a five-foot wide sidewalk on both sides, subject to City Council review. This ordinance dates back to 1974, but there has been inconsistent implementation of the sidewalk ordinance by changing City Councils. The result has been a mixture of streets with sidewalks on both sides, one side, or no sidewalks on either side. This has produced gaps in the pedestrian system.

Please refer to Figure 5-6 in the Transportation Assessment chapter of this plan for a map showing the current network of sidewalks and off-street paths.

One of the outcomes of the prior comprehensive plan was the creation of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, a group of citizens that advises the City Council.

The following objective and policies are consistent with and complementary to the vision, goals and objectives identified in the Wisconsin Department of Transportation’s *Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020*. The City should continue to work closely with WisDOT to ensure that pedestrian issues, particularly those affecting children, the elderly, and the disabled, are addressed along and across state trunk highways within Eau Claire. Special attention should be made to the unique needs of the disabled including, but not limited to, “slow-walkers”, wheelchair users and the use of “scooters”.

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<sup>1</sup> Census Transportation Planning Package based on the 2010 to 2012 American Community Survey by the US Census Department.



## **Objective 6 – Walking**

**Improve pedestrian connections to create a continuous and seamless pedestrian system, and enhance the pedestrian environment to create a more walkable community.**

### **Policies**

#### **1. Sidewalks**

Seek to construct sidewalks along both sides of all new local, collector, and arterial streets.

Sidewalks should be at least five feet wide along local and collector streets, possibly wider along arterial streets. Finish sidewalk connections and crosswalks at major intersections in coordination with new development.

When reconstructing streets without sidewalks, study pedestrian deficiencies in the immediate neighborhood and the connectivity of the overall pedestrian system to determine the need for sidewalks. Solicit comments from affected neighborhoods.

Review the City policy for constructing sidewalks along newly-built streets. The City Code currently requires sidewalks as part of a development agreement for major developments or at the time the main building is constructed. An alternative approach is to require all sidewalks to be installed when the street is built.

#### **2. Sidewalk System Plan, 2010**

Continue to build new sidewalks and off-street paths according to the recommendations of the *Eau Claire Bicycle and Pedestrian Systems Plan (2010)*. Please refer to that plan for recommendations, policies and maps.

Figures 5-12 and 5-13 of the Transportation Assessment chapter of this plan illustrate the existing system of sidewalks and the planned network of off-street paths.

#### **3. Gaps in the Sidewalk System**

Work to eliminate gaps in the sidewalk system within the City. Maps 7 and 8 illustrate the location of the most significant gaps in the City’s sidewalk system based on Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission and Public Works Department review of the existing infrastructure. Elimination of these gaps is important in order to reduce hazards and safety issues that may exist and encourage greater usage and a more “walkable” community.

Areas of high priority include:

- East Hamilton Avenue near Robbins Elementary School
- Golf Road east of Oakwood Hills Parkway
- Fairfax Park area
- London Road (Hamilton Avenue south to Damon Street)
- Marquette Street north to Piedmont Road, west of North High School
- Starr Avenue between Piedmont Road and Marquette Street
- Taft / Kay Street area south of Memorial High School
- Abby Hill Drive / Winsor Drive / Brookline Avenue, north of Northwoods Lane / Brookline Avenue to Las Salle Street

- Deblene Lane north of Vine Street
- Birch Street and Malden Avenue area.

The Public Works Department should periodically evaluate the sidewalk system in order to identify additional gaps that should be corrected.

#### **4. Gaps in the Off-Street Path System**

Continue to eliminate major gaps or missing linkages in the multiple-use path system, just as several have been filled since the prior Comprehensive Plan. Existing gaps that are of high priority to eliminate include:

- Truax Boulevard from North Clairemont Avenue to Preston Road
- The trail on the western side of Half Moon Lake
- The two rail-to-trail conversions leading to Roosevelt School
- The river crossing between the Roosevelt School trail and Forest Street
- A route from the planned river crossing to Forest Street Park
- A path along North Clairemont Avenue.

#### **5. Pedestrian Crossings**

Continue to design streets and pedestrian crossings to comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by providing appropriately designed pedestrian ramps. Pedestrian crossing design should be a priority in the design and construction or reconstruction of functionally classified roads.

Several principal arterial streets have fast-moving traffic with multiple through-lanes that are difficult for pedestrians to cross (e.g. Clairemont Avenue, Cameron Street or Hastings Way). Pedestrian crossing improvements on major roads near schools, parks and other high pedestrian activity areas should be a high priority. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission should prepare recommendations on safe street crossings. Striping and curb extensions (“bump-outs”) are two techniques that could be used to help pedestrians cross streets at intersections.

#### **6. Urban Design**

Create pedestrian-oriented environments by implementing this Plan’s land use and urban design recommendations.

Sidewalks by themselves will not induce walking. More important are an appropriate mix of land uses and densities, the quality and design of the built environment, pedestrian scale streetscapes, and pedestrian comfort.

Creating pedestrian environments between buildings even in auto-oriented commercial areas can encourage more walking between buildings. At a minimum, sidewalks or pedestrian areas should provide connections between buildings within developments. Providing pedestrian amenities such as trees, planters, street furniture, awnings, building windows, and so on is also helpful.

## **7. Traffic Calming**

Use appropriate traffic calming strategies in high pedestrian activity areas.

Measures may need to be taken to calm traffic in areas where pedestrians are especially vulnerable, such as near schools and parks. A wide variety of traffic calming strategies are available, as previously discussed. The sidewalk system plan should identify these areas and recommend appropriate traffic calming strategies where appropriate.

## **8. Downtown Pedestrian Connections**

Maintain the sidewalk and trail system throughout downtown and ensure that redeveloped areas include sidewalks and street crossings.

The pedestrian environment is particularly important in downtown, where the scale of development and access to a variety of shops, restaurants and businesses make walking an attractive alternative.

## **9. Sidewalk and Path Maintenance**

Proper maintenance of the existing sidewalks, multi-use pathways, and streets designated for bicycle use is critical to ensure high levels of safety and encourage increased use of the system. The following should be undertaken to ensure proper maintenance of these facilities:

- Continue the current City policy of snow removal from City sidewalks and crosswalks within 24 hours of a snowfall
- Ensure that the multi-use pathways and designated streets are maintained to provide safe travel for bicyclists and pedestrians on a year-round basis
- Develop a maintenance program for sidewalks abutting arterial streets and other major road corridors to remove winter accumulations of sand and debris in the spring
- Regularly evaluate the condition of sidewalks throughout the City and complete the necessary improvements
- Periodically evaluate lighting needs along sections of the multi-use pathway based on usage and site location factors in order to ensure the safety of those using the facility and to encourage optimal utilization
- Ensure that trees, bushes and other plantings do not obstruct pathways and sidewalks.

## **10. Safe Routes to Schools**

Expand the Safe Routes to School and Safe Steps Programs to all public elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. This includes interested parochial and private schools.

The goal of the Safe Routes program is to provide safe bicycling and walking opportunities to schools and instill values of bicycling and walking as life-long activities.

Some of this work to be completed includes cutting the curb face, installing ramps along the designated route, providing pavement markings at crossings, completing and widening sidewalks, and providing bike parking at each school.

## 11. Multi-Jurisdictional Cooperation

Work with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to identify and correct pedestrian barriers created by State highways and encourage sidewalks as part of new highway and bridge design. A recent success story is the upgrading of Hastings Way prior to its turn-back to the City.

Work with and encourage WisDOT to fund stand-alone sidewalk retro-fit projects under the regular 3R program as described in the WisDOT Pedestrian Plan.

Coordinate pedestrian network planning with contiguous jurisdictions to facilitate a seamless pedestrian and trail system.

## 12. Areas for Further Study

Study these locations, which were identified as having unique needs for walking or bicycling improvements. See Figure 3-8 and 3-9, below, for the locations, and the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan* for further descriptions.

- Piedmont Road, Starr Avenue and Western Avenue area
- Starr Avenue, Western Avenue, North Hastings Way and Highway 312 area
- Arbutus Drive vicinity
- Galloway Street and Hastings Way area
- Madison Street between North Farwell and Riverfront Terrace area
- North Farwell Street and Galloway Street area
- Southeast of the River Confluence area
- South Farwell Street and Washington Avenue area
- Harding Street Area
- South Hastings Way (Kirk Street to the Eau Claire River)
- Brackett Avenue and Keith Street area
- State Highway 93 and Brian Street
- Oakwood Mall area
- Lorch Avenue
- State Street
- Thorp Drive and Summit Avenue area
- Sacred Heart Hospital and University area
- Craig Road and West Clairemont Avenue area
- Short Street and Highway 37
- North Clairemont Avenue and Menomonie Street area
- North Clairemont Avenue and Alpine Street area
- Kane Road.

## Bicycling

Eau Claire has 4.9 miles of bicycling lanes, 34 miles of off-road multi-use paths, 3.8 miles of sharrows and 0.4 miles of bicycle boulevard. The backbone of Eau Claire’s off-street path system is the Chippewa River State Trail, a 37-mile State facility that runs along the Chippewa River with a trail head at Phoenix Park. Figure 3-7 shows the existing and proposed off-street path system.



A "sharrow"

The *Bicycle and Pedestrian System Plan* includes many recommendations for public improvements that would benefit bicyclists, plus rider education, bicycle licensing and enforcement.

### Objective 7 – Bicycling

**Continue to build a connected bicycle route and trail network that is viable, convenient and safe and that encourages both utilitarian and recreational riding.**

#### 1. Bicycle Plan Implementation

Continue to implement the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, 2010*, to create a city-wide network of striped on-street bicycling lanes and off-street paths. That plan, available on the City’s Website, has many recommendations for facility design, bike parking and public education that will help make bicycling more popular and safe. Coordinate route alignment and design with adjacent communities.

Figures 3-8 and 3-9 show the existing and **planned bicycling system** including on-road lanes, off-road paths and areas needing further study. See the list on the previous page of areas needing further study.

Follow a **“complete streets” philosophy** when designing new streets or rebuilding existing streets. A “complete street” is one designed to be safe and convenient for all users including motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians including people with mobility restrictions. This may include various traffic-calming features such as: narrower pavement, on-street parking, chicanes, raised crosswalks, median islands and curb bump-outs.

Apply the zoning regulation that requires consideration of **bicycle parking** for any development that is subject to Site Plan Review.

Build according to these **system categories**: (1) Multiple-Use Off-Street Paths, (2) Primary On-Street Routes, (3) Local Bicycle Routes and (4) Local Streets.

#### 2. Off-Street Paths Network

Continue to expand the system of off-street bicycling facilities as shown by Figure 3-7 and described in the Parks and Greenways System Plan chapter, Objective 4.

#### 3. Primary On-Street Routes

Primary on-street routes may accommodate a variety of improvements depending upon the characteristics of each street. Optimally, they will include bicycle lanes on both sides, signs indicating it is a primary route and bicycle actuation of traffic signals.

Improve the Primary Route streets that currently have no facilities in this sequence:

1. Paint the bicycle lanes, marked edge lines or shared-lane markings on those streets that currently have sufficient width; see as Appendix D of the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*
2. As primary route streets are reconstructed, retro-fit them with striped bicycling lanes as a first priority and shared-lane markings as a second option. Other options such as the off-street path should also be considered in appropriate situations. Space for on-street bicycle lanes may sometimes be created by reconfiguring lane striping.
3. If no bicycle facility can be incorporated into the road because of conditions, install signs to direct bicyclists through the area. Consider using the “sharrow” symbol.

#### **4. Local Bicycle Routes**

No lane markings are needed, but each route should be signed to designate the street as part of the system, informing bicyclists that the route connects to a primary route or off-street path.

These routes generally have lower traffic volumes resulting in fewer conflicts between bicyclists motorists. They provide the connections from the neighborhood areas to the primary routes.

#### **5. Local Streets**

Continue to require that local and collector residential streets are fully interconnected and linked to the framework of arterial streets. This is the most effective and least costly way to accommodate and encourage bicycling. No special treatments such as street markings or signing would be provided.

These streets are generally low-volume, low-speed local residential streets or streets having direct access to the local or primary routes or off-street pathway network.

#### **6. Future Local and Collector Streets**

Require that future local and collector streets be interconnected to the maximum extent possible so that all streets can become part of the bicycling -- and walking -- network. All new collector and minor arterial roads should be built with bicycle lanes or paved shoulders that meet WisDOT guidelines for width, striping and signage. Use bike-safe sewer grates.

#### **7. Wayfinding Signs and Maps**

Design and install a city-wide sign and map system that guides bicyclists and pedestrians through the network, across the city and to key destinations. The signs should include a symbol that contributes to the “brand” of Eau Claire. Provide signs for all of the multi-use paths, primary on-street routes, local bicycle routes, and major walking routes. Also, publish system maps on paper and the City Website.

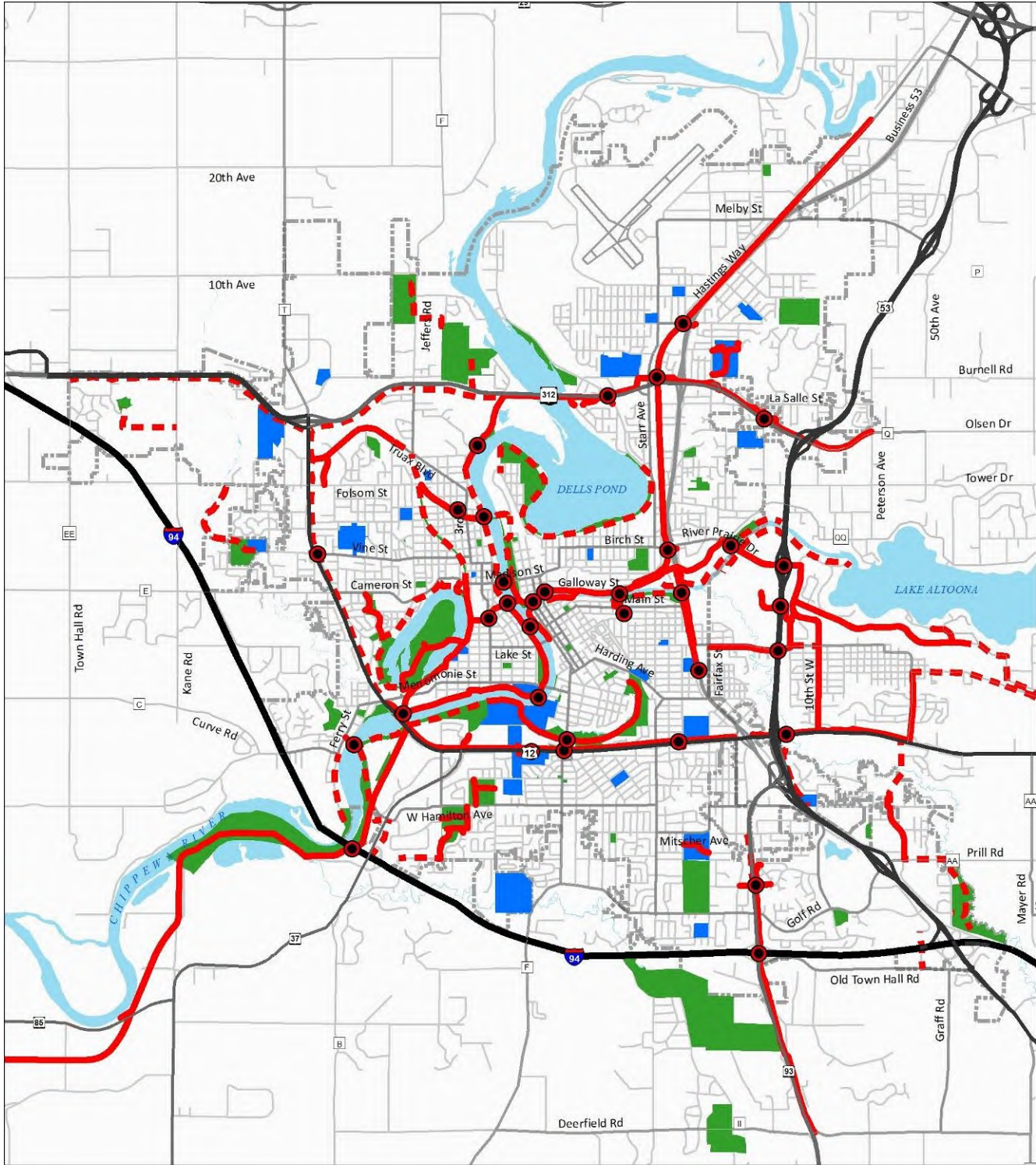
#### **8. Site Design**

Require that major commercial developments, tourist attractions, public buildings, campus or downtown buildings include bicycle parking near the main entrance. Use walkways or bicycling lanes to create safe routes between streets and storefronts.

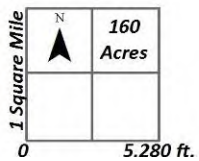
#### **9. National Bicycle Route System**

Work with the Wisconsin DOT and DNR to designate the Chippewa Valley State Trail as a segment of US Bicycle Route 30. <http://www.adventurecycling.org/routes-and-maps/us-bicycle-route-system/national-corridor-plan/>.





- Grade Separated Facility
- Existing Multi-Purpose Path
- Proposed Multi-Purpose Path
- Schools
- Parks



*Figure 3-7*  
**Existing and Proposed Multi-Use Paths**



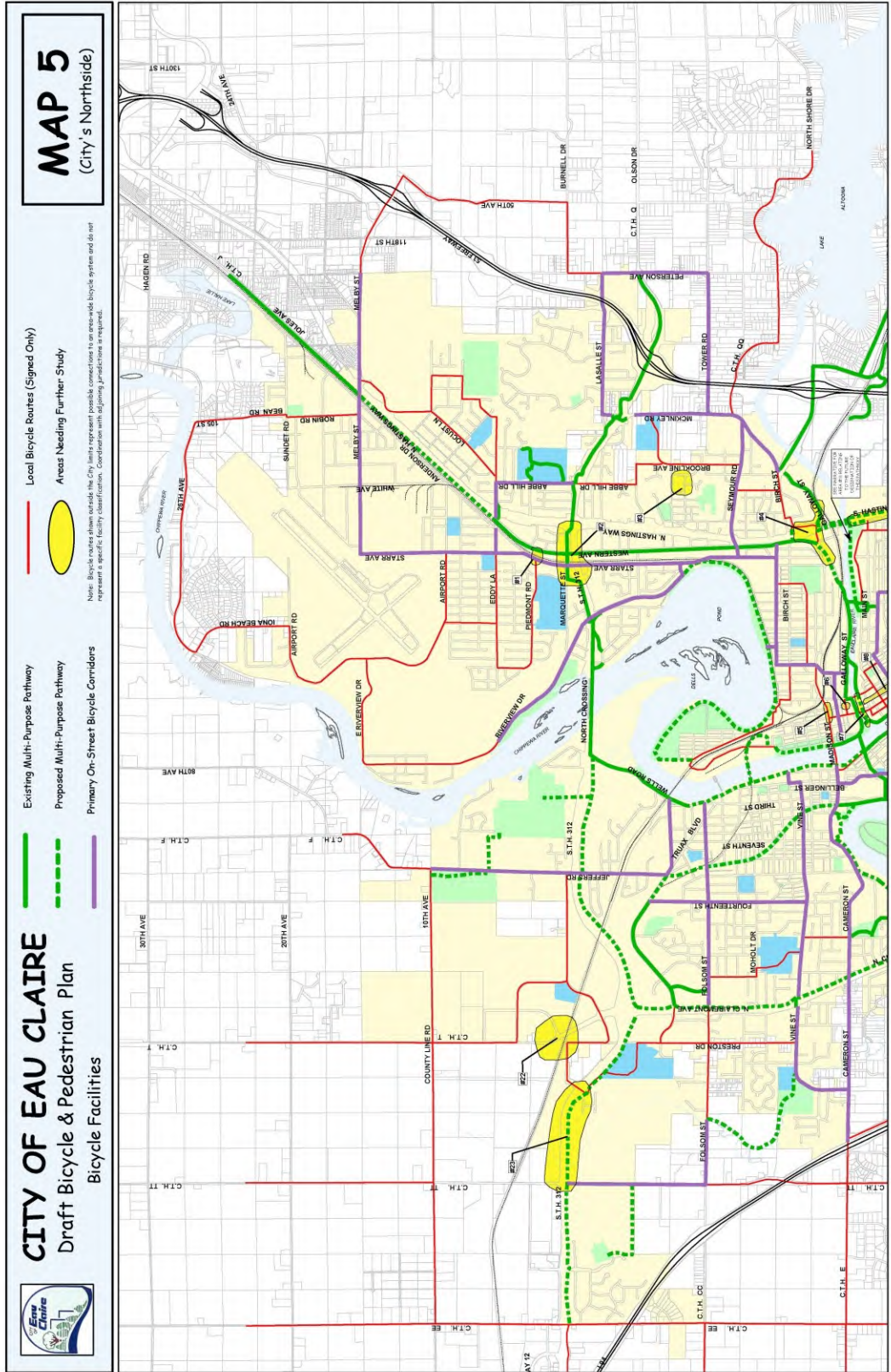


Figure 3-8: Existing and Planned Bicycling Routes – North



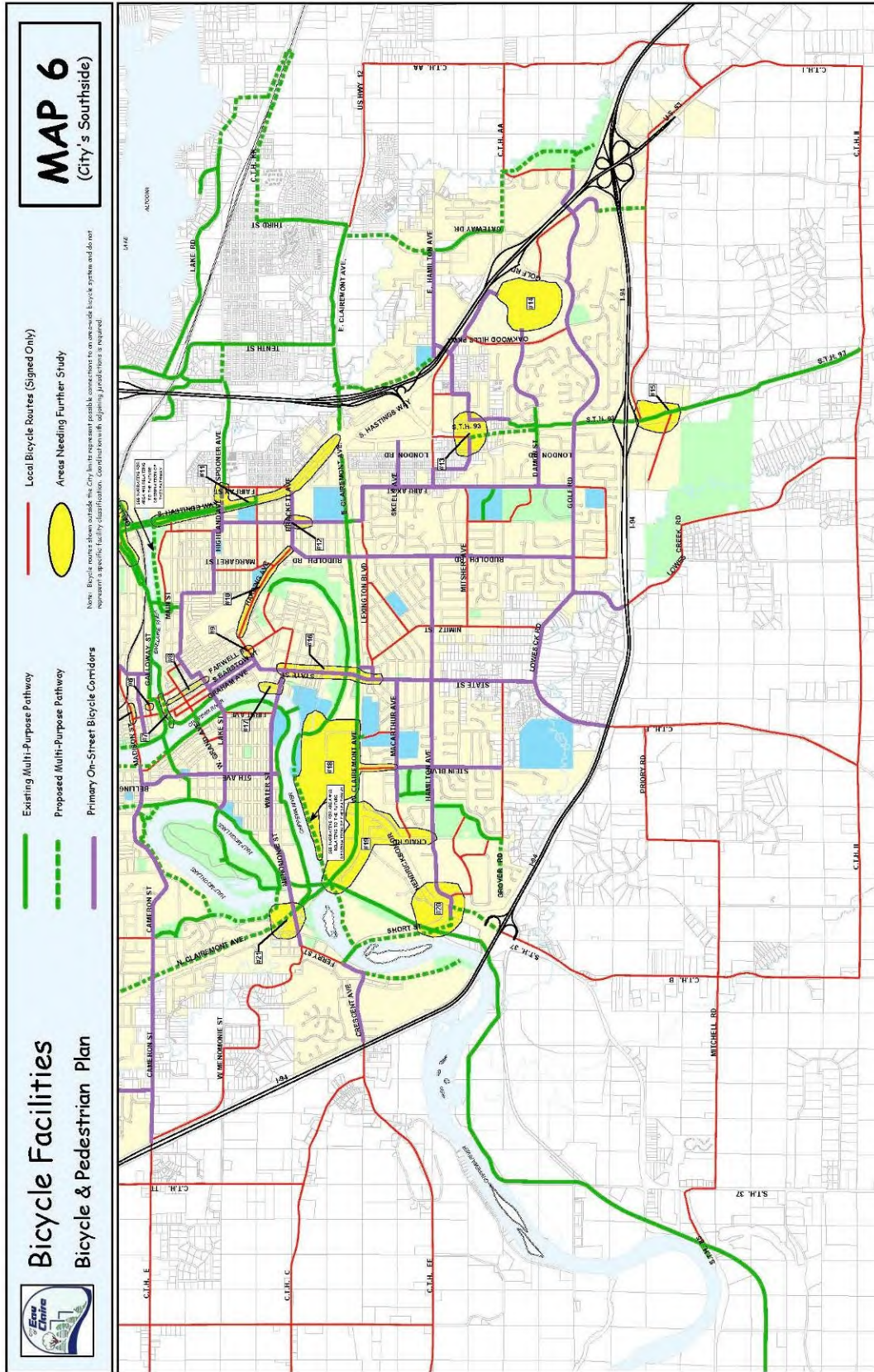


Figure 3-9: Existing and Planned Bicycling Routes – South

## Bus Transit

### Objective 8 – Transit and Paratransit

#### **Sustain and improve the local bus system so that it not only serves the transit-dependent population but also attracts riders who have a choice of travel modes.**

The Eau Claire transit system is an essential public service that provides mobility for those who cannot drive, cannot afford to drive or choose not to drive.

An efficient transit system provides numerous benefits to the community. Several studies have documented the cost savings resulting from public transportation. A report prepared by WisDOT, *The Socio-Economic Benefits of Transit in Wisconsin*, found that transit benefits can be realized through savings in healthcare, employment, education, overall costs associated with discretionary trips (entertainment, recreation, shopping, etc.) and congestion management.

Some of the benefits in Wisconsin were:

- Health care accounts for over 10 million public transit trips annually resulting in a total savings of \$193 million.
- Employment trips account for 47.9 million transit trips per year in Wisconsin for a savings of \$333 million.
- Wisconsin transit riders save \$91.3 million each year for educational trips.
- Wisconsin transit systems provide 18 million trips annually for purposes of entertainment, recreation, shopping or tourism purposes.

To sustain the system, Eau Claire must be appropriately dense and walkable. Several of the policies of the Land Use Plan promote nodes and corridors of moderately dense development and a pattern of streets, sidewalks and site design that allow walking to and from the bus stops. Excessive parking requirements and subsidized parking create a disincentive for transit use.

Eau Claire Transit (ECT) maintains the *Transit Development Plan and Long-Range Plan Element (TDP)* that identifies the major priorities for the transit system. The most significant items related to transit are short-term reductions in service as a result of fiscal operating constraints and constructing the new downtown Eau Claire transit station. In addition, the TDP has classified data regarding service modifications by short-, mid- and long-term changes. The TDP also presents a financial plan for implementing specific capital, service and operational improvements. Finally, the TDP recommended ECT become more involved in site plan review. Additional information regarding the current transit system is discussed below.

### **Policies**

#### **1. Transit Development Plan**

Continue to follow the recommendations laid forth in the *Transit Development Plan and Long-Range Plan Element (TDP)*. Update those plans according to the schedule mandated by the Federal Transit Administration. The major recommendations of the TDP are:

##### **First Priority: Neutral Cost Improvements**

Because they can be accomplished using existing resources, the neutral-cost improvements are the top priority for projects that can be implemented in the five-year time frame. There are numerous options for route adjustments and consolidation of routes to offer higher frequency service and improve efficiency at negligible cost to the City, and there is quite a

bit of flexibility as to how Eau Claire Transit can go about implementing these improvements. The changes to Route 6, Route 8, and Route 20 present the least impact to current users, as would the changes to parking lot deviations. The best course of action would be to conduct further public outreach on each option and let that guide the re-routing decisions.

**Second Priority: Targeted Frequency Investments**

After the neutral-cost strategies have been implemented, Eau Claire Transit can address system growth by adding frequency to selected routes.

The routes with the highest potential for growth are the Route 7 and Route 5, Route 2 and Route 12, and Route 17 and Route 20. Also, the UWEC routes (Route 9’s) have a high potential for growth. Routes that serve the core of the city and areas near the UWEC campus should be given priority during this phase. However, the shortcoming with implementing these strategies is that they will require additional buses, so not all could be implemented at once.

Even if sufficient capital funding for vehicle replacement became available, the transfer facility and bus storage facility do not have capacity for additional vehicles.

Thus, the route selected for frequency investment should be based on additional stakeholder input, operational feasibility (transfer center capacity during peak times) and the availability of funding to support expanded service.

**Third Priority: Capital Investment**

Very little transit service expansion can occur without first investing in new buses and buildings. New service will require additions to the fleet, so vehicle replacement is the highest priority. Additional service will require more space at the transfer facility and more space to store vehicles.

A replacement **downtown transit center** was in the early planning phases in 2015 and should be constructed to accommodate future growth of the system.

Also, sheltered cold storage for any additional vehicles should be provided, either by expanding the garage or by constructing an auxiliary bus barn.

**Fourth Priority: Full System Development**

After the above needs are met, the long term strategy should be to better serve existing markets and serve new markets by strategically deploying new service as money become available. These services should be deployed in the following order of priority:

- |                               |                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Expanded UWEC service      | 4. Carson Park shuttle |
| 2. Saturday service expansion | 5. Regional service    |
| 3. The Third Ward circulator  | 6. Sunday service.     |



A new transit center is being studied.



## **2. Site Plan Application Review**

Continue the practice of involving a representative of Eau Claire Transit in the process of reviewing applications for land development.

This collaboration has led to better site development and increased transit ridership, walking and bicycling.

## **Paratransit**

As required by federal law, Eau Claire Transit also provides paratransit service to people in Eau Claire and Altoona who cannot use fixed-route bus service. Paratransit service includes a fleet of wheelchair-accessible vans that provide door-to-door service upon request. Ridership has increased, and the cost per trip, which is heavily subsidized, has decreased. This trend is expected to continue to increase as the Baby Boomer generation ages.

The Transit Commission regularly examines the cost of paratransit and implements policy changes to keep costs as efficient. Examples of cost-effective policy changes include receiving funds to implement an In-Person Certification contract with a local senior center to ensure that only those persons eligible for paratransit receive service. In addition, the Transit Commission instructed staff to work closely with the Eau Claire County Department of Health Services. This partnership resulted in thousands of dollars in savings annually because of these joint programs with the County.

Another way of reducing paratransit cost is to encourage some riders to use the fixed route system if they are able. The Transit Commission is continuously analyzing the fixed-route system to assure that routes are within a reasonable walking distance of the such populations so that they can use the fixed route at a lower, more efficient per ride cost.

Under current City ordinance, providers of paratransit and private transit services must be licensed. Upgraded standards and a regular inspection program should be considered to assure the public has safe and reliable service.

## **Policies**

### **1. Ensure High Quality Paratransit Service**

Continue to maintain a high quality paratransit service including the vehicles, employees and service that is offered.

### **2. Maintain or Improve Cost-Effective Service**

Continue efforts to provide cost-effective service. The recent increase in paratransit ridership illustrates the need for this type of service within the Eau Claire area.

### **3. Vehicle-for-Hire Ordinance**

The City's Vehicle-for-Hire ordinance addresses the licensing and operation of paratransit companies, cabs and other transportation companies. Consider amendments regarding stricter enforcement on vehicle cleanliness, reliability, safety conditions, and a regular inspection program to ensure the safe transport of passengers.

## Parking

Parking is both a land use issue and a transportation issue. An average parking space including driveways requires about 320 square feet of land. Large surface parking lots can be a barrier to pedestrians and discourage walking and transit trips. Also, the availability and price of parking has been shown to be a significant factor in commuting decisions. Therefore, parking policy should not be thought of in isolation from transportation policy in general.

Downtown parking is generally seen as having the most contentious parking issues. While providing for parking is important in creating an accessible downtown, it is only one component of many. Clearly, parking should be available, but it should not be allowed to overwhelm what makes downtown unique and attractive.

### Objective 9 - Parking

**Require only the amount of parking necessary to avoid problems and maintain viable businesses, considering transit and on-street spaces.**

#### Policies:

#### 1. Downtown Parking Management Plan

Downtown should not try to provide vast amounts of free parking as suburban areas do. Instead, there should be just enough supply restrictions and a pricing plan that encourages alternatives to single-occupant auto trips.

Implement the recommendations of the *Comprehensive Downtown Parking Study, 2015*, including:

- Build a three-story parking structure with a capacity of 575 spaces in the North Barstow District; if any of the six variables listed in the report occur, a fourth level might be warranted;
- Upgrade the physical design and user comfort features of the Municipal Ramp;
- Improve the parking enforcement program in terms of technology and staff assignments;
- Dedicate parking fine and enforcement revenues to the parking utility budget;
- Adjust the management and operational coordination of the parking system; and
- Adjust the charges and enforcement of the parking system to encourage more off-street parking and less reliance on the on-street spaces.

#### 2. Downtown Customers and Visitors

The most desirable and convenient parking should be managed to encourage customer and visitor access. Consistently full parking spaces have the same effect as having no parking spaces. A parking lot is generally considered full at 90 to 95 percent occupancy. Parking management strategies should be used to maintain these occupancy rates by promoting higher turnover for the highest demand parking spaces. The least convenient parking lots or ramps should be targeted for long term and employee usage. Parking management strategies include:

- Set time limits and pricing to promote higher short-term parking turnover.

- Limit lower level ramp parking (i.e., most convenient parking) to customers by prohibiting parking prior to retail hours.
- Increase on-street parking along low traffic streets (consider angle parking where right-of-way permits). While on-street parking, particularly angle parking has been shown to increase accident rates, the severity of crashes are lower due to the traffic calming effect on-street parking creates.
- Promote shared parking agreements for compatible uses (e.g. office parking with high demand during the weekdays and entertainment uses with high demand during evenings and weekends).

### **3. Neighborhood Parking**

On-street parking in residential areas near employment centers, commercial sites and colleges should strike a balance between providing resident parking and providing overflow commercial and employee parking. Requiring off-street parking may result in less attractive and less pedestrian friendly neighborhoods.

Consider strategies for addressing residential area on-street parking that allow flexibility for neighborhood-specific situations that may include:

- “Resident-only” permit zones.
- “Resident-only” permit zones with other users allowed to purchase parking permits.

Consistent parking policies throughout the community may not be possible because of differing levels of demand and particular issues related to any given neighborhood.

Benefits of allowing or encouraging on-street parking include:

- Traffic calming by narrowing through traffic lanes
- Buffering between moving traffic and pedestrians
- Use of “empty” or unused street space
- Revenue generation.

### **4. Minimum Parking Requirements**

Review and revise as needed the minimum and maximum parking ratios by type of land use as found in the zoning ordinance.

Requiring more parking than reasonably necessary yields lower land use density and greater impervious surface. Off-street parking areas can quickly grow and consume a tremendous amount of land if it is not examined critically. Mitigation measures include:

- Exempt downtown from minimum parking requirements
- Increase flexibility with minimum parking requirements to reflect typical daily demand and allow innovative parking provisions.
- Encourage mixed use developments that share parking.



## Passenger Railroad Service

The Midwest High-Speed Rail Association is an initiative that proposes a high-speed passenger rail service which would serve the Midwest region with Chicago serving as the hub.

In a July, 2002, report prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, several alternative passenger rail scenarios for service between Chicago and St. Paul were analyzed. The “Eau Claire plus La Crosse” option would provide direct train service from Eau Claire to St. Paul as well as to La Crosse, Madison and points east. An “Eau Claire West” option would provide frequent train service back and forth between Eau Claire and St. Paul and would retain bus service to the rail route for direct trips east. These two options were forecast to produce similar ridership and financial results. Both would improve the overall financial performance of the base Midwest Regional Rail System.

However, a decision to move forward with service across Wisconsin has been stymied by an order of Governor Walker and was no longer being considered in 2015. Building the system would take many years even after funding was committed, and money does not appear to be forthcoming in the near future. However, the potential for passenger rail to the area should still be considered.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation updated its *Statewide Rail Plan* in 2015 and included an eastern leg of passenger service that would terminate in Eau Claire. The route compared favorably with other routes across Minnesota. A local citizens group, West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition, is promoting this line.

The location of the Eau Claire station for any high-speed train would be important to its convenience and success, and perhaps have some positive effect on nearby land development.

### Objective 10 - Passenger Rail

#### Help bring high-speed passenger rail service to Eau Claire.

##### Policies

#### 1. High Speed Passenger Rail Options

Work with the states of Wisconsin and Minnesota and citizens advocacy groups to promote Eau Claire as part of a chosen route for the potential high-speed passenger rail service.

#### 2. Station Location

If a high-speed rail route is chosen that includes Eau Claire, work to have the station located in downtown Eau Claire and accessible by Eau Claire Transit, such as near Banbury Place.

Passenger rail service between Eau Claire and the Twin Cities is being studied. Eau Claire is the proper size and distance for that service.



## Freight Railroad Service

Overall, Eau Claire is not heavily dependent on rail transportation for the shipment of goods. The Transportation Assessment chapter described the two Union Pacific Railroad lines that cross the northern part of the city, the volume of freight rail traffic and its rate of growth.

There is the potential for conflict between trains and nearby land uses as well as safety concerns at railroad street crossings. Railroads traveling through or near residential neighborhoods can be disruptive and create safety concerns. At-grade railroad crossings can create safety and traffic problems.

Quiet zones have been found effective in mitigating the disruptive effects of locomotive horns through residential and downtown areas, and it has been documented that they improve safety through their federally-required supplemental safety measures.

In 2014, the City of Eau Claire studied the feasibility of establishing one or more railroad “quiet zones.” Two possible Quiet Zones were studied:

1. Galloway and Putnam Street Crossings
2. Seven crossings from Centre Street to Hogarth Street.

Figures 5-18 and 5-19 in the Transportation Assessment show the location of the nine proposed Quiet Zones. Associated text described their features and estimated costs.

Since the 2005 *Comprehensive Plan*, two abandoned railroad corridors a in the West Riverside Neighborhood and a related Chippewa River bridge have been converted to multiple-use paths.

## Policies

### Objective 11 - Freight Railroads

**Work with private railroads to ensure safe crossings and mitigate impacts to neighborhoods.**

#### Policies:

#### 1. Railroad Quiet Zones

Implement the improvements recommended in the 2014 Quiet Zone Assessment as other improvements to those individual track crossings are required.



In a railroad quiet zone, safety controls are upgraded in exchange for less horn use.

## **Truck Freight Service**

Truck freight movements are essential to the local and regional economy. Most finished consumer goods arrive by truck and therefore need to have access to commercial activity centers. Truck routes should direct truckers to their destinations on the most appropriate roads in order to minimize truck noise and safety impacts in residential areas and reduce wear on roads that are not suited to heavy vehicle traffic.

### **Objective 12 – Trucking Service**

**Provide for the safe and efficient movement of truck traffic through Eau Claire while minimizing negative impacts to neighborhoods.**

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Truck Routes**

Continue to designate and sign routes that direct trucks via appropriate roads while discouraging travel through residential areas.

If it is brought to the City's attention that some trucks are diverging from the truck routes, staff will discuss the matter with the appropriate businesses.

##### **2. Roads to Industrial Sites**

Design and build truck routes used to access industrial areas to adequately accommodate heavy truck traffic.

## **Chippewa Valley Regional Airport**

A recent plan for the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport forecasts a rising number of enplanements and a slight increase in air cargo service, which has always been a small component of the airport’s activity. In 2014, the number of annual enplanements was approximately 22,000; the forecast for year 2031 is 34,000.

As of 2014, there were no regularly scheduled air cargo operations locally because most freight is trucked to or from the Twin Cities. Only 6 to 10 cargo flights occur at the airport in a given year.

In the *Airport Master Plan*, two alternative sites were identified for development of air cargo operations in the long-term future.

### **Objective 13 – The Regional Airport**

**Coordinate efforts with the management of the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport in their effort to maintain and improve passenger and freight service while minimizing impacts to adjacent residential neighborhoods.**

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Airport Facilities Layout**

Eau Claire will coordinate with the administrators of the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport in their effort to maintain and improve passenger and freight service. However, the City will insist that airport improvements are designed in a way that minimizes adverse effects on nearby roads, bridges, utilities and existing or future residential neighborhoods.

##### **2. Air Cargo Operations**

Amend the Land Use Plan in this *Comprehensive Plan* to allow for air cargo operations. This change is shown in Table 2-2 of the Land Use and Growth Management Plan chapter.

Reflect this proposed Plan modification by amending the airport zoning ordinance from the Public District to a new zone that is specific to the airport, similar to the zone administered by Eau Claire County, the owner of the airport.

##### **3. Airport Access**

Cooperate if Airport management or Chippewa County wishes to invest in improvements to Melby Street or to provide wayfinding signs leading from US 53 and Hastings Way to the airport. Improving that corridor is identified as one of the top ten road improvements desired in this Comprehensive Plan. (See Objective 3, Policy 3.)

## Plan Action Steps

The City will take the following steps to implement the recommendations of the Transportation Plan.

**Table 3-6  
Transportation Plan Actions**

Action	Timing
Participate in the <b>review of plats</b> and site plans and other city planning; recommend design adjustments to private or public facilities for capacity, flow, safety and economy	Ongoing
Implement the recommendations of the 2015 <del>Downtown</del> <b>Parking Study</b>	2016 <u>Completed</u>
Conduct a feasibility study for <b>Galloway Street</b> bridge and connecting links	2016—2020 <u>Moved back for future study areas and consideration</u>
<del>Conduct a feasibility study for</del> <b>State Street</b> improvements	2016—2020 <u>Completed</u>
Conduct a feasibility study for <b>Melby Street</b> improvements	2020—2025 <u>In design for construction moved back to a later date 2022-2025, working with the railroad</u>
Conduct <b>traffic studies</b> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Menomonie Street</li> <li>▪ Clairemont – Hendrickson area</li> <li>▪ Oakwood Mall area</li> <li>▪ Cameron-Madison corridor</li> <li>▪ Birch Street – Galloway corridor</li> <li>▪ Harding Avenue corridor</li> </ul>	2016—2025 <u>Ongoing studies; City teamed with County and WisDOT to complete traffic study for Oakwood Mall area in 2020; other traffic studies to occur in the future 2025-2030</u>
Study and monitor <b>County Highway T</b> for possible improvements and possible transfer to the State.	2020—2030 <u>Conversation and public meeting held working with Eau Claire &amp; Chippewa Counties and the State of WI</u>
Implement the recommendations of the <b>Transit Development Plan</b> ; site and build a new downtown transit center	2016—2020 <u>Transit Plan Completed- 2021-2022 construction for new Transit Center; Continue to work with UWEC and new facility on the campus; add language within the plan that addresses equity as it</u>

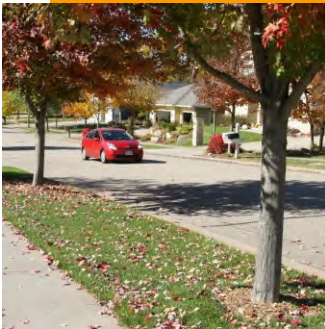
Action	Timing
	<u>relates to transportation to ensure access for all individuals; Transit is to continue to move towards electric buses and future placement of new bus shelters throughout the community</u>
Implement the recommendations of the <b>Bicycle and Pedestrian Systems Plan</b>	Ongoing <u>Completed an update in 2018 and will continue to throughout the years</u>
Monitor the Minnesota <b>passenger rail</b> link study	Ongoing <u>Continue to work with partnerships for passenger rail</u>
Update the Zoning Code <b>parking</b> requirements	2016 <u>Part of Plan Commission work program to be reviewed in 2022 to update parking standards</u>



Adopted

# **Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015**

## **Public Utilities Plan**



City of Eau Claire Wisconsin

## **Public Utilities Plan**

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# Public Utilities Plan

The Public Utilities Plan addresses maintaining the present sanitary sewer and water systems, extending sewer and water lines on the perimeter of the community and protecting the natural environment in the process.

## Summary of Public Utilities Issues

These are the major public sewer and water systems issues identified through the Assessment of Conditions and Issues.

- 1. Sanitary Sewer and Water Main Extensions:** What should the City of Eau Claire do to ensure coordination between the cost-effective extension of sanitary sewer or water mains and future development in the City's Extra-Territorial Plat Approval Area?

*The City has entered into agreements with the five adjacent Towns regarding future trunk utility extensions, land use patterns and road improvements as they apply to properties that successfully petition for annexation to the City. The challenge now will be for groups of land owners and the City to agree on the timing, extent and equitable cost-sharing of the improvements.*

- 2. Urban Sewer Service Area:** Should the City seek adjustments to its existing Urban Sewer Service Area boundary before 2030?

*The City believes that there is sufficient land in the Sewer Service Area to accommodate growth through the 2030 planning period.*

- 3. Regional Planning:** What should the City of Eau Claire do to encourage more effective coordination in the metropolitan area in providing the sanitary sewer and water infrastructure necessary for supporting future residential and business growth essential to the continued economic vitality of the area?

*The City believes that the Intergovernmental Agreements mentioned above and described in the Land Use and Growth Management Assessment should provide sufficient coordination for effective perimeter and infill growth through the 2030 planning period.*

- 4. Surface Water:** What should the City of Eau Claire do to ensure effective management of surface water drainage and safeguarding of the water quality in City watersheds?

*The City has adopted a plan that guides and an ordinance that regulates the management of surface water and its related threats in a manner consistent with State law.*

- 5. River Flooding:** Should the City acquire additional houses from the floodplain in the North Riverfronts Neighborhood and other floodplain areas?

*Those houses were acquired and the area is now called North Riverfront Park. Other flood-prone properties remain developed along First Avenue.*

- 6. Riverbank Stabilization:** Should there be greater emphasis placed on natural means of riverbank stabilization as opposed to rip-rap or concrete?

*The Waterways Plan (2012) recommended and described natural means of riverbank stabilization.*

**7. Water Quality:** What actions should the City take to maintain or improve the quality of water entering the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers?

*The City has strengthened its regulation of surface water and erosion control since the 2005 Comprehensive Plan.*

**Goal and Objectives for Public Utilities**

Based on the Assessment of Conditions and Issues, the following objectives were established for the Public Utilities Plan chapter of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

**Goal**

**Maintain the existing public utility system and extend lines to newly-annexed properties while minimizing harm to the natural environment.**

**Objective 1 – Existing Water and Sewer System Infrastructure**

Maintain and improve the condition of the existing sanitary sewer and water infrastructure.

**Objective 2 – New Water and Sewer System Infrastructure**

Implement the features of the Intergovernmental Agreements and the Sewer Service Area Plans as they pertain to the extension of City utilities to newly annexed properties.

**Objective 3 – Public Utility System Expansion**

Extend City sewer and water mains to serve newly-annexed properties according to engineering studies.

**Objective 4 -- Surface Water Management**

Implement the *Eau Claire Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan*, the subsequent sub-area studies and the State water quality permit under NR 216.

**Objective 5 – The Natural Environment**

Maintain the existing public utility system and construct new public utility infrastructure in a manner that minimizes harm to the natural environment.



This plan includes recommendations for improvements to the water wells and filtration complex.

## Public Utilities Objectives and Policies

### Objective 1 – Existing Public Water and Sewer System Infrastructure

**Maintain and improve the condition of the existing sanitary sewer and water infrastructure.**

#### Policies

##### 1. Assess the Condition of the Existing System

Continue to regularly inventory the condition of existing sewer services, trunks, structures, pumps and water mains.

##### 2. Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements

Complete the remaining improvements recommended by the 2007 *Wastewater Treatment Plant Facilities Plan Amendment*. These include replacing the rotating biological contactor system with a nitrifying activated sludge system by 2020. If the City decides to not adopt total nitrogen effluent standards, it may elect to build a non-nitrifying activated sludge system.

##### 3. Major Sanitary Sewer Improvements

Study the feasibility of and budget for replacing the Chippewa River Interceptor Sewer. That pipe, built in 1939, serves a large portion of central Eau Claire and runs from the North Barstow District, under the Eau Claire River, through the South Barstow District, under the Chippewa River near Lake Street and then along the northern bank of the river to the treatment plant located near I-94. Pipe conditions have deteriorated to the point that repairs are becoming uneconomic and the risk of failure is approaching an unacceptable level.

##### 4. Water Supply and Treatment

Consider including in future capital improvement programs and City budgets the recommendations of the 2014 *Water Supply and Treatment Evaluation*, which addressed improvements at the water well field and treatment system. Those recommendations included:

- Rehabilitate the filters
- Abandon Well #4 and site two new wells north of existing Well #19
- Install a new generator at the treatment plant
- Study and improve the pH control system
- Modify the settling basins
- Fully automate the treatment plant
- Construct a 1 million gallon clear well and modify the filter backwash process
- Replace Well #11 after installing the new wells north of Well #19.

## 5. Water Distribution System

Consider including in future five-year capital improvement programs and annual City budgets the recommendations of the 2014 *Water System Evaluation*, which addressed improvements to the network of water mains. Those recommendations included:

- Construct a second (redundant) 30-inch main across the Chippewa River from the treatment plant.
- Improve fire flow volume and pressure in localized areas through looping or pipe replacement as described in the study
- Reduce overly-high water pressures in certain areas of low elevation as described in the study
- Consider adding storage in the Southwest pressure zone.

A preliminary opinion of probable cost was included in the report for each of the recommendations.

The City will also follow the recommendations of the report regarding:

- Water facilities maintenance
- Storage facilities maintenance
- Booster station maintenance.

## 6. Coordinate Utility and Street Work

Continue to coordinate the street reconstruction program with the replacement and repair of under-street sewer or water lines.

When rebuilding a street, replace any water lines that meet these criteria:

- Any pipe older than 75 years
- Any water main built between 1940 and 1960 that is made of cast iron
- Any locations where there has been a cluster of water main breaks.

## 7. Minimize Infiltration and Inflow to the Sanitary Sewer System

Maximize the efficiency of the existing sanitary sewer system by continuing to implement improvements that reduce infiltration and inflow.

## 8. Update Sewer and Water Infrastructure Studies

Update the two-part 2014 *Water Source and Distribution Study* every five years.

Update the 2007 *Wastewater Treatment Plan Facilities Plan Amendment* in approximately 2025.

## **Objective 2 – Perimeter Growth Management for Public Utilities**

**Implement the features of the Intergovernmental Agreements and the Sewer Service Area Plans as they pertain to the extension of City utilities to newly annexed properties.**

These policies coordinate with several from the Land Use Plan chapter.

### **Policies**

#### **1. Perimeter Growth Management Plan**

Follow the perimeter growth management techniques outlined in the Land Use and Growth Management Plan chapter, including:

##### **Growth Management Areas**

Use the Urban Area, the Urban Sewer Service Area and the Extra-Territorial Plat Approval Area to organize land use regulations and utility extensions.

##### **Intergovernmental Agreements**

Follow the provisions of the Intergovernmental Agreements negotiated with each of the five adjacent Towns. Those provisions relate to development density, public water and sewer service, private water and sewer service, and cooperative boundary agreements for land within the Sewer Service Area (SSA) and land between the SSA and the limits of the Extra-Territorial Plat Approval Area.<sup>1</sup>

##### **Sewer Service Area Plans**

Apply the Sewer Service Area Plans with regard to newly-annexed properties.

##### **USSA Boundary**

Study the need to amend the boundary of the Urban Sewer Service Area whenever the *Chippewa Falls / Eau Claire Urban Sewer Service Plan* is updated by the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

##### **Annexation Petitions**

Approve annexation petitions that are consistent with Policy 2, below, and Objective 11, Policy 2, of the Land Use and Growth Management Plan chapter of this comprehensive plan.

#### **2. Sequence of Public Utility Improvements**

Give most favorable consideration to annexation petitions that allow public sewer and water lines to be extended in a cost-effective sequence. Utility extensions that are not optimally efficient will be considered but the added cost will likely be passed on to the petitioner.

Trunk sewer and water lines will be extended from the City's systems to serve land that is transferred from Town jurisdiction to City jurisdiction. Geographic features will dictate the routes for these main pipes to a large degree, particularly in the case of the sanitary sewer lines, which usually rely on gravity flow.

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to page 2-14 of the Land Use Plan chapter for a definition of these growth management areas.



### **3. Eligibility for Municipal Sewer or Water Service**

Continue the policy of providing municipal sewer or water service only to (a) properties within the City of Eau Claire, (b) properties subject to an intergovernmental cooperative boundary agreement or (c) land that is the subject of another form of intergovernmental cooperation agreement.

### **4. Feasibility Studies and Cost-Sharing**

In Eau Claire, the portion of the public sewer and water system that is located under the Local and Collector Roads in a new neighborhood is normally financed and installed by the land developer then given to the City at no cost. Occasionally, some of the extensions needed to get the pipes to the edge of the subdivision are also financed privately.

However, the cost of extending the trunk lines to the vicinity of the neighborhood -- lines that are intended to serve other neighborhoods as well -- are often financed and built by the City with the costs spread to landowners within the City for the broad benefit. For landowners outside the City, the assessment is deferred until annexation. The land developer may be required to pay some portion of the cost of building or improving roads that lead to his land.

Either before or after an annexation, one or more landowners may petition the City to study the cost of extending City trunk sewer, water and, perhaps roads, known as a feasibility study. Such studies estimate the project costs and propose how they will be shared among the benefiting landowners and, perhaps, the City. If the project is approved and built, the City would then distribute and assign the assessments to the benefiting lots within the City and defer the assessment for benefiting lots outside the City until annexation. The affected Town would be notified of the annexation request.

The Special Assessment Policy of the City of Eau Claire (June 22, 2004) describes the methods that may be used to distribute equitably the cost of various types of public improvements projects, the number of years that property owners will be given to repay their costs, and what percentage of certain costs may be borne by the City.

### **5. Possible Additional Agreements with the Towns**

Intergovernmental agreements with one or more of the adjacent Towns may be negotiated to help extend or improve public roads or utilities in response to private land development and annexation applications. Such agreements are allowed by state law under these Wisconsin Statutes:

- Section 66.0301, Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Section 66.0305, Political Subdivision Revenue Sharing and
- Section 66.0307, Boundary Change Pursuant to an Approved Cooperative Plan.

### **Objective 3 – Public Utility System Expansion**

#### **Extend City sewer and water mains to serve newly-annexed properties according to engineering studies.**

Conceptual routes for extending City sanitary sewer and water lines have been prepared. Additional studies will be needed to determine optimum routes, and feasibility.

The City prepared a major engineering study of its water distribution system in 2014 that addressed improvements needed to serve current and future customers. That report, *Water System Evaluation*, assumed City expansion through annexation and projected population growth within the current City limits and future annexation areas; it assumed full development of the Sewer Service Area of each of the five Towns adjacent to the City; and it took into account the five *Sewer Service Area Plans* prepared by the City in 2013.

A comparable engineering study has not yet been prepared for the City’s sanitary sewer system. However, the general routing of future sewer trunk lines has been forecast based on topography, land use, connection points and anticipated development sequencing. Those routes were originally shown in the *Sewer Service Area Plans* prepared in 2013.

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Engineering Studies**

Refine through more detailed engineering studies the conceptual plans for the extension of trunk water lines into the Towns. Preliminary alignments are illustrated by Figure 4-2 through 4-8.

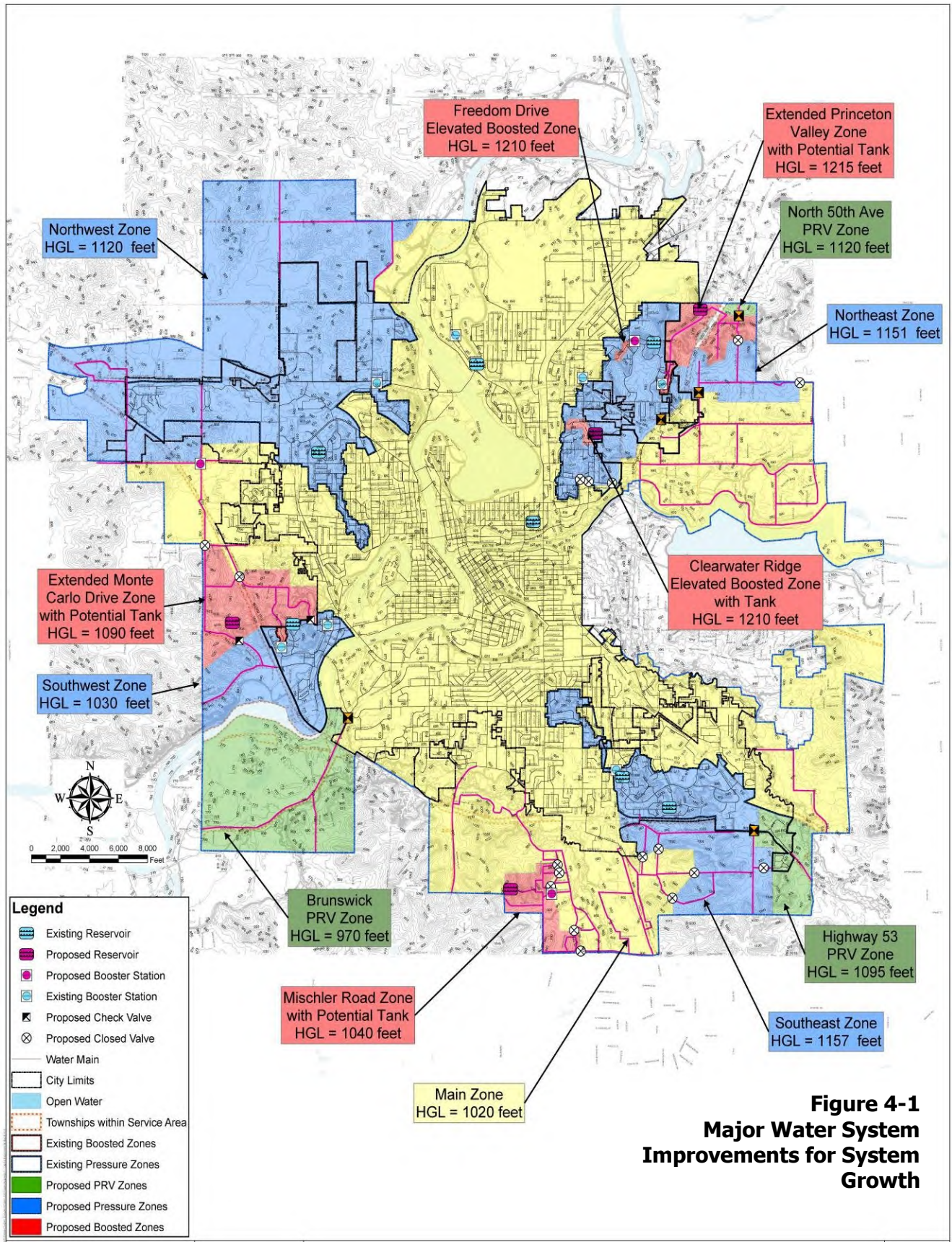
##### **2. Water System Evaluation, 2014**

Anticipate extending the City’s water system to newly-annexed areas consistent with the assumptions of the 2014 *Water System Evaluation*. Figure 4-1 illustrates the conceptual alignment of the trunk lines, the service areas, pressure zones, booster pumps and reservoirs that are likely to be needed in each of the five Sewer Service Areas.



This section of the chapter outlines preliminary plans for extending water and sanitary sewer lines into future service areas,





**Figure 4-1  
Major Water System  
Improvements for System  
Growth**

Source: *Water Evaluation Study* (2014), Figure F-1.

### **3. Utility Service Plan for Properties Annexed from the Town of Brunswick**

Figure 4-2 illustrates the preliminary general alignment for the extension of the sanitary sewer trunk line and the water trunk line from the City to properties annexed from the Town of Brunswick.

#### **Sanitary Sewer Trunk Lines**

Preliminary engineering indicates that the sanitary sewer system may be extended from the trunk line located near Short Street and the Chippewa River then southwest to a lift (pump) station in the valley of Taylor Creek then southeast up the creek valley. Alternatively, the lift station and trunk line could use the Lowes Creek valley. To select the alignment, a future feasibility study will consider costs, land development benefits and landowner participation interest.

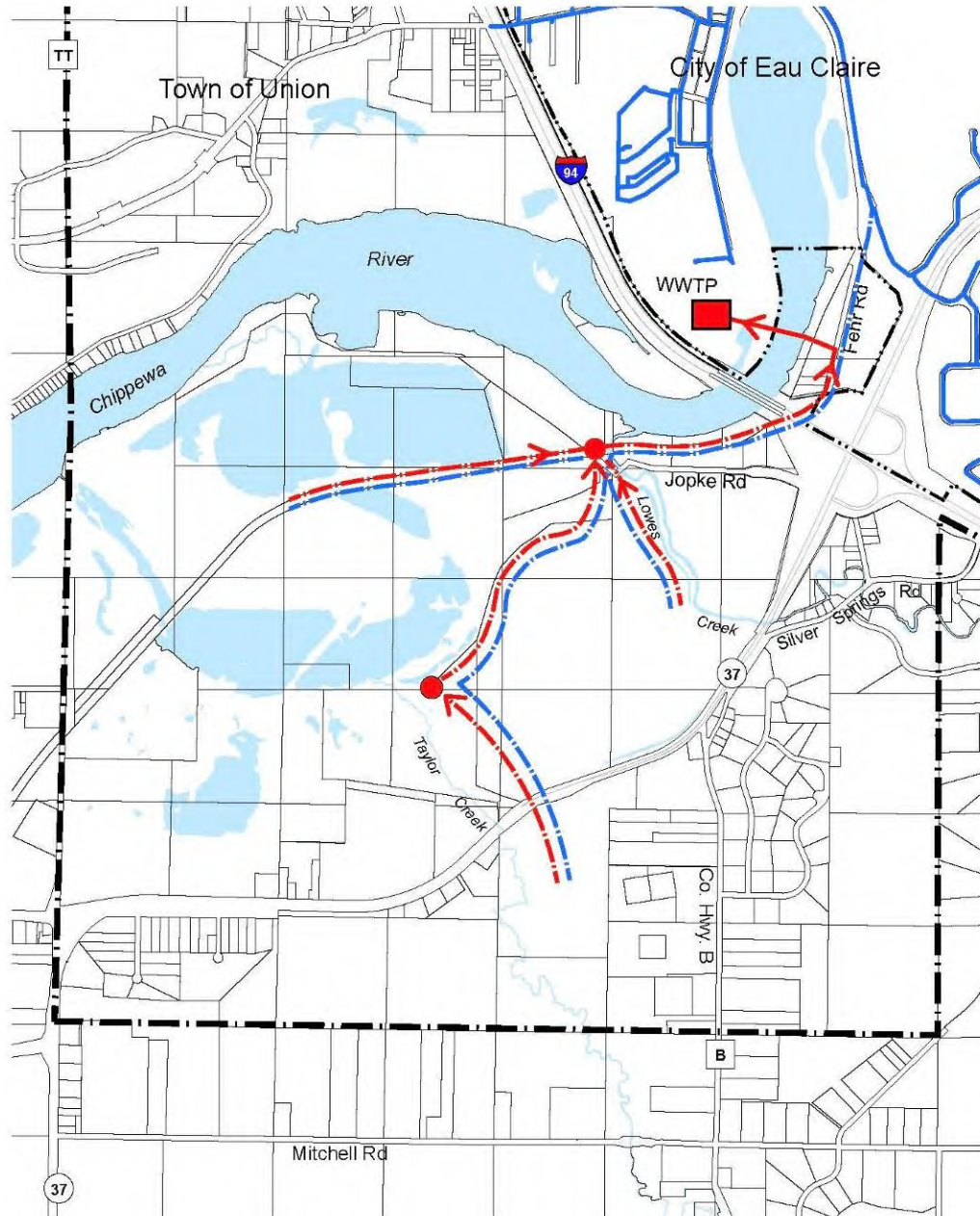
#### **Water Trunk Lines**

The trunk water system offers more alignment options because it does not rely on gravity flow, although it ought to be looped to ensure even pressure and continually fresh water. Contrary to Figure 4-2, the City report, *Water System Evaluation* (2014), assumed that a water main would be extended along Highway 37 to serve areas annexed from the Town.

Extending City sewer and water lines into the study area may not prove to be economical in the foreseeable future because of two factors: (a) most of the land on the river side of Highway 37 is judged to be floodplain or wetland and, thus, costly or legally impossible to develop and (b) some of the land along County Highway B has been divided into large lots for semi-rural housing and, thus, difficult to consolidate and re-subdivide.

Note that the water system pressure zones and trunk water main alignments shown in Figure 4-2 differ slightly from those shown in Figure 4-1, with those of Figure 4-1 being more accurate. Based on *Water System Evaluation* (page 216), mains would be constructed along County Road B and Highway 37.





**Figure 4-2  
Plan for Municipal  
Utilities in the  
Brunswick USSA**

Source: *Sewer Service Area Plan for the Town of Brunswick* (2013)

### **3. Utility Service Plan for Properties Annexed from the Town of Union**

Figure 4-3 illustrates the preliminary general alignment for the extension of the sanitary sewer trunk line and the water trunk line from the City to properties annexed from the Town of Union.

#### **Sanitary Sewer Trunk Lines**

Preliminary engineering indicates that the sanitary sewer system may be extended into the Town from the existing trunk lines in the City at eight locations. To select alignments, future feasibility studies will consider costs, land development benefits and landowner participation interest.

#### **Water Trunk Lines**

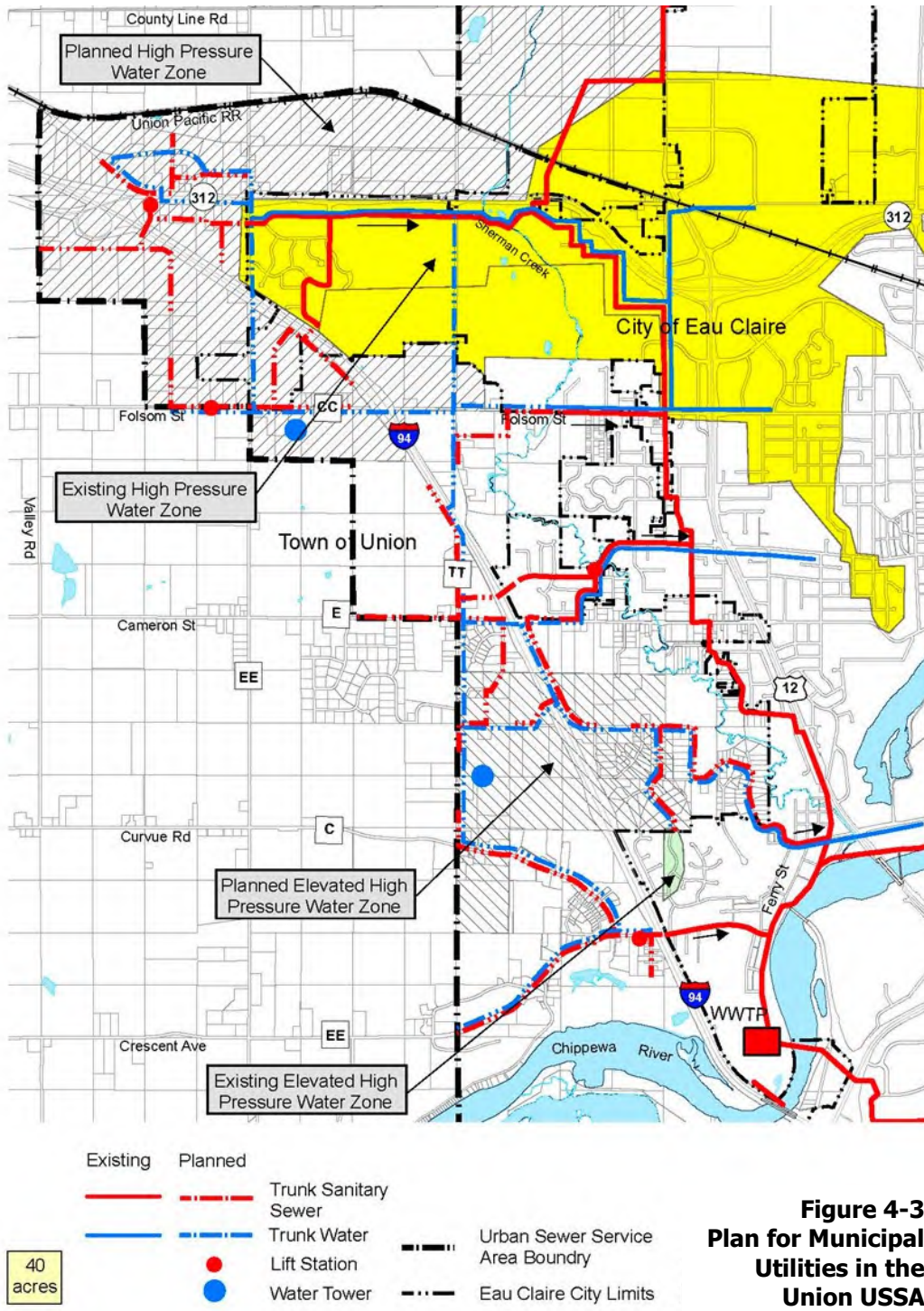
The trunk water system offers more alignment options because it does not rely on gravity flow, although it ought to be looped to ensure even pressure and continually fresh water.

Based on *Water System Evaluation* (page 224) water mains of at least 12-inch diameter are recommended to be constructed along the major roadways in the Town in coordination with successful annexation petitions. Properties would be served by four pressure zones: the Southwest zone, the Monte Carlo Drive zone, the Main zone and the Northwest zone.

The northern areas are recommended to be served by the Northwest pressure zone. A new booster station would pump water from the Main zone to the Northwest zone from West Folsom Street to the existing dead end along North Town Hall Road. Connections and check valves would be required among the zones.

The existing Monte Carlo Drive booster could provide adequate pumping capacity to the zone to meet the potential maximum day demands. If development in the extended Monte Carlo Drive pressure zone exceeded 50 units, storage would be required there.

Note that the water system pressure zones and trunk water main alignments shown in Figure 4-3 differ slightly from those shown in Figure 4-1, with those of Figure 4-1 being more accurate.



Source: *Sewer Service Area Plan for the Town of Union* (2013)



**4. Utility Service Plan for Properties Annexed from the Town of Wheaton**

Figure 4-4 illustrates the preliminary general alignment for the extension of the sanitary sewer trunk line and the water trunk line from the City to properties annexed from the Town of Wheaton.

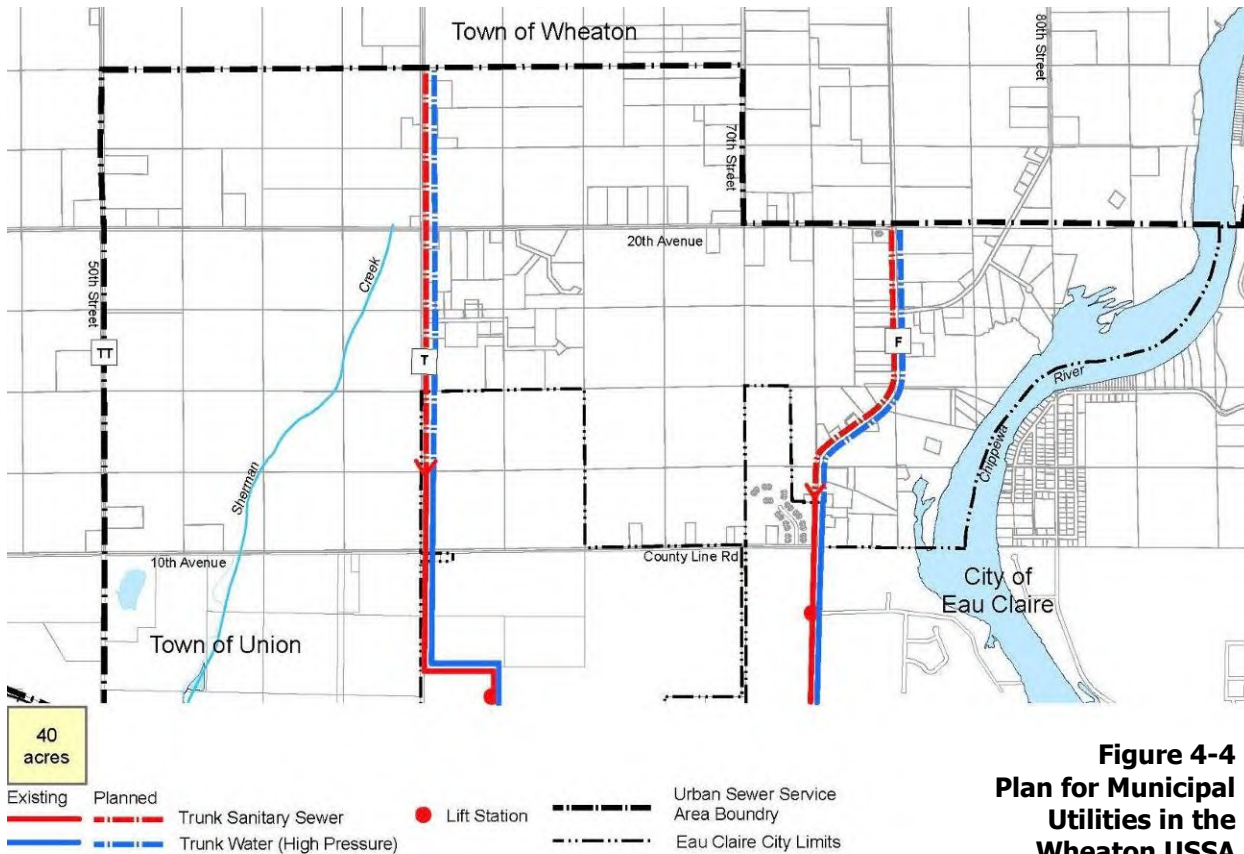
**Sanitary Sewer Trunk Lines**

Preliminary engineering indicates that the sanitary sewer system may be extended north from trunk lines located near the City limits along both County Highways T and F (Jeffers Road).

**Water System Trunk Lines**

Based on *Water System Evaluation* (page 224) water mains of at least 12-inch diameter would be constructed along the major roadways in the Town. The Town will be served by the Northwest pressure zone. With the anticipated land development, the transmission mains would have acceptable pressures. Until a storage tank is constructed, the available flow in the entire zone is that of the booster station.

Note that the water system pressure zones and trunk water main alignments shown in Figure 4-4 differ slightly from those shown in Figure 4-1, with those of Figure 4-1 being more accurate.



**Figure 4-4  
Plan for Municipal  
Utilities in the  
Wheaton USSA**

Source: *Sewer Service Area Plan for the Town of Wheaton* (2013)

## 5. Utility Service Plan for Properties Annexed from the Town of Seymour

Figures 4-5 and 4-6 illustrate the preliminary general alignment for the extension of the sanitary sewer trunk line and the water trunk line from the City to properties annexed from the Town of Seymour.

### Sanitary Sewer Trunk Lines

Preliminary engineering indicates that the sanitary sewer system may be extended from two existing lift stations:

- **Between Black Avenue and US 53 south of Olson Drive.** Lines may be extended along Olson Drive and Burnell Drive to serve the primary growth areas of the Town.
- **Along the Eau Claire River.** A lift station may be built along the northern side of the river near the bend in North Shore Drive to serve the potential long-term needs of the large-lot housing in the vicinity of North Shore Drive and Tower Drive. This line would be an important safeguard in case of a public health hazard resulting from widespread and numerous failures of on-site wastewater systems. This station would pump wastewater up to an existing lift station located downriver near the Union Pacific railroad bridge.

To select an alignment, future feasibility studies will consider costs, land development benefits and landowner participation interest.

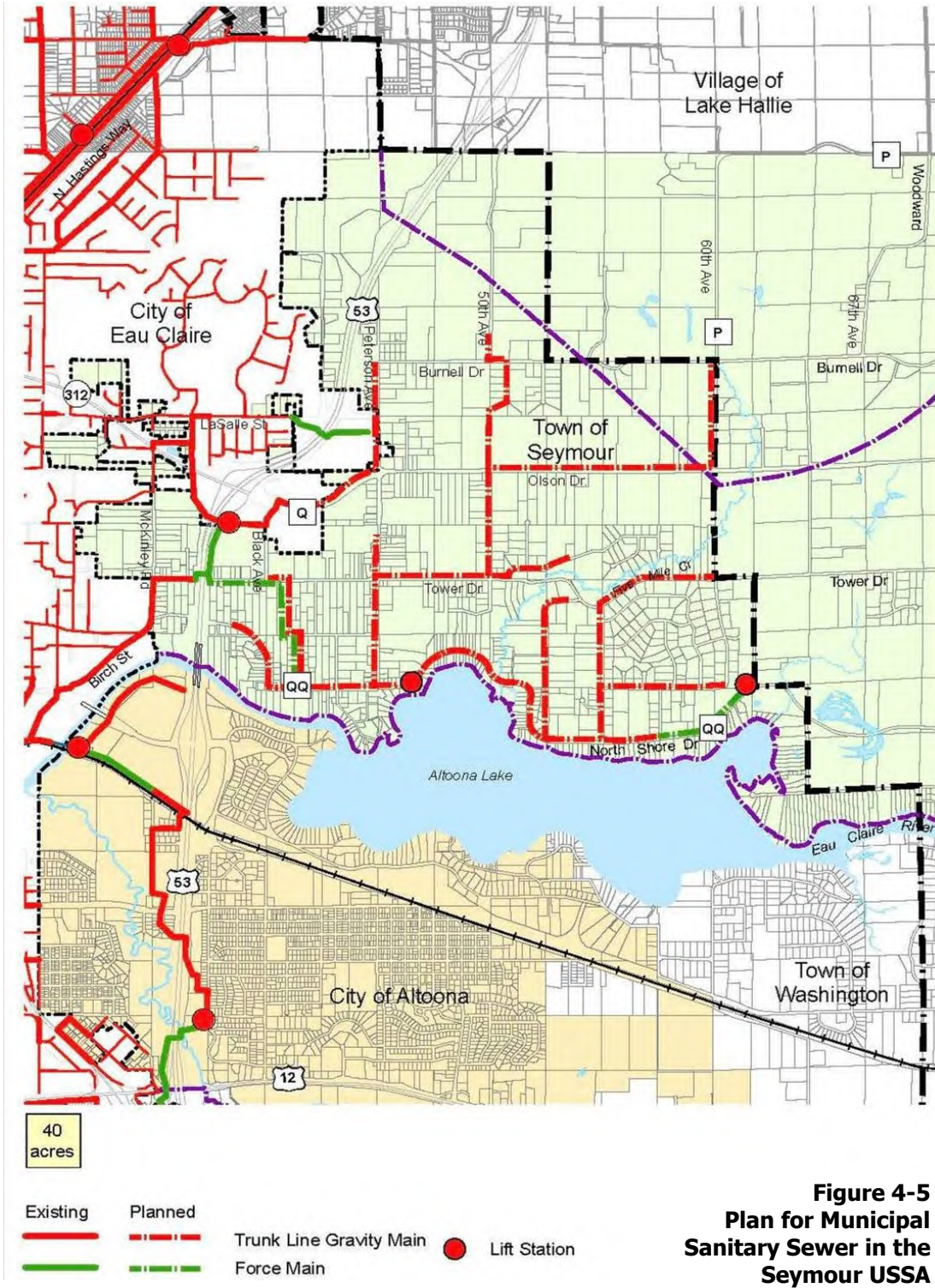
### Water System Trunk Lines

Figure 4-6 illustrates the general alignment for the extension of the water trunk line from the City into the Town of Seymour. The trunk water system offers more alignment options because it does not rely on gravity flow, although it ought to be looped to ensure even pressure and continually fresh water.

Based on *Water System Evaluation* (page 221), water mains of at least 12-inch diameter would be constructed along the major roadways in the Town. The majority of the Town would be served by the Main pressure zone and a smaller portion to the north by the Princeton Valley zone. The major portion of the Town would be served by the 10-inch water main from County Road Q along with the 8-inch water main from Gala Street. Two pressure reducing station were recommended to provide additional water capacity from the Northeast zone in the case of a fire flow event.

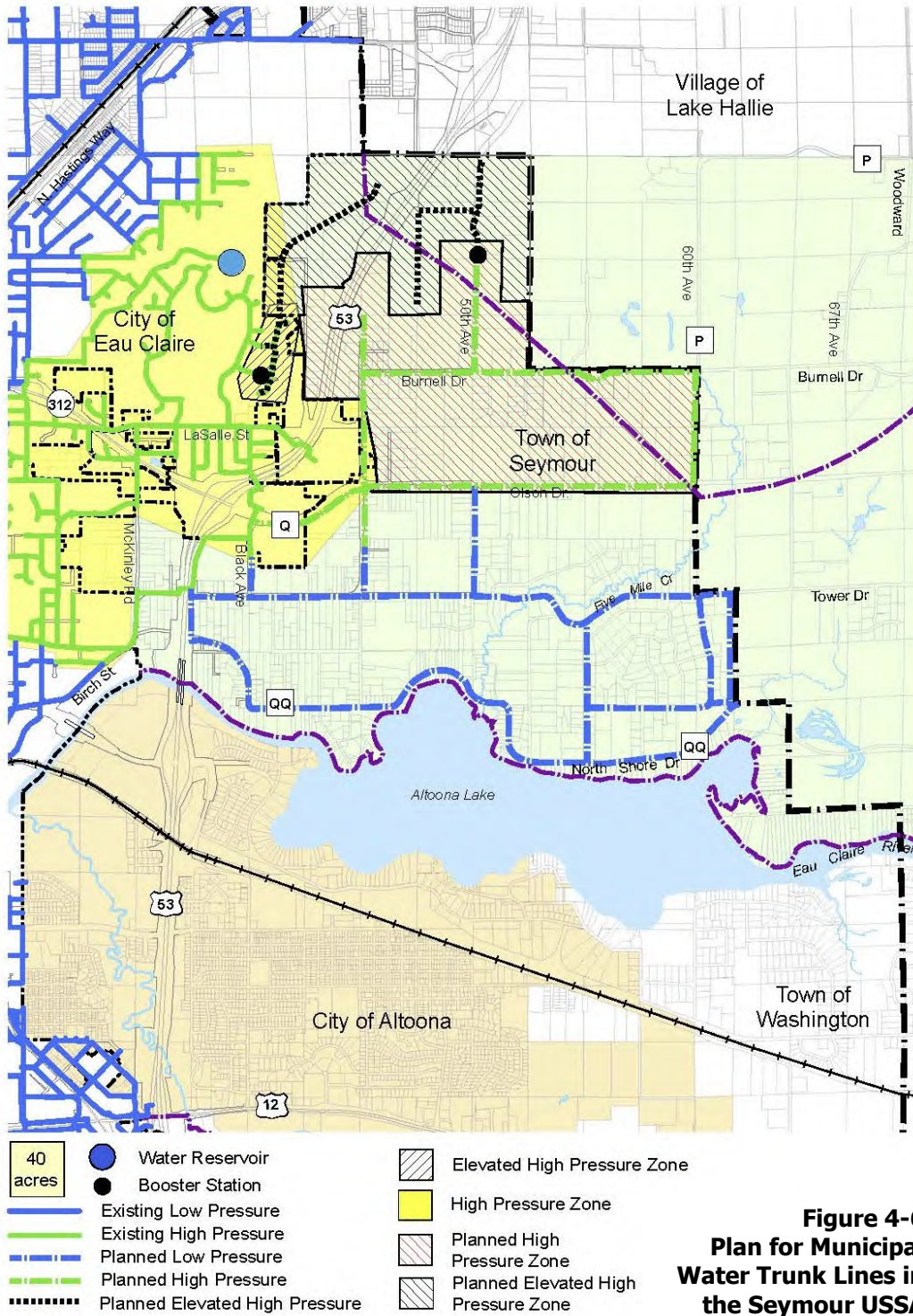
The existing Princeton Valley booster can provide adequate pumping capacity to the zone to meet the potential maximum day demands. However, the reliable supply capacity of the Princeton Valley booster station is less than 500 gallons per minute (gpm) and is recommended to be increased to at least 500 gpm. If future development in the extended Princeton Valley pressure zone exceeded 50 units, storage would be required there.

Note that the water system pressure zones and trunk water main alignments shown in Figure 4-6 differ slightly from those shown in Figure 4-1, with those of Figure 4-1 being more accurate.



Source: *Sewer Service Area Plan for the Town of Seymour* (2013)





Source: *Sewer Service Area Plan for the Town of Seymour* (2013)

## 6. Utility Service Plan for Properties Annexed from the Town of Washington

Figures 4-7 and 4-8 illustrate the preliminary general alignment for the extension of the sanitary sewer trunk line and the water trunk line from the City to properties annexed from the Town of Washington.

### Sanitary Sewer Trunk Lines

Preliminary engineering indicates that the sanitary sewer system may be extended south from trunk lines located near the City limits to Lowes Creek Road East and West, Lorch Avenue and the vicinity of Highway 53 and Hall Road. Sewer service east of Otter Creek may be provided from a Town lift station located along Prill Road near Otter Creek.

New sanitary sewer connections to properties in the former Washington Sanitary District that were receiving only water from the District will have to be annexed.

### Water System Trunk Lines

The trunk water system offers more alignment options because it does not rely on gravity flow, although it ought to be looped to ensure even pressure and continually fresh water. Nevertheless, the water lines often parallel with the sewer lines to support land development and reduce costs.

Figure 4-8 illustrates the general alignment for the extension of the water trunk utility lines from the City into the Town. The water service in the higher elevations of Washington will have to be designed for higher pressure similar to the water system in the vicinity of Golf Road.

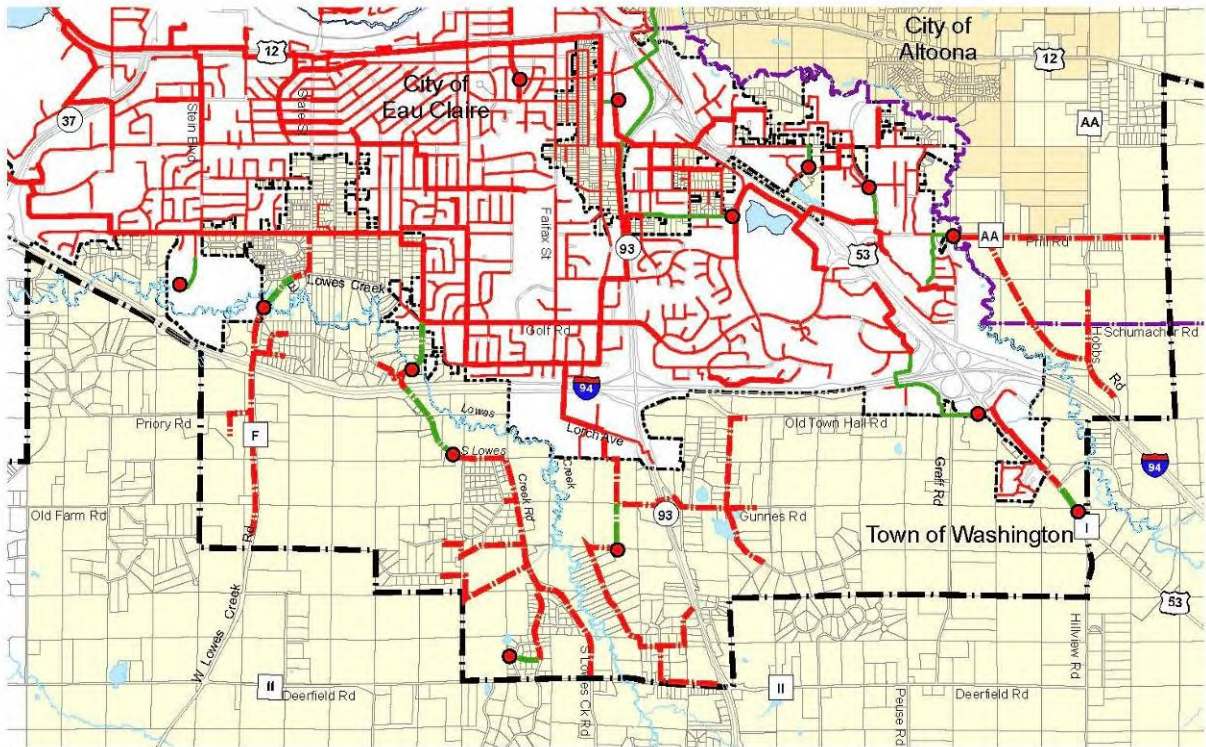
Based on *Water System Evaluation* (page 227), water mains of at least 12-inch diameter were assumed to be constructed along the major roads to serve full development. The Town would eventually be served by three pressure zones: the Southeast zone, the proposed Mischler Road zone and the Main zone.

There is sufficient capacity in the water well and storage systems to serve growth forecast in the Sewer Service Area during this 20 year planning period. However, *Water System Evaluation* determined that a booster station would be needed between West Lowes Creek Road and Highway 93 in the vicinity of Mischler Road if development there exceeded 50 housing units. Until a storage tank is constructed in that vicinity, the available flow in that zone would be derived from on the booster station.

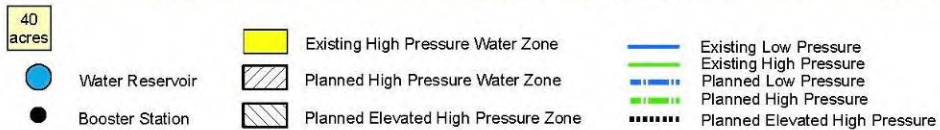
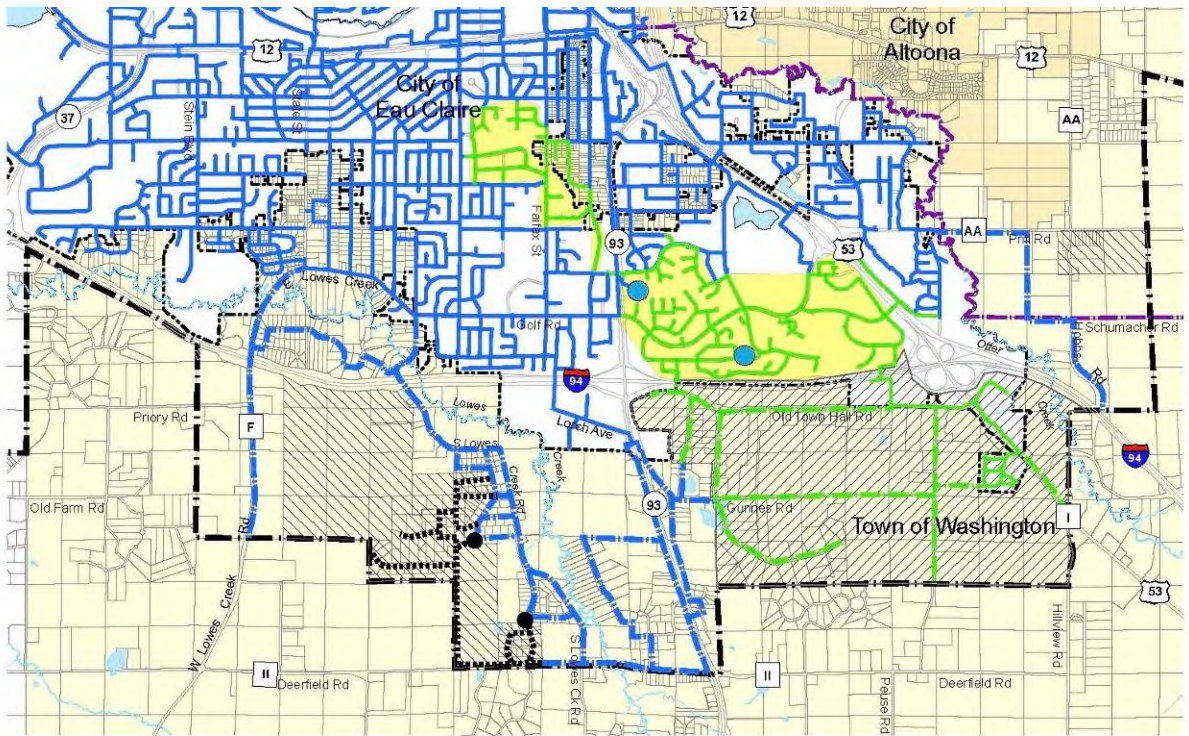
A pressure reducing station may be needed near Graff Road and Old Town Hall Road to alleviate the high pressures experienced around Prairie Circle.

The water system pressure zones and trunk water main alignments shown in Figure 4-8 differ slightly from those shown in Figure 4-1, with those of Figure 4-1 being more accurate.





**Figure 4-7**  
**Plan for Municipal Sanitary Sewer in the Washington USSA**



**Figure 4-8**  
**Plan for Municipal Water Lines in the Washington USSA**



## **Objective 4 – Surface and Ground Water Protection**

### **Apply the provisions of the State MS4 Permit throughout the watersheds under the jurisdiction of the City.**

The Natural Resources Plan chapter should also be consulted regarding the protection of soil, slopes, woods and waters.

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Stormwater Permit Implementation**

The City will continue to apply and enforce the provisions of its Surface Water Management Plan and its WPDES **Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS-4)** permit from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources under NR 216 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code throughout the watersheds that drain to the rivers, creeks and lakes.

The provisions of the MS4 permit are described in the Natural Resources Plan chapter of this comprehensive plan and include:

- Legal authority to control stormwater runoff from new development
- Monitoring program
- Stormwater management
- Catch basins
- Leaf collection
- Street sweeping
- Structural control maintenance
- Roadway maintenance
- Nutrient management on City properties
- Construction site runoff
- Flood control devices
- Illicit connections and discharges
- Industrial and high risk runoff
- An information and education program
- Toxic spills
- Reduction of the discharge of Total Suspended Solids to surface waters
- Assessment of controls
- An annual report

##### **2. Private On-Site Wastewater Treatment**

Continue to require new development in the City of Eau Claire to connect to the public sewage system. Require annexed development served by an on-site system to connect to the City's sewage system according to a schedule negotiated between the City and the owner at the time of annexation. Septic tanks and other private, on-site wastewater treatment facilities located outside a City are regulated by the County.

**Objective 5 – The Natural Environment**

**Maintain the existing public utility system and construct new utility infrastructure in a manner that minimizes harm to the natural environment.**

Sewer and water services allow and promote intensive urban growth in undisturbed locations. Eau Claire is committed to regulating growth so that it respects sensitive natural features.

**Policies**

**1. Minimize Disturbance to Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESAs)**

Minimize the extension of water and sewer infrastructure into designated Environmentally Sensitive Areas through the continued application of its zoning ordinance, especially Chapter 18.11, **Floodplain Zoning District**, Chapter 18.12, **Shoreland-Wetlands Overlay Zoning District**, and Chapter 18.45.050, **Site Plans**, and Chapter 17.12.290 of the Subdivision code, **Environmentally Sensitive Areas**.

Chapter 17.12.290 states:

No development or land disturbance activity shall be allowed within any environmentally sensitive area ...unless the owner demonstrates the proposed development or land disturbance activity is expressly allowed under any of the following:

1. Chapter 18.11, Floodplain Overlay District, for floodplain areas.
2. Chapter 18.12, Shoreland-Wetlands Overlay District, for wetland areas.
3. The provisions of the *Chippewa Falls - Eau Claire Urban Sewer Service Area Plan*, adopted by reference herein, for all areas of 20 percent or greater slope.

**Environmentally Sensitive Areas**

According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) is defined as “portions of the landscape including valuable natural resource features that should be protected from intensive development”. ESAs include all lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, floodways, and certain other significant and unique natural resource features plus a setback or buffer from these features. Furthermore, areas of steep slopes (12 percent or greater) when located wholly or partially within these natural resource features shall also be included as an ESA. Required setbacks from Environmentally Sensitive Areas are:

**Table 4-1  
Setback Requirements for Environmentally Sensitive Areas**

<b>ESA Feature</b>	<b>Setback or Buffer</b>
Navigable waters	100 feet from the ordinary high water mark
Non-navigable waters	25 feet from the top of bank
Channels of concentrated flow	10 feet from the edge of feature
Floodways	No setback or buffer
Wetlands	50 feet from the leeward edge of wetlands 2 acres or larger

In general, roads, storm sewers, sanitary sewers and water mains should be allowed to cross ESAs if the care is taken to minimize disturbance. Also, private utilities, stormwater management facilities and recreational facilities should be allowed to be constructed within an ESA.

## Plan Action Steps

The City will take the following steps to implement the Public Utilities Plan.

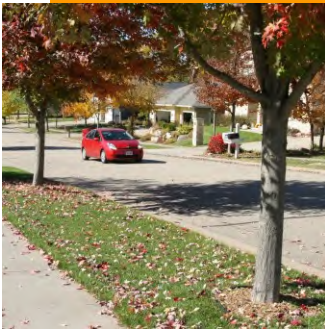
**Table 4-2**  
**Public Utilities Plan Actions**

Action	Timing
Complete the remaining <b>improvements</b> recommended by the 2007 <i>Wastewater Treatment Plant Facilities Plan Amendment</i> .	2015 – 2030
Study the feasibility of and budget for replacing the <b>Chippewa River Interceptor</b> Sewer.	2015-2016 <u>Moved back within the CIP Replacement plan for 2021-2023</u>
<b>Budget</b> for the recommendations of the <i>Water System Evaluation</i> .	2015 - 2025
Replace aging or break-prone <b>water lines</b> as streets are rebuilt.	Continuous
Continue to make improvements that reduce water <b>infiltration</b> and inflow to the sanitary sewer system.	Continuous
<b>Update</b> the two-part 2014 <i>Water Source and Distribution Study</i> every five years. Update the 2007 <i>Wastewater Treatment Plant Facilities Plan Amendment</i> in approximately 2025.	2020 – 2025
Follow the utilities provisions of the <b>Intergovernmental Agreements</b> negotiated with each of the five adjacent Towns.	Continuous
Study the need to amend the <b>boundary</b> of the Urban Sewer Service Area whenever the <i>Chippewa Falls / Eau Claire Urban Sewer Service Plan</i> is updated by the Regional Planning Commission.	Continuous
Continue the policy of providing <b>municipal sewer</b> or water service only to (a) properties in the City, (b) properties subject to a cooperative boundary agreement or (c) land that is the subject of another form of intergovernmental cooperation agreement.	Continuous
Use intergovernmental agreements or cooperative boundary plans to facilitate construction of public <b>utilities</b> in the Sewer Service Area.	Continuous
Continue to provide municipal <b>utilities</b> only to properties in the City or subject to a cooperative boundary plan.	Continuous
Prepare a comprehensive sanitary <b>sewer system plan</b> comparable to the 2014 water system plan.	2015-2020 <u>Moved back to be within the 2025 FPA</u>
Continue to apply and enforce the provisions of its <b>Surface Water</b> Management Plan and its WPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS-4) permit.	Continuous

Adopted

# **Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015**

## **Parks, Greenways and Trails System Plan**



City of Eau Claire Wisconsin

## **Parks, Greenways and Trails System Plan**

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## Parks, Greenways and Trails System Plan

The parks, trails and greenway system is a major investment for Eau Claire and a vital element of its quality of life. Eau Claire is proud of its long history of providing parks in every residential neighborhood, along with specialized athletic facilities that serve broader areas. And, because the City is blessed with both the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers, waterfront public access has been emphasized for a century. Now that those streams are used much less for industry than they were decades ago, parks and other public land uses have become more appropriate riverfront land uses.

This *Plan* is a minor mid-course correction and reaffirmation, since it continues a long program of planning, programming, and capital improvements. The *1993 Comprehensive Plan* recommended several locations for new parks and improvements. The *2003 to 2007 Five-Year Parks Plan* presented a detailed list of projects in priority to address deficiencies. This chapter will confirm a broad course of action and coordinate major park investments with other plan elements such as the Land Use Plan chapter.

Eau Claire faces challenges to the management of its park system on two fronts: first, to improve or maintain what it already has and, secondly, to provide new parks for established or future neighborhoods. At the same time, the City wishes to extend its system of off-road paths and improve its stewardship of the natural resources that exist in parks and other public open spaces.

### Major Issues in Parks, Greenways and Trails

- 1. Parks in New Neighborhoods:** Should the City continue to create a 5- to 10-acre playground in each new neighborhood (about 4,000 residents), or should there be fewer but larger playgrounds?
- 2. Parks in Established Neighborhoods:** What should the City do, if anything, to improve park access in established neighborhoods?
- 3. Riverfront Parks:** How aggressive should the City be in acquiring land and/or easements to extend the park system along the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers? To what extent should the City strive to provide or require public access to the riverfront during property redevelopment? What should be the balance between public access and private control? Should additional riverfront park land be created by acquiring additional properties between the Eau Claire River and East Grand Avenue between Downtown and Boyd Park?



4. **Balance of Park Size and Type in All Areas of the City:** What should the City do, if anything, to ensure that residents of older neighborhoods have the same access to playgrounds and athletic fields as do the residents of newer neighborhoods, and that newer neighborhoods have easy walking access to visually attractive parks?
5. **The Role of Parks in Urban Design:** Should the City make a conscious effort to use parks, greenways and parkways to enhance residential neighborhoods and commercial districts, reflect local cultural heritage and honor civic life? Should there be more gardens in the parks?
6. **Park Land Acquisition:** Is the present system of acquiring land for future parks adequate?
7. **The Number of Full-Service Playgrounds:** Should the City reduce the number of playgrounds at which it provides a full complement of facilities and programs?
8. **Ecological Stewardship:** Should portions of the park system be managed for water quality, wildlife habitat, protection of sensitive features and/or natural interpretation?
9. **Skateboard Park:** Should one or more sites devoted to skateboarding be created?
10. **Funding:** What is the best means to fund trail reconstruction, new play equipment, stadium renovations and life guards at Half Moon Beach? Should the City bond for these improvements? What is the role of parks in aiding tourism and improved sports facilities in Eau Claire? Can room tax dollars fund these improvements?

## **Goal and Objectives**

### **Goal**

**Continue to expand the park system into new neighborhoods while improving the conditions in the older parks.**

#### **Objective 1 – New Parks**

Plan, acquire, and develop additional parks to help meet the outdoor recreation needs of the community’s population, protect environmentally sensitive areas, provide sites for environmental education and improve urban design.

#### **Objective 2 – Park Improvements and Maintenance**

Continue to improve existing parks and greenways so they meet current recreation needs, are visually appealing and sustain the natural environment.

#### **Objective 3 – Waterfront Access and Trails**

Improve public enjoyment of rivers and streams in Eau Claire by creating new park land, acquiring easements for access and protection of open space, and linking existing parks with paths where possible.

#### **Objective 4 – Bicycling and Walking**

Link paths in City park land with on- and off-street facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians.

#### **Objective 5 – Role of Parks in Urban Design**

Locate and design parks, greenways and parkways to enhance the quality of residential neighborhoods and commercial districts, reflect Eau Claire’s cultural heritage and honor civic life.

#### **Objective 6 – Ecology and Environment**

Plan and design parks and greenways to protect environmentally sensitive features, reduce negative environmental effects and serve as models of land stewardship.

#### **Objective 7 – City-Wide Facilities and Recreation Programs**

Refine park system facilities and recreation programs to meet changing outdoor recreation needs, meet safety and access guidelines, and achieve other objectives of this Plan.

#### **Objective 8 – Other Community Recreational Facilities**

Work cooperatively with other communities, units of government, landowners or recreation providers to reduce costs and enhance the delivery of outdoor recreational facilities.

## Parks System Policies

### Objective 1 – New Parks

**Plan, acquire, and develop additional parks to help meet the outdoor recreation needs of the community’s population, protect environmentally sensitive areas, provide environmental education and improve urban design.**

Several new park sites are proposed in conjunction with the plan for future land use and the forecast growth of households and population.

### Policies

#### 1. Park Classifications

Use the following park classifications when planning for and maintaining the City parks system:

- Play Lot
- Neighborhood Park or Playground
- Community Park
- Community Athletic Field
- Special Area
- Urban Park
- Waterfront Park

The major characteristics of each type of park, including the primary group served, the service area, desirable size, ideal location, and typical facilities and features are listed in Table 5-1, Eau Claire Guidelines for Park and Recreation Open Space Planning.

The municipal park and open space standards contained within this *Plan* should be used as flexible guidelines to determine open space and facility needs.

Two changes in classification and terminology are recommended:

- The **Waterfront Park** classification has been created to separate linear parks along the rivers, creeks or lake from what were formerly called Special Area Parks. This change reflects the growing number and importance of these features.
- The **Street Island** classification has been deleted. Nevertheless, those properties are still owned by the City.

All of the City’s current parks and trails are mapped and listed by classification in the Parks, Greenways and Trails Assessment chapter of this plan.

**Table 5-1  
Eau Claire Guidelines for Park and Recreation Open Space Planning**

	<b>Group Served</b>	<b>Acres per 1,000 people</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Desirable Size</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Facilities and Features</b>
<b>Playlot</b>	Pre-school children	Special facility for higher-density housing	1 to 4 blocks	No standard. Usually less than 1/4 acre.	High-density neighborhood that lacks private yards. Interior of residential block or housing development or in corner of neighborhood park.	Sandbox, swings, slides, climbing structures, benches, open shelter, fences, paved and grass areas.
<b>Neighborhood Park or Playground</b>	Neighborhood surrounding the playground (for all ages)	2 acres per 1,000 persons depending on neighborhood characteristics	1/2 mile radius from playgrounds	5 to 15 acres minimum	Near intensely developed areas and areas of high density. Preferably at or adjoining an elementary school. Should be accessible by pedestrians.	Play apparatus area, multi-purpose athletic field, shelter building, skating rinks, organized summer playground program offered. Quiet or passive areas and activities should also be provided.
<b>Community Park</b>	Entire community (all ages)	5 acres per 1,000 residents	Area within 20 minutes travel time	25 acres minimum; 50+ acres desirable.	Where appropriate sites can be obtained incorporating scenic or other natural features. Should be along collector or arterial streets.	Active athletic areas similar to playfield but at least 1/2 should be rustic and provide picnicking, hiking, fishing, boating, etc. Shelters, swimming pools and quiet areas are desirable.
<b>Community Athletic Fields</b>	Entire community (all ages)		No specific service area	Depends on the types of fields	A site with good road access	Major complexes for such sports as soccer, softball, baseball, etc.
<b>Special Area</b>	Entire community	Not applicable	No specific service area	Depends on type of facility	Depends on type of facility.	Hockey, swimming, archery, skiing, sledding, bike-ped paths, overlooks.
<b>Urban Park</b>	All ages	Not applicable	Neighborhood	2 acres	High density neighborhood	Seating and strolling, benches, trees, views, plaza.
<b>Waterfront Park</b>	Entire community	Not applicable	No specific service area	Minimum width 25 feet; no minimum length.	Along lake or river shoreline	Bicycle and pedestrian trails, benches, look-outs, picnic areas. Physical and visual access to the water.
<b>Greenway</b>	Entire community	Not applicable	Entire community	Minimum width 25 feet	Off-road; former railroad lines; waterfronts; natural areas; link parks	Landscaped open land; 10 to 14 foot multi-use paved path

## 2. Planned New Parks and Greenways

Acquire land for new parks and trails in the approximate locations and sizes illustrated by Figure 5-1, Parks and Greenway Plan, and listed in Table 5-2, Existing and Planned Parks and Greenways and School Playground sites.

### New Park Locations

- **Perimeter Locations:** Six new Neighborhood Parks are proposed in perimeter locations along with two new park-school sites. On Figure 5-1, see the parks numbered:

- 61 Prairie Lane Neighborhood Park (north of Highway 312)
- 63 Peterson Avenue Neighborhood Park (in the present Town of Seymour)
- 79 Union Neighborhood Park (near Soley Lane)
- 80 Washington Neighborhood Park (in the present Town of Washington)
- 81 Gateway Drive Neighborhood Park
- 82 Menomonie Street Neighborhood Park (in the present Town of Union)
- 83 Upper Chippewa River Community Park (in the present Town of Wheaton)
- 85 Union Park-School Site (the location is yet to be determined)
- 86 Washington Park-School Site (near Old Town Hall and Graff Roads)

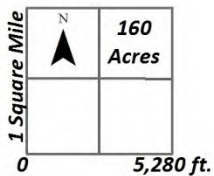
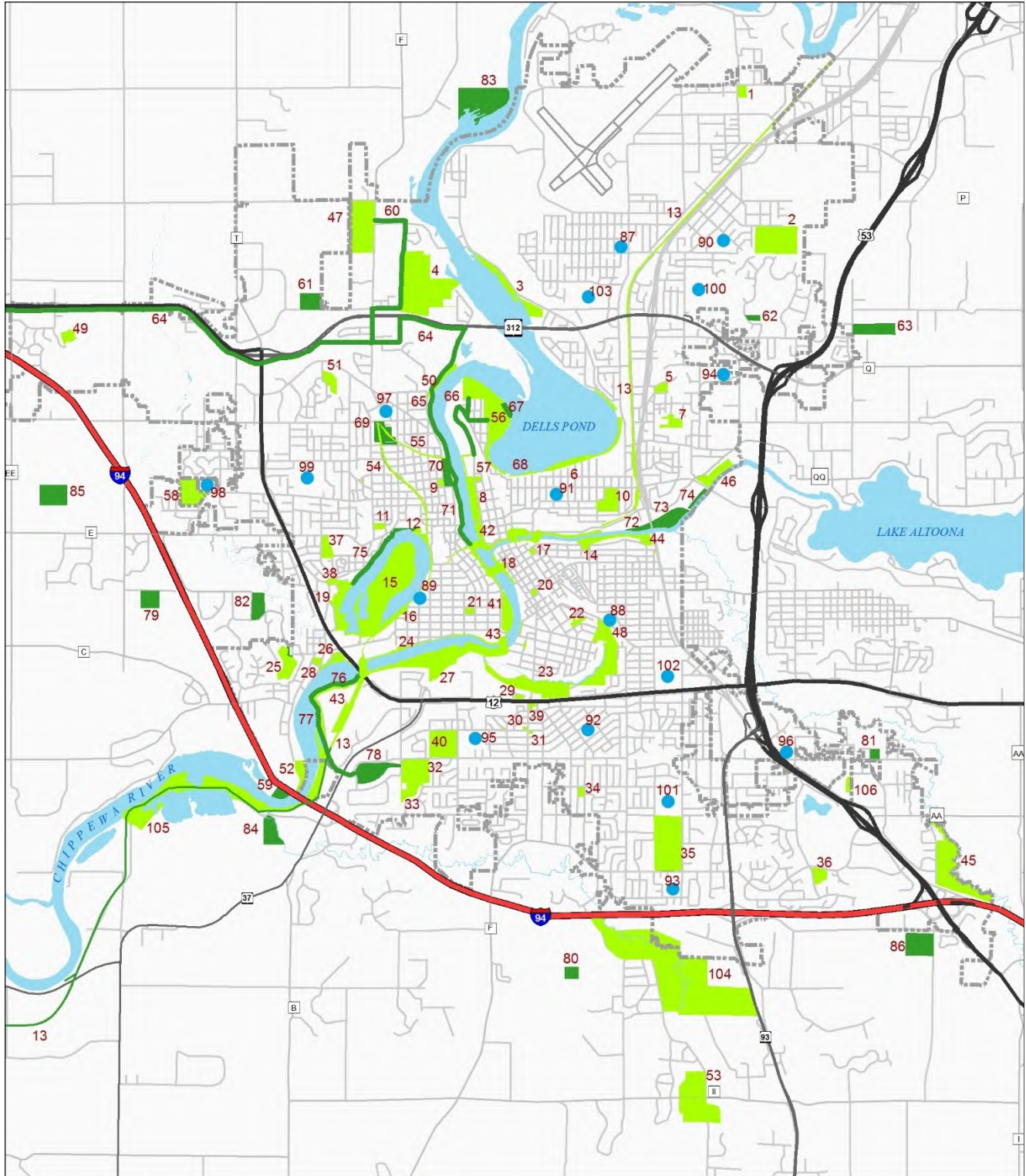
Also proposed is a future Chippewa River Waterfront Park near 80<sup>th</sup> Street in the current Town of Wheaton.

- **Folsom Street Park:** One new Neighborhood Playground is proposed between Folsom and Bolles Streets, just south of Roosevelt Elementary School, where two new bicycle paths intersect. (Numbered 69 on Figure 5-1.) This neighborhood has a shortage of park space and is nearly fully developed.
- **Greenways:** Additional Greenways with trails are planned along both the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers. Another greenway trail is proposed along the Xcel power line and Highway 312.

### Additional Future Considerations or Initiatives

- **Older Neighborhoods:** Seek to acquire and improve additional land for Play Lots or Neighborhoods Parks within the ring of Clairemont Avenue, Highway 312 and Hastings Way, where a shortage exists.
- **Sherman Creek Park:** Negotiate with the Town of Union to make Sherman Creek Park jointly accessible for Town and City residents.
- **Taft-Kay Stormwater Area:** In the future, consider using the Taft-Kay surface water management site as an informal neighborhood park or athletic field. However, that is not proposed in this plan.





- Existing Parks
- Planned Parks
- School Recreation Sites
- Existing Greenway
- Planned Greenway

**Figure 5-1**  
**Parks and Greenways Plan**





- 82 Menomonie Street Neighborhood Park
- 83 Upper Chippewa River Waterfront Park
- 84 Brunswick Park

**School Playground and Open Space Sites – Planned**

- 85 School-Park Site West
- 86 School Park Site Southeast

**School Playground and Open Space Sites – Existing**

- 87 Davey Elementary School
- 88 Flynn Elementary School
- 89 Lakeshore Elementary School
- 90 Locust Lane Elementary School
- 91 Longfellow Elementary School
- 92 Manz Elementary School
- 93 Meadowview Elementary School
- 94 Northwoods Elementary School
- 95 Putnam Heights School
- 96 Robbins Elementary School
- 97 Roosevelt Elementary School
- 98 Sherman Elementary School
- 99 DeLong Middle School
- 100 Northstar Middle School
- 101 South Middle School
- 102 Memorial High School Fields
- 103 North High School Fields

**County Parks**

- 104 Lowes Creek County Park

**State Open Space**

- 105 DNR State Trail Open Space

**Town Parks**

- 106 Horlacher Fields (Town of Washington)

### 3. Park Acquisition, Programming and Development

Develop new parks consistent with the recommendations shown in Table 5-3, Development Program for the Planned Parks.

Adjust the facility locations, sizes and configurations shown by Figure 5-1 during the acquisition process.

The means of acquiring future park land should be according to Policy 3, below.

Negotiate with landowners and developers to specify the location and configuration of each park with the aim of acquiring the approximate amount of land indicated by Table 5-3, Development Program for the Planned Parks, and satisfying the area needed to accommodate the planned facilities. Negotiate also the street access, the length of public street abutting each park and the relationship to adjacent buildings in that process.

**Table 5-3  
Development Program for the Planned Parks**

Reference Number	Reference Name	Classification	Acreage or Length	Recommended Components
58	Northwest	Greenway	20 acres	Paved path and open space
59	Prairie Lane	Neighborhood Park	15 acres	Neighborhood Park components (see footnote)
60	Princeton	Neighborhood Park	7 acres	Neighborhood Park components
61	Peterson Avenue	Neighborhood Park	20 acres	Neighborhood Park components
62	Xcel Corridor	Greenway	6 miles	Paved path and open space
63	Upper Chippewa River	Greenway	1 mile	Paved path and open space
64	Trail link to Mt. Simon Park	Greenway	0.5 mile	Paved path and open space
65	Addition to Mt. Simon Park	Community Park	10 acres	Paved path and open space
66	Dells Pond Addition	Greenway	1 acre	Paved path and open space
67	Folsom Street	Neighborhood Park	12 acres	Neighborhood Park components
68	West Riverside	Neighborhood Park	4 acres	Neighborhood Park components
69	West Riverside	Greenway	1 mile	Paved path and open space
70	Eau Claire River	Greenway	0.5 mile	Paved path and open space
71	Eau Claire River	Greenway	0.5 mile	Paved path and open space
72	Eau Claire River	Greenway	0.25 mile	Paved path and open space

Reference Number	Reference Name	Classification	Acreage or Length	Recommended Components
73	Half Moon Lake	Greenway	1 mile	Paved path and open space
74	Lower Chippewa River	Greenway	0.5 mile	Paved path and open space
75	Lower Chippewa River and Short St.	Greenway	0.75 mile	Paved path and open space
76	Sky Park	Special Area	5 acres	Open space
77	Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood Park	10 acres	Neighborhood Park components
78	Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood Park	10 acres	Neighborhood Park components
79	School-Park Site West	School Playground	5 acres	Neighborhood Park components
80	School Park Site Southeast	School Playground	5 acres	Neighborhood Park components

**Neighborhood Park Components**

- Open play area
- Play equipment
- Basketball court
- Picnic shelter

**4. Number and Size of Neighborhood Parks**

Site future Neighborhood Parks to be relatively large, few in number and serving larger areas.

Numerous small parks are becoming overly expensive to maintain. Smaller parks should be the responsibility of private land developers and homeowners associations.

**5. Coordinating Locations for New Park Sites**

Locate neighborhood playgrounds not associated with a school near the middle of a defined residential service area rather than near its edge along an arterial road.

Site new parks in coordination with school sites and the City’s long-range development plan for major surface water ponds.

Some efficiency in land acquisition, grading and site development may be gained by siting these facilities together on one large tract of land rather than on smaller individual parcels. It is important that the amount of land needed for a particular park site is not sacrificed in combining such multi-use areas.

**6. Means of Acquiring Land for Parks and Greenways**

Consider adopting a City ordinance requiring that some combination of land and/or cash be dedicated by anyone subdividing property, with such land or money being applied to parkland acquisition and/or park improvements. Thus, land for future

parks would be acquired during the platting process. Earmark cash given during subdivision for land acquisition or improvements in or near the area from which it came.

If the land dedication process is not sufficient to acquire sites of sufficient size and quality as recommended by this *Plan*, then the City will use general funds to acquire additional property. Donating lands for park needs should also be encouraged.

Attempt to acquire land for new neighborhood playgrounds before the vicinity is platted if possible. This may be done by identifying specific sites and acquiring land using general funds or bond proceeds. Alternatively, such lands should be acquired during the platting process using the proposed new parkland or cash dedication ordinance. In either case, it will be important to determine the approximate location, size and facilities desired for each park so that the City can act decisively and wisely when an opportunity presents itself.

It is judged appropriate to require land developers to dedicate land or money during the platting process because those resources will go to create neighborhood playgrounds that will benefit the residents who ultimately bear those costs. This is considered more equitable than requiring people all across the City to pay for a new neighborhood park that might not benefit them. On the other hand, the large community athletic fields and special use parks, which have City-wide benefit, ought to be financed through the general fund.

## **7. Components of Future Neighborhood Playgrounds**

Design and build new playgrounds with these basic components:

- Multi-purpose open play area
- Children's play equipment
- Basketball court
- Picnic shelter

Additional elements may be added at later times depending on identified neighborhood or wider district needs, and the availability of funding.

Summer playground programs and ice-skating rinks will not be provided at every playground site. Instead, they will be provided at sites having a larger service area than the playgrounds.

## **8. Waterfront Parks**

Continue to extend public parks, plazas, trails and overlooks along the Chippewa River and along the Eau Claire River from the confluence to Altoona. In some locations, existing development may make this impossible in the foreseeable future, but redeveloped sites should include some public access along the waterfront.

## Objective 2 – Park Improvements and Maintenance

### Continue to improve existing parks and greenways so they meet current recreation needs, are visually appealing, and sustain the natural environment.

Many recent improvements have been made to Eau Claire’s parks and recreational facilities; however, some deficiencies still exist. The challenge will be to sustain an adequate renewal effort during periods of budgetary retrenchment.

#### Policies

##### 1. Five-Year Improvements Plan

Continue the process of preparing and updating the City’s five-year *Park and Open Space Plan*, which lists specific actions to improve individual parks. Included with each five-year plan are an updated list, map and description of the parks in the system. Each five-year plan is drafted by the City staff and reviewed and adjusted by the Waterways and Parks Commission.

The five-year plans are based on the *Comprehensive Plan* and a detailed review of the current conditions, usage and trends of the parks.

The criteria used to **identify** and **rank** priority improvement projects are:

- **Coordination:** Does the improvement coordinate well with other work currently committed for or recently accomplished at that park?
- **Physical Need:** What is the physical condition of the facility relative to other needs in the system? Is there a safety hazard?
- **Service Deficiencies:** How seriously deficient is the park system relative to that type of facility?
- **Neighborhood or District Planning:** How well would the improvement add to an overall improvement campaign in that neighborhood or district? Is it supported by a neighborhood plan?
- **Geographic Balance:** Would the improvement help to balance parks spending across the City in that year?
- **Funding Source:** Are special sources of funding available for certain areas of the City or for certain projects (e.g., Federal Community Development Block Grant funds in neighborhoods with low- and moderate-household incomes, lake improvement funds from the DNR)?

The **timing** of these projects depends on:

- The availability of funding from the City’s general fund;
- The availability of grant funds for particular projects;
- The timing of other capital improvement projects near a park;
- The timing and availability of private funds;
- Changes in recreational demands and needs;
- Opportunities to consolidate bidding to reduce costs.



The priority and scheduling for the projects is to be evaluated annually using these factors as the City prepares its annual five-year capital improvement program.

## 2. Land Acquisitions included in the ~~2013—2017~~ 2018 – 2022 Park and Open Space Plan

Pursue these land acquisitions as recommended in the ~~2013 to 2017~~ 2018 – 2022 Park and Open Space Plan:

- The houses southeast of hockey rink at **Roosevelt Playground**
- Land for a trail on the south side of **Chippewa River** from the University property west to Clairemont Avenue
- The remaining two residential properties abutting lower **Mount Simon Park** area
- ~~The western shoreline of the **Chippewa River** between Madison and Anderson Streets as recommended in the *West Riverside Neighborhood Plan*~~
- Any remaining properties necessary for a continuous trail along the northern side of the **Eau Claire River**
- The **Half Moon Lake** shoreline as needed to complete a trail around the lake – may be acquired in fee or as an easement
- Houses east of **First Avenue** from Fulton to Randall Street as recommended in the *West Riverside Neighborhood Plan*.
- Neighborhood Park ~~or Playground~~ near **Gateway Drive**
- Neighborhood Park ~~or Playground~~ near **Sherman School**
- Land or easement, for trail on the south side of the Eau Claire River from S. Hastings Way to River Prairie

## 3. Other System-Wide Improvements

- Improve **lighting** at parks and trails to increase use during winter
- Encourage residents to use parks through **signs**, classes and demonstrations
- Implement the park **signage** plan
- Provide infrastructure for new **community gardens**.

## 4. Cooperative Effort

Investigate opportunities to coordinate park improvements and maintenance with the Eau Claire Area School District, counties, towns and the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

### **Objective 3 – Waterfront Access**

#### **Improve public enjoyment of rivers and streams in Eau Claire by creating new riparian park land, by acquiring easements for access and protection of open space, and by linking existing parks with paths where possible.**

Eau Claire has 32 miles of waterfront, including the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers, and Half Moon Lake. For the sake of quality of life, economic development, property values and environmental protection, the community owes it to itself to line these water bodies with nearly continuous public open space.

The Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers, Half Moon Lake and numerous creeks such as Otter, Sherman and Lowes are integral components of the form and image of Eau Claire and provide open space and recreation. In addition, the natural beauty of the community’s scenic vistas, hills and valleys are in large part a result of these waterways. Because of their importance, the aim goal of the City is to protect these resources and provide public access to and along these waterfront areas.

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Waterfront Linear Parks**

Seek to acquire land in the form of continuous linear open space corridors called greenways along the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers, Dells Pond, Half Moon Lake, and portions of Otter Creek and Sherman Creek.

Continue to implement the recommendations of the 2012 *Waterways Plan*, which recommends where to acquire waterfront land. Of particular importance is the opportunity to create a continuous greenway along the northern side of the Eau Claire River and a connection of the south sides of the Eau Claire River to River Prairie.

The Otter Creek corridor between the Eau Claire River and Southeast Community Park also has untapped potential, and that effort should be coordinated with the City of Altoona.

##### **2. Half Moon Lake**

Continue to acquire properties around Half Moon Lake as they become available until a continuous strip of land is owned by the City and a path can be looped around the lake.

##### **~~3. The Confluence~~**

~~—The redevelopment occurring at *The Confluence* in the South Barstow District of Downtown presents an opportunity to extend and improve the path system along both riverfronts. As the site plan and financial partnership are negotiated, seek to create a public plaza on the waterfront between the mixed-use and the performing arts components. Take advantage of this highly visible central location with design and materials that will express community pride.~~

#### **4. The Menomonie-Street Sonntag Event and Recreation Center**

Work with the University and the YMCA to redevelop the County Materials Sonntag Center site in a way that enhances the adjacent greenway and Chippewa Valley State Trail. Additional open land along the trail would be helpful, and the new building should both complement and benefit from the greenway and the path.

#### **5. Walking and Bicycling**

Build paths for walking and bicycling in the riverfront greenways where conditions permit. Take care to protect the ecological integrity of the flood plains, wetlands and steep slopes. In some locations, include benches, overlooks and occasional larger park nodes. Link waterfront paths to the City-wide route network via other paths or on-street striped bicycling lanes.

Monitor use of the trails and separate bicycle traffic from pedestrian traffic where pedestrian and bicyclist conflicts occur because of traffic levels or design.

#### **6. Waterways Plan**

Prior to 2030, update the City's *Waterways Plan*, which was initially prepared in 1988 and updated in 2012.

This update should emphasize the City's commitment to protecting the rivers, creeks and lake, to providing public access to and along waterfronts, and to encouraging only that development that enhances the attractiveness of the waterways and is sensitive to waterways environmental issues. The list of needed improvement projects should be refreshed.

## **Objective 4 – Bicycling and Walking Network**

### **Link paths in City park land with on- and off-street facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians.**

This objective focuses on the off-road system of paths and trails that primarily extend through the City’s waterfronts linear parks and Community Parks. However, other important components of the overall bicycling and walking systems are the paved paths along arterial roads (e.g. Hastings Way), the on-street striped bicycle lanes and the sidewalks; all of those are addressed in more detail in the Transportation Plan chapter.

Although bicycle paths along streets or on-street striped bicycle lanes are not traditionally considered part of the City’s park system, they do provide outdoor recreation and provide a means to access the parks. It is important to recognize that in developing a city-wide network for bicycling, both components must be considered in planning the overall system.

### **Policies**

#### **1. Park Access**

Improve access to the parks and waterfront greenways by linking them with off-road paths and on-street striped bicycling lanes.

Recent neighborhood or district plans have emphasized improved sidewalks and bicycling lanes through the neighborhood to linear riverfront parks to enhance the actual and perceived connections and extend the waterfront benefits deeper into the neighborhood. Refer to the plans for the Randall Park, West Riverside, East Side Hill and North Riverfronts neighborhoods and the Clairemont Educational and Medical District.

#### **2. Bicycling and Walking Networks**

Expand the system of off-road multiple-use paths as shown by Figure 5-2, Greenway and Trail System Plan. These paved paths may either be along former railroad rights-of-way, through linear parks known as greenways, within road rights-of-way or within future residential neighborhoods through the purchase or dedication of park land. If along roads, the paths may be physically separate from the road, on wide road shoulders or striped as on-road lanes.

Continue to build the facilities recommended by the 2010 *Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*. Integrate off-road paths with on-road striped lanes to create a city-wide bicycling network for transportation and recreation. Ensure that future residential streets are interconnected for the benefits of bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists. Continue to seek advice from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, a group of citizens appointed by the City Council.

#### **3. Major Greenway Initiatives**

##### **Creating the Northwest Greenway**

Build multi-use paths that link Jeffers Road Fields, Northwest Community Park, Dells Pond, Domer Park, the planned West Riverside Park and the Chippewa

Valley State Trail. An arm of the trail may also be extended west along Highway 312 to the City limits. A section of the trail should also be considered west along Highway 312 to the City limits and south along Kane Road.

Some of this system will be on land owned by Xcel Energy for its power lines, which will require negotiating easements and related agreements. Locating the path along Xcel Energy power lines offers the opportunity for it to meander through open settings.

If the Mill Run and Wild Ridge Golf Courses are ever redeveloped into housing, the path might be run straight west from Clairemont Avenue through there, assuming an easement can be obtained across the Chippewa Valley Technical college property.

### **Completing the Eau Claire River Greenway**

The City owns nearly all of the land it needs to build a continuous riverfront path along the northern bank from the confluence to the eastern City border. The next task will be to improve the land as park and build the path(s), which should be budgeted through upcoming capital improvement programs.

The path along the southern bank from Haymarket Plaza to S. Hastings Way should be studied. ~~will be extended west during the Confluence development. There is an informal foot path along the face of the steep slope between Boyd and Archery Parks.~~

~~Acquiring more than one or two of the houses along Grand Avenue for additional greenway is not likely in the foreseeable future even though the 2006 East Side Hill Neighborhood Plan recommends the idea.~~ Also, a trail connection further east to River Prairie should be studied.

### **Linking the High Bridge to the Chippewa Valley State Trail**

Create a safe on-street bicycling route linking the High Bridge path, Mt. Simon Park, McDonough Park and the Chippewa Valley State Trail near Starr Avenue. ~~Extend the route south to connect Forest Street and Phoenix Parks.~~

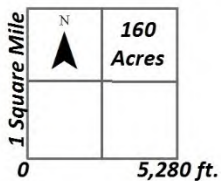
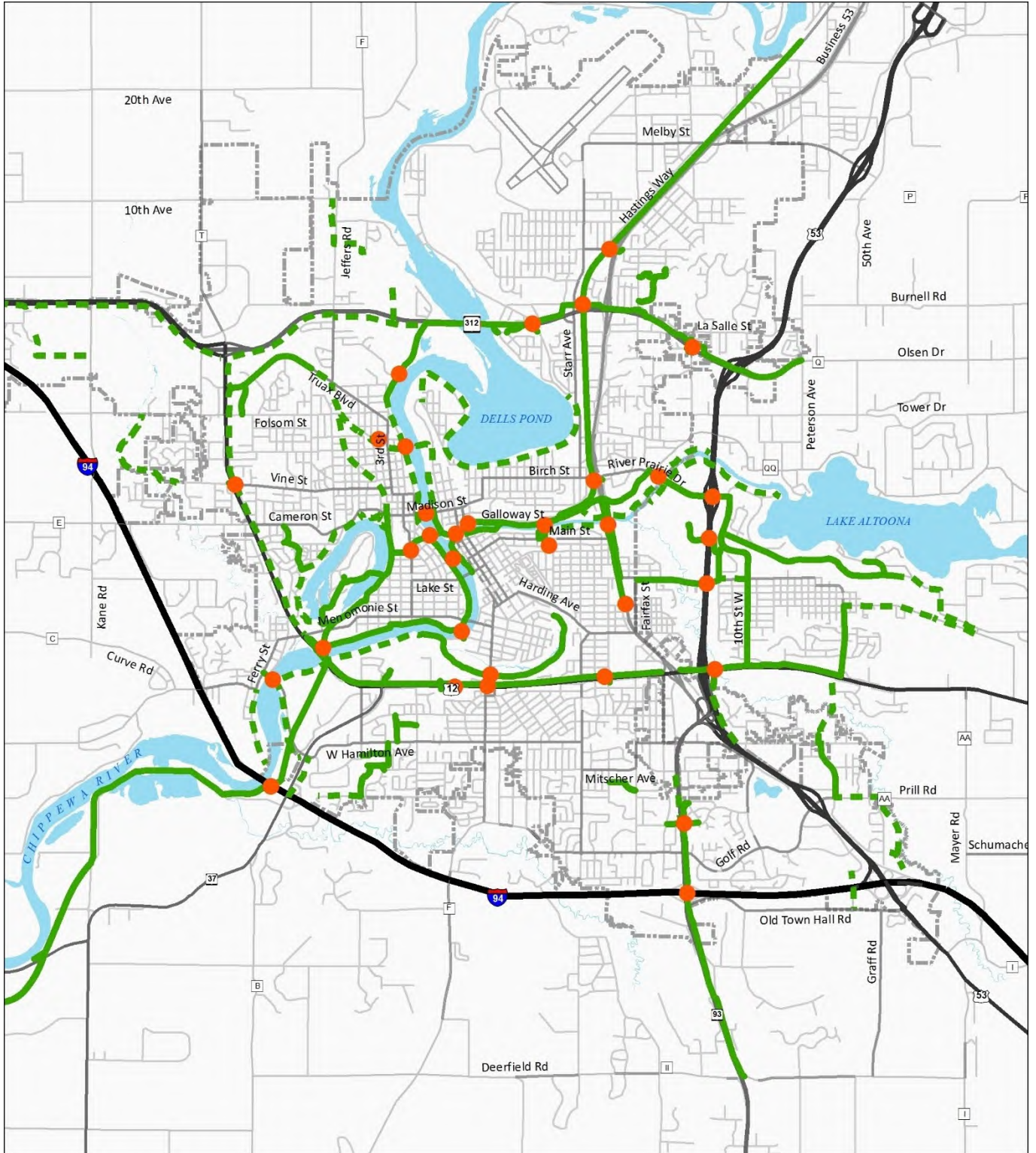
~~Use Forest Street, Sheridan Road and Omaha Street. Widen Forest Street under the Union Pacific Railroad bridge when that structure is eventually rebuilt; presently, that passage is narrow and hazardous.~~

~~The previously planned scheme to build a continuous waterfront path among those points is probably not feasible because of land ownership and topographic limitations. Refer to Figures 5-14 and 5-15 in the Transportation Assessment chapter or Figure 7-5 in the Parks Assessment for depictions of the waterfront alignment.~~

### **The Lower Chippewa River Greenway**

Follow the guidance of the parks element of the *Waterways Plan*, page 30, as it pertains to riverfront greenways and paths between the Clairemont Avenue and I-94 bridges. That plan recommended maintaining the current route of the Chippewa River State Trail and/or negotiating space for a riverfront greenway and path during the redevelopment process. ~~That change is not expected to occur for several decades, however.~~





- Existing Off-Street Path
- - - Proposed Off-Street Path
- Grade Separated Facility

**Figure 5-2**  
**Greenway and**  
**Trail System Plan**



## **Objective 5 – The Role of Parks in Urban Design**

**Locate and design parks, greenways, and parkways to enhance the quality of residential neighborhoods and commercial districts, reflect Eau Claire’s cultural heritage and honor civic life.**

Parks are a major and highly visible public investment that can have a significant positive effect on the appearance of a community and its quality of life. Eau Claire has several fine examples of how parks and greenways can be used to improve or sustain nearby private investment. This objective recommends ways that existing or future parks should be used to help create better neighborhoods, promote revitalization and build an attractive, urban community.

### **Policies**

#### **1. A Network of Green Spaces**

Continue to build a system of green open spaces for recreation, urban beauty and natural protection that are linked by linear parks (greenways), off-road paths and on-street bicycle lanes, and generously landscaped roads known as parkways. This theme runs throughout the plan.

#### **2. A System of Civic Spaces**

Incorporate the design of the City park and greenway system as one element of a larger system of civic spaces. Through a high quality of design and stewardship, key civic spaces will sustain the quality of life, private investment and economic competitiveness of Eau Claire. The system elements should be designed to complement one another both visually and functionally, and should be interconnected for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Other elements of this system include:

- Parks of all types
- Plazas
- Schools
- Civic buildings, such as City Hall and the library
- The university and technical college campuses
- Local residential streets, sidewalks and street trees
- Minor arterial or collector roads
- Bridges
- Off-street and on-street bicycle lanes
- Wetlands and ponds
- Rivers and streams
- Wooded areas

### **3. Neighborhood Quality**

Seek to design parks, greenways, and parkways as visual assets that should enhance the level of private investment in nearby housing and create lasting value in neighborhoods. Each park should:

- Be open to the neighborhood on at least half of its perimeter;
- Include generous landscaping to soften and direct views;
- Provide both active spaces and quiet, natural areas;
- Use a civic building such as a gazebo or picnic shelter as a focal point;
- Be designed in school-park situations in coordination with the facilities provided by the school;
- Include off-street parking designed in careful relation to the topography, plantings and views so as to minimize its visual effect. No more off-street parking should be provided than is reasonable in addition to on-street parking.

At the same time, the City should strive to ensure that development that occurs next to parks is compatible with these open space areas.

### **4. Waterfront Public Open Space**

Provide well-designed and accessible public corridors along rivers and streams for public open space and parks. As recommended previously, the City should design the green space to include walkways and bicycling paths, protect key environmental features such as wetlands or flood plains, use environmentally sensitive bank stabilization techniques instead of heavily engineered devices, and create visual and functional linkages between the waterfronts and nearby neighborhoods or districts. In addition, a large portion of the edge of public linear open space should abut local streets rather than private lots in order to extend the benefits of that open space into the larger neighborhood.

### **5. Quiet Spaces**

Include quiet spaces in parks and playgrounds for strolling or sitting wherever the landscape allows. Some locations in the park system should be managed to retain their wooded or otherwise natural characteristics to invite exploration and discovery. Such places offer a small refuge from the bustle of the urban environment and offer opportunities to connect with nature on a daily basis.

### **6. Civic Pride and Local Heritage**

Design and maintain parks and other public spaces as the highest expression of civic pride and local heritage. Parks should be beautiful as well as functional so that current generations will enjoy their use and future generations will appreciate what they represent. Parks and greenways should be inspiring and represent the best of Eau Claire.

## **7. Park Buildings**

Design buildings and facilities in parks to follow a consistent architectural theme reflecting local materials, building practices, cultural heritage and user needs. Buildings should be classic in proportions and materials, adaptable and long lasting. If necessary, it is preferable to delay construction rather than to install a structure that is not of sufficient quality.

## **8. Associated Furnishings and Amenities**

Encourage park furnishings and amenities; such as benches, bicycle parking, fences, park-related signs, and trash containers to complement the design of the park areas and buildings within such parks. Other design features such as art, decorative lighting of buildings and bridges, and other decorative urban design features should be encouraged to further enhance the appearance of the City's park, and greenway areas.

## **9. Development of Adjacent Park and Greenway Areas**

Ensure that development that occurs adjacent to parks and greenways is compatible with such areas, provides appropriate screening, maintains access and does not negatively affect the natural environment of such park or greenway.

The Waterways and Parks Commission currently comments on development proposals that abut a park or open space. The City may consider expanding the Commission's review to include advisory comments on development applications that are adjacent to parks or greenways and only separated by a public right-of-way.

## **Objective 6 – Ecology and Environment**

### **Plan and design parks and greenways to protect environmentally sensitive features, reduce negative environmental effects and serve as models of land stewardship.**

Parks can and should provide benefits in addition to outdoor recreation such as protecting environmentally sensitive areas and connecting people to nature on a daily basis. This section describes several ways that the City will manage its parks and greenways in an ecologically responsible manner while meeting other objectives.

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Natural Preservation and Stewardship**

Identify, preserve, restore or enhance existing valuable natural areas, such as wetlands, major wooded areas, hilltops, and native prairies (if any) and provide for appropriate public use. Identify such lands prior to the neighborhood development process. The City should also establish an inventory of other significant natural resource areas, such as Mt. Tom.

##### **2. Half Moon Lake Water Quality Improvements**

Continue to work with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and citizen groups to monitor and improve water quality in Half Moon Lake and its watershed. Much progress has been made since this campaign was begun in 2006.

Promote wildlife and fisheries management programs for the Half Moon Lake, Rod and Gun Park and Carson Park areas and their watersheds. Encourage such programs in other appropriate areas within the City.

##### **3. Otter Creek Greenway**

Seek to acquire a strip of land on the east side of Otter Creek opposite the Southeast Community Park to protect that wooded valley beyond the already-protected flood plain. This greenway should be sufficiently wide to buffer the effects of future urban development to the east. This initiative depends on where the Cities of Eau Claire and Altoona negotiate the future boundary between their jurisdictions. If that land is destined to be in Altoona, then that City should acquire the land.

Eau Claire will partner with the City of Altoona to acquire land along one or both sides of Otter Creek between the Eau Claire River and County Trunk Highway AA for use as a greenway. Because some areas along Otter Creek are already divided into small parcels for housing, the Cities will have to act soon to acquire meaningful amounts of creek edge.

##### **4. Manage Drainageways Naturally**

Seek to identify and maintain drainageways in parks in a natural state. Drainage swales and creeks are important for their ability to provide wildlife habitat and movement paths, cost-effectively manage storm water, reduce flooding, and serve as visual amenities. Mowing should be discouraged, and environmentally sensitive methods of bank protection should be used rather than engineering approaches.

The City will also try to incorporate neighborhood detention ponds into parks for the sake of park aesthetics, water quality and land efficiency. This should be done without losing the amount of land needed for active park uses, however.

**5. Use Sustainable Plantings**

Seek to reduce the amount of park area devoted to mowed turf and introduce in its place plant species that require less maintenance, provide habitat for birds, small animals and insects, and improve the quality of water runoff. Invasive, non-native plant species should be controlled.

**6. Link Open Spaces**

Link major intact natural areas in public open spaces by corridors of native woods and grasses for the sake of wildlife habitat and movement, and urban aesthetics. Landscape elements that can be used for such links include streams and stream edges, fencerows and hedgerows, drainage swales, roadside ditches with natural vegetation, flood plains and wetlands.

**7. Retain Unmanaged Places**

Retain selected few wooded and other natural areas in the park system at a very low level of management in order to provide places for people to explore on their own and experience a rudimentary bit of wilderness.

**8. Stewardship Example**

Seek to set a positive example of land stewardship. As the major public landowner within the community, the City should set a good example of land stewardship for the private sector to emulate by following sound principles of sustainable design.

**9. Provide Educational Opportunities**

Educate the general public and teach park users about the physical and natural environments existing within the City's parks through the use of interpretive displays, plaques, educational programs, etc. Such efforts should address topics such as vegetation, wildlife, aquatics, and geology as well as highlighting significant historical events associated with a particular park.

**10. Work with Other Organizations**

Cooperate with allied organizations (e.g., the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, DNR, Friends of Half Moon Lake, Eau Claire County) that are dedicated to protecting the local natural environment in order to leverage spending and volunteer help, marshal political support, and evaluate resources.

## **Objective 7 – City-Wide Facilities, Programs and Services**

### **Refine park system facilities and recreation programs to meet changing outdoor recreation needs, meet safety and access guidelines, and achieve other objectives of this Plan.**

Eau Claire supports similar programs in many locations, so these activities are best addressed on a City-wide basis. The following policies provide recommendations that apply across the community.

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Recognize Diverse Needs**

Seek to recognize and accommodate the diverse recreational needs of the community:

- Neighborhood-level recreation facilities should be made available to each household in the City at either a neighborhood ~~playground~~ park or through the joint use of school properties.
- Facilities provided at sites classified as Neighborhood Parks should reflect the needs of the particular neighborhood or user group within the service area.
- Park and open space facilities should be designed to serve all ages and ~~the disabled~~ abilities.
- Use the standards in this plan as flexible guidelines.

##### **2. Citizen Involvement**

Encourage greater citizen involvement in leisure activities and promote greater use of the parks.

Continue to provide a financial assistance program to people who are financially unable to pay for the registration fees for recreation programs sponsored by the City and promote the fact that this assistance is available.

Continue to monitor attendance and participation levels of the programs and parks to help determine demand.

Conduct surveys to assess the needs and deficiencies in programs and facilities.

##### **3. Service Delivery**

Follow the guidance of the 2011 *Parks, Recreation and Forestry Strategic Plan*, which addressed service delivery in the subjects of:

- Customer service
- Ranking services, programs, events and facilities
- Marketing
- Personnel and staffing
- Funding
- Community health and well being
- The environment.



#### **4. Complete Jeffers Park**

Complete the Jeffers Park softball and baseball fields in 2015.

Jeffers Park is planned to feature a five-field baseball and softball complex and include a playground, pavilion and trails. The project is a collaboration of two youth sports leagues, the Eau Claire National Little League and Eau Claire Fastpitch, plus the City of Eau Claire.

The ball field complex would be the first joint boy and girl ball fields in the City and expand limited access to fields. The fields would be the first City softball fields for girls outside of Carson Park, now used primarily by UWEC and the high schools, and allow both the boys and girls improved league and tournament opportunities. Jeffers Park will also provide the neighborhood and northwest side of Eau Claire much needed access to a community park offering a variety of active and passive outdoor recreational activities. Accomplishing this project will address actions that were included in the 2005 *Comprehensive Plan*.

#### **4. Active Aging Facilities**

Work with volunteer groups to develop an active aging program at McDonough Playground Park. Plans have been approved and fundraising is in progress.

#### **5. Football**

Maintain the Carson Park football field and stadium seating to meet community needs. The Carson Park Field was upgraded to artificial turf using donations from the private sector, University of Wisconsin Eau Claire and the school district along with income from the beverage sales. The artificial turf allows the field to be used more intensively without degradation. It also provides a consistently better and safer playing surface. Anticipate replacing the present surface by 2020.

#### **5. Carson Park Master Plan**

Follow the guidance and implement the 2021 Carson Park Master Plan.

#### **6. Basketball**

Provide outdoor basketball courts at each neighborhood playground.

#### **7. Disc Golf**

Assess and address community needs for additional disc golf courses. Conduct a site study that includes County as well as City parks.

#### **8. Tennis and Pickleball**

Continue to monitor the needs for additional community tennis courts. There is no need for more tennis courts presently or in the foreseeable future.

Investigate the opportunities for pickleball courts and the means of increasing participation in this growing sport. Pickleball is a hybrid of tennis, badminton and ping pong and played on a court approximately half the size of a tennis court.



A pickleball game on half of a tennis court

## 9. Community Gardens

Designate spaces in parks where residents can plant gardens of vegetables or flowers. Consider park master plans, neighborhood and community needs, water access, visibility for security, and appropriateness.

The UW Extension Office reviewed the suitability of the various neighborhood parks for community gardens in 2015. Sites were assessed based on soil quality, sunlight exposure, water access, and available space. Their review indicated that the following parks seem to be best suited for a community garden: Sundet, Newell, Cameron, Buffington, County Farm, and Zephyr Hill.

## 10. Skate Parks

Create several small concrete plazas of 2,000 to 4,000 square feet in various parts of the city for skate parks.

## 11. Swimming

Continue to monitor the need for additional or improved outdoor swimming facilities. The outdoor swimming pool and water slides at Fairfax Park are adequate for the City's summer needs within the time frame of this *Plan*, although they should be supplemented by spray equipment.

There is also a swimming beach at the northeast end of Half Moon Lake.

## 12. Boat Launches

Assess and address community needs for boat launches. The City maintains boat landings at Riverview Park and Mt. Simon Park for access to the Chippewa River and Dells Pond, at Carson Park for access to Half Moon Lake, and behind Hobbs Ice Center for access to the Chippewa River. The Riverview Park boat launch is near capacity on summer weekends. All boat landings are free and open to the public. Trailer parking is available at all sites. No internal combustion engines are allowed on Half Moon Lake.

The feasibility of creating a launch should be studied at the Xcel Energy property off Old Wells Road (accessible from the western side of the community). The City should conduct a study of the number of boats that typically use Dells Pond and the upper Chippewa River to determine the boating capacity of this portion of the river, as well as whether any of the semi-submerged logging "booms" should be removed.

An additional boat launch is proposed at the proposed county park on the Chippewa River downstream of I-94 in the Town of Brunswick and on the east side of Half Moon Lake.

## 13. Canoe Launches

Assess and address community needs for canoe launches.

Currently, canoes may be put into the Chippewa River from any of the motorboat launches. The City should consider providing additional canoe launches at:

- Phoenix Park at the confluence of the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers

- North side of the Eau Claire River and west of the Birch Street crossing of the river
- Near the Lake Altoona dam (possibly by the City of Altoona)
- West of the City Shops located on Forest Street
- North of Madison Street on the west side of the Chippewa River.

#### **14. Fishing Docks**

Assess and address the community needs for additional fishing docks. The City should consider installing additional fishing docks on Half Moon Lake near the causeway and Lakeshore School, on Dells Pond at Mount Simon Park, and on the Chippewa River at Riverview Park, north of the existing boat launch.

#### **15. Nordic Ski Trails**

Assess and address the community needs for additional Nordic ski trails. There are City cross-country skiing trails with terrain for beginners in three locations:

- City Wells Area (flat trail, approximately 3 miles)
- Carson Park (rolling terrain with 1 hill, approximately 1 mile)
- Fairfax Park (fairly flat trail, approximately 1.7 miles).

More extensive Nordic skiing trails are located in four of the Eau Claire County Parks, particularly Tower Ridge Recreation Area, located in the Town of Seymour.

#### **16. Artificial Turf Fields**

Investigate the increased use of the new, long-blade artificial turf on select, premier fields for soccer, football, baseball, and softball.

The cost of artificial turf is decreasing, in some cases making it more affordable and efficient than natural grass. Schools and park systems are beginning to find this to be a cost-effective investment over the long-term for certain fields because of decreased maintenance and increased use. If the City can find other organizations with which to share in the cost, and, perhaps, increased sources of revenue, then the decision to change surfaces could be made on a case-by-case basis. The Carson Park stadium is a prime candidate for an artificial turf field.

#### **17. Dog Park**

Improve as a dog park the site over which the City has an easement along the Chippewa River near I-94 and the Ferry Street Open Space.

A place for letting dogs run off-leash with other canines has already been created in Southeast Community Park.

#### **18. Summer Playground Program**

Continue to provide the City-sponsored summer playground program. Since, this program is not offered in each neighborhood or at each neighborhood playground, the City will regularly assess neighborhood needs and demand for this program in order to direct program offerings to the areas experiencing the greatest need.

However, in selecting summer playground sites, the City will also consider site location on a City-wide basis in order to afford all interested youth the opportunity to participate in the program. In addition, identify and secure funding sources to assist in providing this program at the neighborhood playgrounds.

## **Objective 8 – Other Community Recreational Facilities**

**Work cooperatively with other communities, units of government, landowners or recreation providers to reduce costs and enhance the delivery of outdoor recreational facilities.**

### **Policies**

#### **1. Reduce Costs to the City**

Seek to reduce the proportion of park costs borne by the City through these means:

- Promote the development of those parks where the beneficiaries donate time or money.
- Use state or federal aid to acquire and develop facilities.
- Promote joint public-private ventures in creating parks.
- When appropriate, plan the park system in cooperation with the county, the school district or the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire to enable its joint design, development and operation for the mutual benefit of recreation and education programs.
- Consider maintenance when designing facilities.
- Encourage the formation of “friends” groups that can assist park improvement, maintenance or funding.

#### **2. Cooperative Relationships**

Seek cooperative and cost-effective relationships with other units of government in the delivery of recreation facilities and programs. Those units include Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties, the Eau Claire Area School District, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, City of Altoona, adjoining towns, and private sports associations and user groups. The aim will be to avoid duplication and counterproductive competition, while communicating and planning cooperatively.

#### **3. Planned Lower Chippewa River Park**

Support the acquisition and development of a new community park along the lower Chippewa River (south of I-94) by Eau Claire County. This site is in the Town of Brunswick and could serve regional recreation needs such as boating, fishing, hiking, picnicking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and nature study; it would also provide flood storage.

Extensive reforestation would be required for this long-term project, as the site has been recently mined for gravel and inundated over the centuries by floods. Assistance from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources should be sought for that work.

#### **4. Otter Creek Greenway**

Pursue the acquisition and joint management of a greenway and trail along Otter Creek. The land needed for the greenway and trail is currently located in the Cities of Altoona and Eau Claire and the Town of Washington. The City of Eau Claire

should initiate efforts to work cooperatively with adjacent jurisdictions to acquire and develop the greenway.

**5. Chippewa River State Trail**

Coordinate with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and adjacent municipalities to maintain and promote the Chippewa River State Trail. This trail is the most prominent example of a recreation facility in or near Eau Claire that is managed by several jurisdictions.

**6. School Facilities**

Seek to co-locate City parks with schools and to use existing school gymnasiums or pools to meet City recreational program needs.

**Plan Action Steps**

The City will take the following steps to implement the recommendations of the Parks, Trails and Greenways Plan.

**Table 5-4  
Parks, Greenways and Trails Plan Actions**

Action	Timing
<u>Seek to acquire land for the parks proposed in Object #1</u>	<u>Ongoing</u>
Acquire land for the six planned <b>Neighborhood Parks</b> and one <b>Waterfront Park</b> located in perimeter locations in conjunction with land subdivision if not before; list improvement costs in the multi-year capital improvements program.	Ongoing
Acquire land for the proposed <b>Folsom Street Park</b> and budget for improvements.	2015 – 2020
Acquire land for <b>Greenway extensions</b> as described in Policy 4-3 of the Parks Chapter.	Ongoing
Coordinate with the City of Altoona to create a greenway along <b>Otter Creek</b> <u>and connection to River Prairie.</u>	2015 <u>2020 – 2025</u>
<del>Work with the developer of <b>The Confluence</b> to create a riverfront plaza and greenway extensions.</del>	<del>2015 – 2016</del>
Work with the <b>University</b> to acquire additional greenway land adjacent to the planned event and recreation <u>develop the Sonnentag Center</u> along Menomonie Street.	2015 <u>2020 – 2025</u>
Acquire <b>other properties</b> as listed in Policy 2-2 under the City’s five-year Parks Plan.	Ongoing
Negotiate with the Town of Union to make the existing <b>Sherman Creek Park</b> jointly accessible to Town and City residents.	2015 <u>2020 – 2025</u>
<b>Improve existing parks</b> as described in Table 5-3, Objective 7 and the five-year <i>Parks and Open Space Plan</i> .	Ongoing

Parks, Trails and Greenway System Plan

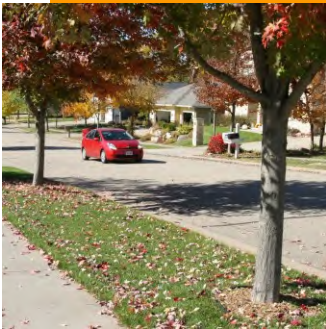
Continue to <b>build</b> paths and other improvements in the greenways.	Ongoing
Continue to <b>design</b> parks and greenways to advance civic pride and environmental stewardship.	Ongoing
Consider adopting an ordinance requiring land or cash be dedicated with subdividing of <b>residential</b> lots.	<del>2018</del> <u>2021 - 2022</u>
Continue acquiring properties around <b>Half Moon Lake</b> as they become available.	Ongoing
<u>Implement the <b>Safe Routes to Parks Plan</b></u>	<u>2020</u>
<u>Implement the <b>Carson Park Management Plan</b></u>	<u>2021</u>
<u>Develop active aging facility at McDonough Park</u>	<u>2021 - 2022</u>



Adopted

# **Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015**

## **Natural Resources Plan**



City of Eau Claire Wisconsin

## Natural Resources Plan

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## Natural Resources Plan

This chapter establishes policies for municipal actions to protect or restore Key natural resources. It is closely linked to other Plan chapters such as Land Use, Parks and Urban Design.

### Major Natural Resources Issues

The major unresolved natural resources issues may be summarized as:

- 1. Stream and Lake Water Quality:** What actions should the City take to maintain or improve the quality of water entering the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers and Half Moon Lake?
- 2. River Flooding:** Should the City acquire additional houses from the floodplain along the Chippewa River or Eau Claire Rivers?
- 3. Tree Preservation:** Should the City adopt an ordinance requiring builders to replace lost trees at a certain ratio?
- 4. Urban Forest:** What should the City do, if anything, to ensure that trees are planted along the public edge of new streets?
- 5. Habitat Restoration:** Where should wildlife habitat and stream restoration be conducted?
- 6. Steep Slopes:** Should the City adopt its own development regulations for steep slopes that supplement the slope controls that are mandated by the *Urban Sewer Service Area Plan*?

Several other issues that were identified during the 2005 *Comprehensive Plan* have been resolved. They were listed in the Assessment of Conditions.

## Overview of the Natural Resources Plan

The Eau Claire Natural Resources Plan provides guidance to the City in the management of steep slopes, wetlands, floodplains and other natural areas. Some of these locations will be protected through regulations such as zoning and others may be acquired by the public and managed. Water is the focus of the plan since the city is at the confluence of two rivers and includes several creeks.

Please refer to the Land Use Plan for policies on the subject of brownfields or contaminated properties.

**Goal: Protect or improve water quality, river banks, urban forest, wildlife habitat and soils in Eau Claire for the sake of sustainable development, ecological responsibility, quality of life and economic development.**

## Summary of Objectives

The objectives of the Natural Resources Plan are:

### **Objective 1 –Water Resources Management**

Maintain or improve the quality of surface water and ground water in and near Eau Claire.

### **Objective 2 -- River Bank Management**

Improve the natural condition of the river banks while minimizing flood hazards

### **Objective 3 – Urban Forest Management**

Protect the remaining undisturbed tracts of old-growth forest in the city and supplement it with new trees

### **Objective 4 – Wildlife Habitat Management**

Protect the key remaining small tracts of wildlife habitat and restore or improve the quality of other locations.

### **Objective 5 – Soil Resources Management**

Safeguard soils by reducing soil erosion, especially near streams and wetlands, and by promoting compact urban growth.

### **Objective 6 – Coordination, Education and Volunteerism**

Work through the Sustainability Commission to coordinate efforts with other units of government and leverage the work of citizen volunteers.

## Natural Resources Plan Objectives and Policies

This major section of the Natural Resources Plan describes what the City would like to accomplish regarding sensitive natural resources, particularly water, and how it would like to do so.

Figure 6-1 indicates the general locations of some of the major resources to be protected such as rivers, creeks, floodplains, lakes, wetlands, steep slopes and major wooded areas.

### Objective 1 – Water Resources

#### Protect and improve the quality of surface water and ground water in and near Eau Claire.

Eau Claire is rich in water resources, and protecting those streams and aquifers is a major responsibility. The City has been implementing a 1992 surface water plan and subsequently improved its water quality regulations to conform to state and federal guidelines.

#### Policies

##### 1. Surface Water Management and Water Quality Protection

The City will continue to apply and enforce the provisions of its Surface Water Management Plan and its Water Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) **Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS-4)** permit from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources under NR 216 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code throughout the watersheds that drain to the rivers, creeks and lakes.

Consistent with the terms of that permit, the City of Eau Claire was working in 2015 with the Department of Natural Resources to update the City's storm water ordinances to meet the objectives of the DNR's runoff water quality criteria (NR 151), model ordinances (NR 152), and the City's Building, Subdivisions and Zoning Codes.

Water quality in the streams and lakes depends on proper practices throughout the watershed, which in the case of the Chippewa River is 6,630 square miles. The City has jurisdiction over a small portion of that watershed, and will continue to do its part to safeguard water quality.<sup>1</sup>

New outfalls on the river and stream banks will be discouraged unless there is not a practical alternative.

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<sup>1</sup> Many tips and educational materials about maintaining or improving water quality can be found at these locations:

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

### The Eau Claire MS4 Permit

The elements of the City’s Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS-4) permit address:

- Public education and outreach
- Public participation
- Illicit connections and discharges - detection and elimination
  - Industrial and high risk runoff
  - Toxic spills
- Construction site pollutant control
- Post-construction storm water management
- Pollution Prevention
- Stormwater management as required by NR 151
  - Reduce total suspended solids
  - Catch basins
  - Leaf collection
  - Street sweeping
  - Structural control maintenance
  - Roadway maintenance
  - Nutrient management on City land
  - Flood control devices
- Assessment and monitoring
- A storm sewer system map that identifies location of water management facilities
- An annual report to the Department of Natural Resources

Each city must adopt measurable goals or design objectives to quantify how well it is doing in achieving its minimum control measures.

In 2004, the City of Eau Claire expanded its requirements for erosion control from private construction sites (Chapter 16.36.040, Standards for Public and Private Development, Storm Drainage) using the DNR model ordinance. That section was amended to include:

- That a **construction control plan** be prepared for each development or redevelopment site of one acre or greater in size as required under Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 151, Construction Site Performance Standard for New Development and Redevelopment. That regulation requires the use of Best Management Practices to reduce by 80 percent the sediment load carried in water runoff.
- **Flexibility for City staff** to modify release rates based on downstream conditions such as limited conveyance system capacity, erosion potential and/or regional storm water facilities.
- **Requirements for grading plans** to regulate runoff during and after individual lot construction and landscaping.
- Any **Best Management Practices** that are required under the NR 216 water quality permit.



However, Chapter 16.36.040 does not apply to the construction of one- and two-family housing.

**Public Education**

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

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

**Best Management Practices**

Runoff from rainfall, snow melt or other activities will be collected on-site and treated with site-appropriate “best management practices” (BMPs) for pollutant removal prior to discharging into the public storm sewer system. These include:

- Ponds to detain and filter runoff before it reaches a stream, natural lake or wetland
- Rain gardens
- Bio-filtration devices
- Vegetated swales
- Infiltration areas
- Pervious pavement
- Buried storage vaults
- Oil and water separators.
- Covering dumpster or material storage areas to prevent contact with rainfall
- Nutrient management programs to prevent over-use of fertilizers and/or pesticides
- Site designs that minimize paved areas and areas exposed to vehicular traffic.

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

**2. Minimize Disturbance to Environmentally Sensitive Areas**

Continue to minimize harm to designated Environmentally Sensitive Areas through the continued application of its zoning ordinance, especially Chapter 18.11, **Floodplain Zoning District**, Chapter 18.12, **Shoreland-Wetlands Overlay Zoning District**, and Chapter 18.45.050, **Site Plans**, and Chapter 17.12.290 of the Subdivision code, **Environmentally Sensitive Areas**.

Chapter 17.12.290 states:

No development or land disturbance activity shall be allowed within any environmentally sensitive area ...unless the owner demonstrates the proposed development or land disturbance activity is expressly allowed under any of the following:

1. Chapter 18.11, Floodplain Overlay District, for floodplain areas.
2. Chapter 18.12, Shoreland-Wetlands Overlay District, for wetland areas.

3. The provisions of the *Chippewa Falls - Eau Claire Urban Sewer Service Area Plan*, adopted by reference herein, for all areas of 20 percent or greater slope.

**Environmentally Sensitive Areas**

According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) is defined as “portions of the landscape including valuable natural resource features that should be protected from intensive development”. ESAs include all lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, floodways, and certain other significant and unique natural resource features plus a setback or buffer from these features. Furthermore, areas of steep slopes (12 percent or greater) when located wholly or partially within these natural resource features shall also be included as an ESA. Required setbacks from Environmentally Sensitive Areas are:

**Table 6-1  
Setback Requirements for Environmentally Sensitive Areas**

<b>ESA Feature</b>	<b>Setback or Buffer</b>
Navigable waters	100 feet from the ordinary high water mark
Non-navigable waters	25 feet from the top of bank
Channels of concentrated flow	10 feet from the edge of feature
Floodways	No setback or buffer
Wetlands	50 feet from the leeward edge of wetlands > 2 acres
Others	On a case-by-case basis

**3. River and Stream Shoreline Protection**

Preserve and restore natural conditions to the extent practical, especially the rivers and streams of the city, in order to filter runoff, reduce erosion and provide habitat for stream species.

A natural, vegetated stream corridor and lowland conservancy area should be maintained along the edges of streams or wetlands to minimize erosion, stabilize the bank, protect water quality, maintain water temperature at natural levels and preserve fish and wildlife habitat. The natural vegetation should extend a minimum of 25 feet from the ordinary high water mark of a stream or wetland.

Work with the Department of Natural Resources to protect the banks and floodplain of the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers as well as Sherman, Lowes and Otter Creeks by enforcing its current floodplain regulations, using natural stream edge protection techniques as described above and by acquiring additional land for public open space. (See also the Parks and Recreation Plan and the Land Use Plan.)

Use natural means of protecting the edge of the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers and other shorelines in locations where wake action needs do not dictate otherwise. The use of stone rip-rap and concrete walls will be minimized because they are unattractive and do not provide any natural habitat or runoff filtration. The aims for restoring stream banks should be to introduce new plantings or protect existing native plants that will provide an integrated series of benefits:

- Stabilize the mechanics of slopes
- Reduce soil erosion
- Improve water quality
- Create and connect wildlife habitat
- Enhance riverbank aesthetics.

### **Protecting Lowes Creek**

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

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

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

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

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

#### 4. Half Moon Lake Water Quality Management

The City will continue to implement the recommendations of the ~~2002~~ 2020 Report on Half Moon Lake Water Quality Improvement Plan ~~and the 2010 Plan Update~~. This plan updates the initial plan from 2002 and an update in 2010.

The ~~2002~~ plan ~~calls-called~~ for coordinating ~~four~~ five groups – the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, City Parks, Recreation and Forestry, City ~~Public Works~~ Engineering Department, ~~Ski Sprites Waterski Club~~ and the Friends of Half Moon Lake - - to advocate for the changes recommended. ~~It also-~~The original plan called for relocating the Ski Sprites from Half Moon Lake, cutting weeds to improve swimming and boating experiences, implementing motor boat restrictions, improving stormwater management in the lake watershed, improving the fish habitat and reducing the invasive plants that dominated the lake.

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

~~An alum treatment~~ Alum treatments were applied in 2011, 2017 and 2019 to control the release of phosphorus into the lake and will be continually monitored during the next several years to measure ~~its~~ their effectiveness.

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

#### 5. Stormwater Plan Updates

Update the ~~1992~~ 2018 *Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan* by conducting an additional sub-area study in the Otter Creek watershed, which were partially addressed in the 1992 plan, along with a study west of County Highway TT in the Town of Union, which was not included in the 1992 plan but which is a location of planned urbanization under this comprehensive plan.

Review the calculations for the Sherman Creek watershed using more accurate information about current and planned land use.

#### 6. Greenway Design

Consider environmental issues in the design of linear public parks and other open space along streams or bicycle paths. When determining the width of a greenway, consider environmental standards such as slope percentage, erodible slopes, soil conditions, wetlands, floodplain locations and areas of quality woodlands with their size, area and species identified. Carefully align bicycle paths in a greenway so as to minimize disruption of the ecology of the site.

## **7. Wetland Restoration**

Restore filled or degraded wetlands when feasible during redevelopment projects for the sake of water quality, rate control and neighborhood amenity.

Eau Claire has few wetlands because of its sandy soils, and the few that it does have tend to be in stream floodplains.

## **8. River Floodplain Management**

Continue to apply the regulations of its Floodplain Overlay zoning district.

The floodplain zoning district provides standards for land development in the floodway and in the flood fringe sub-districts such as allowable types of land use, allowable coverage, minimum building elevations and building flood-proofing. Land use and site development plans will be drawn to protect the streams and accomplish appropriate waterfront development.

The location of the floodplain district is based on mapped estimates of 100-year and 500-year floodplains prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Administration.

## **9. River Floodplain Property Acquisition**

Acquire the few structures remaining in the 100-year floodplain along the Chippewa River to reduce the potential of damage and to create additional linear park (Greenway). The acquisition should be through voluntary sale as reasonable prices can be negotiated.

One location for such potential acquisition noted in the 2012 *Waterways Plan* are the several houses located east of First Avenue just south of Madison Street, although there are additional endangered locations in Eau Claire. Houses west of Forest Street were previously acquired and removed for those purposes.

## **10. Groundwater Contamination**

Continue to coordinate with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the United States Environmental Protection Agency to implement the remedial action plan for containing and reducing the groundwater threat to the Eau Claire Well Field.

## **11. Infiltration Standards**

Adopt surface water infiltration standards that are consistent with Wisconsin DNR requirements. Consider the percolation rate of the soil and maintenance; do not increase the potential for groundwater contamination or groundwater mounding.

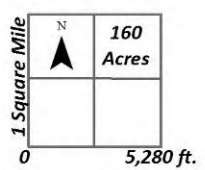
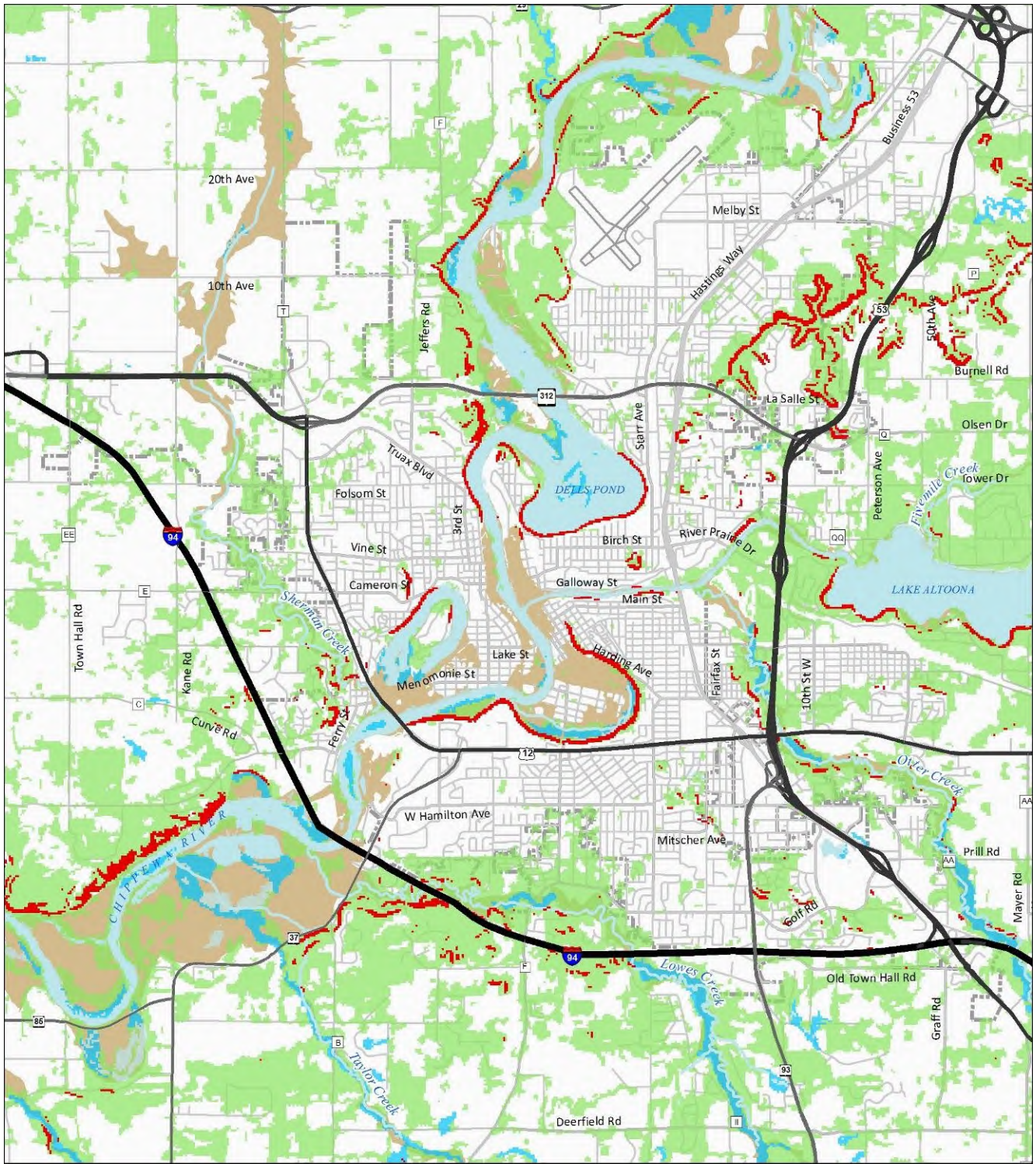
## **12. Lawn Fertilizers**

Phosphorus in lawn fertilizer is a source of water pollution in Eau Claire and other communities. The City will support efforts by other units of government and/or private advocates to reduce or eliminate this type of lawn fertilizer in the region or the state.

## **13. Street Ice Control Materials**

Continue to use materials other than just salt to control street ice to the extent practical. The City currently uses salt, brine and sand. Salt is very harmful to plants and water quality and all the species that depend on them. It also accelerates rust.





- Steep Slopes
- Forest
- Wetland
- Streams and Lakes
- Flood Plain

**Figure 6-1**  
**Major**  
**Natural Resources**



## Objective 2 –River Bank Management

### Improve the natural condition of the river banks while minimizing flood hazards

The Banks of the Chippewa, and to a lesser extent, the Eau Claire Rivers have been abused in ways that are unattractive, contrary to river ecology and not even totally effective in preventing loss of soil from floods. New, more enlightened management is needed.

#### Policies

##### 1. River Bank Management

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

The use of boulders (often called rip-rap) will be limited to situations where engineering analysis indicates that bio-engineering alone will not be sufficient to protect valuable structures such as bridge piers. Boulders covered with a thin layer of topsoil that is stabilized by hardy, low plants is an acceptable bank protection method in locations already “armored,” as illustrated by Figure 6-2. The Chippewa River bank at Phoenix Park is an example of this technique. Rip-rap may consist only of natural rock or materials made for that purpose, not concrete or other man-made material. In all cases, the rip-rap should be covered with soil and planted. Please refer to the *Waterways Plan* for a detailed description of this technique.

##### Existing Armored River Banks

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

The City may work with the DNR to cover with a suitable planting soil and plant those locations to improve their appearance. Soil cover should consist of 8 to 12 inches of a sand and soil blend planted with herbaceous<sup>2</sup> or low woody plants but not trees.

Armored riverbanks above the elevation determined to be flood-prone will remain armored rather than being revised with entirely natural treatments. Removing the boulders, even if they have been judged to be unnecessary, may do more harm than good. Instead, those locations will be covered and planted as shown by Figure 6-2.

##### Existing Natural River Banks

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

Riverbanks currently in a natural condition should not be treated with rip-rap unless engineering analysis indicates that is necessary. This is because a bank with native soil

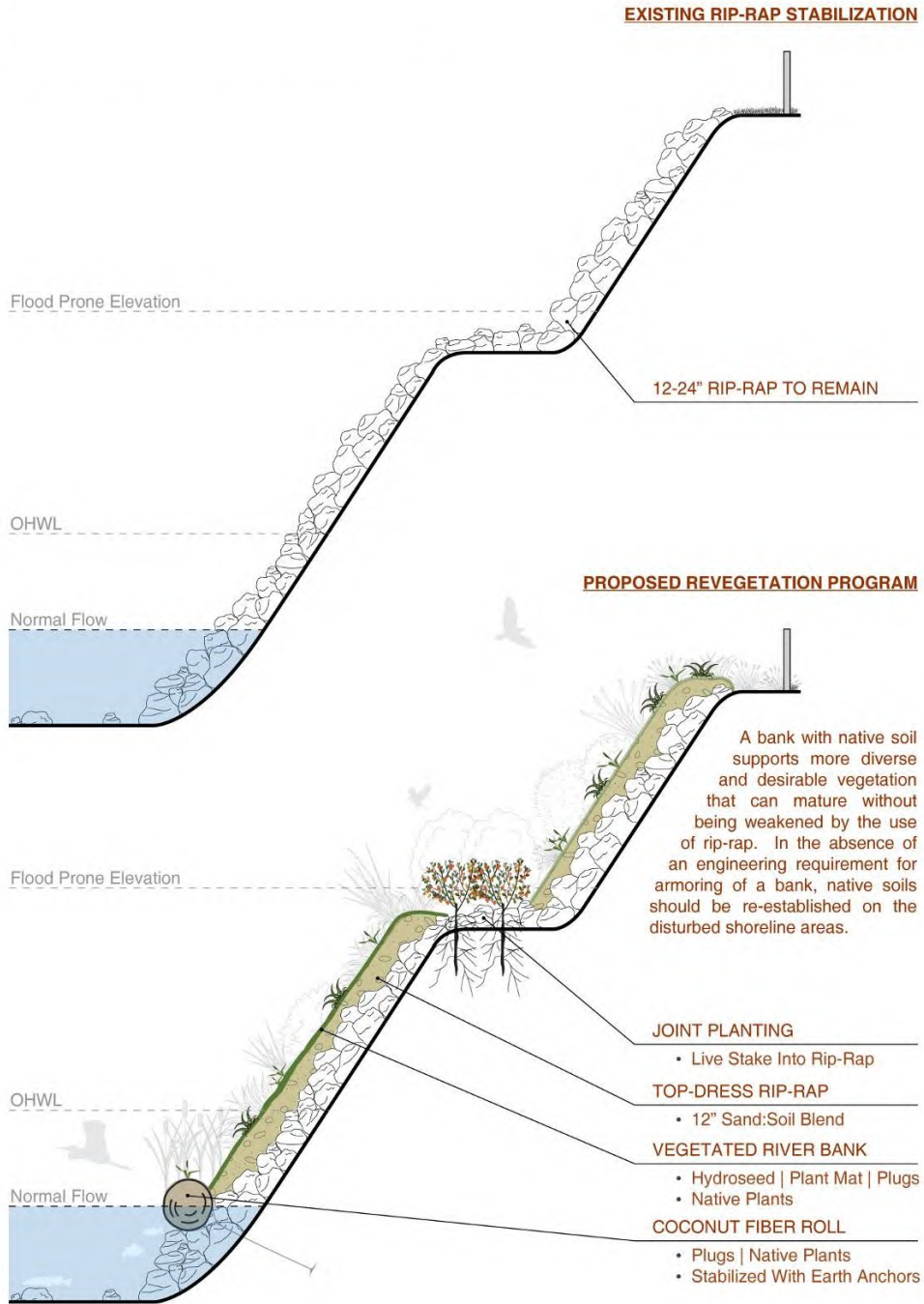
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<sup>2</sup> An herbaceous plant is one that has leaves and stems that die down to the soil level at the end of the growing season. They have no persistent woody stem above ground.

will support a more diverse and desirable set of vegetation, and sustain itself better under normal water conditions, than will a slope treated with boulders.

**Central Business District River Banks**

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



**Figure 6-2 -- Remediation for an Armored Riverbank**

### **Objective 3 – Urban Forest Management**

#### **Protect the remaining undisturbed tracts of old-growth forest in the city and supplement it with new trees**

Nearly all of the original forest has been lost, so there is value in protecting what is left. In addition, the beauty and quality of life in Eau Claire can be enhanced by planting trees along streets, on private property and in parks.

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Trees along Public Roads**

The City will revisit its ordinance and practice regarding the planting of trees along public streets and roads. The intention will be to adopt methods that ensure that trees will be planted in the public right-of-way of every residential street and major municipal thoroughfare. Emphasize the concept of “the right tree in the right place”.

##### **New Streets**

For new streets, a continuous row of trees should be planted on both sides. The time frame will depend on the chosen method. Options may include:

- The private sector plants the trees at the same time as the sidewalk, which occurs after the lot is built upon:
  - i. House builder installs
  - ii. City installs using money put into escrow by the land developer.
- The City furnishes and installs the trees at its own cost:
  - i. Cost is assessed to the benefiting property owner
  - ii. Cost is entirely borne by the City
  - iii. Some combination of the two.

##### **Existing Streets**

For existing streets that have gaps in the tree pattern, a long-term campaign should be started that will fill those spaces. A method of paying for this public improvement and a realistic time schedule should be adopted.

##### **Planting Plan**

The City Forester and City Planner will propose for Council consideration a city-wide plan of tree species by location with spacing guidelines and accommodations for driveways, intersections, utilities and other trees. Start by preparing a map in GIS of all street trees by species and condition in the City. Species continuity on at least a block-by-block basis is favored because it would be best for appearances even though complete diversity would be the best way to prevent disease transmission; limited continuity seems like a reasonable balance.

##### **2. Steep Wooded Slopes and Wooded Bluff Lines**

Prepare and adopt an ordinance limiting the loss of trees on steep slopes and along wooded bluff lines. These features are important to the beauty of the city, its river valley character, soil conservation and water quality.

### 3. Waterways Forest Management

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

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

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

Trees or shrubs may currently be removed or thinned on private land above the bluff line to improve views from the shore to the water provided that sufficient vegetative cover remains to soften the view of cars or buildings when viewed from the water or the opposite bank and that disturbed areas are stabilized against erosion. Such thinning is allowed particularly if the obstruction has been caused by invasive species. However, significantly affecting the view from the water shoreline is discouraged. This subject should be studied with the intent of possibly adopting an ordinance that disallows tree removal (except invasives) along any bluff line or on the face of a steep slope. Refer also to Policy #2, above, and to Policies #1 and #2 under Objective 5, Soil Resource Management.

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

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

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

- Agree in writing to pay all costs of the work
- Conduct the work under the supervision of the City Forester.

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

Clear-cutting vegetation along the shoreline is strictly forbidden.

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

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

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

#### **Objective 4 – Wildlife Habitat Management**

##### **Protect the key remaining small tracts of wildlife habitat and restore or improve the quality of other locations.**

Wildlife habitat is limited in this urban area, but key locations such as stream corridors can be protected.

##### **Policies**

###### **1. Greenways**

The existing and planned public open space along portions of Otter, Lowes and Sherman Creek, the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers, and Half Moon Lake can act as corridors for the protection and movement of some species of animals. Thus, try to manage them to retain uninterrupted vegetative cover and a high percentage of native vegetation. To the extent feasible, acquire and protect additional lands through easements along those greenways beyond what may be needed for recreation and trails in order to enhance their function as wildlife corridors.

###### **2. Fisheries Habitat Management**

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

###### **3. Urban Forest**

Continue to replace trees that have been lost or removed along City streets and in parks. Prepare an inventory and map for the trees in those locations.

Continue the practice of requiring land developers to install trees in the street right-of-way behind the curb along all residential streets. Locate private utilities (electricity, cable television, gas and telephone services) near the outside of the right-of-way or in an easement just outside the right-of-way to leave the boulevard open for trees.

Also install (or require developers to install) trees along arterial roads, including in commercial or industrial districts according to a comprehensive tree planting plan.

#### **4. Native or Threatened Species**

Seek opportunities for the Department of Parks and Recreation to restore native vegetation in portions of some parks. Good locations for this approach include Carson Park, Rod and Gun Park, the Eau Claire River Greenway, and along Sherman or Otter Creek. In certain areas of private development, such as near wetlands, use native vegetation in an attractive and economical manner. Suggest and encourage private site designers to adopt this practice and advise them on appropriate species.

Find un-managed or un-mowed places on public or private land to plant vegetation that attracts and supports threatened species such as Monarch butterflies (i.e., milkweed) or honey bees.

#### **5. Ecological Studies**

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

The purpose of such studies would be to:

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

#### **6. Bird Watching**

Work to retain the designation of Eau Claire being a “Bird City Wisconsin”, a program of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative. The local commitment to eco-tourism, river stewardship, Greenway preservation and other habitat protection practices was the basis for the application.

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





## **Objective 5 – Soil Resources Management**

**Safeguard soils by reducing soil erosion, especially near streams and wetlands, and by promoting compact urban growth.**

### **Policies**

#### **1. Steep Slopes**

Prepare and adopt an ordinance that regulates development or alteration of steep slopes and coordinate it with the construction site controls under its WPDES stormwater permit.

The steep slope ordinance may help reduce soil erosion, reduce the rate of water runoff and lessen negative visual effects. These rules may be written as a “floating zone,” which may be applied wherever slope conditions meet specified standards such as 12 to 20 percent or greater than 20 percent. It will be useful for purposes of education and understanding to show members of the City Plan Commission and City Council several examples of slopes in the 12 to 20 and greater than 20 percent range in natural settings, developed settings and roads.

#### **2. Steep River Bank Slopes**

The 2012 *Waterways Plan* identified several sites along the Eau Claire River for possible use as parks and others for urban development or some combination of park and development. Each of these sites is encumbered in whole or part by a slope steeper than 20 percent. Steep slopes such as those are considered undevelopable under the terms of the *Chippewa Falls / Eau Claire Urban Sewer Service Area Plan for 2025* because they meet the definition of an Environmentally Sensitive Area according to the Wisconsin DNR. These environmentally sensitive areas may not be served by public sanitary sewer according to state regulations.

#### **3. Construction Sites**

Surface water runoff and wind erosion from construction sites will remain the largest source of soil loss and a problem for water quality at certain times. Thus, continue to enforce requirements for erosion control at such locations.

#### **4. Prime Farmlands**

Minimizing the loss of land that is classified by government agencies as prime for agriculture is one of several considerations in this plan. The City of Eau Claire seeks to minimize the loss of this irreplaceable natural resource by promoting compact urban development and discouraging large-lot sprawl outside its borders.

The regulatory techniques written into Town Plans and County zoning (per the Intergovernmental Agreements with the Towns) include:

- Zoning land for an overall base density standard of one single family lot per 10 acres in the Sewer Service Area of the Town unless features were included that facilitate future urban growth with City utilities.
- Clustering unsewered houses onto sites that cannot be economically served with municipal utilities.

Refer also to Policy 5 of Objective 3 in the Land Use Plan.

## **Objective 6 – Coordination, Education and Volunteerism**

**Work through the Sustainability Commission to coordinate efforts with other units of government and leverage the work of citizen volunteers.**

### **Policies**

#### **1. Advisory Commission on Sustainability**

Use the Advisory Commission on Sustainability to coordinate public and private efforts toward sustainability.

The Advisory Commission on Sustainability promotes community-wide sustainability through educational campaigns, initiatives and working with others. The Commission also:

- Prepares an annual work plan that includes many natural resource concerns such as energy, food, waste, hazardous materials, and pollution;
- Implements the Wisconsin Green Tier Legacy Community program’s sustainability strategies, which the City joined in 2012;
- Advises the Council on sustainable policy and practices;
- Advises the City Manager on how municipal operations can maximize environmental stewardship;
- Serves an important role for City and community stakeholders to collaborate to create a more sustainable ethic, place and region.

#### **2. Coordination with other Groups**

Whenever feasible, coordinate City initiatives with those of other units of government, private organizations and citizen efforts.

Whether through corporate, public, educational or volunteer action, coordinating collective contributions will make a difference in transitioning Eau Claire into a sustainable community.

Governmental units may include the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Eau Claire County Extension, Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties, the City of Altoona and the adjacent Towns.

Private stakeholders include power and energy service companies, waste and recycling firms, the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce Green Business Initiative, and others.

Citizen and non-profit environmental organizations at work in the region include the Chippewa Valley Sierra Club, Eau Claire Citizens’ Climate Lobby, Eau Claire Transitioning Group, among others. The University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire and Chippewa Valley Technical College are also driven to educate students and work on projects that protect the environment.

#### **3. Citizen Volunteers**

Use citizen volunteers to supplement City staff and to build environmental awareness and commitment.

## Plan Action Steps

The City will take the following steps to implement the recommendations of the Natural Resources Plan.

**Table 6-2  
Natural Resources Plan Actions**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Continue to apply and enforce the provisions of its <i>Surface Water Management Plan</i> and its WPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System.	Continuous
Continue public education about water resources through the leadership of the Chippewa Valley Storm Water Forum.	Continuous
Continue to apply protective zoning regulations especially floodplain and shoreland-wetlands and Chapter 17.12.290 of the Subdivision Code.	Continuous
Use natural means to protect river banks.	Continuous
Give special attention to surface water management and land development in the Lowes Creek watershed and apply the recommendations of the Lowes Creek watershed plan.	Continuous
<del>Continue to work with the Department of Natural Resources to improve water quality in Half Moon Lake.</del>	<del>2015—2020 <u>Plan Completed</u></del>
Update the <i>Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan</i> by preparing protection plans for the Otter Creek and upper Sherman Creek sub-watersheds.	<del>2015</del> <u>2021 – 2020</u>
Acquire developed property located in the 100-year floodplains.	<del>2015</del> <u>2021 – 2020</u>
Prepare and implement a city-wide plan for planting street trees.	<del>2016</del> <u>Ongoing</u>
<del>Consider adopting an ordinance that regulates development on steep slopes and wooded bluff lines consistent with DNR standards.</del>	<del>2015</del> <u>2021 – 2020</u>

Adopted

# **Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015**

## **Economic Development Plan**



City of Eau Claire Wisconsin

## Economic Development Plan

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## Economic Development Plan

The purpose of the Eau Claire Economic Development Plan is to strengthen the economic vitality of Eau Claire and guide public investment in economic development. The **desired outcomes** are higher household incomes, lower unemployment, greater job security and increased opportunity for all.

The Eau Claire Economic Development Plan directs the City to **work cooperatively** with private industry, regional economic development partners, and state and federal agencies to promote investment in projects that will create good-quality employment opportunities for area residents and a strong tax base that supports public facilities and services.

Business development and job creation are guided both to **central locations**, promoting redevelopment and infill growth, and to **fringe locations**.

Well-located and serviced business locations are important to the expansion of existing companies and key to attracting new employers. The City and its **partners**, Gateway Development Corporation, Downtown Eau Claire, Inc., and the Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority, should continue to support investment in business sites. The greater Downtown is the primary candidate for ongoing revitalization because of its importance as a center of office space, cultural resources, medical services, entertainment and civic life.

Economic development is the **most important element** of this *Comprehensive Plan* and of all the collective endeavors of this community. More and better jobs are of critical importance to Eau Claire as it struggles to evolve from an economy highly dependent on manufacturing and assembly to one that is more diverse and in tune with the industries of the future. Private and corporate well-being are the foundation of family security, public fiscal health and city renewal. Thus, without a growing and resilient economy, none of the other goals of this plan may be achieved.

Eau Claire is well-positioned for a better future because of its **competitive advantages**:

- Highway access via I-94, State Highway 29 and US 53; railroad and airport access
- The presence of the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire and Chippewa Valley Technical College
- Its role as a regional center for goods and services
- Its position in a strong and sustainable agricultural region, particularly of dairy
- Its location near the Twin Cities and along the route to Chicago and Milwaukee
- The presence of strong medical, educational, retail and governmental industries
- A history of computer technology and recent growth in that field
- Natural and cultural features that enhance quality of life
- Available development sites in greenfields and central locations.



## Major Economic Development Issues

These are the major economic development issues identified through the assessment of conditions:

1. **Household Income and Employment:** What, if anything, should the City do to promote the growth of living-wage jobs, help raise average incomes and reduce the rate of poverty, unemployment, under-employment and their debilitating personal effects among Eau Claire residents, particularly households with children? This issue was the most highly rated by members of the Citizens Advisory Committee on the *Comprehensive Plan*.
2. **Workforce:** How can the community maintain or improve its attractiveness as a place to live and work? Which community resources and areas should be a priority in a strategy to attract and retain a competitive workforce, including the “Millennials.”
3. **Fringe Sites versus Redevelopment Sites:** How much of Eau Claire’s future business development should occur on redevelopment sites (where there are existing roads and utilities) compared to fringe or “greenfield” sites (but within the Sewer Service Area)?
4. **Availability of Development Sites:** Should the City act to make additional industrial land available for certain types of users, such as those needing rail access or small lots with design standards different than those of the Gateway Industrial Park?
5. **Conflicts with Adjacent Uses:** Should the City take steps to reduce land use conflicts in and around existing business and industrial parks?
6. **Downtown:** Should a master plan be prepared for redevelopment east of North Barstow Street?
7. **Industry Concentrations and Target Industries:** How can the community be strategic in targeting economic development resources to address the challenges and opportunities of declining or challenged industries or businesses? Growth industries or businesses? Emerging industries or businesses? How should such strategies be developed and priorities set?
8. **Incentives:** Are the City’s existing incentive programs appropriate for today’s economic environment and the community’s priorities? What should the City do to ensure that its incentive programs keep pace with changing economic conditions and opportunities? Community priorities?
9. **Transportation Infrastructure:** What transportation Improvements would enhance the City’s economic competitiveness? What role should the City play in encouraging such investment?
10. **Organization:** Should the current public and private collaborative structure for promoting economic development in and around Eau Claire be modified? If so, how could organizational roles, responsibilities and budgets be changed to accommodate changing community needs, priorities, and opportunities?

## **Goal and Objectives**

### **Goal**

#### **Increase household income, job opportunities and business growth throughout the local community.**

The following objectives and policies are each intended to advance the community toward that goal.

#### **Objective 1 – Community Leadership**

Provide outcome focused leadership for effective collaborative economic development efforts in Eau Claire and the broader Chippewa Valley region. See page 7-4.

#### **Objective 2 – Target Enterprises**

Focus economic development support on targeted enterprises that attract an educated and trained labor force to Eau Claire. See page 7-5.

#### **Objective 3 – Entrepreneurs**

Attract entrepreneurs to Eau Claire who are most likely to succeed at establishing new industries and adding diverse employment opportunities to the city. See page 7-6.

#### **Objective 4 – Site and Asset Readiness**

Maintain an inventory of fully serviced land, ready for development in locations throughout the city as an attraction to business recruitment, relocation and start-ups. See page 7-7.

#### **Objective 5 – Redevelopment**

Support redevelopment and adaptive re-use of contaminated, blighted, functionally obsolete and under-utilized properties. See page 7-9.

#### **Objective 6 – Downtown Revitalization**

Support the ongoing revitalization of the greater downtown to strengthen its status as a vibrant city center. See page 7-10.

#### **Objective 7 – Sustainable Development**

Protect and enhance the beauty of Eau Claire’s natural resources through sustainable development practices that balance growth with environmental protection. See page 7-12.

#### **Objective 8 – Quality of Place**

Invest in the cultural, recreational, and leisure amenities in Eau Claire that encourage businesses and people to thrive. See page 7-12.

#### **Objective 9 – Appropriately Skilled and Educated Workforce**

Foster development of a competitive workforce needed to meet the demands of the contemporary economy. See page 7-13.

#### **Objective 10 – Recruitment, Retention and Incentives**

Retain existing businesses and attract new ones with appropriate benefits and incentives. See page 7-14.

## **Economic Development Policies**

### **Objective 1 – Community Leadership**

**Provide outcome focused leadership for effective collaborative economic development efforts in Eau Claire and the broader Chippewa Valley region.**

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Performance Measures**

Develop outcome-based performance measures for economic development functions and assistance programs.

##### **2. Work with Local Organizations**

Collaborate with and leverage area economic development organizations to ensure open communication channels, clearly defined partner roles and responsibilities, and a complete incentive package so that business needs are addressed effectively.

##### **3. City Policies**

Identify and address existing City policies that keep the city current with national economic development trends.

##### **4. Funding**

Identify gaps in regional access to funding and explore means of filling these gaps.

##### **5. City's Economic Development Funds**

Implement funding initiatives to restore the long-term viability of the City's economic development funds.

##### **6. Marketing**

Collaborate with community organizations to market Eau Claire as a unique and desirable economic development location, driving all prospects to a common platform that advertises all entities, services, and incentives available.

##### **7. State and Federal Fiscal Policies**

Provide leadership for community strategies to improve the revenue and fiscal policy decisions of state and federal government affecting local economic development efforts.

## Objective 2 – Target Enterprises

**Focus economic development support on target enterprises that attract an educated labor force to Eau Claire.**

### Policies

#### 1. Existing Industry Concentrations

Monitor trends, issues and opportunities involving key industries in Eau Claire such as food processing, technology, health care, education, finance and insurance, business and professional services, back office, plastics and rubber, metal manufacturing, printing and mailing. Identify cost-effective investments that the public sector can make to support the competitiveness of existing industry groups.

#### 2. Compare Local Assets and Target Industries

Work with the Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation to attract industries that can be competitive in the Eau Claire area and will strengthen the economy by providing good wages and benefits.

Inventory Eau Claire’s assets in natural resources, existing capital, labor skill set, and education and training opportunities.

Monitor and target industries that may be attracted to Eau Claire’s assets and that provide higher-wage jobs with benefits.

#### 3. Grow Targeted Industries

Invest public sector funds in strategies and work with the private sector to grow targeted industries. These include medical devices, nano-technology, software development, food production, plastic manufacturing and computer components.



Processing of dairy products is a targeted industry in this agricultural region.

### **Objective 3 – Entrepreneurs**

**Attract entrepreneurs to Eau Claire who are most likely to succeed at establishing new industries and adding diverse employment opportunities to the city.**

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Communication Technologies**

Expand the availability of state-of-the-art communication technologies throughout the city.

##### **2. Access to Funding**

Support stronger links to early stage capital, mezzanine funding, and equity funds.

##### **3. Target Industry Clusters**

Promote and attract development of innovation- and knowledge-based technology clusters.

##### **4. Community Culture**

Facilitate initiatives to create a community culture that attracts and supports entrepreneurs.

##### **5. Business Incubators**

Promote existing incubation centers and explore alternative incubator spaces that reflect start-ups in the area (food processing, hi-tech, services).

##### **6. Entrepreneur Support**

Encourage and support all entrepreneurs including but not limited to women, minorities, people with disabilities, and veterans.

##### **7. Access to Resources**

Facilitate easy access to resources in order to simplify the business start-up process.

##### **8. University Collaboration**

Deepen collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire entrepreneurial program.

##### **9. Community marketing**

Market Eau Claire as a creative entrepreneurial community.

## **Objective 4 – Site and Asset Readiness**

**Maintain an inventory of fully serviced land, ready for development in locations throughout the city as an attraction to business recruitment, relocation and start-ups.**

### **Policies**

#### **1. Diverse and Competitive Inventory**

Continue to expand Gateway Business Park and other sites as needed to maintain a competitive inventory of serviced industrial land, with a diversity of lot sizes to meet the needs of varied users. Maintain a 10 year inventory of fully serviced sites and zone a 30-year inventory for future business park development.

Provide municipal sewer, water and roads for all sites and appropriate access for trucks and employees. Zoning, transportation access, berms and other buffers should be used to minimize potential for conflict with adjacent users. Sustain a quality image for business and industrial sites.

#### **2. Supportive Commercial Enterprises**

Zone specific locations for service businesses valued by business park tenants, for example, child care, fitness, banking, lodging or meeting facilities. Develop land sale and incentive policies appropriate for such users.

#### **3. Sites for Small Industries, Support Businesses and Building Contractors**

Act to promote the private development of industrial areas that are suitable for smaller, industrial service, construction or distribution operations. Such lots should be in the range of 1.5 to 3 acres and have no additional design requirements beyond those of the zoning ordinance. These lots would be similar to those found in the Chippewa Valley Industrial Park, which allows outdoor storage and basic industrial buildings. Sewer and water lines may be needed to support such businesses, ~~which may require annexation of land from a Town as there were few, if any, suitable tracts available within the City as of 2015.~~

#### **4. Industrial Sites with Railroad Service**

Work to promote the private development of industrial areas that have railroad access. As with the smaller sites, the extension of municipal sewer and water lines may be necessary, which may require annexation of land from an adjacent Town as there were few, if any, such locations available within the City as of 2015.

#### **5. Redevelopment**

Continue to empower the Redevelopment Authority to find investors willing to create new economic activity and/or housing on blighted properties, particularly in locations with high levels of amenity such as the riverfronts.



## **6. Major Highways**

Continue to ensure that the major highways in and around the city continue to function well. These include County Highway T, Clairemont Avenue, Cameron Street and Business 53 / Hastings Way. Continue to advocate for building an interchange on I-94 at Cameron Street. See the Transportation Plan chapter for further description.

## **7. Access to the Chippewa Falls Intermodal Facility**

Improve County Highway T to accommodate truck movement between Eau Claire and the Intermodal Facility in Chippewa Falls.

The Intermodal Facility in Chippewa Falls offers truck-to-train shipment capabilities, giving area businesses the ability to ship and receive goods from the West Coast without going through a major transit center such as Minneapolis or Chicago.

Please refer to the Transportation Plan chapter for additional description of this proposed improvement.

## **8. Public Transit**

Implement the 2015 transit improvement plan including the idea of a new downtown Transit Center.

## **9. High Speed Passenger Rail Service**

Work with the states of Wisconsin and Minnesota and citizens advocacy groups to promote Eau Claire as part of a chosen route for the potential high-speed passenger rail service. If a high-speed rail route is chosen that includes Eau Claire, work to have the station located in downtown Eau Claire and accessible by Eau Claire Transit, such as near Banbury Place.

## **10. Air Cargo Operations**

Adjust the zoning ordinance and map to enable the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport to add air cargo operations and other warehouse-related uses on-site.

Amend the airport zoning from the Public District to a new zone that is specific to the airport, similar to the zone administered by Eau Claire County, the owner of the airport.

Explore the creation of a Foreign Trade Zone at the Regional Airport.

## **11. Airport Access**

Cooperate if Regional Airport management or Chippewa County wishes to invest in improvements to Melby Street or to provide wayfinding signs leading from US 53 and Hastings Way to the airport. Improving that corridor is identified as one of the top ten road improvements desired in this Comprehensive Plan. (See also the Transportation Plan chapter.)

## **Objective 5 – Redevelopment**

### **Support redevelopment and adaptive re-use of contaminated, blighted, functionally obsolete and under-utilized properties.**

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority (RDA)**

Continue to ensure that the RDA plans and carries out redevelopment projects and has the authority to enter into contracts, acquire property through purchase, lease or eminent domain, borrow money and issue bonds, improve, lease and sell property, apply for grants, loans or contributions, and invest excess funds.

The RDA develops an operating plan for each designated area and project, which requires a public hearing and City Council approval.

##### **2. Redevelopment Tools**

Address the cost difference between redeveloping obsolete, blighted or contaminated sites and preparing greenfield sites. Evaluate using a variety of financing tools, including tax increment finance, state and federal programs and local revolving loan funds.

Facilitate redevelopment involving larger or more complex projects by preparing a master plan or issuing an RFP for a master plan that addresses private development features as well as public infrastructure and amenities.

##### **3. Potential Redevelopment Assistance Locations**

Locations where the Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority could provide valuable assistance in redevelopment for economic purposes include the Oxford Street corridor, the Melby Street corridor, and Menomonie Street corridor, and the area between North Barstow and Dewey Streets.

Please refer to the Downtown Plan for additional description about the North Barstow Street opportunity. The residential properties near Melby Street suffer from the deleterious effects of truck and other industrial or airport traffic.

##### **4. National Presto Site**

Redevelopment of this 300-acre site involves some brownfield areas under remediation. The site is well located for commercial or industrial purposes and redevelopment should occur when the seller is willing and market conditions are favorable.

The Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority has been acquiring and assembling disused sites such as this one along Oxford Street for sale to new users.



## **Objective 6 – Downtown and Riverfront Revitalization**

**Support the ongoing revitalization of the greater downtown and the riverfronts to build a vibrant city center.**

### **Policies**

#### **1. Regional Mixed-Use Activity Center**

Establish Downtown as a regional mixed-use activity center integrating civic and government uses, professional and corporate offices, health care, meeting and entertainment facilities, arts and culture, housing and specialty retail.

#### **2. Desired Activities**

Attract downtown employers, civic and cultural resources, high density housing and owner-occupied projects, mixed-use projects, recreational opportunities, and commercial services.

#### **3. Downtown Employers**

Work to retain and attract major employers, particularly offices, corporate headquarters, and courts (federal, state and local).

These important “anchor tenants” bring workers as well as legal and professional services to downtown during the traditional work week.

#### **4. Entertainment, Civic, Recreational and Cultural Resources**

Work to retain and attract entertainment, civic, recreational and cultural resources such as the library, YMCA, theaters, parks, trails and restaurants. These “anchor tenants” bring area residents to downtown and the riverfront during the evening and weekend hours.

#### **5. Downtown Planning**

Incorporate the Barstow Business Improvement District Master Plan (Downtown Eau Claire, Inc., 2012) into the *Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan*.

Prepare a master plan for the revitalization of the area east of North Barstow Street.

Plan and zone for apartments and townhouses in and near downtown and along the riverfront to strengthen activity and market demand during the evening and weekend hours.

#### **6. Riverfront Redevelopment**

Redevelop the older, underutilized industrial areas bordering the Chippewa and Eau Claire rivers.

#### **7. Water Street**

Support continued revitalization of Water Street as a commercial corridor.

#### **8. Southeastern Commercial Area**

Work with WisDOT to conduct a traffic study and program road and bridge improvements in the vicinity of the southeastern commercial area.

**9. Downtown Eau Claire, Inc.,**

Support Downtown Eau Claire Incorporated (DECI) to serve as the lead agency in coordinating downtown economic development and marketing programs.

DECI continues to serve as the lead organization for issues related to downtown Eau Claire and serves as a liaison between City government and downtown businesses. It provides an organizational framework for downtown business and property owners to develop a shared economic vision and address issues of design, appearance, marketing and promotions. DECI also provides information on property, traffic, parking, development statistics, financial and business assistance as well as marketing and promotions.

**10. Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority**

Continue to support the role of the Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority in implementing downtown redevelopment projects under the leadership of DECI and the City.

**11. Business Improvement Districts**

Continue to encourage the formation and use of Business Improvement Districts to foster private investment, cooperation and appearance improvements.

**12. Downtown Loan Funds**

Continue to support revitalization of downtown properties through the Revolving Loan Fund, Downtown Façade Loan Program and the Code Compliance Loan Program.

Identify properties appropriate for façade enhancement and direct them to appropriate resources to make improvements.

**13. Downtown Parking, Signs and Ordinances**

Evaluate downtown parking needs and support parking structures in place of surface lots where appropriate.

Review and evaluate downtown ordinances for signage, sidewalk, parking, and rooftop use. Support increased wayfinding and signage.

Downtown has led all parts of Eau Claire in the 2010 to 2015 period for new construction, including the office and residential categories.



## **Objective 7 – Sustainable Development**

**Protect and enhance the beauty of Eau Claire’s natural resources through the use of sustainable development practices that balance growth with environmental protection.**

### **Policies**

#### **1. Environmental Practices**

Prevent and/or mitigate negative impacts of development to native ecosystems, including the preservation of nature in urban settings.

#### **2. Compact Development**

Promote compact development through infill, redevelopment, mixed use projects, and the use of existing infrastructure.

#### **3. Community Connections**

Ensure connectivity of diverse segments of the community through open space, expanded public transportation, and sufficient provision for walking and biking options.

#### **4. State Environmental Programs**

Support Wisconsin’s Green Tier and Travel Green programs and the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce’s Green Business Initiative.

## **Objective 8 – Quality of Place**

**Invest in the cultural, recreational and leisure amenities in Eau Claire that encourage businesses and people to thrive.**

### **Policies**

#### **1. Public Space Design**

Promote investment in well-designed public spaces.

#### **2. Riverfront Access**

Continue to advance long term public use and access to riverfronts.

#### **3. Collaboration**

Collaborate with private and public organizations to promote cultural and recreational opportunities in Eau Claire.

#### **4. Partnerships for the Arts**

Pursue innovative public-private partnerships and joint ventures, including community performance arts facilities, arenas and convention centers.

#### **5. All-America City**

Leverage and market the All-America City designation in all economic development branding and promotion efforts.

## **Objective 9 – Appropriately Skilled and Educated Workforce**

### **Foster development of a competitive workforce needed to meet the demands of the contemporary economy**

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Retain Local Graduates**

Support efforts to attract and retain college graduates and faculty.

##### **2. Support for Higher Education**

Support initiatives of the higher education facilities and programs in the region, such as Chippewa Valley Technical Collage and the Universities. Welcome and integrate students and faculty into the community and area businesses.

##### **3. Collaborate to Link Skills and Needs**

Serve as a link between specific employers or industry groups and workforce development resources to train or retrain workers.

Continually evaluate employee demographics and changes in available workforce to match the workforce with the needs of the community.

Link employers and workforce development resources.

Initiate closer collaboration between local Department of Workforce Development representatives, schools and economic development to address workforce changes.



Chippewa Valley Technical College and the University of Wisconsin are among the post-secondary schools in Eau Claire that provide a skilled workforce, people who ought to be retained to help make Eau Claire competitive in the global economy.



## **Objective 10 – Recruitment, Retention and Incentives**

### **Retain existing businesses and attract new ones with appropriate benefits, incentives, information and marketing.**

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Lead Organization**

Continue the role of the Economic Development Division as the lead organization for all economic development activities in Eau Claire. This includes, but is not limited to, downtown, redevelopment areas, industrial, technology, commercial and retail. All businesses seeking City funds or wanting to purchase lands owned by or in part by the City should deal directly with City staff to streamline and accelerate the process for businesses.

##### **2. Business Recruitment**

Continue to take the lead in meeting directly with companies interested in locating in Eau Claire.

Staff of the City of Eau Claire Economic Development Division will continue to be responsible for working with prospects in the City and proposing sites. The City may proactively market the community with economic development organizations such as the Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation, Momentum West, and the State of Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation.

##### **3. Regional Cooperation**

Continue to affirm the philosophy of regional cooperation in economic development. Take a leadership role in establishing regular review processes and convening local government partners to clarify expectations, improve efficiency and effectiveness, and set accountability measures.

##### **4. Marketing**

Continue to market the Eau Claire economic development amenities in cooperation with the Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation (ECAEDC).

The City of Eau Claire expects that in return for its continued funding, the ECAEDC will create and print marketing materials and format them for a Web site. All materials will have the contact information of city staff on the marketing piece. All prospects and leads will be directed to city staff for response.

The City staff may do some niche marketing that is not done by another organization (e.g., direct mail on a specific building or mailing to UWEC alumni). The City's Economic Development website will also have general economic development information, community statistics, and information on financial resources, protective covenants for the business parks, and other information.

##### **5. Retention Calls**

Continue to place a priority on the retention and expansion of existing industries and major employers.

Continue retention calls through combination of in-person visits and electronic surveys.

Conduct visits, provide program assistance and thank them for employing local citizens.

The Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation may be involved in making business calls and providing referrals to the City from those calls.

Maintain an inventory of businesses that want to expand; understand what their needs are and what is prohibiting them from expanding; and facilitate and encourage local supplier sourcing.

## **6. Technical Resources and Community Information**

Support programs that provide technical resources to businesses.

Continue to serve as the clearinghouse for information on the local economy, gathering and tracking development statistics, demographics, local trends, employment statistics, traffic counts and data meaningful to developers and site locators.

## **7. Municipal Processes**

Audit current permitting policies and timelines and suggest improvements.

Continue to monitor incentives to ensure that the city is competitive in recruiting new and maintaining existing businesses. Promptly and extensively respond to requests for information.

Promote easy access to financial assistance and business programs.

Continue to handle the City's development and regulatory functions in a professional manner with a focus on customer service while ensuring compliance of the city's development standards and regulations.

## **8. Accountability**

Develop performance measures for the various economic development programs using criteria such as private investment leveraged, number of jobs, increase in tax base, acres of brownfield cleaned up, and number of façades upgraded.

Provide an annual report of business retention calls from Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation and City of Eau Claire staff.

The performance measures will be used to quantify the accomplishments and impact of the City's Economic Development Division and its economic development partners -- ECAEDC, DECI, RDA, Gateway, CVIC and Momentum West.

Eau Claire has been successful in recruiting and retaining medical facilities of all kinds, making it a regional center for that industry, one that provides a wide range of well-paying and steady jobs.



**9. Role of the Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation:**

The City of Eau Claire expects three principal functions from the ECAEDC in return for the City's funding:

**Marketing**

Continue to maintain appropriate community profiles, brochures, a Website and other marketing materials. Develop and implement a proactive recruitment process with active outreach to geographic targets (i.e. Twin Cities and Chicago) and sector targets. Once a lead is developed, it should be immediately turned over to City staff.

**Private Sector Leadership**

Engage the private sector to suggest policies, support City efforts and to raise funding to match the public sector expenditures.

**Regional Development**

Determine the best way to coordinate and implement regional economic development.

**10. Communication**

Continue to communicate regularly with key stakeholders and the general public regarding economic development issues, opportunities, goals, progress and impact.

## Plan Action Steps

The City will take these steps to implement the recommendations of the Economic Development Plan.

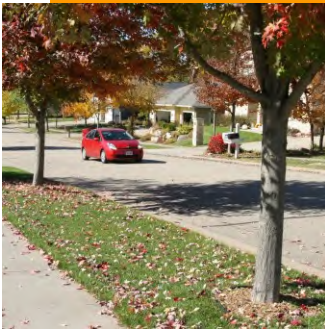
**Table 7-1  
Economic Development Plan Actions**

Action	Timing
<b>Target Enterprises.</b> Continue to monitor and target industries that may be attracted to Eau Claire’s assets and that provide higher-wage jobs with benefits.	Ongoing
<b>Entrepreneurs.</b> Work to attract entrepreneurs to Eau Claire who are most likely to succeed at establishing new industries and adding diverse employment opportunities to the city.	Ongoing
<b>Site Readiness.</b> Continue to maintain an inventory of fully-serviced development sites. Act to promote the private development of a new location with sites for small industries and support businesses. Also work to promote the private development of an industrial area with rail service.	2016—2020 <u>Ongoing</u>
<b>Highway T.</b> Improve County Highway T to improve truck access from the north.	By 2030
<b>High Speed Passenger Rail.</b> Advocate and support this potential travel option between Eau Claire and the Twin Cities.	2016 until success
<del><b>Airport Zoning.</b> Adjust zoning to enable the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport to add air cargo operations and other warehouse-related uses on site.</del>	2016
<b>I-94 Interchange.</b> Continue to advocate for building an interchange on I-94 at Cameron Street.	2016 – 2030
<b>Redevelopment.</b> Continue to support redevelopment and adaptive re-use of contaminated, blighted, functionally obsolete and under-utilized properties, including those in and near Downtown. Support the ongoing revitalization of the greater downtown and the riverfronts to build a vibrant city center.	Ongoing
<b>Recruitment and Retention.</b> Maintain a working relationship between local employers and colleges. Continue the public and private campaign to retain existing businesses and recruit new ones. Support initiatives that help make Eau Claire a desirable place to live and work.	Ongoing

Adopted

# **Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015**

## **Urban Design Plan**



City of Eau Claire Wisconsin

## Urban Design Plan

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## Urban Design Plan

The Eau Claire Community Urban Design Plan is intended to guide public and private investments to create a more attractive community. The goal, objectives and policies of this chapter direct the City in terms of its ordinances, spending and public infrastructure design, especially in regard to streets and parks. Private actions are directed through the City's review of development applications and amendments to the City's zoning ordinance.

Urban design addresses the three-dimensional aspects of city planning – the way the city appears. As such, it touches almost every aspect of the physical form of a city, from land use to housing to transportation, parks and open space. Therefore, many aspects of the Urban Design Plan refer to, or are referenced in, other chapters of the Comprehensive Plan, especially under the topics of Land Use, Parks and Downtown. The primary focus of this chapter is on the characteristics that make Eau Claire special, such as its riverfronts, or that cut across many parts of the City.

The intent of the Urban Design Plan is to create a community of distinctive neighborhoods that are supported by green public lands and vital civic and commercial centers. The recommendations direct Eau Claire to take better advantage of its major natural attributes such as the Eau Claire and Chippewa Rivers, Sherman, Lowes and Otter Creeks, and the wooded hillsides. New neighborhoods should be designed with some of the valued characteristics of the City's traditional neighborhoods. Parks and greenways should be designed and connected to help build lasting neighborhood value. Downtown should continue to become more dense, diverse, walkable and linked to the rivers.



The classic tree-lined street in a traditional Eau Claire neighborhood.

## Summary of Issues

The major Urban Design or urban design issues are summarized as:

### New Residential Neighborhoods

- 1. Street Connectivity:** Should streets in new neighborhoods be interconnected or should the pattern be dominated by cul-de-sacs?
- 2. Street Design:** Should future minor residential streets be built narrower than they are presently, which is 30 feet between the backs of the curbs?
- 3. Sidewalks:** Should future residential streets have sidewalks on both sides?
- 4. Development Model:** Which development model is preferred: the traditional neighborhood with its emphasis on the street, sidewalk and front yard, or the more low density “suburban” look? Does Eau Claire wish to design its zoning regulations to promote one or the other, or leave it to the market to decide?
- 5. Small Commercial Nodes:** In what locations, if any, would the older urban model of neighborhood corner store be allowed and encouraged?

### Established Residential Neighborhoods

- 1. Context-Sensitive Architecture:** To what extent should new infill and redevelopment of existing structures (both single-family and multi-family) follow established site design patterns and be stylistically compatible with the predominant neighborhood aesthetic?
- 2. Mixture of Housing Types:** In what instances, if any, would it be appropriate to introduce multiple-family housing into single-family neighborhoods? What conditions should be applied in such instances?
- 3. Mixed-Use Development:** Where might it be appropriate to mix residential with non-residential land uses? When might they be mixed vertically (housing above business) or horizontally (housing next to commercial space)?
- 4. New Cultural Influences:** What should be the City’s urban design response, if any, to new cultural influences resulting from its changing population?
- 5. Neighborhood Identification:** Should neighborhoods and districts be identified by signs and banners?

### Commercial Districts and Corridors

- 1. Design Guidelines and Design Review:** Should the site planning and landscaping regulations in the zoning ordinance be made more rigorous? Should site planning design guidelines be adopted for commercial development?
- 2. Design Guidelines for Commercial Signs:** Should business signs be more limited in size, height and number?
- 3. Oakwood Mall and Vicinity:** Should the City promote more intensive development around the shopping mall that may eventually include multi-story office buildings, multiple-family housing, mixed-use development and structured parking?
- 4. Major Road Corridor Beautification:** Should the City undertake landscaping and decorative lighting improvement projects along the major roadways of the city such as US 312 (North Crossing), Hendrickson Drive and North Clairemont Avenue?
- 5. Billboards:** Should the City continue to limit billboards?

### Parks and Riverfronts

- 1. Mount Tom:** Should communication towers be allowed in parks?
- 2. Public Open Space:** Should the City seek to create additional public open space in the older neighborhoods as redevelopment occurs?
- 3. Park Design:** Should new neighborhood parks have primarily an aesthetic focus or a utilitarian focus (such as gardens and gazebos versus athletic fields and parking lots)?

### Downtown

- 1. Town Square:** Should a “town square” be created next to City Hall and along Eau Claire Street?



Places of public worship and other institutional buildings often form visual and cultural landmarks.

## **Goal and Objectives**

### **Goal**

**Improve the aesthetics and enhance the identity of the city as a whole and its neighborhoods, major road corridors and waterfronts by building on its traditional urban character, natural amenities and history.**

### **Objective 1 – Overall Urban Character**

Design Eau Claire to include the best aspects of both a small town and a major city. Page 5.

### **Objective 2 – Regional Environment**

Use public improvements, public art and land development regulations to preserve, highlight and interpret the major elements and special places that evoke the regional environmental and cultural history of Eau Claire. Page 6.

### **Objective 3 – Site and Building Design**

Improve standards for site planning and design, including building and parking placement, pedestrian connections, signage, landscaping and lighting. Page 8.

### **Objective 4 – New Neighborhoods**

Design new neighborhoods to reflect the best qualities of the traditional neighborhoods of Eau Claire. Page 12.

### **Objective 5 – Established Neighborhoods**

Maintain the traditional urban character of these neighborhoods and promote continuous public and private reinvestment to ensure that they remain attractive places to live. Page 17.

### **Objective 6 – Activity Centers**

Encourage a mix of compatible land uses in a variety of locations and scales in order to create more vital and walkable activity centers. Page 19.

### **Objective 7 –Waterfronts**

Improve the visual quality and connections to the waterfronts to support appropriate development and enhance the community's quality of life. Page 21.

### **Objective 8 – Major Road Corridors**

Improve the appearance of the major roadway corridors in Eau Claire through access management, site planning and sign controls. Page 22.

### **Objective 9 – Parks**

Build parks and greenways to enhance the quality of residential neighborhoods and commercial districts, reflect Eau Claire's cultural heritage and honor civic life. Page 27.

## Objective 1 – Overall Urban Character

### Design Eau Claire to incorporate the best aspects of a small town and a major city.

Eau Claire wishes to protect and extend the best aspects of its residential neighborhoods while intensifying the urban atmosphere of certain nodes such as the downtown, the Water Street corridor or the area around Oakwood Mall.

#### Policies

##### 1. Nodes of Urbanity in a Small Town

Protect and improve the quiet and leafy character of most residential neighborhoods while accentuating the sense of urban diversity and intensity in certain other districts and corridors. Become more urban in some locations, and use that sense of urbanity as a marketing tool for long-term growth and stability for Eau Claire.

##### 2. Downtown and the River

Promote awareness of the Downtown and the rivers as the most interesting and special aspects of the city.

##### 3. Greening the City

Create a network of greenways, parks, plazas, promenades, parkways and tree-lined streets to beautify the community, provide recreation, enhance quality of life, boost property values and balance the effects of urban density.



The Chippewa River looking toward the UWEC campus.

##### 4. Major Road Corridors

Improve the appearance of the major road corridors in the city by continuing to review development applications for private landscaping, public road-edge landscaping, the size and number of signs, parking lot location, and the relationship of building to the street.

##### 5. De-emphasize the Automobile

Accommodate the automobile but do not allow it to dictate all aspects of urban design. Give high priority to the pedestrian and pedestrian-oriented development.

##### 6. Urban versus Rural Distinctions

Preserve and accentuate the difference between the urban landscape and the rural landscape by implementing the fringe growth management strategy described in the Land Use Plan chapter, which promotes keeping housing density in the rural areas extremely low.



A rural scene just beyond the City border



## Objective 2 -- Regional Setting

**Use public improvements, public art and land development regulations to preserve, highlight and interpret the major elements and special places that evoke the regional environmental and cultural history of Eau Claire.**

There are certain aspects of and locations in Eau Claire that make it distinctive, and accentuating those through public or private actions will help build a “sense of place.”

### Policies

#### 1. Cultural and Economic Heritage

Help residents and visitors understand the importance of the early logging industry, the paper milling economy, the tire manufacturing era, and the ethnic and religious heritage of Eau Claire through signs, interpretive monuments, the use of historic place names, and by creating appropriate parks or plazas as described in the Historic Resources Plan.

#### 2. Special Places

Protect, interpret and enhance the qualities of the City’s “special places” that offer distinct and valued experiences. Some present opportunities for continued development; others for conservation. A preliminary list includes:

- The waterfronts, especially the confluence and Phoenix Park.
- Historic residential districts -- Randall Park, Third Ward and Eastside Hill.
- The lower Sherman Creek valley
- The West Grand Avenue business district
- The historic central business district
- The baseball stadium in Carson Park
- Banbury Place, its manufacturing history and reincarnation as business and housing.
- Certain tree-lined residential streets
- The logging history of Dell’s pond.
- The trail hidden in the Putnam Park valley
- The views of the city from the surface of the Chippewa River.



Banbury Place and the S Bridge



### 3. Community Entrance Corridors

Design major entries into the City with attractive gateway features such as overstory trees, ground or monument signs and public art. Opportunities for major gateway enhancements exist at:

- Hendrickson Drive, State Highway 37
- West Clairemont Avenue, US Highway 12
- Hastings Way
- Old Wells Road and Third Street
- Birch Street
- Cameron Street/Madison Street
- Brackett Avenue



Birch Street at the Union Pacific Railroad bridge

### 4. Views and Landmarks

Strive to preserve and enhance important views and landmarks in order to maintain visual character and reinforce civic identity.

Design for public use, where feasible, locations offering views of the waterfronts or of the City. Use interpretive signs, on-street or off-street parking or pedestrian access, and suitable landscaping. Citizen input will help to determine which views and landmarks are valued by the public and help guide strategies for preservation or enhancement.



The river bridges are important striking landmarks and provide long vistas.

### 5. Wayfinding Sign System

Extend the existing City's downtown wayfinding sign system to advertise and make more visible Eau Claire's major facilities and attractions.

### Objective 3 – Site and Building Design

#### Improve standards for site planning and design, including building and parking placement, pedestrian connections, signs and landscaping.

The details of private site design, including landscaping, lighting and signs, are critical to the overall appearance of the city. Eau Claire has improved its zoning regulations in this regard but can do more.

#### Policies

##### 1. Design Guidelines for Commercial Development

Prepare and adopt design guidelines or standards for new commercial development in perimeter, corridor and downtown locations.

The guidelines may address the subjects described under this Objective as well as these points:

- Placement of buildings and building entrances close to the sidewalk to enhance visibility and pedestrian access
- Locating parking lots to the side and rear of buildings, not in front
- Screening of parking lots from the street using plantings, low walls or decorative fences; increasing and enhancing parking lot landscaping
- Providing many front windows to provide both natural surveillance and visual interest
- Building architecture that respects the neighborhood context, with building heights and massing that are compatible with adjacent residential areas
- Pedestrian-scale lighting
- Other streetscape elements such as street trees, benches and public art that help create a distinct identity for the neighborhood center.



Public and private landscaping combine to soften the appearance of commercial buildings along an arterial road despite some of the parking between the building and the road. The free-standing sign is in scale with the building and road. The business is still visible and identifiable.

## 2. Connections

Maximize visual and physical linkages between adjoining land uses that are similar or can coexist compatibly, such as offices and retail or high-density housing. Encourage pedestrian movement between adjacent sites rather than multiple trips by car.

Where uses are less compatible (such as industrial and residential uses), provide adequate landscape buffers and screens to soften the transition between them.

## 3. Efficiency

Continue to encourage sites to share functional site design elements such as access, parking, landscaping, open space and surface water ponds when such elements support a more efficient and attractive development pattern.

## 4. Landscaping

Continue to require high-quality planting plans for all new multi-family residential, commercial and industrial developments. Apply the guidelines of the *Eau Claire Landscaping Guidelines Manual*, which has been adopted into the zoning ordinance.

## 5. Sensitivity to Context

Design new development to respect surrounding development, whether this includes quiet low-density residential neighborhoods, traditional storefronts or major institutions such as the hospitals. New development should emulate the desirable qualities of traditional urban settings, while protecting the integrity of existing neighborhoods.

## 6. Multiple-Family Housing Design

Continue to follow the guidelines of the City's updated *Multi-Family Housing Design Manual*, which addresses:

- Location and context
- Access, traffic, private drives, parking, curb cuts and sidewalks
- Relationship of building to street; façade design, doors and windows; materials
- Garage design, fenestration and setback
- Density, open space and lot coverage
- Landscaping, screening, fencing, lighting and trash handling
- Surface water management
- Affordability and mixed-income
- Mixed Use Residential Model



These two-family residential buildings present an attractive face to the public street because their garages are turned. Facing the attached garages of multiple-family housing onto a shared private street or drive is a beneficial technique second only to locating the garage in the rear.

## **7. Parking Design**

Locate parking lots behind or to the side of buildings or in block interiors wherever possible in order to reduce the visual impact of surface parking. Landscape and screen all parking lots and parking structures in order to improve their appearance from surrounding streets and properties.

## **8. Environmental Protection**

Continue to protect natural features such as major wooded areas, steep wooded slopes, streams, wetlands and stream edges in new developments.

The City's zoning and subdivision regulations both include regulations for protecting natural features, including water, steep slopes and trees.

## **9. Open Space and Land Development**

Preserve open space in new developments through the use of planned unit developments, conservation easements, parkland acquisition or dedication and other techniques.

A nice example of open space preservation is the wooded ridge line located in southeastern Eau Claire approximately between Skeels Avenue and Lehman Street.

Once again propose an ordinance that would require land developers to give the City a certain percentage of the subdivision if the Parks Plan shows the need for a park in that location, or money in place of land.

## **10. Coordinated Signs**

Continue to administer its sign code regulations (Section 16.16), which addresses sign placement, spacing, height, design, coordination, colors, lighting and movement. Periodically review the regulations and update them as needed. The regulations call for "integrating" individual signs within a single visual frame.

## **11. Transit-Oriented Design**

Ensure that new developments along bus routes support ridership by placing building entrances close to the street and making provisions for locating bus stops or shelters in convenient and visible locations.

## **12. Incentives**

Encourage innovative development and redevelopment through the use of incentives and appropriate regulations, to achieve desired residential and non-residential development patterns that are also environmentally responsible. Provide incentives for developments that protect natural areas or environmentally sensitive areas through land trusts, open space zoning or other techniques such as density bonuses for open space development.

### 13. Outdoor Lighting

Regulate outdoor lighting to reduce off-site glare and nuisances using City Code Sections 16.26 and 18.45.050. Sign lighting is regulated by Section 16.16.070, which should be reviewed and updated. A pamphlet from the Department of Community Development summarizes the practical considerations.

Outdoor lighting is potentially either one of the most attractive or disturbing elements of urban design. While it is a necessity in many locations, outdoor illumination is often overdone or poorly controlled, resulting in off-site glare.

- Exterior lighting should be controlled so it is not a nuisance to nearby property, is not a traffic hazard and preserves the dark night sky.
- Lighting in parking lots should be shielded to contain glare on the site. Near residential areas, cut-off fixtures will be used and pole heights will be reduced. Building lighting should be controlled to keep glare on site and not allow buildings to be lit-up for excessive display (e.g., lighting the entire façade).
- Lights under gasoline station canopies will be required to be recessed into the ceiling or otherwise designed so that the light source is not visible from the side and all light is directed downward.
- The City will begin a long-term program of installing streetlights with cut-off fixtures.



A convenience store with recessed canopy lights over the gasoline pump islands.

## Objective 4 – New Neighborhoods

### Design new neighborhoods to reflect the best qualities of the traditional neighborhoods of Eau Claire.

The most desirable aspects of the City’s traditional neighborhoods should be carried forward and adapted to the design of new neighborhoods. These include relatively narrow lots (deeper than they are wide), and shorter front yard setbacks, continuous sidewalks, street trees and recessed garages (set back further than the principal façade). These are also the characteristics common to pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods, in which compact development patterns and interconnected streets encourage socializing, walking and bicycling.

#### Policies

##### 1. Local Street Design

Create a totally interconnected system with future minor or local residential streets and build them appropriately narrow. Provide public street access in each cardinal direction unless impractical because of natural, environmental or similar conditions.

The street design presented in Figure 8-1 provides 30-feet between the backs of curbs and allows for two-side parking and two-way traffic. This is the City’s current practice.

**Table 8-1 lists design options** for new residential streets.

Figure 8-2 presents an **alternative** local street design that can be accomplished with only **28 feet** between the back of curbs; however, this design provides for parking on only one side of the street.

While the City’s customary local residential street design calls for new local streets to be designed for a 30-foot width with two-side parking, the **City Council may approve narrower designs** in low-traffic situations at the request of the land developer.

Table 8-1 includes a **minor collector street** listed as an alternative to the local street design where proposed neighborhood development is anticipated to produce more than 1,000 vehicles per day on a local street and/or have high on-street parking demand.

**Cul-de-sac streets** should only be allowed where topography limits access to properties from the interconnected street system.

The street system is a fundamental element of the neighborhood design. The street pattern controls traffic flow, determines the ease of pedestrian and bicyclist movement, defines views and vistas, orients the user, unites the community, and creates a physical framework into which houses and other buildings are placed.

The function of minor residential streets should not be to move as much auto traffic as fast as possible but rather to move autos at appropriately slow speeds to and from the home while also encouraging bicycling and walking and creating an attractive forecourt for the housing.

Refer to the Transportation Plan chapter for further direction on the design of future local residential streets. Specifically, see Policy 1 of Objective 5, Neighborhood Streets, and Policy 4 of Objective 3, Thoroughfare System.

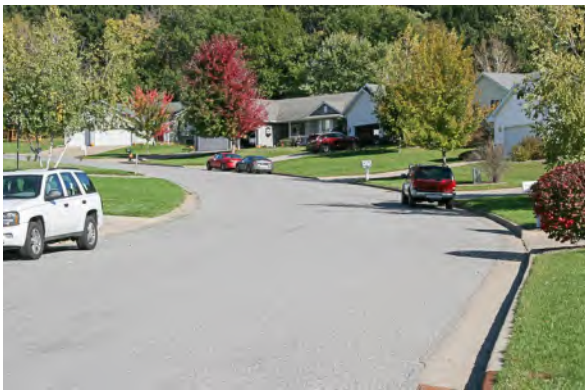


**Table 8-1: Design Characteristics of New Residential Streets**

Type of Street	Street Width *	Right-of-Way Width	Parking	Boulevard / Planting Strip	Sidewalk	Utilities
Local	28 to 32	60	One or both sides	6 to 9 with trees	2 @ 5	ROW and easement behind the sidewalk for electricity, telephone, cable TV. Sewer and water under the street.
Collector (Minor)	32	66 to 76	Both sides	6 to 9 with trees	2 @ 5	
Collector (Major)	36 to 46**	Up to 80	Both sides	6 to 9 with trees	2 @ 6	
Minor Arterial	36 to 60 **	Up to 90	Both sides	6 to 9 with trees		
Cul de Sac (< 8 houses)	26	60	One side only	6 minimum with trees	2 @ 5	
Cul de Sac (8+ houses)	28	60	Both sides	6 minimum with trees	2 @ 5	

\* All dimensions are in feet. Street width is measured to the back of the curb.

\*\* May include a pair of striped bicycling lanes at 5 feet wide each.



It is important to keep minor streets appropriately narrow. This newer street measures 36 feet between curb faces, which encourages higher speeds and wastes resources. It also lacks sidewalks and trees.



A street 30 feet wide provides sufficient space for parking and movement while leaving space for trees and sidewalks.

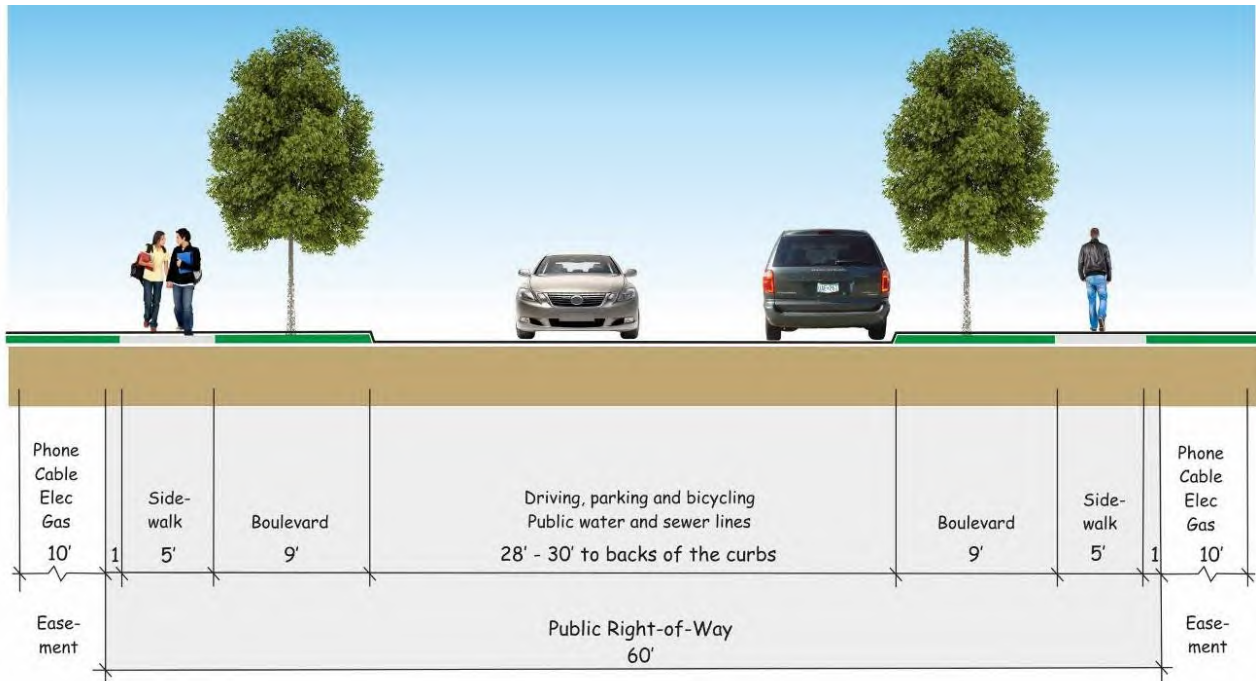


Residential streets must include sidewalks and trees on both sides.

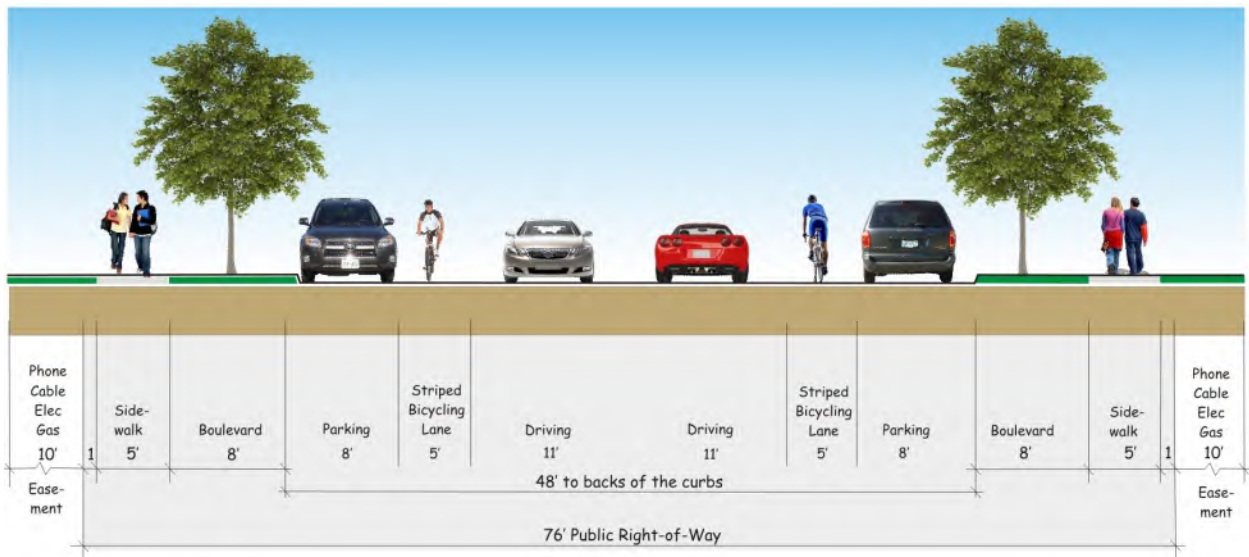


This residential street in another city measures 27 feet to the backs of the curbs with two-way traffic, parking on one side, 10 foot boulevards, and sidewalks on both sides.

**Figure 8-1**  
**Local Residential Street Design**



**Figure 8-2**  
**Minor Arterial Street Design with Parking and Bicycling Lanes**



## 2. Collector or Minor Arterial Street Plans

Plan collector or minor arterial streets for each future neighborhood at the “concept plan” phase. Continue to work with each land developer to plan the general alignment of collector or minor arterial roads beyond the limits of smaller subdivisions to ensure neighborhood-wide continuity.

Always consider including striped on-street bicycling lanes when designing collector streets.

Please refer to Figure 3-1, Future Functional Classification System of Roads, to see the preliminarily planned pattern of these roads. Not every future collector road is shown on that map.

## 3. Public Sidewalks

Continue to require that residential developers include a five-foot concrete sidewalk on both sides of each new local and collector street. Ensure that this requirement is applied consistently. City Code section 17.12.280 addresses sidewalks.

## 4. Street Trees

Strengthen the ordinance and practice regarding the planting of trees along public streets and roads. The intention will be to adopt methods that ensure that trees will be planted in the public right-of-way of every residential street and major municipal thoroughfare, including existing and future streets. Emphasize the concept of “the right tree in the right place” and pursue a city-wide tree cover/canopy goal.

Trees regularly spaced along the street are a key ingredient for giving streets a residential character and making them feel more comfortable. Street trees add greenery, provide shade, give a street a lived-in feeling and contribute to neighborhood character.

### Future Streets

For future streets, a continuous row of trees should be planted on both sides. The time frame will depend on the chosen method. Options may include:

- The private sector plants the trees at the same time as the sidewalk, which occurs after the lot is built upon:
  - i. House builder installs
  - ii. City installs using money put into escrow by the land developer.
- The City furnishes and installs the trees at its own cost:
  - i. Cost is assessed to the benefiting property owner
  - ii. Cost is entirely borne by the City
  - iii. Some combination of the two.

### Existing Streets

For existing streets that have gaps in the tree pattern, a long-term campaign should be started that will fill those spaces. A method of paying for this public improvement and a realistic time schedule should be adopted.



## 5. Street Tree City-Wide Planting Plan

Propose for Council consideration a city-wide plan of tree species by location with spacing guidelines and accommodations for driveways, intersections, utilities and other trees.

The City forester will start by preparing a map in GIS of all street trees by species and condition in the City.

Species continuity on at least a block-by-block basis is favored because it would be best for appearances even though complete diversity would be the best way to prevent disease transmission; limited continuity seems like a reasonable balance.



Trees along the street in either residential or commercial districts are an investment that will literally grow and provide annual returns for many decades.

**Objective 5 – Established Neighborhoods**

**Maintain or revive the traditional urban character of the older neighborhoods so that they remain attractive places to live.**

The majority of urban development that will exist in Eau Claire by the year 2030 is already in place. These private and public improvements represent a tremendous investment and are essential to the quality of life and financial security of many thousands of people. In addition, the historic fabric of the community provides a sense of place and a physical environment that is nearly irreplaceable.

One of the strengths and beauties of older neighborhoods is the close-knit, compact mixture of different forms of housing, shops, offices, services and employment areas. It is these urban patterns that will help make Eau Claire and its older neighborhoods distinct, livable and competitive with other locations that are designed primarily for the automobile. New building technologies may be appropriate, but many elements of the traditional neighborhood will be respected and emulated.

The Neighborhoods and Districts Plan chapter provides recommendations for protecting and revitalizing older areas with emphasis on the process, responsibilities and tools.

**Policies**

**1. Context-Sensitive Redevelopment and Infill**

Encourage but not require that infill development in older, traditional neighborhoods respects the characteristics and prevalent housing styles of each neighborhood. This is particularly true for attached (multiple-family) housing.

- Redevelopment and infill are keys to strengthening older neighborhoods and should respond to and build on the strengths of those neighborhoods.
- This principle does not imply that all housing will be of the same type (i.e., detached or duplex) but that existing and replacement housing will share many design elements.
- It is especially important to regulate the location and orientation of garages in established neighborhoods so as to not introduce a suburban style to a traditional neighborhood.



Infill and replacement housing, particularly attached units, should respect its neighbors, particularly in terms of garage placement.

## **2. Accommodating Appropriate Non-Conformities**

Review zoning regulations that apply to the older neighborhoods so as to accommodate the non-conforming status of dwellings that were caused by setback or area requirements. Current zoning regulations sometimes create difficulties for property owners to properly maintain or upgrade houses.

## **3. Mixed Use in Neighborhoods**

Identify locations for mixed use in established neighborhoods that already have some diversity of uses, proximity to transit or major traffic corridors. The policies of the Urban Design Plan regarding mixed use are applicable in the neighborhood context.

## **4. Land Use Incompatibilities**

Some of Eau Claire's older neighborhoods have been affected by incompatible land uses, such as industrial plants, materials or equipment storage, freight lines or truck routes. There is often no easy way to resolve these incompatibilities in the short term. In general, improved code enforcement, buffering and screening can reduce if not eliminate problems due to incompatibilities.

## **5. Historic Preservation**

Preserve historic or architecturally significant buildings in established neighborhoods because they express the city's heritage and add beauty and charm to their surroundings.

As specified in the Historic Preservation Plan chapter, preservation does not necessarily involve historic designation but can be achieved through tools such as neighborhood conservation zoning.



Fine examples of the community's economic, social or architectural heritage help make it complete and lovable.



## Objective 6 -- Activity Centers

### Encourage a mixture of compatible land uses in a variety of locations and scales in order to create more vital and walkable activity centers.

Zoning regulations can be used to promote private investment that is appropriate in size and composition for its location. In particular, some locations should be built with taller and more intensive structures, even mixing housing and shops vertically.

The idea of “activity centers” is also expressed in Objective 5 of the Land Use Plan chapter.

Please also refer to Objective 3, Policy 1, for guidance on commercial site planning.

### Policies

#### 1. Neighborhood Center Scale

Prepare and adopt design guidelines to help ensure compatibility among diverse land uses and to encourage walking.

These guidelines should encourage development that combines small-scale retail, services, offices and housing in single buildings or in separate buildings in close proximity. These locations may include neighborhood “nodes” or centers in existing neighborhoods or districts such as Water Street, Madison Street or Brackett Avenue.

The principles for new neighborhood design outlined in this plan call for a pattern of small mixed-use activity centers within a short distance of neighborhoods, linked by interconnected streets and set off by parks.

In neighborhood commercial nodes it is also important to limit the size of individual retail or office uses, to ensure that businesses are designed to serve their immediate surroundings, rather than a regional market.



#### 2. Commercial District Scale

In the larger commercial districts such as Downtown, Hastings Way or the vicinity of Oakwood Mall, encourage mixed uses that combine a variety of compatible housing types with existing commercial and office uses.

The addition of upper-story residential units, nearby townhouses, and other types of attached housing can bring more people into these districts, enhancing their economic viability and urban vitality. The design principles listed above are equally applicable in these districts, although the size of individual business may be larger – a “medium” rather than “big-box” level of retail.

In the city’s newer commercial districts, all located along major roads, mixed-use development may also be a viable strategy, but generally requires larger-scale development.

Many Midwestern communities with commercial “strips” are exploring similar strategies for redevelopment, including the use of “liner” buildings oriented to the street along the edges of parking lots, reorienting buildings to new internal streets, and introducing higher-density housing in conjunction with public open space. As the size of these sites and their exposure to regional traffic increases, the size of individual businesses or buildings may also increase.



### 3. Downtown Scale

Continue to follow zoning regulations and design guidelines that ensure that each new building, including parking structures, enhances the public realm and the totality of Downtown.

Downtown should contain a complete mix of uses, including offices, retail and services, government, arts, entertainment, housing, parks and visitor attractions. To strengthen the downtown’s position as the center of both the City and the region, it should increasingly be a place that people can live, work, shop and enjoy cultural and recreational opportunities.

Please refer also to the policies and design guidelines presented in the Downtown Plan chapter, which encourages this continued evolution.



## **Objective 7 – Waterfronts**

### **Improve the visual quality and connections to the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers to support appropriate development and enhance the community's quality of life.**

Waterfront open space, especially with walking and bicycling paths, always adds to quality of life and economic development in any community. Eau Claire is blessed with not one but two fine rivers, and they join in the middle of the community. The City has taken advantage of opportunities to acquire riverfront land for parks, trails and floodplain open space.

An example of riverfront land acquisition is Phoenix Park, located at the rivers' confluence and an essential component of the North Barstow District redevelopment project. Other riverfront open spaces include Owen Park, Domer Park, Mount Simon Park, the University arboretum, the Forest Street Park floodplain, and several open space parcels along the Eau Claire River. There are additional opportunities to add public open space in key locations, such as along the edges of the South Barstow District.

Riverfront views also raise the value of nearby development and can be a powerful catalyst for investment. In some locations, the waterfronts are devoted to parking lots or to industries that do not use the water for either shipping or power and that are unsightly. Thus, there are opportunities to redevelop land to take advantage of views to the river.

The three creeks, Sherman, Lowes and Otter, present similar but less dramatic opportunities for parks and paths, and have floodplains that should be protected in any case.

## **Policies**

### **1. Downtown Design Plan**

Along the Downtown waterfronts, continue to follow the recommendations of the plan chapters on Land Use, Downtown Plan, and Parks and Greenways plus the Waterways Plan.

### **2. Public Open Space and Walkways**

As recommended in the Parks, Greenways and Trails Plan chapter, the City will continue to gradually acquire land to extend its system of linear public open space with walkways along the Chippewa and Eau Claire Rivers except where industry or other development makes it impractical or unsafe. If property cannot be acquired outright, the City will attempt to negotiate public access across the private site along the riverfront when plans show a desire for an extended public walkway.

### **3. Relationships of Buildings to the Open Space Edge**

Private buildings along the riverfront linear parks should provide windows, doors, landscaping, high quality materials, and possibly outdoor private spaces such as dining to complement the public space.

### **4. River Edge Treatments**

“Green” alternatives to rip-rap or sheet pile shoreline stabilization are recommended, including plantings with fast-growing stream bank vegetation in more protected locations (see also the Natural Resources Plan chapter).

## **Objective 8 – Major Road Corridors**

### **Improve the appearance of the major road corridors in Eau Claire through landscaping, site planning, sign regulation and access management.**

Commercial and residential road corridors carry large volumes of traffic but each is in a different setting and, therefore, must respond to different conditions.

#### **Commercial Corridor Policies**

Major roadways such as Clairemont, Hastings or Highway 93, which serve many businesses, present the greatest challenge in terms of community image. They are highly developed and contain a variety of businesses and housing. Challenges include expanses of pavement, overhead utility lines, many public and private signs, and an occasional shortage of landscaping. Portions of both Hastings Way and Clairemont Avenue have been improved with better landscaping and lighting.

The following policies could help to greatly improve the image and appearance of the commercial corridors.

#### **1. Commercial Site Landscaping**

Continue to require landscaping plans with commercial site plans and follow the *Eau Claire Landscaping Guidelines Manual*.

One of the shortcomings in the commercial corridors is the lack of screening for some parking lots, which results in an almost uninterrupted stretch of pavement between building fronts on opposite sides of the road.

A row of deciduous trees along the roadside, spaced at 30 to 60 feet, can soften the appearance of the any commercial corridor, especially when viewed from an angle down the road.

Likewise, a low landscaping screen, up to three feet tall, along the right-of-way line or at the edge of parking lots can dramatically improve the visual character of the corridors by adding greenery to the streetscapes and by breaking up the large expanses of pavement.

Additional parking lot landscaping can also help to minimize large areas of pavement and identify pedestrian walkways.

Please refer to Objective 3 for further guidance on commercial site landscaping.

#### **2. Priority Corridor Landscaping**

Invest in a higher than normal level of tree planting and decorative lighting along certain designated roads as illustrated by Figure 8-3, Priority Streetscape System, and listed below:

- The Primary Downtown Loop: Bellinger, Fifth, Lake, Barstow and Madison
- The Neighborhood Linking Streets: Vine Street; Lake Street; Wisconsin Street
- Hastings Way: Birch Street to Clairemont Avenue
- Clairemont Avenue: State 312 to Hastings Way
- State and Washington Streets: Farwell Street to Clairemont Avenue

- Cameron, Madison and Birch Streets: County Highway EE to Hastings Way
- Old Wells Road, Third and Bellinger Streets
- Harding and Brackett Avenues
- Hendrickson Drive: Hamilton Avenue to Clairemont Avenue.

Thus, the parkway system would form a ring around the central part of the city, link to and through Downtown, announce entrances and extend into a perimeter growth area.

Eau Claire has an opportunity to begin to create a citywide network of highly attractive streets that will bring value and enjoyment to the community for many decades. Because the street system is the spine of the city and the most visible of public expenditures, the priority streetscape system proposed here can have a major visual and economic effect.

The purposes and benefits of the priority streetscape system are to:

- Improve the overall appearance, identity and quality of life of the community
- Increase and sustain property values
- Create bicyclist and pedestrian links among the neighborhoods, districts, greenways and parks
- Create visual community entry statements
- Provide a ceremonial approach to important locations such as Downtown
- Calm traffic speeds in residential neighborhoods.
- Promote annexation of land by demonstrating the City's commitment to investing in high quality public facilities.

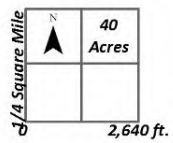


The newly redesigned Hastings Way is a good example of a well-landscaped road corridor.

The arterial or collector roads designated for streetscape emphasis should receive a higher than normal degree of landscaping and decorative lighting. Adjacent private landscaping should generally be improved and coordinated with the public landscaping. Depending on the location, sidewalks, on-road lanes or off-road paths for bicycling may also be included.

In general, the priority streetscape system should be designed to the highest quality in landscaping, signage, lighting, linear public open space and pedestrian or bicyclist transportation. Design may vary across the City because it would be installed in both newly-developing areas where adequate rights-of-way are available as well as more constrained locations.





**Figure 8-3**  
**Priority Streetscape**  
**System**



### **3. Access Points**

During site plan review, apply the access management guidelines presented in the Transportation Plan chapter to limit the number of access points, regulate their spacing and consolidate existing points.

Multiple access points in the commercial corridors create a sense of clutter, require more pavement and reduce the opportunities for landscaping. Although it may not always be feasible to totally remove some of the access points, there may be opportunities to reduce or combine multiple access points to a single property or to adjoining properties.

### **4. Business Signs**

Continue to administer its sign code regulations (Section 16.16), which addresses sign placement, spacing, height, design, coordination, colors, lighting and movement. Require coordinated sign plans with commercial development applications. Review the present ordinance and consider improving it.

### **5. Billboards**

Continue to strictly administer the regulations on billboards found in Section 16.18 of the City Code.

Billboards (also known as off-premise signs or poster panel signs) are allowed only in the Community Commercial (C-3) and Industrial zoning districts upon approval of a Conditional Use Permit. Billboards must be separated along the same side of the street by 1,000 feet along State Highway or Hastings Way, or by 500 feet along all other roads. Non-conforming billboards may not be rebuilt or replaced if they are removed or damaged by more than 50 percent of their value.

Off-premise advertising (commonly known as billboard signs) can be a major community image issue. While some billboards can be reasonably attractive, they essentially represent visual pollution and can have a severe negative impact on a community's visual environment and are inconsistent with the objectives of this chapter.

### **6. Relocate Utility Lines**

Consider paying to relocate private utility lines underground or to less visible alignments in special instances such as when engaging in streetscape improvements, road widening and/or area revitalization projects.

The City currently requires in City Code section 17.24.060 that new private utilities be located underground.

Overhead utility lines can be a visual impact along arterial roads. Tall, wooden poles and the pattern of lines create a chaotic view, sometimes resulting in the decapitation of street trees. The poles occupy valuable space in already-constricted rights-of-way, and in some cases are close to the traffic lanes.

Ideally, all overhead utility lines (except the major trunks) should be relocated underground, or, if that is not feasible, relocated to a less visible corridor. However, some overhead utilities, such as high-voltage lines, may be too expensive or impractical to locate underground. In that case, solutions should be explored to minimize the visual

impact of the lines by designing special, less obtrusive utility poles and by combining as many of the lines in as few locations as possible.

### **7. Housing Abutting High-Volume Roads**

In situations where housing abuts high volume roads, either facing or backing up to the road, require landscaping to mitigate the effect of the traffic on the housing.

Such screening should consist of earth berms or of screen walls. Landscaping treatments should be used for the berms and the screen walls, and the screen walls should be designed to complement the adjoining residential developments.

### **Residential Corridor Policies**

Major roads that abut housing, such as portions of State, Birch, or Main Streets are different from the open roadway corridors in that they are much more densely developed and have a more urban appearance.

Continuous landscaping treatments in the residential road corridors provide a prime opportunity to enhance and green the city. Since there is no need to maintain views of businesses, as there is in commercial corridors, extensive use of shrubbery and/or closely spaced canopy street trees could be used to enhance these corridors.

### **8. Public Improvements**

Include extra landscaping and berming along residential neighborhoods when installing public landscaping along major roads or when building new arterial roads.

### **9. Street Trees**

Continue to require that new residential developments include trees in the boulevard along all streets, following the species plan adopted by the City. Please refer also to Objective 4, Policy 4, for additional guidance on street trees.



State Street, which runs through a residential area and along the University campus, is enclosed by a well-landscaped edge despite the fact that the boulevard has been narrowed by street

## **Objective 9 – Parks**

### **Build parks and interconnected greenways to enhance the quality of residential neighborhoods and commercial districts, reflect Eau Claire’s cultural heritage and honor civic life.**

It is appropriate to address parks as an element of urban design in Eau Claire. Parks are a source of outdoor recreation as well as beauty. They soften the feel of urban development, add greenery to neighborhoods and protect some environmental features. Properly planned and designed, parks can and should be the visual focus of a neighborhood or commercial district while greenways can connect parts of the city. Like streets and parkways, parks and greenways are major determinants of the appearance of a community and can contribute mightily to its quality of life, while also enhancing property values. Parks should be viewed as one element of a larger system of civic spaces that are interconnected and complementary.

The policies that realize this objective are included in the Parks, Greenways and Trails Plan chapter of this comprehensive plan.

### **Policies**

#### **1. A Network of Green Spaces**

Continue to build a system of green open spaces for recreation, urban beauty and natural protection that are linked by linear parks (greenways), off-road paths and on-street bicycle lanes, and generously landscaped roads.

#### **2. A System of Civic Spaces**

Regard the park and greenway system as one element of a larger system of civic spaces. Through a high quality of design and stewardship, these civic features will sustain the quality of life, private investment and economic competitiveness of Eau Claire.

Design the system elements to complement one another visually and functionally and to interconnect for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians.

Other elements of this system include:

- Parks of all types
- Plazas
- Public schools
- Civic buildings such as City Hall
- Local residential streets, sidewalks and street trees
- Minor arterial or collector roads
- Bridges
- Off-street and on-street bicycle lanes
- Wetlands and ponds
- Rivers and streams
- Wooded areas

### 3. Neighborhood Quality

In addition to providing amenities for residents, use greenway and parkways to improve the level of private investment in nearby housing and create lasting value in neighborhoods. These public spaces should be regarded as visual assets and designed as such. Each park should:

- Be open to the neighborhood on at least half of its perimeter
- Include generous landscaping to soften and direct views
- Have perimeter and internal walkways
- Have a defined entry and internal circulation paths
- Provide both active spaces and quiet, natural areas
- Use civic buildings such as a gazebo or picnic shelter as a focal point
- In a school-park situation, be designed in coordination with the school facilities
- Include off-street parking designed in careful relation to the topography, plantings and views so as to minimize its visual effect; no more off-street parking should be provided than is reasonable in addition to on-street parking.
- Preserve historic character and the reason why the park was established.

In addition, a large portion of the edge of public linear open space should abut local streets rather than private lots in order to extend the benefits of that open space into the larger neighborhood and community.

### 4. Waterfront Public Open Space

To the extent feasible, acquire stream edges for public open space and parks, provide walkways and bicycling paths within that green space, protect key environmental features such as wetlands or floodplains, use environmentally-sensitive bank stabilization techniques instead of heavily engineered devices, and create visual and functional linkages between the waterfronts and nearby neighborhoods or districts. Refer also to Objective 7, Waterfronts.

### 5. Quiet Spaces

Include quiet spaces in parks for strolling or sitting wherever the landscape allows. Manage some locations in the park system to retain their wooded or other natural characteristics to invite exploration and discovery. Such places offer refuge from the bustle of the urban environment and opportunities to connect with nature.



Domer Park offers a wooded setting with a spectacular view of Dells Pond.

## **6. Civic Pride and Local Heritage**

Design and maintain parks and other public spaces as the highest expression of civic pride and local heritage.

Parks should be beautiful as well as functional so that current generations will enjoy their use and future generations will appreciate what they represent. Parks and greenways should be inspiring and represent the best of Eau Claire.

Encourage the display of public art in civic spaces and enhance public buildings and structures with decorative lighting, interpretive signing, etc.

## **7. Park Buildings**

Adopt an architectural theme for its park buildings and related facilities after reflecting on local materials, building practices, cultural heritage and user needs. Buildings should be classic in proportions and materials, adaptable, and long-lasting. If necessary, it is preferable to delay construction than to install a structure that is not of sufficient quality.

## **8. Associated Furnishings**

Take care in selecting associated park furnishings such as benches, fences, signs or trash containers. They should complement the design of the major buildings and require relatively low levels of maintenance.

## Plan Action Steps

The City will take the following steps to implement the recommendations of the Urban Design Plan.

**Table 8-2  
Urban Design Plan Action Steps**

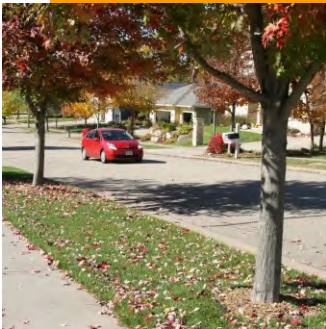
Action	Timing
<b>Special Places.</b> Continue to protect, interpret and enhance the qualities of the City’s “special places” and examples of its cultural and economic heritage.	Ongoing
<b>City Entrances.</b> Design major entrances to the city with attractive gateway features.	Ongoing
<b>Wayfinding Signs.</b> Extend the Downtown wayfinding sign system.	2016 – 2030
<b>Commercial Design Guidelines.</b> Prepare and adopt design guidelines or standards for new commercial development in perimeter, corridor and downtown locations.	<del>2016</del> <u>2022</u>
<b>Multiple-Family Design.</b> Continue to follow the guidelines of the City’s Multi-Family Housing Design Manual and the Landscaping Manual.	Ongoing
<b>New Streets.</b> Build new streets according to the design standards presented in this plan and in the Transportation System Plan chapter.	Ongoing
<b>Street Tree Practice.</b> Strengthen the ordinance and practice regarding the planting of trees along public streets and roads.	<del>2016</del> <u>2023</u>
<b>Street Tree Plan.</b> Adopt a city-wide plan for street tree species and spacing.	<del>2016</del> <u>2023</u>
<b>Sign Ordinance.</b> Review and consider improving the sign ordinance.	<del>2016</del> <u>2022</u>
<b>Infill Development.</b> Encourage infill development in older, traditional neighborhoods that respects the characteristics and prevalent housing styles of each neighborhood.	Ongoing
<b>Activity Centers.</b> Encourage a mixture of compatible land uses in a variety of locations and scales in order to create more vital and walkable activity centers.	Ongoing
<b>Priority Streetscape Improvements.</b> Invest in a higher than normal level of tree planting and decorative lighting along certain designated roads as illustrated by Figure 8-3, Priority Streetscape System.	Ongoing
<b>Green Space Pattern.</b> Continue to build a system of green open spaces for recreation, urban beauty and natural protection that are linked by linear parks (greenways), off-road paths and on-street bicycle lanes, and generously landscaped roads.	Ongoing



Adopted

# **Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015**

## **Neighborhoods and Districts Plan**



City of Eau Claire Wisconsin

## Neighborhoods and Districts Plan

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## Neighborhoods and Districts Plan

This chapter of the *Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan* describes the City's approach to improving neighborhoods and districts. It combines ideas from other chapters as they apply to the central areas of the city while offering new initiatives.

### Summary of Neighborhoods and Districts Issues

The major issues related to neighborhoods or districts in Eau Claire are:

- 1. What are the appropriate roles of the City and the private sector in helping to improve the older neighborhoods?** Should the task of rehabilitation and reinvestment be left to property owners while the City maintains the infrastructure and provides normal City services? To what extent should (or can) the City enlist the assistance of private businesses, foundations and not-for-profit corporations?

The City has been investing in streets, parks and downtown redevelopment, but should there be funds allocated to specifically leverage private reinvestment? Should the City devote an extra measure of effort or a higher level of service to the older neighborhoods compared to the newer areas? These may include plowing alleys, additional street lighting, additional police surveillance, funding a neighborhood development corporation, and others.

- 2. What can be done to encourage owner-occupancy of houses, either existing or new?** The rate of home ownership has been falling in the central neighborhoods, and that sometimes leads to dis-investment and other problems.
- 3. Which, if any, locations would be acceptable for new multiple-family housing?** Sometimes, an increase in housing density is necessary to make redevelopment economically feasible.
- 4. What should be done to preserve neighborhood character during change?** This may include density, housing type, land use patterns, historic preservation and architectural style.
- 5. What should the City do to encourage the re-use of major obsolescent buildings in the neighborhoods?** This may include buildings such as old churches that are no longer used for religious purposes.

6. **Should a neighborhood non-profit development corporation be created to assist in neighborhood revitalization?** This could be a private company with financial assistance and representation from the City and major corporations or foundations. It could have abilities that the City government does not.
7. **What should be done, if anything, to coordinate the efforts of the neighborhood associations?** ~~Presently, they are not coordinated.~~ In 2015 there was no coordination, but recent united efforts could be more powerful and efficient.
8. **Should there be additional cooperation and communication among the University and the neighborhoods?** The University has a major influence on its nearby neighborhoods.
9. **Should City Code enforcement be more proactive and less complaint-driven?** Because of reduced staffing, inspectors focus their attention on those properties where citizens have directed their attention.
10. **Should special on-street resident parking provisions be considered in neighborhoods?** Some Cities issue stickers or permits for vehicles owned by neighborhood residents that allow parking in high demand locations, such as near colleges, enabling police to enforce resident-only parking rules.



Classic American architectural patterns are evident in the neighborhoods of Eau Claire

## The Importance of Neighborhood Revitalization

Neighborhood revitalization is being given special attention in 2015 and in this update to the Eau Claire *Comprehensive Plan*. Although prior versions of this plan have covered the entire city across all of its subjects, and the City has worked with residents to prepare many neighborhood and district plans, this will be the first time that a coordinated strategy has been offered to address the challenges of the six neighborhoods around the central business district.

The reasons for this emphasis and new chapter are several.

- First, there is a sense that, generally speaking, the **conditions** in the oldest parts of the city are slowly becoming worse not better, structural deterioration is continuing with age, the rate of home ownership is declining, nuisance complaints are escalating, and household incomes, on average, are stagnant, among other indicators. There are exceptions to each of these generalities, of course.
- It is felt that the individual **neighborhood plans** are essential but not sufficient because they lack the strength possible through a more coordinated approach.
- Many **millions of dollars** of private and public money has been invested in these neighborhoods during the past 150 years, and those commitments may be greatly diminished unless corrective action is taken.
- Larger private or public **costs** could be avoided in the future if steps are taken now.
- The **lives** of people – the purpose of cities – are diminished by concentrations of inadequate housing, education, health care or employment.
- The reduced vitality of central locations would leave only perimeter sites for growth, which would have negative **environmental** effects through increased driving and loss of farmland or natural habitat.
- To have a strong **downtown**, the surrounding neighborhoods should be healthy.
- The central neighborhoods have tremendous untapped potential for private re-investment, growth and vitality. They can each tap the **assets** of location, history, charm, water, views, parks, transit, major institutions, jobs, the arts and a sense of community.
- The City now believes that it has the problem of **fringe growth** management under control as a result of the 2005 plan and subsequent agreements, allowing it to turn its attention more clearly back to the center.
- Finally, the fiscal, social and environmental wisdom of neighborhood revitalization equates to **sustainable** urban conditions.

## Goal and Objectives

### Goal

**Achieve significant, continuous and lasting improvement to the physical, social and economic conditions of the neighborhoods around downtown.**

#### Objective 1 – Municipal or County Services and Facilities

Support neighborhood revitalization by improving city facilities and services in those locations most in need.

#### Objective 2 – Change and Protection

Enable changes in land use and buildings while protecting the desirable characteristics of the neighborhoods.

#### Objective 3 – Physical Improvements to Housing and Businesses

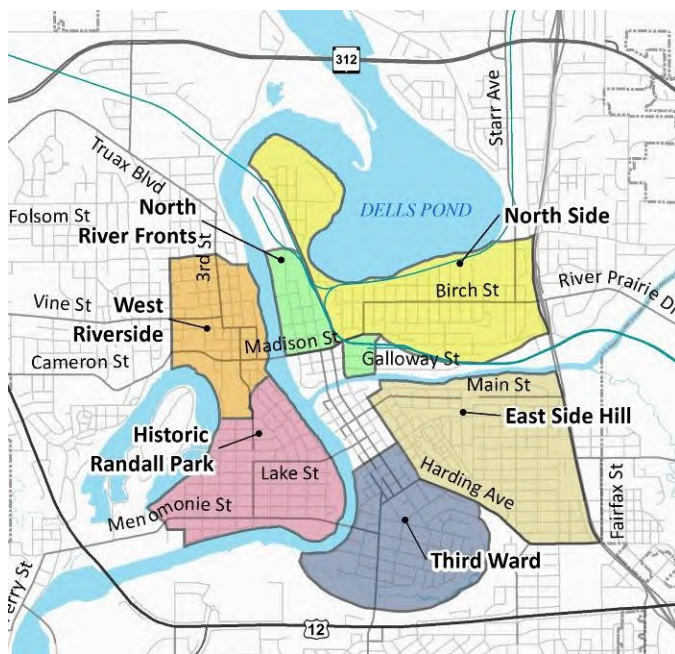
Improve the housing stock, the rate of home ownership and the business districts of the central neighborhoods through the coordinated private and public actions.

#### Objective 4 – Social and Economic Improvement

Focus the existing resources of other agencies in health, education and employment to improve the social and economic conditions of the neighborhoods.

#### Objective 5 – Resident Leadership and Organization

Empower residents and build their capacity for neighborhood leadership.



This chapter addresses primarily the neighborhoods shown on this map but may also pertain to other portions of the city that have similar needs such as the Shawtown neighborhood located in the southwest portion of the City.



**Objective 1 – Municipal or County Services and Facilities**

**Support neighborhood revitalization by improving city facilities and services in those locations most in need.**

The City and County already provide a wide range of facilities and services to all parts of the City, but it is felt that there are gaps and shortages that ought to be addressed to help the older neighborhoods rebound. Presently, the City provides:

**Street maintenance and periodic reconstruction.** The City has a regular schedule of street maintenance and rebuilding but the condition of the oldest streets is considered sub-par by some. Snow plowing is adequate but always an easy target of grumbling. A major shortcoming in 2015, however, is that the City does not patch, rebuild or plow the alleys, which are public. This has in part changed with an alley reconstruction schedule in place.

**Sanitary sewer and water lines.** Sewer and water lines are adequate, repairs are made as needed and long-term improvements have been programmed.

**Police and fire protection.** Police and fire services are considered adequate to good. A city-wide community policing program instituted since 1995 has improved response times and lowered crime rates.

**Parks, greenways and multi-use paths.** The waterfront linear parks are exceptionally strong in the central neighborhoods although the number and extent of play fields could be better.

**Street trees.** Trees between the sidewalk and the street are planted and maintained by the City. However, the pattern is incomplete as new trees have not been consistently required with land development and dead trees are not always replaced.

**Code enforcement by the City.** Under Section 16.04 of the City Code, the City inspects new buildings under construction for conformance to the Wisconsin Building Code. However, the City does not inspect existing structures for Building Code violations. Rental housing is not subject to any additional Code requirements or an inspection schedule. Housing is not required to be fully in conformance with the Building Code before it is sold.

City Code Section 8.28 includes minimum standards for the maintenance of yards and lawns, but these are enforced mostly when a complaint has been received.

**Code Enforcement by the County.** The City-County Health Department administers the Housing Maintenance and Occupancy Code throughout Eau Claire. The department conducts inspections, re-inspections and investigations in response to complaints or referrals.

The Housing Code (Section 16.08) is not the same as the Building Code (Section 16.04 of the City Code). The Housing Code sets minimum standards necessary for health and safety in any housing.

The Department also administers the city-wide Housing Inspection Program, which replaced the Intensified Housing Code Compliance Program in the Community Development Block Grant target area. The Department identifies houses with Housing Code violations through a systematic inspection and works with owners to bring the properties into compliance. Many significant interior health and safety hazards have been identified and exterior maintenance improved. A map of the generalized results of the exterior survey is shown in the Housing

Assessment chapter of this plan.

**Public and rent-assisted housing.** The City’s Housing Authority administers funds from the federal, state or city governments to provide a small number of public housing units for the very low income, elderly or handicapped, rent-assistance and home-buying assistance. See the Housing Chapter for more information about affordable housing policies.

**Urban redevelopment.** The City’s partially-independent Redevelopment Authority buys and sells properties to promote private redevelopment of blighted locations.

**City planning.** The City prepares and updates the *Comprehensive Plan*, sub-area or neighborhood plans, and topical plans such as parks, historic resources or utilities. Based on those, the City administers the zoning and subdivision ordinances, which regulate land use and development standards, the historic preservation program, and all capital improvements (parks, utilities, etc.).

**Public Health.** The City-County Health Department provides services engaged in education, assessment, and service aimed at preventing or reducing public health problems. Topic areas include immunizations, lead paint, food, water, infants, child development, air quality, animals, garbage, lodging, alcohol, exercise, communicable diseases and others.

**Justice administration.** The County courts system.

**Environmental stewardship.** The City prepares plans and enforces regulations for the protection of shorelands, wetlands, floodplains, clean energy, and a general “sustainability” campaign.

## Policies

### 1. City Service Improvements

Consider improving these services across the City:

**Alley maintenance.** Schedule the repair, reconstruction and snow plowing of public alleys to the same level as public streets.

**Street maintenance.** Upgrade the standards for the repair of potholes and cracks in local (minor) streets.

**On-street parking.** Review parking regulations in congested areas and determine if changes would reduce parking congestion. The City could also consider instituting a program in which residents of neighborhoods affected by a high number of cars parked by non-residents may receive a sticker or permit that allows them to park on their street. Cars without such sticker would be ticketed during certain hours.

**Code enforcement.** Become more proactive in the enforcement of external and nuisance violations of the City maintenance regulations including items such as broken windows, unmowed lawns, parking of cars, trucks, boats, trailers and recreational vehicles, trash handling, barking dogs, and so on.

**Rental Housing Registration and Inspection.** The 2015 plan recommendation to start ~~Consider starting~~ a program requiring that all rental housing be registered with the City or County has been adopted. Inspections are compliant-driven or in general done with the city-wide Housing Inspection Program. and that such housing Rental housing is

inspected by the City-County Health Department ~~on a periodic basis~~ for conformance to the Housing Code life safety regulations. For the sake of efficiency, follow-up ~~focus the~~ inspections are focused on rental properties needing ongoing compliance, most likely to need improvement; while others may be inspected less frequently. Selection criteria may include age of the building, location, prior complaints or similar factors.

**Policing.** Continue to provide a strong police presence in the neighborhoods and along Water Street to eliminate problem parties, vandalism and problem behavior from excessive drinking.

**Taverns and Bars.** Continue to limit the number of taverns and bars along Water Street and in other areas in the vicinity of residential neighborhoods.

## Objective 2 – Change and Stability

### Enable changes in land use and buildings while protecting the desirable characteristics of the neighborhoods.

Every vital city changes over time, but better cities do not lose their essence in the process.

The neighborhoods and downtown of Eau Claire have changed and will continue to evolve. They are much different than they were 100 years ago, and they will be different a century from now. The great majority of these changes have been positive -- just look at the riverfronts, the old Phoenix Steel site or Water Street. Through this process, the community has retained the best of its architecture, its parks, its civic core and the look and feel of its residential areas. Downtown has declined as a retail center, as have so many others, but the foundation has survived and its returning transformed. The place still says “Eau Claire”.

The neighborhoods must continue to change to survive and thrive. Some of the buildings must be replaced and some of the development pattern will be remolded. But this evolution can and should conform to timeless principles of city design and beloved features of local heritage. The legacy of the past can inform improvements for the future.

The City can guide appropriate change through its planning and regulations. Its tools include the *Comprehensive Plan* chapters of Land Use, Urban Design, Transportation and Neighborhoods; the individual neighborhood plans; the *Waterways Plan*; the zoning ordinance; the historic preservation program; and parks or other public improvements. But it is ultimately the owners and residents who pay the bills and make the decisions. They must be willing to effect change, embrace it and shape it wisely.

### Policies

#### 1. Plan for a Different and Better Future

Prepare for changes in the housing stock, land use and businesses by adopting and following plans that are endorsed by the community.

Continually update the *Comprehensive Plan* and the sub-area plans. Use those plans to make decisions about public spending or regulations, or private investments.

Accept the idea that change does not necessarily mean loss, and that a community different from the present can be just as good if not better.

Anticipate that some houses and other buildings will be removed, but insist that their replacements contribute to a better future for the neighborhood.

**2. Use Appropriate Guidelines**

Study the design principles relating to infill development offered in the Urban Design chapter of this plan and follow them to the extent possible.

**3. Study Potential Locations of Change**

Work with the neighborhood organizations to identify specific locations that are most suited for or in need of redevelopment, including perhaps increases in density, to guide private initiatives. Consider amending the zoning map or ~~text~~ code in response.

**4. Historic Preservation**

As outlined in the Historic Preservation chapter, continue to study and identify areas that should be preserved because of their architectural or historic character. Consider including these locations in historic districts with design guidelines.

**5. Schools**

Work with the Eau Claire School District to keep elementary schools in the neighborhoods surrounding downtown.



Infill and replacement housing should complement the neighborhood character even if height or density increase. Key elements are the front setback and doors and windows that face the street.

**Objective 3 – Physical Improvements to Housing and Businesses**

**Improve the housing stock, the rate of home ownership and the business districts of the central neighborhoods through coordinated private and public actions.**

Improving the housing stock and the business districts in the neighborhoods around downtown will require a multi-pronged, long-term effort by many organizations and individuals working in coordination. Above all, the profit motive of the private sector will have to be harnessed because the available resources of the public are inadequate for the task.

Residential and business district revitalization are one part of a campaign of community development, the others being jobs and job-readiness, health, and education and training. However, cities such as Eau Claire have a long history of influencing building rehabilitation, district redevelopment, land use and, of course, supportive streets, utilities and parks. Thus, urban physical evolution is the component most suited for the City.

The experience of other cities shows that a campaign of physical renewal will probably be most successful if all the components are addressed. Other entities have expertise in the massive challenges of jobs, health and education, so the City would be wise to enlist them in devising and executing a focused program of neighborhood revitalization. Indeed, efforts have been underway for quite some time in all four of those areas, but coordination has never been formalized.

The organizations needed for the overall task of neighborhood revitalization, sometimes called community development, are:

- Private businesses such as banks, land developers, builders, investor-owners and small business owners
- Individuals, the owners or tenants of residential or business structures
- Government, principally the City, but also state or federal agencies
- Not-for-profit community development organizations such as Western Dairyland
- Institutions such as the university, the technical college and the hospitals
- Charitable foundations, both local and regional.

Central neighborhood housing conditions probably warrant intervention at three levels, including:

1. Market-based responses to the demand for the better housing.
2. Government intervention to serve the lowest strata of the market, which the private sector does not adequately address.
3. A combination of private and public efforts to work between the first two.

Local housing entrepreneurs will sometimes invest in the central neighborhoods when the opportunity appears more promising than the alternatives. However, factors that mitigate against new residential development in these neighborhoods include existing buildings, lack of clear sites, weak demand, competing sites, prevailing rental or sale prices, neighborhood conditions and perceptions, and the resulting mismatch of costs and revenues.

Government help in rent, mortgages, rehabilitation or new construction is inadequate to the need. Federal, state and local funding has diminished since its high-water mark decades ago.

Some cities have witnessed the creation of not-for-profit community-benefit corporations that work on a variety of housing or other community development needs and often receive government or private assistance. There are many varieties of these organizations, as they are always tailored to local circumstances. Three local examples are Habitat for Humanity, the four-county Western Dairyland Community Action Agency, and Downtown Eau Claire, Inc., which have differing but overlapping missions and service territories. Another example is Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc., an organization with affiliates across the nation that works in housing rehabilitation, purchasing and budgeting in neighborhoods that are declining but within the realm of successful private intervention.

Money for public-benefit corporations may come from charges for their services, surplus revenue from their ventures, grants from local or state governments, foundations or individuals, loans or grants from private banks or other corporations, or loans from a community development finance institution (CDFI).

A CDFI may be a community development bank, credit union, loan fund or venture capital fund; a micro-enterprise development loan fund; or a community development corporation. All of those organizations are defined and enabled by the US Department of the Treasury under a 1994 law<sup>1</sup> and funded by the CDFI Fund, which provides money through a variety of programs, or the New Markets Tax Credit Program, which was created to induce equity investments in low-income communities. As an example, Forward Community Investments is a CDFI based in Madison that has funded Western Dairyland, presumably with loans.

## **Policies**

### **1. Neighborhood Revitalization Intensified Planning Process**

Upon adoption of this comprehensive plan, convene several meetings of residents, leaders, decision makers and specialists to plan a strategy for central neighborhood revitalization. Use an independent facilitator with knowledge of the topic to lead the meeting(s). These principles and ideas are suggested as a starting point.

#### **Mission**

Plan a way to achieve measurable results that benefit the physical, social and economic fabric of the central neighborhoods with emphasis on housing improvement. In particular, study whether a non-profit neighborhood development corporation should be formed and what its initial charge should be.

#### **Principles**

- A profitable private sector can be a powerful tool in neighborhood revitalization
- The work of the private sector should align with community hopes
- The government should do work and serve people that the private sector cannot or will not and should protect the most vulnerable in society
- Public infrastructure, services and spending should leverage private investment
- Public participation will improve the plan and its application.

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<sup>1</sup> The Riegle Community Development and Regulatory Improvement Act of 1994.



### **Participating Representatives**

Representatives of the following groups or organizations should be invited to participate in the intensified planning process for neighborhood revitalization. An interim steering committee appointed by the City Council should be formed to set up the meeting(s).

- Neighborhood leaders
- City and County elected or appointed officials
- City management
- Banking, including a Community Development Finance Institution
- Business
- Builders and land developers
- Major local institutions such as hospitals, the University and the School District
- Foundations
- Local community development organizations
- Leaders of neighborhood revitalization corporations from other cities
- Prominent local individuals who are committed to the mission.

### **Role of the Private Sector**

The private housing construction industry will be expected to meet market demands for new housing.

But beyond that, it is hoped that builders and developers will lend their expertise to the proposed community development corporation, include affordable housing in their larger buildings, maintain their buildings to an acceptably high standard and go beyond the minimum necessary in all of their endeavors.

Likewise, it is hoped that the lending industry will help with loans at less than market rate for affordable housing, and, like the builders, participate on the board of directors for the proposed public-private development corporation.

In addition to expertise and good works, it is hoped that private organizations from all industries will also underwrite the community development corporation with donations of money.

### **Role of the City and County**

The public sector is meant to include the City, its Housing Authority and its Redevelopment Authority, Eau Claire County, and the City-County Health Department.

The public sector, particularly the City, should contribute with what it does best:

- Convene, organize, plan, inspire and lead
- Maintain streets, utilities, parks and trails
- Provide police and fire safety services
- Proactively administer the City Code
- Provide public financing, such as scattered-site tax increment financing
- Help ensure that the lowest-income members of the community have decent, safe and affordable housing, either through new construction or rent subsidies

- Tackle the least feasible housing redevelopment projects; clear and re-sell or redevelop the most troublesome buildings; do what the private sector and the proposed community development corporation will not
- Provide housing rehabilitation loans and grants for lower income homeowners to correct Building Code defects
- Prepare and maintain a comprehensive plan, neighborhood plans, zoning regulations, a Building Code and historic preservation incentives
- Receive money from the federal and state governments.

#### **Role of the Not-for-Profit Sector**

- Devise a role for itself that bridges the gap between that of the private housing development industry and that of the City
- Engage in selective housing development, redevelopment, rehabilitation and related housing services
- Form a tax-exempt, non-profit corporation led by directors from banking, business, government, institutions, the construction industry, residents, other community-benefit corporations and foundations
- Receive funding from the City, local commercial banks, community development finance institutions, foundations, government and private individuals
- Manage itself and negotiate in business without all of the regulatory restrictions and transparency requirements of government.

#### **Related Services to Be Considered**

The range of services for the City and the proposed community development or housing development corporation will be defined during the planning summit and subsequent deliberations. It may be decided that some of these activities are best administered by the City, another public-benefit corporation or an institution such as a college. The range of activities is wide and could include any of these or more:

- Building new housing, including units considered “affordable” or “accessible,” on sites that it buys and prepares or sites obtained from other parties
- Housing rehabilitation loans and counseling
- Counseling for home ownership, mortgage applications, personal finance and foreclosure prevention
- Home ownership down-payment assistance
- Housing maintenance advice and assistance
- Historic preservation
- Building housing designed for students
- Acting as a resource for job training.

In June 2016, the Neighborhood Revitalization Task Force Report was accepted by City Council, which fulfilled this section. Many recommendations have been integrated into recent neighborhood plans, housing policies and City activities. An example is using Water Street tax increment financing to fund the Historical Randall Park Neighborhood Revitalization Corporation’s future homeownership improvement program.

## **Objective 4 – Social and Economic Improvement**

### **Focus the existing resources of other agencies in health, education and employment to improve the social and economic conditions of the neighborhoods.**

If physical development were the only challenge facing the central neighborhoods, it would be relatively easy to address. However, other troublesome conditions exist in the topics of household income, employment, job-readiness, training, health, education, language skills and others. Achieving sustainable and significant neighborhood improvement often requires progress on several fronts.

These myriad problems are highly intractable, unfortunately. It may be more than enough for the City or a new community development corporation to emphasize physical improvements at the outset of this long campaign without itself taking on extra responsibilities. Moreover, there are already agencies and organizations focused on these fundamental tasks, including schools, colleges, non-profits and health care organizations as well as City departments.

### **Policies**

#### **1. A Comprehensive Approach**

In the next and subsequent stages of planning for central neighborhood improvement, seek to devise a comprehensive approach to neighborhood improvement. Focus and coordinate efforts that may already be underway by local organizations other than the City. Involve representatives of allied public or private organizations in planning and implementing this campaign. Set specific objectives then measure and report results.

#### **2. Arts, Culture and Entertainment**

Seek ways to use the arts, culture and entertainment to supplement efforts in housing, employment and social services as a complete campaign of community development.

Eau Claire and many other cities have found this to be an effective strategy.



Neighborhood development involves more than housing improvement. Resilient families are the foundation and purpose.

## **Objective 5 – Resident Leadership and Organization**

### **Empower residents and build their capacity for neighborhood leadership.**

It long ago became a tenet of community development that the best and most effective initiatives are those that are conceived with the help of, or led by, those people most affected. Likewise, it's true that campaigns or plans that reflect community values are endorsed politically and stand the test of time.

As residents serve meaningful roles in grass-roots democracy, they tend to grow in their ability to effect change. A neighborhood or community seeded with veterans of the process is well equipped to find a consensus, articulate its preferences and work with the outcomes.

### **Policies**

#### **1. Neighborhood Planning**

Continue to prepare and update neighborhood or district plans with involvement from residents, property owners and tenants. Implement the recommendations of each neighborhood plan through City actions, private initiatives or the proposed community development corporation.

Five neighborhoods have formal plans, all of which have been assisted by the City and adopted into the *Comprehensive Plan*. The neighborhood and district plans completed as of 2014 were described in the Assessment of Conditions. In 2017, the North River Fronts and in 2020 Third Ward plans were updated, Shawtown neighborhood is next in 2022.

#### **2. Neighborhood Organizations**

Help to form and sustain neighborhood organizations. Work to initiate an organization in any neighborhood that does not have one, such as ~~West Riverside~~ North Side Hill.

There are five neighborhoods with organized associations, although the degree activity varies among them. In 2021, there were 14 organized with also a master umbrella association formed to coordinate and support the associations.

Periodically host meetings of all the neighborhood associations so that they can compare efforts and ideas, resolve any differences near shared boundaries, and provide unified requests to the City.

#### **3. Communication with the University**

Facilitate annual meetings between representatives of the University and the neighborhood associations to exchange ideas about topics of mutual interest and communicate them to the City.

#### **4. Role in a Community Development Corporation**

If a non-profit community development corporation is formed, include a representative sample of neighborhood residents on its board of directors. The Historical Randall Park Neighborhood Revitalization Corporation formed and has a board of directors that includes residents of the neighborhood.

## Plan Action Steps

The City will take the following steps to implement the recommendations of the Neighborhoods and Districts Plan.

**Table 9-1  
Neighborhoods and Districts Plan Actions**

Action	Timing
<b><u>Neighborhood Revitalization Task Force Report.</u></b> Continue to implement the initial stakeholder summit ideas recommended in the report.	Ongoing
<b><u>Planning Annual Summit.</u></b> Initiate and organize the planning meeting of representatives from the public and private sectors to advance this proposal for intensified and ongoing neighborhood improvement, including creation of a not for profit neighborhood development corporation. <u>Support growth of neighborhood associations and their annual summit to improve communication, address concerns, and share best practices.</u>	2015 Ongoing
<b><u>Neighborhood Revitalization Corporation (NRC).</u></b> Support the Historic Randall Park NRC non-profit to improve reinvestment and homeownership opportunities. Implement a housing reinvestment plan within the Water Street TID #12 Project Plan.	Ongoing
<b><del>Coordinated Community Development.</del></b> Seek to devise a comprehensive approach to neighborhood improvement. Focus and coordinate efforts that may already be underway by local organizations other than the City. Involve representatives of allied public or private organizations in planning and implementing this campaign. <u>[See above items that accomplish this]</u>	2016 – 2025
<b>Code Enforcement.</b> Become more proactive in the enforcement of external and nuisance violations of the City maintenance regulations.	Ongoing
<b><del>Rental Registration Housing Inspections.</del></b> Consider beginning a program requiring that <u>Continue the Health Department’s rental registration housing program for improvements and communication.</u> be registered with the City or County and that such housing is inspected periodically for conformance to the Housing Code.	2016 Ongoing
<b>Alley Maintenance.</b> Schedule the repair, reconstruction and snow plowing of public alleys to the same level as public streets.	Continuous
<b>Street Maintenance.</b> Upgrade the standards for the repair of potholes and cracks in local (minor) streets.	Continuous
<b>Parking Regulations.</b> Review parking regulations in congested areas and determine if changes would reduce parking congestion.	2016 2020 - 2025
<b>Parking Sticker Program.</b> Consider instituting a program in which residents of neighborhoods affected by a high number of cars parked by non-residents may receive a sticker or permit that allows them to	2016 2020 - 2025

Action	Timing
park on their street.	
<b>Neighborhood Plans.</b> Continue to prepare and update neighborhood or district plans with involvement from residents, property owners and tenants.	Continuous
<b>Land Use Planning.</b> Work with the neighborhood organizations to identify specific locations that are most suited for or in need of redevelopment, including perhaps increases in density, to guide private initiatives. Consider amending the zoning map or <del>text code</del> <u>code</u> in response.	Continuous
<b>Amend Zoning Regulations.</b> <u>Consider amending zoning in older neighborhoods to accommodate the non-conforming status of dwellings because of setback requirements and area requirements that are generally applicable to newer residential neighborhoods.</u>	2022 - 2025
<b>Organizational Coordination.</b> <u>Assist or facilitate</u> <del>Periodically host</del> meetings of all the neighborhood associations so that they can compare efforts and ideas, resolve any differences near shared boundaries, and provide unified requests to the City.	Continuous
<b>University Communication.</b> <u>Assist or facilitate</u> annual meetings between representatives of the University and the neighborhood associations to exchange ideas about topics of mutual interest and communicate them to the City.	Continuous



Adopted

# **Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015**

## **Housing Assistance, Diversity and Design Plan**



City of Eau Claire Wisconsin

## **Housing Assistance, Diversity and Design Plan**

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## Housing Assistance, Diversity and Design Plan

The purpose of the Eau Claire Housing Plan is to guide public spending on housing assistance programs and to guide public regulation of private housing development.

This housing element is based in part on established commitments to housing assistance as expressed in the Eau Claire Consolidated Plan for Community Development Block Grants, HOME and Housing Programs, 2013-2017.

This chapter may serve as a foundation for modifications to housing assistance programs and may guide the Land Use Plan and amendments to the City's zoning ordinance.

### **Summary of Issues (2015)**

- 1. Rental Housing Supply:** What should the City do, if anything, to increase the supply of lower-cost rental housing, especially with more than two bedrooms?
- 2. Affordability for Low-Income Households:** Should the City put more of its own money into rent assistance and scattered-site public housing?
- 3. Diversity and Design:** To what degree is a diversity of housing types desirable within single neighborhoods? Could design standards help to create a compatible mixture of housing types and densities? Should the greatest variety of housing types be concentrated around commercial nodes?
- 4. "Upper-Bracket" Housing:** Should the City make special efforts to attract new housing with sale prices over \$300,000?
- 5. Infill Standards:** Should design standards be developed for new infill housing in existing older neighborhoods? These might include basic criteria such as similar setbacks, building massing and garage placement.
- 6. Preservation of Existing Housing:** How can the city's existing housing stock best be preserved and upgraded? Are additional incentives needed to stimulate private sector investment in housing in the city's older neighborhoods?
- 7. Updating:** How can Eau Claire's large stock of 1950s and 1960s single-family houses best be updated to meet current market needs and ensure the continued viability of their neighborhoods.

## **Housing Goal and Objectives**

**Continue to stabilize and improve established neighborhoods while promoting affordable and decent housing for all residents of Eau Claire.**

Based on the Concept Plan and the Analysis of Conditions and Issues, the following objectives were established for the Eau Claire Housing Plan.

### **Objective 1 – Housing Affordability**

Use regulations and assistance programs to help make housing affordable for all.

### **Objective 2 – Housing Rehabilitation, Maintenance and Infill Development**

Continue to support and require maintenance of all types of housing.

### **Objective 3 – Housing Diversity**

Promote through plans and regulations a broad range of housing types and price levels in each major district or neighborhood.

### **Objective 4 – Multiple-Family Housing Design**

Improve the appearance of multiple-family housing so that it becomes a more acceptable and compatible alternative.



A nice example of housing rehabilitation in the East Side Hill Neighborhood

## **Housing Objectives and Policies**

The actions of the City of Eau Claire Housing Division and the Eau Claire Housing Authority will be guided principally by its *Consolidated Plan for Community Development Block Grant, HOME and Housing Programs*. That plan is updated every five years. Some of the actions recommended by that plan are included below.

### **Objective 1 – Housing Affordability**

**Use regulations and assistance programs to help make housing affordable for all.**

#### **Policies**

Rent assistance was identified as a top priority need in Eau Claire in the *Consolidated Plan*.

There are also approximately 1,000 households receiving rent assistance from the federal or state governments via the Eau Claire Housing Authority and the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA). Approximately 370 of those are in the form of Section 8 Vouchers through WHEDA, and approximately 300 through the Housing Authority's housing program.

WHEDA administers the Housing Choice voucher program for the City of Eau Claire.

#### **1. Rent Assistance**

Continue to administer the following programs through the Eau Claire Housing Authority and WHEDA to the extent that funding is available:

- Subsidies for Rental of Private Housing:
  - Public Housing (Housing Authority of the City of Eau Claire)
  - Section 8 Vouchers (WHEDA)
  - HOME Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (Housing Authority of the City of Eau Claire)
- Subsidized Housing Owned by the Housing Authority
  - Park Tower Apartments
  - Park Tower Townhomes
  - Substantial Rehabilitation Housing
  - Homeownership Program for Low-Income Families.

#### **2. Priorities for Rent Assistance**

Continue to provide rent assistance in all parts of the city to the extent that funding is available. The privately-owned units for which tenants will receive assistance should be scattered throughout the city, although their rents cannot exceed guidelines set by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

### **3. Homeownership Assistance for First-Time Buyers**

Continue to administer the First Time Home Buyer Down-payment and Closing Cost Assistance Program through the Eau Claire Housing Division using federal HOME funds. Under this program, low-income buyers can qualify to receive up to \$3,300 in assistance.

The Housing Division expects to assist approximately 5 households annually through this program.

### **4. Homeownership Assistance for Low-Income Families**

Continue to purchase and rehabilitate housing units on scattered sites city-wide to first-time home buyers through this direct sale program as funding continues to be available.

Families agree to purchase the house for the appraised price at the time the offer to purchase is submitted. Applicants may qualify for up to \$50,000 in subsidies, which makes the houses affordable.

### **5. Priorities for Homeownership Assistance**

Give priority in homeownership assistance to family households with incomes between 50 and 80 percent of the Eau Claire median income.

### **6. Public Housing**

Maintain the number of housing units owned by the Housing Authority (public housing) at its present level as allowed by HUD. Additional units may be added in the future through various other Housing Authority programs as funding becomes available.

### **7. Housing for the Homeless**

Continue to be a partner in the Continuum of Care group, which meets monthly to share ideas, identify needs and set agendas to address local housing and homeless needs.

The Continuum of Care group will continue to seek federal funding for its Supportive Housing Program, which assists these organizations in their efforts to serve the homeless:

- Western Dairyland
- Interfaith Hospitality Network
- Bolton Refuge House
- New Horizons
- Feed My People
- Community Table
- Lutheran Social Services
- Catholic Charities
- Hope Gospel Mission
- Chippewa Valley Free Health Clinic
- Hmong Mutual Relief Association

The Eau Claire Housing Authority will fund a portion of the rehabilitation costs of a permanent homeless shelter for qualified Community Housing Development Organizations through the use of federal HOME funds.

### **8. Habitat for Humanity**

Continue to provide suitable buildable lots and/or suitable units for rehabilitation to the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity, which builds new housing for low- and moderate-income families.



## **9. State Housing Assistance**

Continue to administer through the Housing Authority and the City of Eau Claire all appropriate state housing programs including by but not limited to:

- Housing Cost Reduction Initiative Program (C-Cap Grants) – state grants used by local lenders to reduce down payments
- Tax increment financing through the City of Eau Claire.

## **10. Local Housing Assistance**

Continue to participate with private and non-profit groups seeking to leverage or obtain new funding sources aimed at solving housing problems by supporting or jointly pursuing foundation funds and social investment by corporations, and by assisting with grant applications.

## **11. Private Housing**

The City will promote the private development of for-sale and rental housing affordable to households of moderate income through these means:

- Planning for mid-density residential locations in each major neighborhood
- Educating builders about better design for attached housing so that type of shelter becomes a more desirable option.

## **12. Comprehensive Housing Study**

Commission a comprehensive housing study that combined data on all types of housing in the city, evaluating the current housing supply and comparing it to the current and future housing demand. Data would include all types of housing, location, price points, condition, and size of units, and demographic shifts, with a review every 5 years. Furthermore, the study would include an analysis of current housing demand and a forecast of future housing demand.

## **Objective 2 – Housing Rehabilitation, Maintenance and Infill Development**

### **Continue to support and require maintenance of all types of housing.**

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy**

Participate in the strategy sessions proposed in the Neighborhoods Plan chapter that are intended to forge a plan to focus public and private efforts on improving the central neighborhoods.

A wide range of tools and programs were suggested for consideration in the older parts of the city. The general recommendation was to combine and coordinate the efforts of the private sector, the public sector and possibly a new public-private neighborhood development corporation.

##### **2. Housing Code Enforcement**

The Eau Claire Housing Division will continue to provide some of its Community Development Block Grant funds to support the Intensified Code Enforcement Program of the City-County Health Department.

Through this program, the Health Department identifies houses with code violations and works with property owners to bring the properties into compliance. Owners with Code violations are encouraged to seek assistance through the City of Eau Claire Housing Rehabilitation program.

##### **3. Rental Housing Registration and Inspection**

Begin a program requiring that all rental housing be registered with the City or County and that such housing is inspected by the City-County Health Department on a regular basis for conformance to the Housing Code life safety regulations.

##### **4. Code enforcement**

Become more proactive in the enforcement of external and nuisance violations of the City maintenance regulations including items such as broken windows, unmowed lawns, parking of cars, trucks, boats, trailers and recreational vehicles, trash handling, barking dogs, and so on.

## 5. Housing Rehabilitation Loans

The Housing Division will continue to administer its Housing Rehabilitation Program, which is funded through the federal Community Development Block Grant program.

This is a loan program for low-income homeowners and landlords who rent to low-income tenants. Deferred and installment loans are available to owner-occupants at no interest and to investor owners at 3 percent interest over 20 years. The installment loans are repaid monthly and deferred loans are repaid as the properties are sold or no longer occupied by the original occupants. These repayments contribute approximately \$100,000 annually to the City's CDBG program. An average of 15 to 20 homeowners are assisted by this program annually.

## 6. Priority for Housing Rehabilitation Loans

Priority for housing rehabilitation loans will be given to households with low income, then households with moderate income. Owner-occupants will have priority over investor-owners. Those with substandard housing conditions will have priority over those with cosmetic remodeling needs.

Locational preference will be given to applicants from Census Tracts 6, 7, 10, 11, 12 and 13, which have the greatest number and percentage of deteriorated houses.



Many older houses, such as this one, have attractive architectural features and fit nicely into their surroundings, making them good candidates for Housing Code and exterior rehabilitation. The Eau Claire Housing Division administers programs to assist owner-occupants in this work.

## **7. Lead Paint and Asbestos Reduction Program**

The Housing Division will continue to administer its lead paint and asbestos removal and remediation program for housing that receives federal assistance, such as the CDBG-funded code enforcement and rehabilitation programs described above.

It is estimated that there are 18,500 housing units in Eau Claire that were built before 1980 and may contain lead-based paints. Federal regulations require that all housing receiving federal assistance needs to be evaluated for the presence and dangers of lead-based paint and that paint encapsulated or removed. The Housing Authority estimates that it can assist a minimum of approximately 30 households over the next five years.

Locational priorities for the lead paint removal program would be Census Tracts 6, 7, 10, 11 and the eastern half of 12.

## **8. Weatherization Program**

The Housing Division will continue to allocate a percentage of its federal HOME program funding for housing weatherization projects in conjunction with its CDBG program.

Under this program, low-income homeowners receive grants of up to \$3,500 for weatherization-related improvements. The loans are forgiven if the home owner continues to own the property for either five or ten years.

## **9. Historic Structures**

Preserve and conserve historically significant structures in accordance with the Historic Preservation Plan chapter.

## **10. Incompatible Land Uses**

Identify and remove those incompatible, non-residential land uses that degrade the residential character of a neighborhood and that are not in conformance with zoning.

## **11. Infill Lots**

Support the donation of vacant lots and structures appropriate for infill housing to other organizations engaged in providing homes in established neighborhoods. Consider amending the zoning code to include regulatory incentives for infill projects that are compatible with older neighborhoods and historic districts. Use the design guidelines presented under Objective 4 and those of the Urban Design chapter of this plan to regulate the placement and design of infill buildings in keeping with surrounding homes.

## **12. Adaptive Re-Use**

Encourage the adaptive reuse of existing buildings for residential and commercial uses in appropriate areas through flexible zoning standards and financial assistance.

### **Objective 3 – Housing Diversity**

**Promote through plans and regulations a broad range of housing types and price levels.**

#### **Policies:**

##### **1. Variety**

The City will encourage through its land use plan and zoning ordinance the construction of a variety of housing types including rental housing, narrow-lot singles, townhouses, rowhouses, apartments and live-work units.

Eau Claire also needs to attract large, high-value detached houses and will approve annexation petitions in locations with attributes such as woods, water and views suitable for those desirable houses.

The City will seek to attract new housing in central infill or redevelopment sites as well as fringe locations.

Promote and preserve naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH), including proactive safety inspections for mobile homes as NOAH and encouraging programs for improved energy efficiency and resilience. Consider ways in which manufactured housing as NOAH might be introduced in other neighborhoods.

Means of encouraging this variety will be the land use plan, zoning ordinance, plat review and publicly-assisted redevelopment plans.

##### **2. Special Needs**

The Housing Authority will continue to use federal, state and private non-profit funding to create or reduce the cost of housing for the most ~~needy~~ susceptible in the community. Those ~~people~~ groups may include:

- Large low-income families
- ~~The~~ Elderly persons experiencing low-income ~~elderly~~
- ~~The~~ Persons with disabilities experiencing low-income ~~physically handicapped or disabled~~
- ~~Those~~ Persons with HIV or AIDS
- ~~The chronically mentally ill~~ Persons with a mental health condition.

## **Objective 4 – Multiple-Family Housing Design**

**Improve the appearance of multiple-family housing so that it becomes a more acceptable and compatible alternative.**

### **Policies**

#### **1. Strengthened Design Requirements**

Eau Claire will continue to promote better quality design for multiple-family housing so that it becomes a more acceptable form of housing with better visual appeal and lasting value.

To do so, the City will continue to apply its *Multiple-Family Housing Design Manual* and its *Landscaping Manual*, which have been adopted into the zoning ordinance by reference. These manuals include most of the principles that are essential and basic to attractive design. They have been written in manual form to allow flexibility in their application.

Additional design guidance for housing is presented in the Urban Design chapter of this plan.

#### **2. Integration with Single-Family Housing**

The City will encourage land developers to prepare plans that include some attached housing in every major residential neighborhood. Such housing should:

- Be given desirable locations
- Have architectural and site planning features that help make it compatible with nearby detached housing
- Be planned in conjunction with the single-family housing.



## Plan Action Steps

The City will take the following steps to implement the recommendations of the Housing Plan.

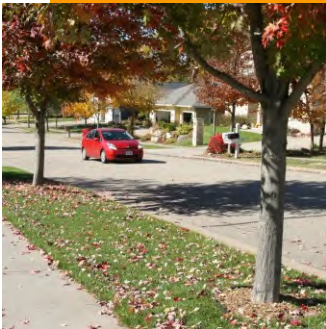
**Table 10-1  
Housing Plan Actions**

Action	Timing
<b>Housing Division.</b> The Eau Claire Housing Division will continue to administer programs supported by federal block grant money such as housing rehabilitation loans, weatherization and home ownership assistance.	Ongoing
<b>Housing Authority.</b> The Eau Claire Housing Authority will continue to administer federal programs such as public housing and rent assistance.	Ongoing
<b>Code Enforcement.</b> Become more proactive in the enforcement of external and nuisance violations of the City maintenance regulations.	Ongoing
<del><b>Rental Housing Inspections.</b> Consider a program requiring that rental housing be registered with the City or County and that such housing is inspected on a regular basis for conformance to the Housing Code.</del>	<del>2016</del>
<u><b>Rental Registration and Housing Inspections.</b> Continue programs to improve rental communication and property upkeep for both rentals and owner-occupied housing.</u>	<u>Ongoing</u>
<del><b>Neighborhood Planning Summit.</b> Convene one or more meetings by representatives from the public and private sectors to advance the proposal shown in the Neighborhood Plan chapter for accelerated neighborhood improvement.</del>	<del>2015</del>
<u><b>Housing Summit.</b> Convene one or more meetings by representatives from the public and private sectors to advance the Housing Plan’s goal and Housing Opportunities Commission’s work plans for accelerated improvements.</u>	<u>Ongoing</u>
<u><b>Housing for the Homeless.</b> Continue to work with the Dairyland Coalition in helping guide the provision of homeless housing in the City of Eau Claire.</u>	<u>Ongoing</u>
<u><b>Comprehensive Housing Study.</b> Commission a comprehensive housing study that combines data on all types of housing in the city, evaluating the current housing supply and comparing it to the current and future housing demand. Data would include all types of housing, location, price points, condition, and size of units, and demographic shifts, with a review every 5 years.</u>	<u>2022</u>

Adopted

# **Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015**

## **Historic and Cultural Resources Plan**



City of Eau Claire Wisconsin

## Historic and Cultural Resources Plan

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## Historic and Cultural Resources Plan

This chapter of the *Comprehensive Plan* presents the policy framework for preserving and enhancing the historic and cultural resources of Eau Claire.

This plan recommends the continuation of many policies and programs put in place over the years since Eau Claire’s preservation program was begun. It reinforces the role of Eau Claire Landmarks Commission (ECLC) in enhancing and preserving Eau Claire’s historic buildings and guides the ECLC to play an active role in helping to maintain the character and integrity of historic areas ongoing change.

### Importance of Historic Preservation

With its location at the confluence of the Eau Claire and Chippewa Rivers, Eau Claire has been transformed from an undisturbed wilderness to a bustling community of more than sixty thousand people. Norwegian, Irish, French, German and Canadian immigrants settling here from the mid-1800s through the early 1900s constructed many homes and commercial buildings of diverse styles and scale, which helped define Eau Claire and its neighborhoods. Although Eau Claire is now a regional center for medical services, retail, education, government and business, its early role as a center for lumber and manufacturing industries is still an integral part of Eau Claire’s heritage, legacy and identity.

Eau Claire recognized the importance of preserving its cultural and historic resources back in the 1970s when it initiated its preservation program. As many of the community’s architecturally and historically important buildings were demolished in the early and mid 1900s, citizens became increasingly concerned about preserving the remaining significant buildings and sites for future generations. Refer to the Historic and Cultural Resources Assessment chapter for a detailed summary of the programs and accomplishments of Eau Claire’s preservation program.

### Benefits of Historic Preservation

As the preservation program has grown, the community has experienced the broad range of benefits that preserving the City’s historic resources brings; such as:

- **A Sense of Place.** Perhaps the most important rationale is the desire to retain and protect a “sense of place”. The preservation of historic and older buildings helps to keep the visible symbols of our heritage and to provide a connection to the past. Our older buildings help define communities and their unique personalities and their preservation provides the foundation for local pride.

Much of America’s landscape has gone the way of uniformity, franchise businesses, billboards, standardized housing projects and other accompaniments of suburban

development. Many of the unique cultural features, which distinguish one community from another, have been lost because of the economic expediency of standardization. The intangible qualities of our older buildings and neighborhoods have become a resource that is important to preserve and protect.

- **Neighborhood Preservation.** Another clear rationale for heritage preservation is the contribution that the older neighborhoods make in defining the character of a community. Much of the ambience of neighborhoods is derived from the unique architecture and variety of housing styles of the older buildings, many of which have specific local importance attached to them.
- **Community Pride and Accomplishment.** An important component of preservation is the fostering community pride as individuals become involved in projects to preserve their heritage. Here in Eau Claire, many people who have already participated in preservation either through the restoration, protection and maintenance of older buildings or through involvement with organizations or groups that have derived a feeling of pride and accomplishment in contributing to the community in a manner which may be handed down to future generations.
- **Economic Development.** Historic preservation is an important tool for economic development. As more people are placing a higher value on their community's unique identity, property owners and businesses are realizing clear financial advantages in maintaining and protecting older and historic structures. Recent market trends in housing restoration and the popularity of restaurants, specialty shopping facilities and offices in older buildings have been major incentives for preservation. As the cost of construction and land increase, developers are finding that re-using older structures makes good economic sense.
- **Resource Conservation.** Preservation of older buildings and districts is one of the most cost-effective means of conserving resources. Frequently, the quality of construction and the materials used in older buildings cannot be matched using modern construction practices. Extending the life of these buildings not only retains the quality built into the original structures, but also reduces the new materials, which must be expended for replacement buildings.
- **Tourism.** National and state surveys consistently show that historic areas and attractions are a major reason why people travel and visit certain areas. Eau Claire has much to offer tourists in architecture and history. Preserving and enhancing these resources will help to bolster our tourism industry.

## Major Historic and Cultural Resources Issues

The Assessment of Conditions and Issues chapter of the *Comprehensive Plan* provides the background information for this chapter. In review of the historic preservation program, which was established in 1983, the following issues were identified.

- 1. Protection:** Are the City's historic resources adequately protected?
- 2. Coordination:** How can the Landmarks Commission, Historic Preservation Foundation, Chippewa Valley Museum and other organizations better coordinate efforts to promote and educate the community about historic preservation?
- 3. Preservation Incentives:** Should additional incentives be made available to encourage the preservation and restoration of significant buildings, and should such incentives be made available to older "non-significant" buildings?
- 4. Opted-Out Properties:** How should the City address the current status of the districts and individual properties that opted out of their historic designation in 1992?
- 5. Downtown:** Do the buildings downtown need some level of additional recognition, designation or protection?
- 6. Citizen Interest:** What can be done to increase citizen interest in preservation of Eau Claire's historic resources?
- 7. Support:** How can the City and other groups work with neighborhoods and individuals to develop a better understanding and appreciation of the benefits of historic preservation?
- 8. Education:** How can the Landmarks Commission strengthen its educational role in the community?
- 9. New Building Materials:** How can preservation interests be balanced with some property owner interests in reducing maintenance of their property by utilizing new types of building materials and new technology?
- 10. Tourism Promotion:** How can historic preservation be utilized as a more effective tool to promote tourism in the community?



A fine example of commercial architecture, restoration and re-use in downtown.



## Overview of Historic and Cultural Resources Plan

The Historic and Cultural Resources Plan is one of the few elements that is led by its own implementation organization. The Eau Claire Landmarks Commission has been given the charge of encouraging the preservation of the City's architecturally and historically significant buildings, neighborhoods and sites. It was created according to Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 62, which mandates that any city with buildings and/or historic districts on the National Register of Historic Places shall have a Historic Preservation Commission to oversee those properties. In addition, the Commission works to foster a sense of pride in the community's historic and architectural resources through educational and promotion activities and programs. Chapter 2.65 of the City Code outlines the charge and responsibilities of the Commission.

This plan builds on the plans adopted in 2005, 1993 and 1982. It is meant to guide public and private investments to preserve Eau Claire's historic and cultural resources and provide direction to the ECLC.

## Goal and Objectives

### Goal

**Identify, protect and preserve Eau Claire's resources, which reflect distinctive elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political, historical and architectural heritage in order to enhance the quality of life and foster pride and knowledge about Eau Claire's past.**

**Objective 1 – Evaluation and Designation:** Continue to survey and evaluate historic and potentially historic resources for designation, recognition and protection.

**Objective 2 – Role of ECLC:** Work to expand the role of the ECLC to use its expertise in assisting in the implementation of other elements of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

**Objective 3 - Community Support:** Increase community support for heritage preservation and for the work of the ECLC.

**Objective 4 – Heritage Education:** Continue to provide programs and activities that will instill an appreciation and pride in Eau Claire's past.

**Objective 5 – Heritage Tourism:** Explore alternatives to enhance heritage tourism in the City and area.

## Objectives and Policies

### Objective 1 -- Evaluation and Designation

#### **Continue to survey and evaluate historic and potentially historic resources for designation, recognition and protection.**

Identifying and protecting resources that are important historically or architecturally is an ongoing process. Eau Claire has a very strong foundation in this regard and should continue to update its knowledge.

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Intensive Historic and Architectural Resource Survey**

Continue to regularly update and expand the City's Intensive Historic and Architectural Resource Survey in order to have a current listing of properties and sites that may be historically and architecturally important in the community.

This document was first prepared in 1983 and subsequently updated in 1987 and 1996. Updates should re-evaluate previous survey findings and initiate review of areas where structures are meeting the 50-year-old threshold.

In addition, coordinate with the State Historical Society regarding the location and preservation of archeological sites that may be in the community.

##### **2. Certified Local Government Program**

Continue to maintain its status as a member of the Certified Local Government Program through the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Continue to seek grant-funding assistance through the program to assist in preservation activities. The ECLC should periodically make application for funding through the City's Community Development Block Grant Program for surveys and National Register nominations.

##### **3. National Register Nominations**

Proactively seek and prepare nominations to the National Register of Historic Places for individual properties and districts that have been identified as eligible in the Intensive Historic and Architectural Surveys and in consultation with the Wisconsin Historical Society and the Cultural Resource Management Manual prepared by the Wisconsin Historical Society.

The City currently has 41 individually listed or eligible properties and 7 districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Surveys have also identified a number of additional properties that are potentially eligible for the National Register. The Assessment chapter enumerates and maps the properties and districts.



The Third Ward National Historic District has many well-maintained homes that reflect the best of period design.

#### **4. Local Historic Designation**

Consider the local designation of properties and districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. When assisting property owners in the preparation of a National Register Nominations, local designation of such properties will be a priority.

Properties and districts that have been designated by the ECLC are listed in Appendix B in the Assessment of Conditions and Issues report.

Study areas outside the boundaries of existing or potentially eligible National Register Districts to assess whether such areas may be eligible for local designation even if not eligible for the National Register.

Consult with the Wisconsin Historical Society to evaluate whether this additional research may warrant reconsideration of eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.

Study these areas:

- Eau Claire’s Central Business District
- Water Street Commercial District
- West Grand Avenue Commercial District
- The area north of the Randall Park Historic District
- Portions of the North Side Hill Neighborhood
- Portions of the East Hill Neighborhood
- Cemeteries in the community
- The eastern portions of the Third Ward Neighborhood

Criteria for the consideration of local designations is set forth in Chapter 2.65 of the City Code.

Consider amendments to Chapter 2.65 of the City Code pertaining to recommendations made by the Commission in the 2011 Report to the City Manager that relate to encouraging a more streamlined process for the voluntary reinstatement of opted-out properties and reviewing the procedures used for the designation of historic districts.

#### **5. On-Going Designation Program**

Consider annual goals for the consideration of local designations in order to maintain an on-going designation program.

#### **6. Historic Sites**

Research the location and significance of historic sites in the City.

Such sites may be locations of important events that occurred in the City’s past, the location of significant buildings that have been demolished, cemeteries (or portions thereof) in the community, etc. Consideration will be given to designating significant archeological sites, while other sites should be recognized with a historic marker.

## **7. Status of Opted-Out Local Landmark Properties**

Work to restore the continuity of the two locally landmarked districts and the individually landmarked properties that were removed from their local designation in 1992 by considering the recommendations of the Commission’s 2011 report to the City Manager that would restore the local designation of these properties through a phase-in process. By restoring the continuity of the two historic districts, all properties in the districts would be governed equally by the same provisions. Eau Claire is the only city in Wisconsin that allowed properties to opt out of the local designation, which has compromised the integrity of the districts and preservation of these properties.

Work with property owners and the neighborhood associations to strengthen their support for the re-establishment of the local districts in their entirety and designation of all the individually significant properties. This is intended to promote the broader, neighborhood-wide importance and benefits of the local preservation for the older neighborhoods.

The goal of the City is to restore the continuity of the two locally landmarked historic districts and the individually landmarked program.

## **8. Review Guidelines**

Continue to follow review guidelines found in Chapter 2.65 of the Municipal Code and in the historic district plans pursuant to the review of exterior alterations, remodeling, new construction and demolition of locally designated individual properties and properties in locally designated historic districts.

These guidelines are based on the “Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation”.

Regularly consult with the Wisconsin Historical Society regarding updates or interpretations of these standards and update Chapter 2.65 and district plans as needed. This includes the use of new building materials that may vary from traditional building materials.

In interpreting these guidelines, it shall be the policy of the ECLC to follow the direction of the Wisconsin Historical Society regarding the application of new materials not addressed in existing guidelines.

## **9. Update Section 106 Agreement with Wisconsin Historical Society**

Update the Programmatic Agreement for HUD funded activities between the City and the Advisory Council of Historic Preservation as needed.

This agreement was first negotiated in 1996 and enables the ECLC to review City sponsored-housing rehabilitation programs using Community Development Block Grant funds and ensure that such activities conform to the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

## **Objective 2 -- Role of Eau Claire Landmarks Commission**

### **Work to expand the role of the ECLC to utilize its expertise in assisting in the implementation of other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.**

This plan suggests that the ECLC become a stronger participant in Eau Claire planning and the implementation of this chapter as well as assisting in the implementation of other chapters of the *Comprehensive Plan*. Their knowledge and experience can provide important contributions to City housing programs and revitalization efforts in older residential and commercial areas.

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Neighborhood and Area Planning**

Include a member of the ECLC or consult with the ECLC in the preparation of neighborhood or area plans to ensure that heritage preservation issues are addressed in such plans.

The preservation of historically or architecturally significant buildings and sites is an important tool that has helped maintain the unique character and identity of the City. Involvement of the ECLC in planning activities would better ensure that information about historic buildings and sites is considered in conjunction with the preparation of the plans. The ECLC may have funding or informational programs that can assist or provide incentives when pursuing revitalization strategies in older residential or commercial areas.

##### **2. Design Standards and Guidelines**

Provide assistance in design related issues pertaining to architectural changes required due to code requirements, Housing Authority rehabilitation programs, infill development and redevelopment in older residential and commercial areas of the City that have unique and important character, but have not been designated as a historic property or district.

Although, such areas are not designated historic, many still play an extremely important role in defining the fabric and unique appearance of Eau Claire's residential and commercial areas.

##### **3. Applicability of Zoning Regulations in Older Neighborhoods**

Review and consider amending zoning regulations in older neighborhoods to accommodate the non-conforming status of dwellings because of setback requirements and area requirements that are generally applicable to newer residential neighborhoods.

Some zoning regulations may create difficulties for property owners to properly maintain and upgrade structures in these areas due to their non-conforming status.

##### **4. Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Zoning Districts**

Evaluate the use of neighborhood conservation overlay zoning districts as a tool for the protection of older residential and commercial districts that are not designated as historic districts but could benefit from some level of review.

Such districts have been used with success in many cities to provide a middle ground between locally designated historic districts where design review can be quite detailed to areas where design review of any degree is non-existent.

These zoning overlay districts are sometimes used to protect distinctive neighborhood characteristics and are useful in areas that contribute significantly to the overall character and identity of the Town but may presently lack sufficient historical, architectural or cultural significance to be designated a Historic District.

A neighborhood conservation zoning overlay could consist of either advisory, non-enforceable guidelines, or it could be mandatory regulations that supplement the normal regulations for the various zoning districts in a designated area.

Some of the older residential or commercial areas may benefit from some limited design review for major building alterations or new construction, which could radically alter the character of an area. If a conservation district were created, the ECLC could be involved in the design review for the district.

The Urban Design Plan chapter of this *Comprehensive Plan* also emphasizes the importance of Eau Claire's older established neighborhoods. This element states that "one of the strengths and beauties of older neighborhoods is the close-knit, compact mixture of different forms of housing, shops, offices, services and employment areas". Conservation districts may be applicable in certain locations to retain the character of these areas.

## **5. Historic Markers**

Continue and expand programs and activities such as the historic marker program along the recreational trail. This is a non-traditional program for the ECLC as it provides information about sites along the recreational trail and the City in general. Programs such as this do not focus specifically on designated properties or districts but, instead, encourage a broader appreciation of Eau Claire's past. Also, work to incorporate web-based applications to assist in the identification of historic properties.

A similar idea would be to create signs and a brochure to guide people among the sites important to the City's saw milling heritage.

Likewise, the route of the log flume that once led from the Chippewa River to Half Moon Lake and discharged downstream could be marked on the ground with the cooperation of the property owners.



### **Objective 3 -- Community Support**

#### **Increase community support for heritage preservation and the work of the ECLC.**

Support for the City's heritage preservation program comes from several organizations in addition to the City plus a broad base of citizen goodwill.

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Relationships with Other Organizations**

Continue to foster good working relationships with other preservation organizations in the community.

This includes organizations such as:

- The Chippewa Valley Museum
- The Eau Claire Historic Preservation Foundation (HPF)
- Paul Bunyan Camp
- Waldemar Ager Association
- UWEC Geography Department
- UWEC Area Research Center.

This could be accomplished by sharing information such as meeting minutes and by working jointly on projects and activities. Since the ECLC and Preservation Foundation share common goals relative to education and promotion of Eau Claire's past, it is recommended that both organizations strive to select a person that will serve on both the Commission and HPF Board of Directors in order to facilitate coordination and communication.

Maintain regular communication with other organizations that may use and promote the benefits of heritage preservation in a more limited capacity. Such organizations would include:

- Friends of the Chippewa River State Trail
- Downtown Eau Claire, Inc.
- Water Street BID
- West Grand Avenue BID
- Neighborhood associations
- The Apartment Association
- Visit Eau Claire
- Realtors Association
- South Barstow BID
- North Barstow / Medical BID

##### **2. Economic Incentives**

Continue to explore and promote opportunities related to tax credit programs, historic building codes, state and federal loans and grants-in-aid programs that encourage the re-use and restoration of designated historic properties. Also study the use and creation of economic stimulus programs that use local funding, which create incentives to re-use older buildings.

Do not discourage the re-use of historic buildings involving the change of use, provided that the architectural character of the building is retained.

**3. Commission Membership**

Strive to have a broad based membership of persons on the ECLC, including people having a variety of interests pertaining to heritage preservation and who live in various neighborhoods.

Membership on the Commission is established in Chapter 2.65 of the City Code that specifies that a real estate agent, architect and historian serve on the Commission. In addition, a City Council representative also serves on the Commission. The remaining three members may come from any discipline.

**4. Education**

Involve people in preservation programs through the development and implementation of educational programs pertaining to historic and heritage preservation.

This has proven to be an effective means of gaining positive public support and getting people involved See also Objective 4.

**5. Wisconsin Association of Historic Preservation Commissions (WAHPC)**

Continue to be a member of WAHPC and actively be involved with the organization.

Membership with this organization provides a valuable network of communication with other communities in the State. In addition, the organization provides valuable training opportunities for staff and Commission members.

**6. Recognition of Preservation Efforts**

Provide recognition of people and organizations that are involved in heritage preservation in Eau Claire.

This may include letters of commendation to property owners completing restoration or rehabilitation work on their properties or for positive preservation activities undertaken by a group or organization.

**7. Historic Preservation at the County Level**

Support efforts to develop a historic preservation commission at the county level charged with the preservation of architecturally and historically significant properties in rural areas, the smaller towns, villages and un-incorporated areas.

Significant structures located in these rural areas have no protection and are being lost with little consideration. Neither Chippewa County nor Eau Claire County has historic preservation commissions, whereas counties such as La Crosse County have a very successful commission that has preserved a number of rural sites and structures.

**8. Evaluate the Landmarks Commission Loan Program**

The ECLC should review the requirements for its Historic Residential Loan Program and determine if modifications could be made to encourage greater utilization of the program. The Commission should also determine if the scope of the program could be expanded to include designated commercial properties and non-profit or religious institutions.

## 9. Public Facilities

Set an example and be a leader in the ensuring that public capital improvements are undertaken and completed in a sensitive manner that retains the integrity of the facility or area.

Review improvements affecting historic properties and districts.

This would include work completed on historic buildings and site work in the vicinity of these historic buildings.

Infrastructure improvements such as for streets located in older residential and commercial areas should also be sensitive to maintaining the character of the area.



The Eau Claire City Hall is an adaptive re-use of an architecturally-significant library building.



This old railroad bridge over the Chippewa River is now owned by the City and was adapted in 2015 for bicycling and walking.

## **Objective 4 -- Heritage Education**

### **Continue to provide and expand upon programs and activities that will instill an appreciation and pride in Eau Claire's past.**

Increased community awareness of and support for heritage preservation will likely pay dividends in terms of local funding and regulatory support

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Work with School Districts**

Work with the Eau Claire and Altoona School districts to refine the Third Grade curriculum about the history and development of the Eau Claire area and re-introduce it in the two school districts.

In 1987, the ECLC prepared this curriculum and copies were provided to each elementary school. The Commission should meet with the school district representatives and assess the effectiveness of the materials prepared by the Commission and determine what improvements should be made.

##### **2. Workshops and Programs**

Continue to sponsor informative workshops and programs for owners of designated historic properties and the general public that address a variety of topics ranging from the maintenance and upkeep of older structures to assistance programs that are available to presentations about various aspects of Eau Claire's heritage.

Such activities should not be limited to only "Preservation Week." Efforts to co-sponsor such events and activities are encouraged.

##### **3. Informational Materials**

Continue to prepare and disseminate information pertaining to heritage education.

This may include brochures, posters, websites, web applications, and programs relating to: buildings, cemeteries, historic sites, information about the Federal and State income tax credit program, the State Historic Building code, etc.

The Commission should also promote the importance of resource conservation relating to preserving the high quality construction materials and craftsmanship in older buildings.



The Waldemar Ager house was saved and relocated for use as an historic museum and educational center.

**4. Design Assistance**

Provide the expertise of the ECLC members to owners of historic and older non-historic structures regarding questions relating to exterior rehabilitation or additions. Also disseminate information to the public from the Commission’s resource library.

The ECLC can help provide this advice at their regular meetings, resource fairs, seminars, etc.

**5. Web Site Development**

Upgrade the information and materials currently on the City’s web site pertaining to historic preservation.

**6. Community Television Programming**

Study the feasibility of developing programming for Community Public Access Television pertaining to heritage education.

Partnerships with such organizations as the Chippewa Valley Museum, Eau Claire Preservation Foundation should be encouraged. In lieu of regular programming, the ECLC should request that Community Television record workshops and programs sponsored by the ECLC or other preservation organizations and request that they be broadcasted periodically.

**7. Commission Member Training**

Explore opportunities for training and continued education of the ECLC members.

This could include programs offered by such organizations as the Wisconsin Historical Society, Wisconsin Trust for Historic Preservation, Wisconsin Association of Historic Preservation Commission and the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Planning Association. Occasional meetings could be requested with representatives of the Wisconsin Historical Society to discuss topics of special concern.

The use of new building materials that vary from traditional or standard materials could be studied. Representatives of the building material industries could be invited to speak to the Commission.

## **Objective 5 -- Heritage Tourism**

### **Explore alternatives to enhance heritage tourism in the City and area.**

#### **Policies**

#### **1. Downtown and Milling History Guides**

Work with Downtown Eau Claire, Inc., to prepare and install building markers for historic downtown buildings and prepare a paper or web-based brochure for a walking tour. Include all four quadrants of downtown and Banbury Place.

Such markers and brochure would describe the history and architecture of the buildings plus those that have been lost. This program could be paired with markers and a brochure describing the early saw mills and the milling era. The milling era, being so closely linked to the rivers and the north woods, could serve as a central element of any tourism marketing and city branding campaign.

#### **2. Economic Benefits**

Study the economic impact of heritage preservation in Eau Claire as an important means of gaining support for such programs.

The benefits are two-fold as preservation programs provide positive economic benefits through increased tourism. In addition, reinvestment in older areas of the City provide a stimulus for others to make improvements in their properties.

#### **3. Coordination with Other Organizations**

Work with organizations such as the Eau Claire Area Conventional Tourism Bureau and Chippewa Valley Museum to explore various means that the Commission could assist in expanding the heritage tourism sector of the economy.

#### **4. Plaque Recognition Program**

Continue the City's plaque program recognizing historic districts, properties and sites in the community.

This has included street signs, individual building plaques and the trail marker program. Funds from the State Historical Society marker program should also be utilized.

It is possible to envision how a log flume from the Chippewa River once discharged into Half Moon Lake at this site. Most residents are unaware of this colorful aspect of their community's heritage, but a plaque, map and on-the-ground markings could bring it to life.





## Plan Action Steps

The City will take the following steps to implement the recommendations of the Historic and Cultural Resources Plan.

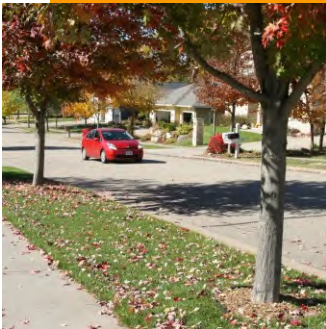
**Table 11-1  
Historic Resources Plan Actions**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<b>Survey.</b> Regularly update the historic resource survey	2015—2020 <u>Continuous</u>
<b>National Register.</b> Prepare additional National Register nominations for properties and districts as warranted by survey results	Continuous
<b>Local Designations.</b> Continue to consider additional local designations particularly those properties listed on the National Register	
<b>Opt-Outs.</b> <del>Work with</del> Present options to City Council related to the status of the opted-out <u>property owners</u> properties from historic districts and individual properties <u>to re-designate these landmarks</u>	2016 <u>Continuous</u>
<del><b>Landmarks Ordinance.</b> Discuss possible amendments to the Landmarks ordinance with the City Manager and City Council.</del> N/A	2016
<b>Federal Funding.</b> Update the Programmatic Agreement for HUD-funded activities between the City and the Advisory Council of Historic Preservation	2016
<b>Design Advice.</b> Continue to provide design advice in neighborhood and downtown planning and in the structural rehabilitation of historic and older non-historic buildings	Continuous
<b>Amend Zoning Regulations.</b> <u>Consider amending zoning in older neighborhoods to accommodate the non-conforming status of dwellings because of setback requirements and area requirements that are generally applicable to newer residential neighborhoods</u>	<u>2022 - 2025</u>
<b>Markers.</b> Expand the historic markers program	Continuous
<b>Relationships.</b> Sustain working relationships with allied organizations	Continuous
<b>Education.</b> Continue educational outreach and interpretative efforts	Continuous

Adopted

# Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015

## Downtown Plan



City of Eau Claire Wisconsin

## **Downtown Plan**

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# Downtown Plan

## Introduction

Downtown Eau Claire is a multiple-use center consisting of retail, office, residential, government, civic, medical and entertainment development. The site of the 1872 incorporation of the City, the Downtown is adjacent to six residential neighborhoods.

Through the late 1960's, the Downtown (then viewed as the North and South Barstow areas) served as the major retail center for a multi-county market region centered in Eau Claire. For **the past forty years**, the Downtown has been undergoing a transition toward a different economic and civic role in the community. The movement of most retail businesses to the perimeter of the city during the 1970's and 1980's resulted in the Downtown's decline as a regional shopping district. The 1992 closing of the Uniroyal Tire Plant further contributed to the Downtown retail decline and also weakened stable home ownership patterns in the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Yet, **Downtown has continued to experience new investment and positive change.** The L.E. Phillips Memorial Library was opened in 1976. New office and apartment buildings were added to the Downtown along Graham Avenue. The vacant Soo Line buildings were replaced with new office buildings. A new office building and senior center were built on Bellinger Street. The vacant Uniroyal site was converted to a successful mixed-use development with over 100 businesses. The Eau Claire County complex was expanded. The Mayo Clinic hospital added a bed tower. The former Phoenix Steel site and adjacent properties were cleared and redeveloped into offices, housing, shops and a riverfront park – a major accomplishment! And, in 2014 a plan was approved to redevelop the former Haymarket site into housing, shops, classrooms, and a performing arts center. See the Assessment chapter for a complete list of accomplishments since just 2005.

**At the beginning of the 21st century**, while still facing significant economic challenges, the Downtown also has many of the assets needed for economic success. What has also evolved over the past several years is a more clear definition of the Downtown as a unique multiple-use district.

**This 2015 Downtown plan** is a guide for the major public and private investments that need to be made over the next twenty years to ensure the continued economic and civic revitalization of the Downtown. The recommendations of the plan focus on the transformation of the Downtown into a multi-functional town center active both day and night, seven days a week. The recommendations build on the existing strengths of the Downtown location and identify the market opportunities for additional retail, office, civic and residential uses, as well as the physical and public policy improvements necessary to attract and sustain desired development and investment.

## Study Area

The Downtown encompasses the four distinct business areas shown on Figure 12-1:

### South Barstow District

The South Barstow District is the traditional business center of the Downtown, generally bounded by Dewey Street on the east, the Eau Claire River on the north, the Chippewa River on the west, and Emery Street on the south. The district is the principal location for arts, entertainment, specialty business, civic and government uses, and includes much of the Downtown's older commercial architecture and the Downtown Business Improvement District.

### North Barstow District

The North Barstow District is bounded by the Eau Claire River on south, the Chippewa River on the west, Madison Street on the north, and Banbury Place on the east. The district has a diverse mixture of land uses including light manufacturing, retail, corporate offices and housing, and includes the Banbury Place multiple-use development, the Phoenix Park and Trailhead facility, and the North Barstow Redevelopment Project area.

### Courthouse District

The Courthouse District is bordered by Fulton Street on the north, the Chippewa River on the east, Lake Street on the south, and Fifth Avenue on the west. The district includes the County government campus, the West Grand Avenue Business Improvement District, a large number of historical houses and structures, and the surrounding residential neighborhood.

### West Madison District

The West Madison District is bounded by the Chippewa River on the east, Fulton Street on the south, Half Moon Lake on the west, and on the north by Cameron Street and the business area south of Maple between Bellinger and the river. The district includes the Mayo Clinic Health Systems campus, the L.E. Phillips Senior Center, the West Madison Redevelopment Project area, and a variety of retail and business uses.



Reinvestment and renewal are occurring in all parts of Downtown.

## Major Downtown Issues

These are the major Downtown issues identified through the Assessment of Conditions and Issues. Issues are questions to be discussed, debated and resolved during the planning process in light of the other issues. Please refer to the Assessment for further explanation of each issue.

- 1. City Support:** What degree of financial and other support will the City be willing to provide for Downtown redevelopment?

*The City has shown strong support for Downtown through the creation of Phoenix Park, the ongoing North Barstow district redevelopment project, park and trail improvements along the rivers, the rebuilding of Barstow Street and Graham Avenue, financial support for Downtown Eau Claire, Inc., and the public-private Confluence redevelopment project.*

- 2. West Riverside Redevelopment:** How should the riverfront property north of Madison Street along both sides of Oxford Street be developed, and what should be the role of the public sector?

*The aging industrial and commercial property does not take advantage of the amenity of the river. The West Riverside Neighborhood Plan (2011) provided planning direction for land use, parks and trails, urban design, housing rehabilitation, nuisance abatement, and the role of the City and the Redevelopment Authority. (Refer also to the Neighborhoods Assessment, page 10-20.) The Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority has been gradually assembling properties in the Oxford Street corridor through the West Bank Redevelopment District.*

- 3. North Barstow Redevelopment?** What should be the next step in the redevelopment of the North Barstow District?

*Approximately two blocks remain to be redeveloped west of Barstow Street, one of which will include a municipal parking structure with first floor shops facing Barstow Street. What's next? Should the City prepare a master plan for the area east of Barstow Street?*

- 4. South Barstow Redevelopment:** What should be the next step in the revitalization of the south Barstow District?

*How can the momentum of The Confluence be leveraged for additional private investments? Will the renovation of the convention center hotel, The Lismore, bring a significant number of additional visitors to Downtown, creating a cascade of positive effects? Should a "town square" be created on the present site of the US Bank drive-through and parking lot? Should the transit center be relocated and improved, possibly as part of a larger mixed-use project? How should the site of the YMCA be used if or when that facility relocates to Menomonee Street?*



## Downtown Plan

- 5. Public Access to the Riverfront:** To what extent should there be public access to the riverfront in Downtown? Should such access be provided strictly by public parks or should there be a combination of parks and easements across private property?

*The Waterways Plan (2012) provided direction on this issue. Phoenix Park, First Avenue Park and the public plaza planned as part of The Confluence are splendid examples of public riverfront access. Future private redevelopment projects will provide opportunities and challenges for different forms of public access to the waterfront. Should a waterfront trail be improved and extended south from The Confluence to the Grand Avenue pedestrian bridge (or further?) and east from The Confluence all the way to Boyd Park?*

- 6. Parking:** What should the City do to create a more favorable parking environment?

*Better use is needed of the existing parking supply. Should a parking utility be created? Should parking enforcement be handled outside of the City's Police Department?*



A rendering of the residential and commercial portion of the *Confluence* redevelopment along South Barstow Street

## **Goal and Objectives**

**Continue the renaissance of the Downtown as the regional multiple-use center that integrates civic facilities, offices, health care, meetings, entertainment, arts and culture, housing, and specialty retailers. Continue to make Downtown the most desirable location in Eau Claire to live, work or play because it is dense, diverse, walkable and linked to the rivers.**

### **Objective 1 - Downtown Partnership**

Continue an effective public and private partnership in order to implement the Downtown plan prepared by Downtown Eau Claire, Incorporated (DECI). See page 12-6.

### **Objective 2 - Business Development and Marketing**

Provide business development and marketing support to encourage diverse economic activity in the Downtown. See page 12-8.

### **Objective 3 – Redevelopment and Remodeling**

Support redevelopment of obsolescent, vacant or underutilized properties. See page 12-10.

### **Objective 4 - Riverfront Orientation**

Encourage the use of the riverfront and adjacent open spaces as a key organizing feature for public facilities and private development. See page 12-15.

### **Objective 5 - Downtown Design**

Encourage the use of consistent Downtown design standards and principles for buildings and public spaces to guide public and private developments. See page 12-16.

### **Objective 6 – Walking and Bicycling**

Enhance the ability to walk and bicycle Downtown by ensuring safe and attractive routes throughout Downtown and between Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. See page 12-21.

### **Objective 7 – Street System**

Maintain a street system that supports land development while honoring the importance of walking and bicycling. See page 12-23.

### **Objective 8 - Parking**

Provide surface and structured parking consistent with Downtown design principles to meet the multiple-use parking needs of Downtown. See page 12-24.

### **Objective 9 – Housing**

Encourage new housing development and housing remodeling in Downtown. Page 12-26.

### **Objective 10 – County Courthouse District**

Maintain the Courthouse District while protecting the integrity of the adjacent residential neighborhood. See page 12-27.

### **Objective 11 - West Madison District**

Encourage the development of the West Madison District as a quadrant of Downtown anchored by the Mayo Clinic Hospital campus, related office uses, small retail businesses, new housing and riverfront parks. See page 12-29

## Downtown Policies

### Objective 1 – Downtown Partnership

**Continue an effective public and private partnership in order to implement the Downtown plan.**

#### Policies

##### 1. Role of Downtown Eau Claire, Inc.

Continue to support Downtown Eau Claire, Incorporated, (DECI) as the lead organization for coordinating economic development and marketing programs for Downtown and for implementing the 2012 *Redevelopment Strategy and Vision Plan* and the 2001 *Downtown Action Agenda*. Many of the major recommendations of that document have been woven into this chapter.

##### 2. Coordinated Effort

Several public or private organizations should work as a team to improve Downtown:

- DECI will assist with Downtown promotions and historic preservation efforts.
- The Redevelopment Authority of the City of Eau Claire will continue to acquire and clear blighted sites and bring those sites to market.
- The City will plan and regulate land use, maintain streets and utilities, operate the Civic Center parking structure and administer the parking utility.
- The Business Improvement Districts for South Barstow, North Barstow and West Grand Avenue will continue to “develop, manage and promote” their areas, financed by an assessment on commercial properties.

##### 3. Role of the Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority

The City Council will encourage the Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority to take an active role in downtown development in conjunction with the private sector. That is, the Redevelopment Authority will share the responsibility of taking initiatives to stimulate the development process, recruit developers, provide financial and technical assistance for new development and renovation, prepare project feasibility analyses, assemble land for resale if necessary, negotiate agreements, strive to retain existing successful businesses and recruit new ventures.

By state law, the City Council appoints seven City residents to the Redevelopment Authority, one of whom may be a member of the City Council. This body may enter into contracts, acquire real estate by fair market negotiations or eminent domain proceedings, hold or sell real estate, and borrow money and issue bonds not backed by the City.

##### 4. A Public and Private Partnership

The City or its Redevelopment Authority will negotiate a working partnership with business and property owners to carry out the Downtown Plan chapter of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

Under this partnership, the City will provide funds for public improvements, redevelopment incentives and assistance to the Business Improvements Districts and

## Downtown Plan

Downtown Eau Claire, Inc. In return, property owners will invest in the rehabilitation or redevelopment of their buildings in accordance with design standards and will provide financial support to Downtown Eau Claire, Incorporated (DECI).

For the Downtown enhancement effort to be successful, key private and public sector leaders and constituents must plan and implement together, in partnership. A shared direction, a unified voice and action are essential for Downtown success.

### 5. Funding

The City will devise and agree upon a funding mechanism for revitalization that is fair, efficient and reliable. It will prepare with this mechanism a five-year program of capital improvements to streets, parking, utilities, parks and trails consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan*. In addition to revenues from the existing Business Improvement Districts, the following sources should be considered to fund the enhancement effort:

- Downtown business owners and commercial property owners
- Real estate developers
- Banks
- Utility companies
- Service clubs
- Foundations
- Major employers, corporations and industry
- City, County, State and Federal government.

### 6. Business Improvement Districts

Three Downtown business improvement districts (BIDs) will continue to be supported by their members and the City:

- West Grand Avenue
- South Barstow
- North Barstow, which includes properties along West Madison Street.

State law gives Wisconsin cities the power to establish business improvement districts and assess (tax) commercial or industrial properties within such areas to promote, manage, maintain or develop each district.

It should be noted that there is a fourth BID that serves the Water Street district, which has its own policy plan.

### 7. Leadership

Nurture leaders for Downtown revitalization who will support a consensus for this plan. Both private sector leadership and public sector commitment are critical for Downtown success.

### 8. Forums

Hold regular community forums coordinated by DECI to keep the enhancement process open and inclusive by inviting business owners, property owners, residents, investors, adjacent neighborhood residents and the general public to learn about ongoing developments in the Downtown, discuss upcoming projects and ask questions and offer input.

## **Objective 2 – Business Development and Marketing**

### **Provide business development and marketing support to encourage diverse economic activity in the Downtown**

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Downtown Marketing**

Continue to implement an overall, comprehensive marketing campaign that includes media relations, special events, social media and a Web site, a brochure and on-street Downtown directories with DECI being responsible for completing necessary mailings.

##### **2. Business Recruitment**

Recruitment activities should be focused on filling vacant commercial spaces in the South Barstow District and other districts. A **grocery store** is especially needed.

An outline for business recruitment was presented in the 2012 *Redevelopment Strategy and Vision Plan* and in the 2001 *Action Agenda*, including business prospecting, recruitment materials, working with the real estate community and being aggressive in filling spaces.

##### **3. Business Retention**

Continue the business retention programs administered by the City and DECI, which include consultations with business owners, keeping an inventory of Downtown space and administering loan programs.

Additional actions could be taken, such as better snow removal, improved window displays, better window lighting, street tree lights in the winter and improvements to adjacent neighborhoods.

Downtown should not be the sole location of the community's social service providers.

##### **4. Major Downtown Employers**

Work to retain and attract major employers, particularly offices, corporate headquarters, health-care services, and government offices.

These key tenants bring workers as well as legal and professional services to the Downtown during the traditional work week.

##### **5. Entertainment, Recreation and Culture**

Work to retain and attract entertainment, recreational, and cultural activities and venues.

Market Downtown as a regional center with indoor and outdoor performance spaces for music, dance and drama, places for the display and sale of visual arts, and facilities for conferences, seminars and trade shows.

Key attractions that bring residents and visitors to Downtown include L.E. Phillips Memorial Library, the State Theater, the Children's Museum, the Boys and Girls Club, the prospective community performing arts center at The Confluence, the Civic Center, and riverfront parks and trails.

The new Lismore Hotel and the remodeled Green Tree Inn should help attract visitors of all kinds.

## Downtown Plan

Seek to attract new and better restaurants, cafes and bars in all four quadrants of Downtown. The vicinity of The Confluence and the Lismore Hotel ought to become a prime location upon redevelopment, and the North Barstow District has recently become the place to go.

Continue the summer Thursday evening program of music performances at Phoenix Park.

Seek to have a few of the musical acts from the Eaux Claires music festival (inaugural event in 2015) perform at Phoenix Park, the planned Confluence amphitheatre or the planned community performing arts center. Hopefully, this event can grow to become a city-wide celebration similar to the South by Southwest festival in Austin, Texas.



The proposed University performing arts center and municipal outdoor public plaza at the rivers' confluence promise to draw many people to Downtown for music and theater.

### 6. Incentives

Continue to support revitalization of Downtown properties through the Downtown Façade Loan Program, the Code Compliance Program, Loft Matching Grant, and the Revolving Loan Fund.

Ensure the City's financial programs keep pace with the changing economic conditions in the Downtown.

### 7. Walking

Pedestrian traffic supports retail businesses in a downtown.

Walking will be increased by creating new housing, trails, and retail businesses such as restaurants, brew-pubs, bookstores, art galleries, specialty stores and gift stores.



### **Objective 3 – Redevelopment and Remodeling**

#### **Support redevelopment of obsolescent, vacant or underutilized properties and sites.**

##### **Policies**

#### **1. North Barstow District – Master Plan for East and North**

Continue to prepare plans to guide the redevelopment of portions of Downtown as was done for the North Barstow District and the Oxford Street corridor.

Prepare and adopt a master plan by ~~2020 period~~ 2025 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 Madison and William Streets.

#### **2. The Confluence**

Continue to participate financially in the public-private effort to create The Confluence, a multiple-use redevelopment at the corner of Eau Claire Street and Graham Avenue consisting of University student housing, class rooms, retail shops and restaurants, live performance theatres, a public plaza or amphitheatre and riverfront trail extensions.

It is hoped and expected that The Confluence, in combination with the rejuvenated Lismore Hotel, will be the catalyst for many other private investments in the South Barstow District.

#### **3. Redevelopment Tools**

The City Council will continue to provide adequate funding and support for the Redevelopment Authority to plan and execute its Downtown actions.

The Redevelopment Authority will address the cost difference between redeveloping obsolete, blighted or contaminated sites versus preparing greenfield sites. Consider using a variety of tools, including private investment (of course), tax increment financing, City loan funds, municipal general obligation bonds, and state or federal grants. Examples of the latter include help with soil remediation at the Phoenix Steel site and a state challenge grant for the University performing arts center.

#### **4. Redevelopment and Major Remodeling Prospects**

These locations are considered prime for new development and should be given attention by the private sector and, if necessary, the Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority.

##### **South Barstow District**

#### **Riverfront - Gibson Street to Grand Avenue – the 200 Block**

The value of this riverfront site will rise tremendously when The Confluence has been completed and the community performing arts center has been opened north of Gibson Street.

Consider removing the tired three-story commercial and residential building that faces Gibson Street but keeping and restoring the façade of the building that fronts Grand Avenue. The middle of the block is being used as

Downtown Plan

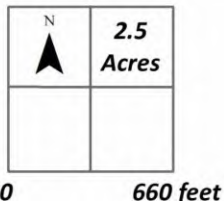
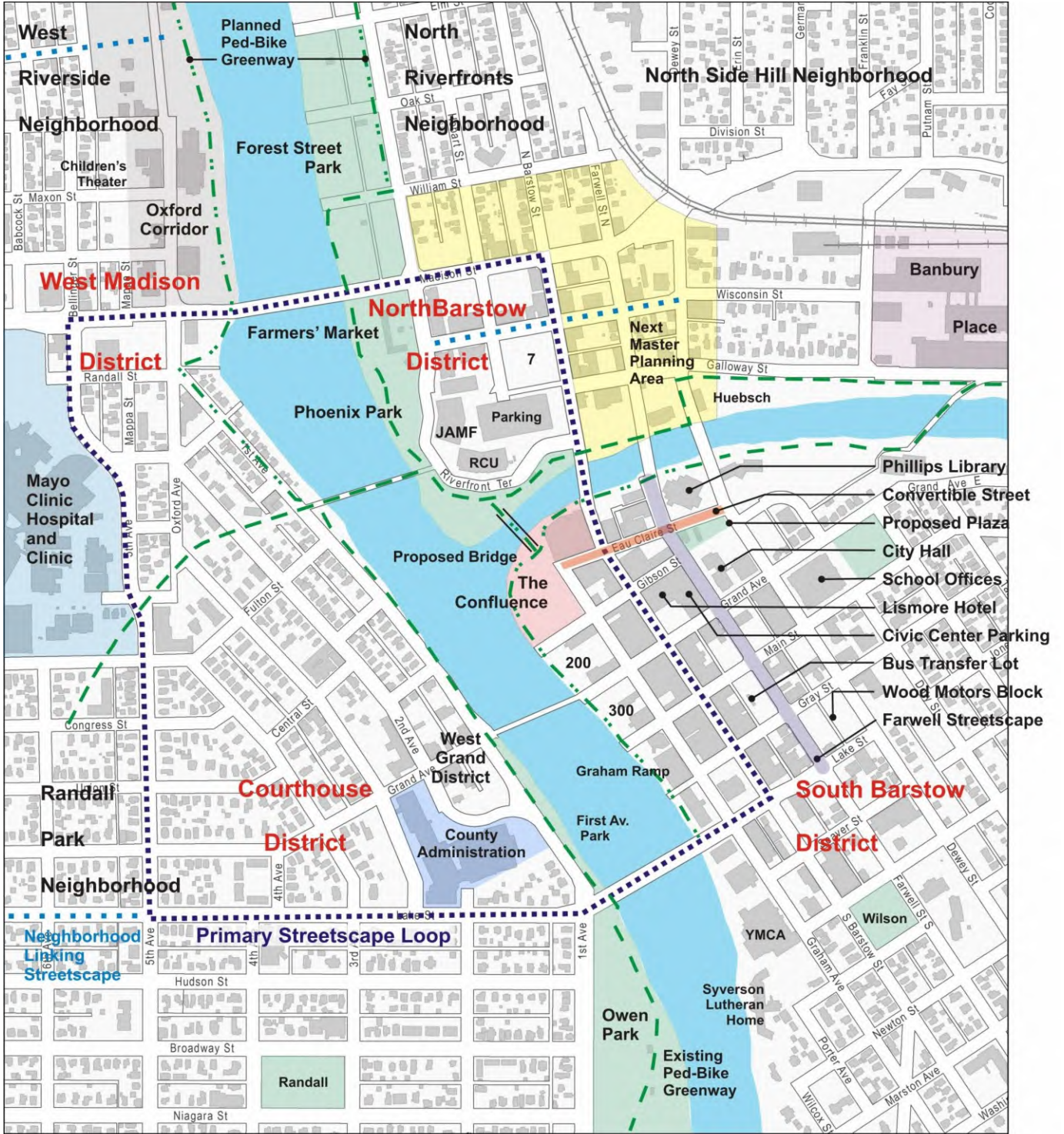


Figure 12-1  
Downtown  
Districts and Places



## Downtown Plan

parking for 112 cars, which is not appropriate for a riverfront site. The City apparently has a riverfront easement for the existing path; this should be verified.

New development here should respect the performing arts center, have doors and windows on Graham Avenue, and provide an architectural and green transition to the riverfront trail. Housing or office, hopefully with street-front retail, are the land uses that are most appropriate and likely. Of course, the development would want to take advantage of the river views, its greatest amenity.



The Graham Avenue riverfront holds tremendous potential for new development that takes advantage of the river views and Downtown lifestyle, as illustrated above.

### **Riverfront - Grand Avenue to Main Street – the 300 Block**

The second-priority site is probably the next block to the south along the Chippewa riverfront, the block from Grand Avenue to Main Street.

This site has a bank branch building, an attached drive-through teller, surface parking and much riverfront pavement. Retain the 320 Graham Building because it has historic architectural merit and recent improvements; it also provides an appropriate frontage along Grand Avenue.

As with the site to the north, housing and/or office with retail frontage and river vistas are desired.

**Town Square Park**

Between City Hall and the Phillips Library is another branch bank building, built in 1960, with a drive-through teller and excess paving. Highly auto-oriented land uses such as drive-throughs of any kind are incompatible with the pedestrian emphasis sought for Downtown.

Consider optional land uses for this site such as a two-story office building or a public plaza and park, a “town square”. It would be important to be architecturally compatible with the historic three-story City Hall building and the one-story library with its landscaped site.

Arguments for the open space use of the site are its proximity to the proposed “convertible street” in front of the State Theatre and its role as forecourt for the two civic buildings.



A small park or plaza between the library and City Hall could create a stronger civic area and anchor the eastern end of an improved Eau Claire Street.

**Bus Transfer Site**

~~Conduct a study to determine the best alternative location and the cost feasibility of moving and improving the central bus transfer site. The site, located along Farwell Street between Main and Gray Streets, could then be re-used as parking (interim) or development.~~

**The “Wood Motors” Block**

The “Wood Motors” site has long been eyed for as the location for the improved bus transfer facility, perhaps even in a vertical mixed-use configuration with housing or offices above, drive-through bank teller lanes (mentioned above) and retail frontage.

**YMCA Site**

Seek a new use for the current YMCA building and site if that activity relocates.

**The School District Administration Building**

Work with the Eau Claire Area School District to find an adaptive re-use for the upper floors of the former high school that is now used as district offices. Lack of parking either on-site or off-site is a major limitation for any use including seniors’ housing.

## Downtown Plan

### North Barstow District

#### Block 7

This is the last major site of the first phase of the North Barstow District renaissance. It is a full block bounded by Wisconsin, Galloway, Barstow and Hobart Streets. Its anticipated use is rental apartments with underground parking and retail shops along Barstow Street.

#### Huebsch Building and Site

This building and its large riverfront site have great potential.

One option would be to remove the dilapidated industrial building and build housing, possibly with a commercial component facing Dewey Street.

The other option would be to restore and remodel the building as a mixed-use with retail on the first floor, restaurants on the first or upper floors and housing or offices on the upper floors. Additional development is encouraged to the north while leaving a green public edge along the river.

### West Madison District

#### Oxford Avenue Corridor

This corridor could be the next major area of change for Downtown. The Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority should continue to give a high priority to the Oxford Avenue corridor, which runs from Madison Street in Downtown north to the High Bridge. The Redevelopment Authority will continue to assemble properties and seek developers who will invest in a way consistent with the *West Riverside Neighborhood Plan*. See also the policies under Objective 11 and updated *Cannery District Redevelopment Plan (2019)*.



The Oxford Avenue and Madison Street corridors are major opportunities for the community to help revitalize a neighborhood, increase downtown housing and businesses, support the Mayo Clinic Hospital and extend the riverfront greenway. Shown here is a sketch from the *West Riverside Neighborhood Plan*.



**Objective 4 – Riverfront Development**

**Encourage the use of the riverfront and adjacent open spaces as a key-organizing feature for public facilities and private development**

There is no doubt that the river views and adjacent greenways were key to landing the RCU headquarters building, the JAMF Software headquarters, the Confluence multiple-use redevelopment, and the Phoenix Park Neighborhood housing. Likewise, the riverfronts will be the amenity that drives the market for redevelopment along Graham Avenue in the South Barstow District and the redevelopment of the Oxford Avenue corridor in the Madison Street District.

**Policies**

**1. Riverfront Parks and Paths**

Continue to use public open space as a key organizing feature for development, and maximize pedestrian activity by establishing an interconnected open space system. Extend linear parks and greenways from the Downtown into adjacent neighborhoods and beyond.

Promote the ability of the public to reach the river edge to experience its views and vistas, launch tubes, fish and put their feet into the water. Link non-riparian sites to the riverfronts via the street network.

Please also refer to the policies under Objective 6, Walking and Bicycling, as well as the Parks, Trails and Greenways Plan chapter

**2. River-Oriented Development**

Continue to follow the policies of the Land Use Plan chapter, which advocate for riverfront development that takes advantage of the views to the water, orients a good face toward the river, and cooperates with City efforts to create linear riverfront parks and trails.

**3. Connections to the Riverfront**

Link non-riparian properties to the rivers via sidewalks with generous landscaping and decorative lighting, streets that terminate at the bluff, overlooks and open vistas.

Riverfront parks and views have drawn very substantial private investment to Downtown.





## Objective 5 - Downtown Design and Enhancements

**Encourage the consistent use of Downtown design principles for buildings and public spaces to guide all public and private developments in the Downtown.**

### Policies

#### 1. Downtown Design Principles

Prepare a set of design guidelines for Downtown as supplements to the City Zoning Code to guide public and private improvements in the Downtown. Build upon these points:

- Recognize and preserve **good design from the past**, maintain the Downtown’s unique characteristics, and encourage improvements compatible with the character of the Downtown and its principal districts.
- Emphasize the **relationship of buildings to the street** by facing buildings toward and situated close to the public street. Each building along a street should have many windows and doors that face that sidewalk. Streets should be lined with buildings without intervening parking lots.
- Improve **public spaces** and ensure that the Downtown’s appearance enhances efforts to improve economic activity.
- Acknowledge the **rivers** and encourage all development to draw from this beginning and enhance the Downtown’s unique riverfront setting.
- Identify sites suitable for public or private **landmarks** that enhance the identity of the Downtown. Site new structures in a way that orients the visitor and organizes the development pattern.
- Use **building edges** to define the streets, edges and paths between spaces and use “build-to lines” so structures enclose and define streets, plazas and parks so that open space does not feel barren, uninviting or exposed to the weather. Animate these edges with windows – not blank walls.
- Generate **activity day and night** by designing buildings to create a mixture of uses along streets.
- Design interesting **public spaces** and carry attention to detail to the design of individual blocks, buildings, and smaller courts and streetscapes that result in attractive pedestrian environments.
- Provide **sidewalks** and pedestrian pathways that allow people to walk easily throughout the Downtown and to cross streets safely.
- Allow and encourage Downtown property to be used more **intensively** than in the rest of the city. Overall, land should be developed significantly more densely than it is elsewhere in Eau Claire. The highest development densities should be in the South Barstow District and on the larger redevelopment sites. Density should generally decrease and make a smooth transition to the surrounding existing residential neighborhoods.

## Downtown Plan

- Provide a **mixture** of types of development in Downtown, including shops, offices, housing, medical buildings, schools and services. The City should favorably consider redevelopment proposals that include two or more types of land use on the same block or the same building as long as the central principles of density, relationship to the street, walking and quality are maintained.
- Downtown buildings and sites should have high quality, long lasting **materials**.
- Downtown should take better advantage of its greatest natural attributes, the **views of two rivers**, and especially the confluence point. Riverfront land should not be used for parking or other outdoor storage, nor should buildings present their worst sides to the rivers. The river should either be lined with public parks and walkways or land uses that benefit from the location such as apartment buildings, offices and restaurants. Ideally, there would be a public open space corridor between the top of the river bluff and the adjacent private river-oriented development.
- Views to **parking lots** should be softened by landscaping, which may include low brick or stone walls, grassy berms, shrubs, trees or opaque fences. Fences should be used to separate dissimilar and incompatible land uses such as commercial buildings or parking lots from housing.
- **Façade renovations** must be consistent with the original architecture of the building in terms of window or door size and location, detailing of cornices, lintels and window frames, façade materials, patterns and colors, and sign placement, materials and lighting.



A central design principle for Downtown is to have numerous doors and windows along the sidewalk. The images on pages 12-4 and 12-22 also illustrate this idea.

## 2. Streetscape Design

Ensure that street edges in the Downtown are improved with decorative lighting, trees and other features to add visual interest and facilitate walking. A hierarchy of streetscape elements should be established along the Downtown roadway corridor system and at key roadway intersections.

### Downtown Loop System

A high level of improvements should be installed along the central street loop system of Barstow, Madison, Bellinger, Fifth and Lake. Include features such as:

- Pedestrian-scale lighting with banner arms and weather-resistant electrical outlets along designated streets
- Scored concrete sidewalks 5 to 16 feet wide
- Trees in grates
- Decorative paving in crosswalks
- Decorative railing or landscape buffers along edges of parking.

Other streets in the Downtown should include improvements with:

- Eight-foot wide scored concrete walks
- Pedestrian-scale lighting
- Striped paving in crosswalks
- Landscape buffers along the edges of parking lots

### Intersection Emphasis

Implement a hierarchy of intersection treatments along Downtown roadway corridors to reinforce transitions between streetscape level treatments. A high level of improvements should be provided at these key intersections:

- Lake Street at Graham and Farwell Streets
- Eau Claire Street at Barstow and Farwell Streets.

### Farwell Street

Study the feasibility of rebuilding Farwell Street to three lanes (two through lanes, one turning lane and a raised median) with greater space for trees, bicycling, corner bump-outs and pedestrian safety.

### Gateway Entry Features

Install prominent gateway design features at highly visible approaches to Downtown to signify arrival in the Downtown. Possible entry feature elements could include:

- Entry monument
- Flower and shrub planting area
- Art or sculpture feature
- Decorative paving plaza and outdoor seating area
- Ornamental fencing



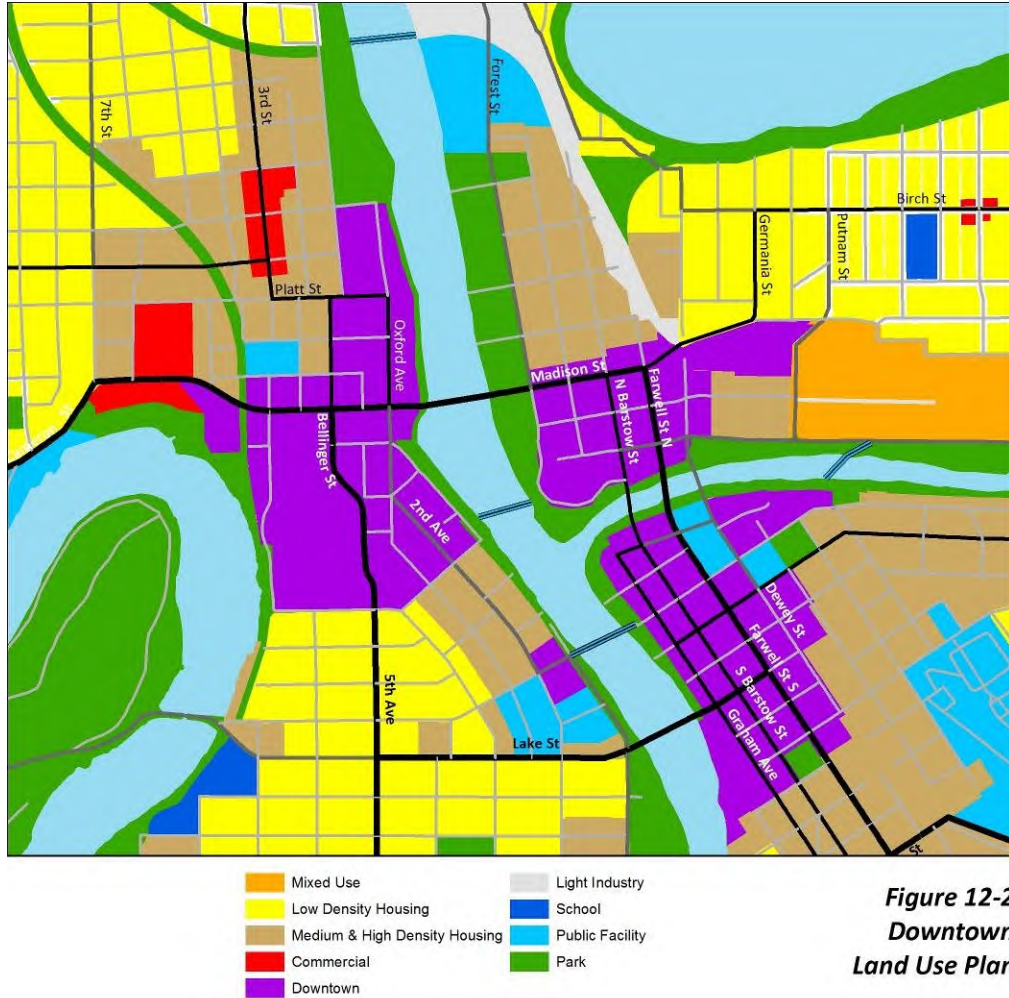
Examples of streetscape improvements, including trees, boulevards, decorative lighting, banners and planted median.



**3. Downtown Land Use Plan**

Design Downtown as a place to **live, work and play**.

Ensure that the long-term future pattern of land use conforms to the general pattern illustrated by Figure 12-2, Downtown Land Use Plan. It is understood that it may take a long time to achieve this pattern, and during the transition period there will be temporary inconsistencies and incompatible relationships.



**Figure 12-2  
Downtown  
Land Use Plan**

Changing market conditions or unforeseen opportunities may make it appropriate to deviate somewhat from this pattern. Such plan amendments are acceptable as long as the key principles continue to be followed. The City intends that the Downtown planning area eventually consist of a variety of business, housing and public land uses that are built in a relatively dense and urban manner.

**4. Town Square Park**

Create a “town square” style park, preferably between City Hall and the Library, or where the parking lot is currently at the northeastern corner of Barstow Street and Grand Avenue with substitute parking nearby. Please refer also to the Town Square Park policy on page 12-13 and the Eau Claire Street Promenade policy on page 12-23.

## 5. Business Signs

The City sign regulations as they pertain to Downtown were amended in 2013 with the help of a committee of Downtown representatives. The Central Business District Sign District was also created. Those improvements notwithstanding, these principles should be observed:

- Thought should be given in the **design** of each building to sign location, size, lighting and materials on the façade of the structure. A horizontal band should be established on each façade to contain all wall signs. Generally, individual letters should be used and backlit plastic panel signs should not be allowed.
- Encourage the use of **perpendicular signs** that are artfully designed to include a logotype or symbol of the business, be indirectly lit and be sized in careful proportion to the space they inhabit.
- **Wall signs** should fit into the building architecture, and projecting signs should artfully convey the nature of the business.
- **Freestanding pylon** (aka “banjo”) signs should not be allowed in Downtown because they would detract from the desired urban appearance of Downtown and compete with building locations.

## 6. Wayfinding Signs

Implement a coordinated way-finding sign system to direct motorists to Downtown from the perimeter of the community, to major Downtown attractions (e.g., the County Courthouse) or to parking and back out to the freeways. These signs should be well-designed and made of high-quality materials so as to convey permanence and civic pride.

## 7. Public Art

Encourage the use of special decorative features in both public improvements and private development to add visual interest, express local pride and convey cultural heritage.

Artistic features should be integral to and designed in conjunction with the building, public space or facility rather than being an afterthought or appendage. Public art may be as subtle as a relief on the face of a manhole cover or as dramatic as a granite water feature. Other examples may include sidewalk pavings, street intersection pavings, neon sculpture, brick patterns on building walls, sculpture, murals and seasonal banners.

Public art should be made of high-quality, long-lasting materials and executed by designers who are experienced with outdoor settings, architecture or public works.



Public art can take many forms

Public art should be included in both public improvements and private development to add visual interest, express local pride and convey cultural heritage.

Consider adding a **mural** to the eastern face of the Civic Center parking structure above Gibson Street, overlooking the possible new public park between the City Hall and the library.



## 8. The River Bridges

Ensure that the new bridges at Water and Madison Streets ~~are~~ is carefully designed to enhance the appearance of the rivers.

Consider adding **lighting** to one or more bridges.

The river bridges are highly visible public features and, therefore, should be designed for beauty as well as function.



The river bridges in Downtown are a major visual asset. As they are rebuilt, appearance should be a prime consideration. Night-time lighting is an idea that could add to their beauty.

## 9. Building Improvements and Architecture

Encourage well-designed exterior improvements to buildings and structures to enhance the architectural and economic value of the Downtown.

DECI should lead the way with loan funds supported by the City to ensure an ongoing rehabilitation program to improve and upgrade the facades of existing buildings. Such programs may include technical and design assistance as well as financial incentives.

Historic facades should be restored on every building where the brick has been painted, the original façade material covered or where the original pattern of windows or roofline have been altered.

The design and display of business signs and awnings should be incorporated into the overall design of the building exterior and be consistent with general Downtown design standards for signs. Building and property owners should be encouraged to remove graffiti within 24 hours.



Building restoration and new construction should both follow traditional principles for proportion, rhythm, openings and position relative to the street.

## Objective 6 – Walking and Bicycling

**Enhance the ability to walk and bicycle Downtown by ensuring safe and attractive routes throughout Downtown and between Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.**

### Policies

#### 1. Walking

Continue to acknowledge the importance of walking in Downtown and continue to rebuild public sidewalks and greenway paths.

Install features such as striped crossing marks and “countdown” signals help pedestrians cross the street.

Complete the following key pedestrian connections in the Downtown:

- Wisconsin Street from Banbury Place to the Farmers Market in Phoenix Park
- Eau Claire and Gibson streets from the proposed City Hall Plaza to the Chippewa Riverfront
- Main Street from Dewey Street to the riverfront
- Grand Avenue from the County Courthouse across the river to City Hall
- Lake Street from Carson Park across the river to Barstow Street
- The South Barstow pedestrian path along the Eau Claire and Chippewa River frontages through the planned Haymarket Plaza.

The streets identified above should become strongly pedestrian in character without disrupting vehicular traffic flow, should serve as direct linkages between parks, landmarks and other activity centers, and should provide visual cues about their function and destination. Land uses along the connections should be made active and safe. Gaps in the connection enclosures should be filled with compatible land uses.

#### 2. ~~The Eau Claire Street Promenade~~

~~Eau Claire Street should be rebuilt as a “convertible street” from Farwell Street to Graham Avenue so that it can be temporarily closed to auto traffic and used for events, performances, celebrations and strolling. Sidewalks would be improved with special patterns, flat curbs with trench drains would be used, tent tie-down rings would be embedded, and the street pavement would be decorative.~~

A “**town square**” park between City Hall and the Phillips Library could anchor the eastern end. Please refer also to the Town Square Park policy on page 12-13.



A rendering of Eau Claire Street rebuilt with sidewalks, low curbs and other improvements.

## **2. The Proposed Grand Avenue Pedestrian Mall**

The 2012 *Redevelopment Strategy and Vision Plan* included a proposal to close a portion of Grand Avenue to vehicles and rebuild it as a pedestrian mall with spaces for entertainment and vendors. This idea should be held in abeyance at least until there is much more Downtown employment, housing and foot traffic. In the meantime, the proposed “convertible street” on Eau Claire Street could serve this function.

Pedestrian malls were once a popular idea but they have proven to be harmful to downtown merchants and expensive to maintain. Only in locations with very high pedestrian counts such as the Nicollet Mall in downtown Minneapolis have these been successful. It is preferable to animate a street with shop fronts, sidewalks, auto traffic and parking.

## **3. Confluence Pedestrian Bridge**

~~Study the feasibility of a pedestrian bridge across the mouth of the Eau Claire River linking Phoenix Park to the plaza and trail at The Confluence. This feature would likely be wildly popular and extend the effect of the riverfront greenway.~~



~~A well-designed bridge for walking and bicycling at the mouth of the Eau Claire River could make a dramatic statement and become an icon for the community.~~

## **3. The Riverfront Greenways**

Complete the riverfront greenway and trail system in these Downtown locations:

- Dewey Street to Lake Street and eventually south to Water Street via Thorp Drive; an interim route could include the street sidewalks south of Lake Street
- From The Chippewa River State Trail bridge north along the western bluff of the Chippewa River to the High Bridge walk-bike river crossing

## **4. Bicycling**

Implement the city-wide bicycle system plan as it applies to Downtown.

Require new development to provide bicycle locking or storage devices, just as they provide parking for autos. Install public bicycle devices in some locations in parks and along sidewalks where there is insufficient private parking.

Continue to prohibit bicycling on public sidewalks that abut buildings.

## **Objective 7 – Street System**

### **Maintain a street system that supports land development while honoring the importance of walking and bicycling.**

The *Comprehensive Plan* anticipates improved access from the peripheral highway system. Cameron Street should be linked to I-94 to complete the east-west cross-town arterial that includes Madison and Birch-Galloway streets. The Barstow-Madison-Lake-Fifth Avenue loop will interconnect the four districts. Directional signs, special landscaping and lighting around the loop will aid orientation.

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Street and Highway Connections**

Coordinate with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Eau Claire County to ensure that street and highway system connections to the Downtown are improved, particularly the City-proposed interchange at I-94 and Cameron Street.

When the time arises, study the need to improve and enhance First Street from Old Wells Road to Platt Street to accommodate additional traffic generated by the planned riverfront redevelopment.

Extending Birch Street via River Prairie Drive to the realigned US Highway 53 improved access to and from that major artery. Now, Galloway Street should be improved to supplement Birch Street and take some of the through-traffic out of that residential neighborhood.

##### **2. Loop System**

Enhance the Barstow, Madison, Lake and Fifth loop system and connect Downtown to the surrounding neighborhoods and to other major city districts such as the University.

##### **3. Street Design**

Incorporate all streets in the Downtown as part of the public open space system serving both pedestrians and vehicles. Lighting trees, benches and awnings should be used to enhance the street environment. The character of each street should be considered when deciding upon building setbacks and open spaces. Sidewalks should be required for both sides of every street.

##### **4. River Bridges**

Accomplish the rebuilding of the river bridges at Dewey, Madison and Water Streets.

Ensure that river bridges are beautifully designed because they are highly visible and long-lasting pieces of public investment.

##### **5. Bus Transit Center and a Passenger Rail Depot**

Maintain the Downtown as the location for the main transit access hub. Encourage the construction of a new multi-modal bus transfer center in Downtown that incorporates a design that allows the integrated exchange of users among buses, autos and bicycles.

If passenger rail service is established to Eau Claire, ensure that the station is Downtown, west or east of Banbury Place.



**Objective 8 – Parking**

**Provide surface and structured parking consistent with Downtown design principles to meet mixed use parking needs**

A detailed study of the parking system in the North and South Barstow Districts was presented by a consultant in 2015. Among its conclusions were the findings that there is plenty of parking for the current and immediately forecast demand but that the system is not used and managed properly.

**Policies**

**1. The City-Owned Parking Structures**

Enhance, repair and generally rehabilitate the City-owned Civic Center parking structure and the two-level City-owned deck on Graham Avenue.

The Civic Center ramp is dark, dreary and foreboding. Spot repairs to the concrete are needed soon to extend its life. Other recommended improvements are better lighting, white concrete sealant, bright and friendly signs, and a glass-enclosed stair tower on the Eau Claire Street frontage. The 2015 parking study includes additional description and support.

It is unfortunate that the Graham Avenue deck abuts the river and that it was not designed to support an “air rights” structure above itself. When its useful life has expired, a use more appropriate to the waterfront should be found while the parking supply is replaced nearby if not on-site.

The North Barstow parking structure was approved in early 2015 for three levels and 575 parking spaces, enough to serve the RCU, JAMF and attached buildings; it was engineered to accept a fourth level and accommodate demand from Block 7, to the north, and elsewhere if desired. The structure includes attractive façade materials, bicycle parking and a landscaped site to help it harmonize with the surrounding buildings.



Proposed Galloway Street parking structure and nearby development

## 2. System Management

Follow the recommendations of the 2015 parking study regarding the allocation of revenues to the municipal parking utility, meter durations and pricing, enforcement, use of technology, City employee parking locations, and customer service.

Review and update the off-street parking regulations in the zoning code with the aim of reducing the number of spaces required.

It is important to improve enforcement so the parking supply is used appropriately. Better enforcement will move some of the parked cars from street meters to off-street lots or ramps and help balance the system.

## 3. Design

Require that all new public and private surface parking lots include hardy perimeter landscaping, uniform signage, curbing or car stops, and paving. When necessary, require that existing lots be retrofitted with these features. The edges of surface parking lots should be softened with landscaping, ornamental fences or low masonry or brick walls. Where possible, buildings will be used to screen parking from street view.

Vehicle access to parking lots should be limited to locations designated by the City for reasons of traffic safety and flow.

Parking structures should be designed for visual compatibility with nearby buildings. Lining the first level at the street with shops helps greatly.



Ideally, surface parking Downtown should be located to the rear of buildings and never between the building and the street. However, when parking is beside the building and meets the sidewalk, it should be softened with landscaping, a low masonry wall or a sturdy fence.

## 4. Bicycle Parking

Ensure that bicycle locking loops are provided in key locations throughout the Downtown such as the parking structures, in the parks, at the transit center, and near major destinations. Consider using on-street bicycle parking “corrals” where appropriate.

## 5. On-Street Parking

Allow parking on each street where it is judged feasible with respect to space and safety. The objective would be to have parking along most street segments for the sake of adding to the public parking supply and to provide an additional sense of protection for pedestrians from the traffic.



## Objective 9 – Housing

### Make Downtown the hippest and most attractive place to live in Eau Claire.

Housing is an important component of any successful Downtown because it adds vitality night and day and supplements the customer base for certain Downtown shops. Additionally, it adds a residential option not found in most parts of the city. For those reasons, and to protect nearby residential neighborhoods and historically-significant properties, it is important to improve and expand the Downtown housing stock.

The North Barstow District redevelopment has opened opportunities for new rental apartment housing in new buildings along Riverfront Terrace and Wisconsin Street. As of 2015, there were six new buildings with a total of 205 one- or two-bedroom units, all located close to the sidewalk in buildings two to four stories tall.

Three buildings include ground-level commercial space totaling 15,400 square feet (including the relocated US Post Office).

Among the 205 units there are 140 underground parking spaces. Additional residential parking is available in on-site or adjacent surface lots; some tenants do not have cars, while some units have two tenants who each have a car. When the off-site surface parking on Block 7 is redeveloped, that contract parking would presumably shift to the municipal parking structure planned to the south.

#### 1. Additional Housing Opportunities in Downtown

Look favorably on any reasonable proposal to build new housing in or around Downtown, especially along the riverfronts and in mixed-use structures. Owner-occupied housing should be given special emphasis.

Administratively support additional housing in these and other locations in Downtown:

- Block 7 – bounded by Wisconsin, Galloway, Hobart and Barstow Streets
- The Oxford Avenue corridor – refer to the *West Riverside Neighborhood Plan and Cannery District Redevelopment Plan (2019)*
- East of North Barstow Street – prepare a master plan for this area
- North of East Madison Street – prepare a master plan for this area
- Graham Avenue along the riverfront

Mixed-use buildings that include retail space on the first floor with housing above are a desired but not mandatory arrangement in Downtown.

## Objective 10 – Courthouse District

### Maintain the Courthouse District while protecting the integrity of the adjacent residential neighborhood.

The Courthouse District is bordered by Fulton Street on the north, the Chippewa River on the east, Lake Street on the south and Fifth Avenue on the west. It includes the County Courthouse complex, West Grand Avenue and the surrounding residential neighborhood. The County facilities occupy only a small portion of the district and do not extend south to the entire frontage of Lake Street.

The County facilities were expanded in 1995 and again in 2012. The City’s police department now shares space with the County Sheriff there. After discussions with the neighborhood, firm boundaries for the County complex have been established.



The 2012 law enforcement addition

The County campus serves as the key anchor for this district and has been improved to provide additional space, take better advantage of its riverfront setting and provide a somewhat better transition to the surrounding neighborhoods.

In coordination with the expansion of the law enforcement wing, the First Avenue Park was created as an element of the greenway and state trail system, and Second Avenue was rerouted.

The Grand Avenue pedestrian bridge, closed to automobile traffic in 1980, provides a connection to the South Barstow District on the east bank of the river. A walk-bike path and a riverfront park connect this district to the state bicycle trail and the North Barstow district.

## Policies

### 1. Economic Orientation

Continue to support the focus of the Courthouse District on housing, churches, small offices, personal service firms and small retail or food establishments, primarily oriented to serve the residents and employees of the district and County complex users.

The district commercial area on West Grand Avenue should be actively marketed as a unique, pedestrian-oriented business district serving area residents, area employees and County campus users. The City should also encourage marketing of housing along the river bicycle trail to take advantage of expanding trail use by providing ‘bed and breakfast’ inns near the riverfront.

### 2. Neighborhood Preservation

Guide the direction and limits of future County expansion to create certainty for adjoining property reinvestment. Commercial and office uses should not be allowed to encroach into the nearby residential area. Business properties should continue to be well maintained. The City will encourage the preservation of existing homes and neighborhood character; it will continue to work with the Historic Randall Park

## Downtown Plan

Neighborhood Association and property owners to ensure compliance with the Housing Code, leading to continued housing reinvestment and improvement.

The Neighborhoods and Districts Plan chapter provides additional guidance on this subject.

### **3. Courthouse Expansion**

If the County facilities expand, they should go up not out. Any additional building expansions should respect the importance of maintaining high-quality housing in this district.

### **4. West Grand Avenue Business Improvement District**

Continue to support the efforts of the West Grand Avenue Business Improvement District to represent and enhance the businesses and commercial properties in the area.



An image of the historic West Grand Avenue business district

**Objective 11 – West Madison District**

**Encourage the continued growth of the West Madison District as a health care services activity center area anchored by the Mayo Clinic Hospital campus, related office uses, convenience retail and support businesses, new housing and riverfront parks.**

The West Madison District is roughly a 35-block area bordered by Cameron Street on the north, the Chippewa River on the east, Fulton Street on the south and Half Moon Lake on the west. The district includes the Mayo Clinic Hospital, the Bellinger-Madison business district, the L.E. Phillips Senior Center, the West Riverside Office Building.

The key anchor for this district is the Mayo Clinic Hospital, whose long-term commitment is a major, positive force for the district; a major bed wing was added in 2012.

The Madison-Bellinger commercial area serves as a neighborhood retail area. The riverfront park and greenway system is planned to be extended north through the district.

In 2011, the *West Riverside Neighborhood Plan* was prepared and adopted by the City. That neighborhood includes the Madison Street corridor, the medical center and the Oxford Street corridor; it extends from Fulton Street on the south to approximately Marshall Street on the north and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the west, encompassing a residential neighborhood.

A former school building at First and Oxford Avenue, once occupied by the City’s Park, Recreation and Forestry Department offices, has been remodeled as housing.

The City purchased the former Charleson Lumber property at the corner of Madison Street and First Avenue in 2014 and has sold the building for use as a brew-pub. The City will keep the floodplain open space below the dike for the riverfront greenway and trail.

The Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority has been acquiring properties in the Oxford Avenue corridor for resale to developers as sites for residential or commercial buildings consistent with the *West Riverside Neighborhood Plan*. Some riverfront land will be retained to provide additional greenway and park space.

There is some interest in the community in creating an indoor market in the Oxford Street corridor (just north of this District) or elsewhere in Downtown that would provide locally-grown foods, ethnic meals, arts, crafts, specialty clothing, and so forth.

**Policies**

**1. Hospital and Clinic Growth**

Encourage the hospital’s involvement in the development of the surrounding commercial area in a way that promotes a pedestrian-scale community commercial district. Building setbacks and sidewalks should define and enclose the street to make the area pedestrian-friendly and safe. Fulton Street should remain the southern limit of medical services expansion; growth upward or east is preferred.

The Mayo Clinic Hospital reaffirmed its commitment to Eau Claire by adding a major bed wing.



**2. Redevelopment Planning**

Work with the Mayo Clinic Hospital and other property owners to guide the redevelopment of the frontages of Madison and Bellinger Streets. The *West Riverside Neighborhood Plan* suggested how buildings, parking and streetscape could be designed in that area.

**3. Park and Pathways**

Continue development of the riverfront park and trail system as recommended by the neighborhood plan.

**4. Business Development**

Encourage the economic orientation of the Madison Street commercial area as a neighborhood retail area that supports both adjacent residential neighborhoods as well as provides services to hospital employees, patients and visitors. Retail and food businesses serving area residents and hospital users should be encouraged to locate along Madison.

**5. Attached Housing**

Encourage the development of well-designed multiple-family housing in order to provide a range of housing options for employees in the district, particularly for people who work at the Mayo Clinic Hospital.

Housing designed for the elderly should also be considered, particularly near the LE Phillips Senior Center, which is along Madison Street.

## Plan Action Steps

The City will take these steps to implement the recommendations of the Downtown Plan.

**Table 12-1  
Downtown Plan Actions**

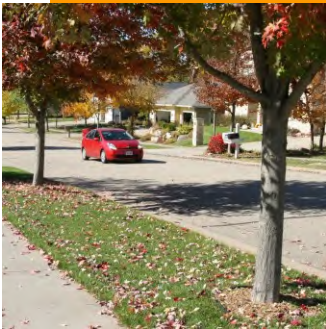
Action	Timing
<b>DECI Activities.</b> Downtown Eau Claire, Inc., will continue to market, recruit and advocate for Downtown, working with owners, tenants, the City and the Redevelopment Authority of Eau Claire.	Ongoing
<del><b>The Confluence.</b> Complete performing arts center and the Plaza at The Confluence, the public and private multiple use redevelopment near Eau Claire Street and Graham Avenue.</del>	2018
<b>Block 7.</b> Accomplish the redevelopment of Block 7 and the liner building, possibly including additional parking in the Galloway Street ramp.	2018 2022
<b>Graham Avenue.</b> Achieve redevelopment and remodeling along this street, particularly key riverfront parcels.	2016 - 2030
<del><b>Bus Transfer Center.</b> Study, relocate and improve the bus center.</del>	2020
<del><b>Eau Claire Street Promenade.</b> Improve the streetscape and rebuild this as a “convertible street” for use during festivals.</del>	2020
<b>Oxford Avenue Corridor.</b> Redevelop this area consistent with the recommendations of the <i>West Riverside District Plan</i> <u>and Cannery District Redevelopment Plan</u> .	2016 - 2030
<b>Riverfront Greenways.</b> Fill gaps and extend the greenway system along both rivers; improve neighborhood connector streets.	2016 – 2030
<b>Streetscape Loop.</b> Improve landscaping and lighting in the street loop of Barstow, Madison, Bellinger, Fifth and Lake.	2016 – 2030
<b>Farwell Street.</b> Study the feasibility of reducing driving lanes and adding streetscape and pedestrian amenities.	2025
<b>City Hall Plaza.</b> Redevelop the underused property between City Hall and the Phillips Library as either office or public park.	2025
<b>Bridges.</b> Build beauty and interest into the river bridges as they are replaced.	Ongoing
<del><b>Confluence Bridge.</b> Study the feasibility and build a walking and bicycling bridge at the mouth of the Eau Claire River.</del>	2019
<b>Master Planning.</b> Prepare a plan for the revitalization of the areas east of North Barstow Street and north of Madison Street.	2016—2020 <u>2021 - 2025</u>
<b>Parking.</b> Implement the recommendations of the 2015 <u>2020</u> parking study <u>update</u> . Reduce the number of off-street spaces required.	2016 <u>2020 - 2025</u>



Adopted

# **Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015**

## **Community Facilities Plan**



City of Eau Claire Wisconsin

## Community Facilities Plan

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## Community Facilities Plan

This chapter of the *Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan* describes the City's approach to providing major facilities and services except for sewer and water services, roads and transit, which are addressed in other plan chapters.

### Summary of Community Facilities Issues

The major community facilities issues are:

**1. Sharing Facilities and Services**

What should Eau Claire do, if anything, to increase its shared facilities and services?

**2. Retired Schools or Places of Public Worship**

How should schools or places of public worship that are closed be re-used within a neighborhood?

**3. Airport Master Plan**

Should the City incorporate the Airport Master Plan into the City's *Comprehensive Plan* and adjust its zoning ordinance?

**4. University Master Plan**

How should the City incorporate the University's Master Plan into the City's *Comprehensive Plan*?

## **Overview of the Community Facilities Plan**

Attractive public facilities are important to maintaining the confidence in the community of homeowners and business people. Schools, libraries, parks and other facilities are all highly valued by residents and are important factors in where to buy or rent a place to live.

These and other facilities and services will help sustain the community through the inevitable cycles of deterioration and reinvestment, so the City should invest in them as generously as it can. The public sector should provide leadership in developing facilities that exemplify quality in design, construction, and maintenance. Besides helping build a sustainable community, attractive public facilities also build community pride.

## **Goal and Objectives**

**Locate and maintain public facilities and services so as to support the goals of compact growth, neighborhood revitalization, and sustainable new neighborhood design.**

### **Objective 1 – Cost-Effective and High Quality Facilities**

Provide public facilities in a cost-effective manner and build them to a high standard of quality.

### **Objective 2 – Schools**

Coordinate urban growth, particularly new parks, with public elementary, middle and high schools.

### **Objective 3 – Airport**

Ensure that any expansion of the airport is done in a manner that does not harm the nearby neighborhood.

### **Objective 4 – Police and Fire Services**

Continue to provide a high level of police and fire services.

### **Objective 5 – Other Facilities and Services**

Continue to cooperate with private companies and other units of government to provide necessary and desired facilities or services used by the broad community.

## **Objective 1 – Cost-Effective and High Quality Facilities**

### **Provide public facilities in a cost-effective manner and build them to a high standard of quality.**

Providing cost-effective public facilities and services is always a worthwhile objective for any City. However, that does not mean doing things for the least possible cost. High quality public facilities and services support private investment in neighborhoods, help retain residents and businesses, and build community pride and quality of life.

Recent economic recessions coupled with reductions in state aid to cities have eroded the City's budget to the point that essential staff and services have been trimmed. It is expected that fiscal conditions will eventually improve and return to historic norms, at which time deferred improvements can begin to be addressed. Until then, the community may have to live with a lower standard of service than it expects and deserves.

Fortunately, the community's long-term fiscal future seems bright because of its good highway access, its proximity to the Twin Cities, its regional retail, health care and educational industries, and its scenic environment.

An important factor in the City's ability to sustain long-term fiscal health will be the way in which it manages growth and redevelopment. Expanding the tax base without over-committing to expenses will help pay for the facilities and services that help renew the city and attract new residents and businesses.

### **Policies**

#### **1. High Quality**

Construct and maintain facilities to the highest level of quality affordable: Since public facilities represent a collective effort of the entire community, they should be of high quality and demonstrate the expressed desire for an improved environment. In doing this, the public provides leadership in enhancing the urban environment.

#### **2. Shared Facilities and Services**

Increase shared services and facilities to the extent that it does not harm the City financially, impede its ability to attract annexation petitions, or diminish the quality of the service or facility to the citizens of Eau Claire.

When feasible, the City and related agencies will build facilities that can serve more than one purpose. Land and facilities shared between schools and parks is a prime example.

#### **3. Compact Growth**

Provide facilities and services with the intention of promoting compact, orderly urban growth and neighborhood revitalization. The location of community facilities should always be consistent with plans for future growth and development and should promote growth in the City of Eau Claire.

#### **4. Accessibility for the Handicapped**

Continue to ensure that public buildings and parks comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## **Objective 2 -- Schools and Places of Worship**

### **Coordinate urban growth, particularly new parks, with public elementary, middle and high schools.**

The Analysis of Conditions described the service area of the Eau Claire Public School District, the locations of the schools, enrollment trends and district demographics.

The locations of the public elementary, middle and high schools are shown by Figure 14-1, Major Community Facilities, in the Community Facilities Assessment. Locations of future public schools shown on Figure 2-1, Planned Land Use, are only conceptual. All future public schools must be in locations that can be served by sewer and water lines from Eau Claire.

### **Policies**

#### **1. Cooperation between the City and the School District**

Continue to cooperate with the Eau Claire School District for mutual benefit by locating schools and parks adjacent to one another and by coordinating the Land Use Plan and the District's plan for future school sites.

In 2015, no additional school sites were needed. However, three possible future locations were shown on the Land Use Plan map so that the question can be explored during the subdivision process.

#### **2. Schools in Older Neighborhoods**

Encourage the Eau Claire School District to maintain schools in the older neighborhoods and find sites in older neighborhoods when replacement sites are needed.

#### **3. Retired Places of Public Worship**

Allow retired places of public worship that are no longer intended for such use to be re-used for multiple-family housing or neighborhood-serving businesses as long as the neighborhood environment and character are protected. The following criteria will be reviewed with these situations:

- Negative effects on nearby housing are mitigated.
- Nearby roads and intersections can accommodate any increased traffic and maintain an acceptable level for service.
- The design and function of the commercial use is integrated with the area through site design, building materials, access, parking, sidewalks, landscaping and lighting.

#### **4. University Master Plan and Event Center**

Adopt by reference into this *Comprehensive Plan* the 2011 *UW-EC Campus Master Plan* as the guidance for the properties owned by the University.

Give a favorable reception to the Menomonie Street event and recreation center proposed by the University and its partners. In conjunction, support the idea of master-planned redevelopment along that corridor between Clairemont Avenue and the Hobbs Ice Arena that may include businesses and housing, centered on the University facility.

Support the concept of increased student dormitory housing on campus.



Coordinate the community review of any proposal to enlarge the campus into an adjacent residential neighborhood, seeking to improve the quality of the neighborhood and the vitality of the university.

The University has prepared and adopted a plan for the long-term physical growth and enhancement of its campus. However, the City regulates land use and development around the campus and, thus, has an interest in how the University acquires property and extends its facilities.

### **Objective 3 – Airport Growth**

#### **Coordinate improvement at the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport in a manner that does not harm the nearby neighborhood.**

The Chippewa Valley Regional Airport is located in the City and is jointly owned and operated by Chippewa and Eau Claire Counties. It is anticipated that number of flight operations will stay relatively flat or grow at a very slow rate over the next 10 to 20 years.

During 2008 to 2011, the passenger terminal building was expanded, renovated and reconfigured to better accommodate new security rules and provide an adequate secure passenger holding area. The project should adequately meet airport passenger needs for the plan's 20-year planning period.

In the *Airport Master Plan*, two alternative sites were identified for development of air cargo operations in the future. Both include cargo aircraft parking, a cargo logistics facility and ground vehicle parking. Alternative 1 is north of the general aviation hangars adjacent to Taxiway A with access via Hogarth Street. Alternative 2 is south of the airfield with access from 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Airport Road. Alternative 1 was preferred in the master plan.

The Airport Commission has requested that the City amend its *Comprehensive Plan* to allow for air cargo operations and other industrial activities not related to the airport. They also asked that the zoning be changed from P-Public to a new zone that is specific to the airport, similar to the zone administered by Eau Claire County, the owner of the airport. While there were no prospective tenants in 2014, airport representatives would like to retain the ability to consider this type of development if the opportunity is presented.

For the sake of flight safety, Eau Claire County administers Chapter 18.60 in its zoning ordinance, which restricts the height, setback, density and use of structures in four zones on and around the airport property, including lands in the City of Eau Claire or Chippewa County. Types of permitted on-airport land uses include, among others, air cargo facilities and intermodal facilities. The County Committee on Planning and Development receives a recommendation from the City of Eau Claire Community Development Department regarding any building or land use application on the airport property, all of which is within the City of Eau Claire.

**Policies**

**1. Compatible Expansion**

Encourage the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport to plan its facilities cooperatively with the City and give due consideration to the adjacent neighborhood.

Means of mitigating visual impacts include plantings and berms, building placement and façade treatments.

Any further airport improvements should be made contingent on additional actions that will safeguard or enhance the quality of the adjacent neighborhood.

**2. Airport Zoning**

Consider creating a new zoning district specific to the Chippewa Valley Regional Airport so that the airport’s rights and responsibilities can be clearly established as they pertain to on-airport land use and development.

This district would allow air cargo and intermodal facilities. It may also allow certain industrial activities not directly related to the airport, such as warehousing, that have limited traffic volumes and do not adversely affect adjacent neighborhoods. The new zoning district should establish minimum building setbacks and maximum heights, and include an administrative process in coordination with that of Eau Claire County.

The City’s conditional use permit process would be useful in these non-aeronautical reviews. Increased truck traffic to and from the airport for cargo operations may become a concern. The district should not contravene the flight safety provisions of Chapter 18.60 of the Eau Claire County Code, Airport Zoning.

**Objective 4 – Police and Fire Services**

**Continue to provide a high level of police and fire services.**

Police and fire services are two fundamental and costly services provided by the City of Eau Claire.

**Policies**

**1. Community Policing**

The Eau Claire Police Department will continue to build on the success it has had across the city with “community policing”.

**2. Cooperative Fire Services**

Seek economies through cooperation with Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties and the adjacent City of Altoona.

**3. Fire Station Locations and Facilities Plan**

Prepare a study in 2015 of fire station locations, facilities and staffing and the advisability of any changes. Submit the report to the City Council for their consideration.



The fire station near the airport will be one of the facilities studied.

## **Objective 5 – Other Facilities and Services**

### **Continue to cooperate with private companies and other units of government to provide necessary and desired facilities or services used by the broad community.**

Some key services or facilities are licensed or indirectly regulated by the City, sometimes in cooperation with another body of government, such as the State or County.

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Telecommunications**

Continue to regulate through the zoning ordinance private antennae, towers, satellite dishes, re-transmitters and related structures as either accessory uses or conditional uses depending on the nature of the facility.

Continue to cooperate with private telecommunications companies who request to install lines in public road rights-of-way while imposing reasonable controls on their design, location and installation.

Continue to rely on private companies for Internet service. Maintain free, unsecured Internet Wi-Fi “hot spots” in several buildings such as City Hall, the Library among others, for use by the public and its employees.

##### **2. Child Day Care**

Continue to allow child care facilities through the zoning ordinance as conditional uses, including any regulations that may be imposed by the State of Wisconsin through its required license.

##### **3. Solid Waste Recycling and Disposal**

Continue to conduct solid waste collection and recycling through private companies licensed by the City. Dispose of solid waste that is not recycled at a County sanitary landfill. Continue to allow recycling facilities in all commercial or industrial districts by conditional use permit.

##### **4. Power Generation and Transmission**

Continue to work with Xcel and other energy providers to ensure the continued supply of electricity, natural gas and other energy sources to the city and the region.

Xcel Energy operates a coal-fired electricity generation plant located along the Chippewa River along with a water-powered turbine. There is a major transformer facility north of the plant along the Chippewa River near Dell’s Pond, and a major transmission line runs east-west across the City south of US 124.

Wind energy conversion systems are allowed by conditional use permit in all zoning districts.

## Plan Action Steps

The City will take the following steps to implement the recommendations of the Community Facilities Plan.

**Table 13-1  
Community Facilities Plan Actions**

Action	Timing
<del>Prepare a study in 2016 of <u>Implement a fire station policy for improvements to fire station locations, facilities and staffing and the advisability of any changes.</u></del>	2016 <u>Ongoing</u>
Continue to cooperate with the Eau Claire School District for mutual benefit by locating schools and parks adjacent to one another.	Ongoing
<del>Consider adopting into this <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> by reference the 2011 <u>Work with UWEC on implementing their UW-EC Campus Master Plan as the guidance for the properties owned by the University. Assist on redevelopment plans for Sonnentag Center. Work with the City Transit Communication on establishing a University Transit Hub.</u></del>	2016 <u>2022-2025</u>
<del>Consider creating a new zoning district specific to the airport so that the airport's rights and responsibilities can be clearly established as they pertain to on-airport land use and development.</del>	2016
<del>Continue to provide City oversight on the expansion committee of 7-Mile Creek Landfill so community waste needs are met. Support City or county programs to reduce the landfill demand through material conservation reuse, composting and recycling programs.</del>	<u>Ongoing</u>

Adopted

# **Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015**

## **Governmental Cooperation Plan**



City of Eau Claire Wisconsin

## **Governmental Cooperation Plan**

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## Governmental Cooperation Plan

This chapter describes what the City will do to promote cooperation among and between nearby units of government for mutual benefit, smart growth, environmental protection and service efficiency.

### Summary of Governmental Cooperation Issues

The major governmental cooperation issues are:

- 1. Shared Services:** To what extent should the City of Eau Claire promote the sharing of services and facilities with other units of government?
- 2. Consistent Land Use Regulations:** Should the City of Eau Claire encourage more consistent standards for development codes, land use regulation, building inspection, and code enforcement in the metropolitan area?
- 3. Boundary Change:** What should the City of Eau Claire do, if anything, to reduce the uncertainty among local communities about the timing, sequence, and costs of boundary changes while ensuring that development in the urban service area is consistent with the *Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan*?
- 4. Trust between Governments:** What should the City of Eau Claire do to foster relationships between governments to exhibit trust and respect?
- 5. Open Space and Environmental Asset Conservation:** What should the City of Eau Claire do to encourage metropolitan area jurisdictions to protect key environmental assets such as rivers and wetlands, woods, scenic areas, and prime farmland?

### Progress since the 2005 Plan

Much progress has been made since the 2005 *Comprehensive Plan* in terms of cooperation between the City and its five adjacent Towns with regard to the planning and regulation of land use, utilities and roads on the periphery of the City.

The major planning issue in the 2005 plan was: *What should the City do to ensure that urban expansion is compact, cost-efficient and designed for lasting value?*

### Governmental Agreements

In response to that issue, the City proposed and the Towns each accepted subdivision regulations saying that land divisions for residential purposes shall be permitted based on an overall base density standard of one single family lot per 10 acres in the Sewer Service Area of the Town unless features were included that facilitate future urban growth with City

utilities. Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties did the same. The provisions of those agreements are outlined on pages 10 through 13 of the Land Use and Development Assessment chapter and on pages 13 through 15 of the Land Use Plan chapter.

The City then prepared plans for land use that would apply to properties that successfully petition for annexation in each of the five Towns, along with general plans for the extension of public utilities and major roads. One such plan was prepared for the Sewer Service Area in each of the five adjacent Towns, and they are being incorporated into this *Comprehensive Plan*.

These agreements are of historic proportion and demonstrate that governments can work together for the greater good even when it requires bending entrenched practices and convictions.

## **Goal and Objectives**

**Craft working arrangements with other units of government that benefit the City and advance the specific aims of the Comprehensive Plan.**

### **Objective 1 – Planning and Growth Management**

Engage neighboring jurisdictions in planning and agreements to achieve ongoing, compact serviced growth and environmental protection.

### **Objective 2 – Services and Facilities**

Continue to seek ways to share services and facilities in ways that benefit the City.

### **Objective 3 – Economic Development**

Work with other jurisdictions and agencies to advance business growth.

### **Objective 4 – Environmental Protection**

Collaborate for the good of natural resources.

## **Objective 1 – Planning and Growth Management**

### **Engage neighboring jurisdictions in planning and agreements to achieve ongoing, compact serviced growth and environmental protection.**

#### **1. Governmental Agreements and Extra-territorial Review**

Continue to follow the provisions of the agreements signed in 2011 with each of the five adjacent Towns.

Continue to review all proposed plats and certified survey land divisions in the City's extraterritorial subdivision review area to ensure compatibility with the City Subdivision Ordinance and *Comprehensive Plan*.

Those agreements stated that land divisions for residential purposes shall be permitted based on an overall base density standard of one single family lot per 10 acres in the Sewer Service Area of the Town unless features were included that facilitate future urban growth with City utilities. The agreements are summarized on pages 10 through 13 of the Land Use and Growth Management Assessment chapter and pages 13 through 15 of the Land Use Plan chapter,

Also follow the guidance of the five *Sewer Service Area Plans* that were prepared subsequent to the agreements. Those plans addressed land use, roads, municipal utilities, environmental protection and development design. They are accurately reflected in the chapters of this *Comprehensive Plan* on land use, transportation, utilities, natural resources and urban design.

#### **2. Boundary Agreements**

Continue to encourage the use of general agreements and cooperative boundary agreements with adjacent jurisdictions to provide for the orderly transition of jurisdictional boundaries in the Extra-territorial Plat Approval Jurisdiction consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan*.

The agreements should define the boundaries, the phasing of transition and land uses and identify significant natural resources to protect. In locations with existing urban development and public utilities, consider sharing property tax revenue and the cost of upgrading roads and utilities.

Look favorably on annexation petitions that are fiscally sound, consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan* and help the City region manage growth wisely and efficiently.

#### **3. Transition Area Joint Planning**

Continue to prepare land use and road plans in the Sewer Service Area through joint efforts of the City, one or more Towns and the County.

#### **4. Services for Annexations**

Continue to require that annexation is coordinated with the timely and efficient provision of adequate public facilities and services and that no extension of City sewer and water service is provided without annexation into the City of Eau Claire.

**5. Boundary Change Notification**

Provide written notification of public meetings and hearings regarding proposed annexations to the appropriate Town Clerk.

**6. Alternative Resolution Strategies**

As stated in the Intergovernmental Agreements, resolve governmental disagreements through methods other than ~~law suits~~ legal action.

Some governmental differences over land use, annexation, surface water management and so on might be resolved through a means other than the legal system and protracted litigation. These include cooperative planning, informal negotiation, facilitated negotiation, mediation and binding arbitration.

**7. Village of Lake Hallie**

Negotiate a mutually agreeable boundary line for the 3-mile Extra-territorial Plat Review Jurisdiction among the City of Eau Claire, the Village of Lake Hallie and the City of Altoona. These lines presently overlap and conflict in the Town of Seymour.

**8. City of Altoona**

Negotiate a line to designate areas for potential future annexation to the City of Eau Claire versus the City of Altoona in the Town of Washington.

Coordinate with the City of Altoona on the review of planned patterns of land use along the common municipal boundary, road functional classification, protection of Otter Creek, and riverfront park and trail planning.



A growth management area in the Town of Washington near Eau Claire and Altoona.

**9. Regional Planning Commission**

Continue to coordinate with the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission on transportation planning, land use patterns, growth forecasting and the boundaries of the Sewer Service Area.

**10. Extra-territorial Area Notifications**

Encourage local government agencies to provide timely notifications to the Eau Claire City Clerk about proposed developments, land subdivisions, rezonings, and public improvements in the City’s Extra-territorial Plat Approval Jurisdiction.

**11. Adjacent Jurisdiction Notifications**

Provide notifications regarding proposed rezonings or conditional use permits in the City of Eau Claire within 175 feet of the City border to the administrator or clerk of the adjacent jurisdiction.

## **12. The Comprehensive Plan on the Internet**

Continue to maintain a City web site providing current information about the City's *Comprehensive Plan*.

## **13. Joint Meetings of Planning Officials**

Sponsor occasional meetings of planning officials to discuss metropolitan planning and growth.

Such meetings could include public and private sector leaders from the metropolitan area to discuss planning, service delivery, economic development and quality of life issues.

In addition, the City should encourage regular meetings of planning and zoning officials from the area jurisdictions to discuss issues of common concern.

## **14. Regional Planning**

Support and participate in regional planning related to the goals and objectives of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

Encourage area jurisdictions to participate in efforts to address transportation system and surface water management issues.

Continue to participate as a member of the Metropolitan Planning Organization and work with the West Central Regional Planning Commission on issues of regional impact in western Wisconsin.

## **Objective 2 – Services and Facilities**

### **Continue to seek ways to share services and facilities in ways that benefit the City.**

#### **1. General Approach to Sharing Services and Facilities**

Share services or facilities with other units of government when there is a clear net benefit to the City and the result of such an agreement will not be contrary to the goals, objectives or policies of this *Comprehensive Plan*, particularly in growth management.

#### **2. Joint Commission on Shared Services Initiatives**

Continue to participate with Eau Claire County and the Eau Claire Area School District on the Joint Commission on Shared Services Initiatives.

The commission studies and proposes collaboration in areas such as purchasing, health insurance, records management, geographic information systems, information technology, administrative functions, and administrative space and facilities.

#### **3. Counties of Eau Claire and Chippewa**

Continue to work with the Eau Claire County Health Department on matters of public health and housing inspections, particularly in an accelerated neighborhood revitalization campaign.

Continue to share mapping services with Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties, and other units of government through the geographic information system.

Work with Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties on the possible jurisdictional transfer of County Highway T to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

#### **4. Regional GIS Mapping System**

Continue to share mapping data with the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

Encourage consistency among the official mapping efforts of the county, city, and adjacent jurisdictions to ensure effective coordination for future streets, highways, and parks and other infrastructure in the metropolitan area.

#### **5. City of Altoona**

Continue to provide sanitary sewer service to the City of Altoona under a pre-existing contract.

#### **6. Town of Washington**

Continue to provide sanitary sewer service under a 1981 contract to portions of the Town of Washington: the Washington Heights peninsula and the area north of I-94 near Lowes Creek. City water service is also provided in portions of these sewer districts under past agreements. The City hopes to eventually receive annexation petitions from landowners in these locations or else work with the Town on a boundary agreement.

#### **7. Wisconsin Department of Transportation**

Coordinate with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation on:

- ~~Transferring to the DOT the jurisdiction of County Highway T, widening the road and building a bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad tracks~~
- Bringing passenger rail to Eau Claire from the Twin Cities and siting the station
- Building an interchange on I-94 at Cameron Street
- Rebuilding Downtown river bridges
- Studying and improving problem locations such as Golf Road at US 53 or Clairemont Avenue (US 12) at Hendrickson Drive (State Highway 37).
- Completing the transfer of Hastings Way right-of-way as a result of US 53 expansion.

#### **8. University of Wisconsin**

Coordinate with UWEC regarding off-campus living, traffic, campus-edge land use planning, off-campus growth and the regulation of liquor licenses along Water Street.

#### **9. School Districts**

Coordinate with the School District on land use planning for future schools and parks.

Ensure that future acquisition and development of facilities for the Eau Claire School District, Chippewa Valley Technical College, and University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire is consistent with the City's *Comprehensive Plan*

#### **10. Redevelopment and Housing Authorities**

Coordinate with the Redevelopment Authority and the Housing Authority on their missions, particularly with regard to the central neighborhoods and Downtown.

#### **11. Regional Transit**

Monitor development patterns in adjacent communities and assess the potential for expansion of the City of Eau Claire bus system.



### **Objective 3 – Economic Development**

#### **Work with other jurisdictions and agencies to advance business growth.**

##### **1. Coordinated Marketing and Recruiting**

Work with other bodies that assist economic development to market the region, build its image and attract employers and employees. These organizations include the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development and private non-profit groups such as the Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation, Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce, Momentum West, Downtown Eau Claire, Inc., the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and Chippewa Valley Technical College.

##### **2. Redevelopment for Economic Growth**

Continue to coordinate with the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Eau Claire to plan and accomplish evolution of obsolete and obsolescent properties that have potential for new businesses.

### **Objective 4 – Environmental Protection**

#### **Collaborate for the good of natural resources.**

##### **1. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources**

Seek assistance from the Wisconsin DNR on:

- Water quality improvements in Half Moon Lake
- Changing the means of riverbank protection
- Managing river greenways or parks with high natural value
- Protecting water quality in the Lowes Creek watershed.



Lowes Creek, with its cold water and sandy bottom, is a natural trout stream that must be protected through multi-jurisdictional efforts.

## Plan Action Steps

Each of the policies in this chapter is an action step. The most important steps are listed below.

**Table 14-1  
Governmental Cooperation Plan Actions**

Action	Timing
<b>Intergovernmental Agreements.</b> Continue to follow the provisions of the agreements signed in 2011, <u>and renewed in 2021</u> , with each of the five adjacent Towns.	Continuous
<b>ETJ Plat Review.</b> Continue to review all proposed plats and certified survey land divisions in the City’s extra-territorial subdivision review area to ensure compatibility with the City Subdivision Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan.	Continuous
<b>Future Boundary with Altoona.</b> Negotiate a line to designate the areas that may receive annexation petitions to the City of Eau Claire and the City of Altoona in the Town of Washington east of US 53 and south of US 12.	2016
<b>Shared Services Initiative.</b> Continue to participate with Eau Claire County and the Eau Claire Area School District in the Joint Commission on Shared Services Initiatives	Continuous
<b>City-County Health Department.</b> Continue to work with the Eau Claire City-County Health Department on matters of public health and housing inspections, particularly in an accelerated neighborhood revitalization campaign.	Continuous
<b>Highway T.</b> Coordinate with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation on <del>transferring to the DOT the jurisdiction of the</del> <u>expansion of</u> County Highway T, <del>widening the road and building a bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad tracks.</del>	2016 to 2030
<b>Passenger Rail.</b> Coordinate with the Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Transportation on bringing passenger rail to Eau Claire from the Twin Cities and siting the station.	2016 to 2025
<b>Lowes Creek.</b> Seek assistance from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on protecting water quality in the Lowes Creek watershed.	Continuous

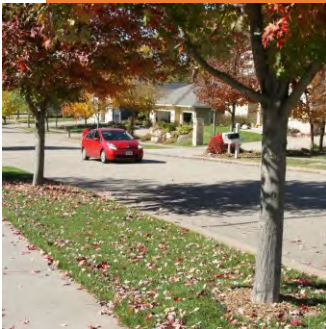
Bringing passenger rail service to Eau Claire will require the coordinated efforts of two state departments of transportation and the City.



Adopted

# **Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan 2015**

## **Plan Implementation Program**



City of Eau Claire Wisconsin

## Plan Implementation Program

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## **Plan Implementation Program**

*Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan* must respond to the continuous stream of changes that occur in the community. This chapter describes how the plan's usefulness will be monitored and how it may be amended.

This chapter of the *Comprehensive Plan* also lists the major actions that the City expects to take to carry out the objectives and policies of the *Comprehensive Plan*. This work plan should be updated annually.

### **Goal and Objectives**

#### **Goal**

**Ensure the ongoing implementation of the *Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan* as a relevant, usable, current and consistent statement of City policy.**

#### **Objective 1 – Annual Report**

Continue to prepare an annual report describing how the plan has been used and what changes have occurred that may affect the relevance of the document.

#### **Objective 2 – Periodic Amendments**

Continue to periodically propose amendments to the plan as conditions warrant.

#### **Objective 3 – Regular Reviews**

Continue to conduct a formal review of the plan at least once every five years.

#### **Objective 4 – Priority Actions**

Continue to establish a schedule of short-term and long-term actions as a targeted work program to guide the ongoing implementation of the plan.

## **Plan Implementation Policies**

### **Objective 1 – Annual Report**

**Continue to prepare an annual report describing how the plan has been used and what changes have occurred that may affect the relevance of the document.**

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Annual Reports**

Every twelve months the Eau Claire City Planning staff will prepare a brief report summarizing:

- How the plan was used to direct major spending, regulatory and construction decisions
- How development did or did not coincide with the guidance of the plan
- How the city has changed in ways that may call for amendments to the plan.

Other City departments and related agencies such as the school district should be consulted for their opinions about these reports as appropriate.

The report should be transmitted to the City Plan Commission and the City Council, and made available to the public. Brief verbal presentation at workshop meetings should be conducted to call attention to the major findings of the annual report.

No plan amendments are necessitated in conjunction with these reports, although such amendments may be appropriate depending on the reports' findings.

### **Objective 2 – Periodic Amendments**

**Continue to periodically propose amendments to the plan as conditions warrant.**

It is appropriate that some parts of the plan are rarely amended while others are highly subject to examination. The features that should be most long-lasting are those that are most fundamental such as the Goal of each Element (e.g., Land Use). The Objectives of each Element are more open to revision, and the specific Policies are most fungible. Changes to the plan maps would, of course, depend on the magnitude of the revision, their relationship to the Goals and Objectives, and the nature of the changing circumstances that lead to the desire for amendments.

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Plan Amendments**

The Eau Claire City Plan Commission will propose amendments to the comprehensive plan from time to time as circumstances warrant. The public, including nearby Towns and Counties, should be notified of these major proposed changes and allowed an opportunity to become informed of the change and comment. The City will consider neighborhood opinion in evaluating how a proposed change would meet the above criteria. The City could consider soliciting public opinion through direct mail survey forms, neighborhood meetings (where applicable), Planning Commission public meetings and the Internet.



### **Criteria to Consider When Reviewing Plan Changes**

These criteria should be considered when reviewing changes to the plan:

- 1.** The change is consistent with the goals and objectives or other elements of the *Eau Claire Comprehensive Plan*.
- 2.** The change does not create an adverse impact on public facilities and services that cannot be mitigated. Public facilities and services include roads, sewers, water supply, drainage, schools, police, fire and parks.
- 3.** Development resulting from the change does not create an undue impact on surrounding properties. Such development should be consistent with the physical character of the surrounding neighborhood or would upgrade and improve its viability.
- 4.** The change allows a more viable transition to the planned uses on adjacent properties than the current land use.
- 5.** The change does not have a significant adverse impact on the natural environment including trees, slopes and groundwater, or the impact could be mitigated by improvements on the site or in the same vicinity.
- 6.** There is a change in City policies or neighborhood characteristics that would justify a change.
- 7.** The change corrects an error made in the original plan.
- 8.** There is a community or regional need identified in the comprehensive plan for the proposed land use or service.
- 9.** The change helps the City meet its life-cycle and affordable housing objectives.
- 10.** The change does not adversely impact any landmarks or other historically significant structures or properties unless mitigated through relocation, commemoration or dedication.

### **Objective 3 – Regular Reviews**

**Continue to conduct a formal review of the plan at least once every five years.**

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Formal Reviews of the Plan:**

At least once **every five years**, the City will instruct its Planning Commission and staff members to conduct a formal review of the entire plan, changing those features and sections that are judged to be out of date and/or not serving their purpose.

At least once every **ten years**, the process for the formal review should involve an *ad hoc* advisory group that assists the City Planning Commission, as was done in 2014 and 2015.

### **Objective 4 – Priority Actions**

**Continue to establish a schedule of short-term and long-term actions as a targeted work program to guide the ongoing implementation of the plan.**

#### **Policies**

##### **1. Priority Actions**

The City will conduct the actions listed in the following tables through annual and multiple-year assignments.

##### **2. Consistency with the Plan**

The City's actions will be consistent with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. Those actions include but are not limited to:

- Review of development applications
- The capital improvements program
- Neighborhood and district plans
- Plans of other agencies as they affect Eau Claire
- Official Maps\*
- The Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map\*
- The Subdivision Ordinance\*.

\* Wisconsin law requires that these actions be consistent with an adopted comprehensive plan.

## Major Implementation Steps by Plan Element

**Table 15-1  
Land Use and Growth Management Plan Actions**

<b>Future Land Use Map.</b> Use the <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> to update the future land use map as a guide for new development, redevelopment, rezoning and future growth areas.	Ongoing
<b>Development Reviews.</b> Use the <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> , the design guidance of this chapter and the Urban Design Plan chapter when reviewing land development or zoning applications.	Ongoing
<b>Airport Zoning.</b> Create a new zoning district for the regional airport.	2016 <u>Continue to work with Airport to seek a new zoning district</u>
<b>Boundary Agreements.</b> Seek to incorporate the peninsulas of the Towns of Washington, Union, Wheaton and Seymour that jut into the City's geographic area through boundary agreements.	2016 – <u>2025-2031</u> <u>The Intergovernmental Agreement was continued in February 2021 for 10 years and the Town comprehensive plans to be updated in 2025</u>
<b>Altoona.</b> Negotiate future jurisdiction with Altoona.	2016 <u>Ongoing: coordinated with City Council Strategic Plan</u>
<b>Perimeter Growth Management.</b> Continue to review applications for land division throughout the Extra-Territorial Plat Approval Jurisdiction; enforce the regulations for minimum parcel size; protect planned rights-of-way.	Ongoing
<b>Commercial Design Guidelines.</b> Prepare commercial development design guidelines for downtown and a set for perimeter locations.	2016 <u>Ongoing: coordinated with City Council Strategic Plan</u>
<b>Activity Centers.</b> Promote the creation of mixed-use activity centers in present commercial areas.	Ongoing
<b>Non-Conforming Uses.</b> Continue to review zoning regulations to accommodate the non-conforming status of dwellings in older neighborhoods.	Ongoing

**Table 15-2  
Transportation Plan Actions**

<b>Development Review.</b> Participate in the review of plats and site plans and other city planning; recommend design adjustments to private or public facilities for capacity, flow, safety and economy.	Ongoing
<b>Parking.</b> Implement recommendations of the 2016 Downtown parking study.	2016 Completed
<b>Galloway Street.</b> Conduct a feasibility study for the proposed Galloway Street bridge and connecting links.	2016—2020 <u>Moved back for future study areas and consideration</u>
<b>State Street.</b> Conduct a feasibility study for State Street work.	2016—2020 Completed
<b>Melby Street.</b> Conduct a feasibility study for Melby Street work.	2020—2025 <u>In design for construction moved back to a later date 2022-2025. Working with the railroad</u>
<b>Traffic Studies.</b> Conduct traffic studies in these locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Menomonie Street</li> <li>▪ Clairemont – Hendrickson</li> <li>▪ Oakwood Mall area</li> <li>▪ Cameron – Madison corridor</li> <li>▪ Birch St – Galloway corridor</li> <li>▪ Harding Avenue corridor</li> </ul>	2016—2025 <u>Ongoing studies; City teamed with County and WisDOT to complete traffic study for Oakwood Mall area in 2020; other traffic studies to occur in the future 2025-2030</u>
<b>County Highway T.</b> Study and monitor County Highway T for possible improvements <u>and possible transfer to the State.</u>	2020—2030 <u>Conversation and public meeting held working with Eau Claire &amp; Chippewa Counties and the State of WI</u>
<b>Transit Plan.</b> Implement the recommendations of the <i>Transit Development Plan</i> ; site and build a new downtown transit center.	2016—2020 <u>Transit Plan Completed; 2021-2022 Construction for New Transit Center; Continue to work with UWEC and new facility on the campus; add language within the plan that addresses equity as it relates to transportation to ensure access for all individuals; Transit to continue to move towards electric buses and future placement of new bus shelters throughout the community</u>

Plan Implementation Program

<b>Bike and Ped Plan.</b> Implement the recommendations of the <i>Bicycle and Pedestrian Systems Plan</i> .	Ongoing <u>Completed an update in 2018 and will continue to throughout the years</u>
<b>Passenger Rail.</b> Monitor the Minnesota passenger rail link study.	Ongoing <u>Continue to work with partnerships for passenger rail</u>
<b>Parking.</b> Update the Zoning Code parking requirements.	2016 <u>Part of Plan Commission work plan to be reviewed in 2022 to update parking standards</u>
<b><u>Intercity Transportation Hub.</u></b> Consider plans for a regional transit hub, including multi-model options.	<u>2022-2030</u>

**Table 15-3  
Public Utilities Plan Actions**

<b>Wastewater Plan.</b> Complete the remaining improvements recommended by the 2007 <i>Wastewater Treatment Plan</i> .	2016 – 2030
<b>Chippewa Interceptor.</b> Study the feasibility of and budget for replacing the Chippewa River Interceptor Sewer.	<del>2016</del> <u>Moved back within the CIP. Replacement plan for 2021-2023</u>
<b>Water Plan.</b> Budget for the recommendations of the <i>Water System Evaluation</i> .	2016 - 2025
<b>Aging Water Lines.</b> Replace aging or break-prone water or sewer lines as streets are rebuilt.	Ongoing
<b>Inflow and Infiltration.</b> Continue to make improvements that reduce water infiltration and inflow to the sanitary sewer system.	Ongoing
<b>Plan Updates.</b> Update the two-part 2014 <i>Water Source and Distribution Study</i> every five years. Update the 2007 <i>Wastewater Treatment Plan Facilities Plan Amendment</i> in approximately 2025.	2020 – 2025
<b>USSA Boundary.</b> Study the need to amend the boundary of the Urban Sewer Service Area whenever the <i>Chippewa Falls / Eau Claire Urban Sewer Service Plan</i> is updated by the Regional Planning Commission.	Ongoing
<b>Utilities Access Policy.</b> Continue the policy of providing municipal sewer or water service only to (a) properties in the City, (b) properties subject to a cooperative boundary agreement or (c) land that is the subject of another form of intergovernmental cooperation agreement.	Ongoing
<b>Sewer System Plan.</b> Prepare a comprehensive sanitary sewer system plan comparable to the 2014 water system plan.	<del>2016—2020</del> <u>Moved back to be within the 2025 FPA</u>
<b>Surface Water.</b> Continue to apply and enforce the provisions of its Surface Water Management Plan and its WPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS-4) permit.	Ongoing



**Table 15-4  
Parks, Trails and Greenways Plan Actions**

<b>New Perimeter Parks.</b> Acquire land for the six planned Neighborhood Parks and one Waterfront Park located in perimeter locations in conjunction with land subdivision if not before; list improvement costs in the multi-year capital improvements program.	Ongoing <u>Add language to consider future park areas for growth areas that are currently outside of the city limits</u>
<b>Folsom Street Park.</b> Acquire land for the proposed Folsom Street Park and budget for improvements.	2016—2020 <u>Ongoing because not all the land has been acquired</u>
<b>Greenway Extensions.</b> Acquire land for Greenway extensions as described in Policy 4-3 of the Parks Chapter. These include the South Barstow District riverfronts, the West Riverside Greenway, the Event Center Greenway expansion, and the Otter Creek Greenway (with Altoona).	Ongoing
<b>Other Land Acquisitions.</b> Acquire other properties as listed in Policy 2-2 under the City’s five-year Parks Plan.	Ongoing
<b>Sherman Creek Park.</b> Negotiate with the Town of Union to make the existing Sherman Creek Park jointly accessible to Town and City residents.	2016—2020 <u>Ongoing</u>
<b>Existing Parks.</b> Improve existing parks as described in Table 5-3, Objective 7 and the five-year <i>Parks and Open Space Plan</i> .	Ongoing <u>Add language to consider future park areas for growth areas that are currently outside of the city limits</u>
<b>Park Land Dedication.</b> Consider adopting an ordinance requiring land or cash be dedicated with subdividing of residential lots.	2018 2022-2023
<b>Half Moon Lake Greenway.</b> Continue acquiring properties around Half Moon Lake as they become available.	Ongoing <u>One (1) property remains around Half Moon Lake</u>

**Table 15-5  
Natural Resources Plan Actions**

<b>Surface Water Plan.</b> Continue to apply and enforce the provisions of its Surface Water Management Plan and its WPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System.	Ongoing
<b>Public Education.</b> Continue public education about water resources through the leadership of the Chippewa Valley Storm Water Forum.	Ongoing
<b>Zoning.</b> Continue to apply protective zoning regulations especially floodplain and shoreland-wetlands and Section 15.12.290.	Ongoing

<b>Lowes Creek.</b> Give special attention to surface water management and land development in the Lowes Creek watershed and apply the recommendations of the Lowes Creek watershed plan.	Ongoing
<b>Half Moon Lake.</b> Continue to work with the Department of Natural Resources to improve water quality in Half Moon Lake.	<del>2016 – 2020</del> Plan completed
<b>Creek Plans.</b> Update the Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan by preparing protection plans for the Otter Creek and upper Sherman Creek sub-watersheds.	2016 – 2020 <u>2025</u>
<b>Floodplain Acquisition.</b> Acquire developed property located in the 100-year floodplains.	2016 – 2025
<b>Street Trees.</b> Prepare and implement a city-wide plan for planting street trees.	<del>2016</del> Ongoing
<del><b>Steep Slopes.</b> Consider adopting an ordinance that regulates development on steep slopes consistent with DNR standards.</del>	<del>2016 – 2020</del>

**Table 15-6  
Economic Development Plan Actions**

<b>Target Industries.</b> Continue to target industries that may be attracted to local assets and that provide higher-wage jobs.	Ongoing
<b>New Businesses.</b> Work to attract entrepreneurs to Eau Claire who are most likely to succeed at establishing new industries and adding diverse employment opportunities to the city.	Ongoing
<b>Development Sites.</b> Continue to maintain an inventory of fully-serviced development sites. Act to promote the private development of a new location with sites for small industries and support businesses. Also work to promote the private development of an industrial area with rail service.	<del>2016 – 2020</del> Ongoing
<b>Highway T.</b> Improve County Highway T to improve truck access from the north.	By 2030
<b>Passenger Rail.</b> Advocate and support the potential passenger rail service between Eau Claire and the Twin Cities.	2016 until success
<del><b>Airport Zoning.</b> Adjust zoning to enable the Regional Airport to add air cargo operations on site.</del>	<del>2016</del>
<b>Cameron Interchange.</b> Continue to advocate for building an interchange on I-94 at Cameron Street.	2016 – 2030
<b>Redevelopment.</b> Continue to support redevelopment and adaptive re-use of contaminated, blighted, functionally obsolete and under-utilized properties, including those in and near Downtown. Support the ongoing revitalization of the greater downtown and the riverfronts to build a vibrant city center.	Ongoing
<b>Retention and Recruitment.</b> Maintain a working relationship between local employers and colleges. Continue the public and private campaign to retain existing businesses and recruit new ones. Support initiatives that help make Eau Claire a desirable place to live and work.	Ongoing

**Table 15-7  
Urban Design Plan Actions**

<b>Special Places.</b> Continue to protect, interpret and enhance the qualities of the City’s “special places” and examples of its cultural and economic heritage.	Ongoing
<b>City Entrances.</b> Design major entrances to the city with attractive gateway features.	Ongoing
<b>Wayfinding Signs.</b> Extend the Downtown wayfinding sign system.	2016 – 2030
<b>Commercial Design Guidelines.</b> Prepare and adopt design guidelines or standards for new commercial development in perimeter, corridor and downtown locations.	2016
<b>Multiple-Family Design.</b> Continue to follow the guidelines of the City’s Multi-Family Housing Design Manual and the Landscaping Manual.	Ongoing
<b>New Streets.</b> Build new streets according to the design standards presented in this plan and in the Transportation System Plan chapter.	Ongoing
<b>Street Tree Practice.</b> Strengthen the ordinance and practice regarding the planting of trees along public streets and roads.	<del>2016</del> Ongoing
<b>Street Tree Plan.</b> Adopt a city-wide plan for species and spacing.	<del>2016</del> 2023
<b>Sign Ordinance.</b> Review and consider improving the sign ordinance.	<del>2018</del> 2022
<b>Infill Development.</b> Encourage infill development in older, traditional neighborhoods that respects the characteristics and prevalent housing styles of each neighborhood.	Ongoing
<b>Activity Centers.</b> Encourage a mixture of compatible land uses in a variety of locations and scales in order to create more vital and walkable activity centers.	Ongoing
<b>Priority Streetscape Improvements.</b> Invest in a higher than normal level of tree planting and decorative lighting along certain designated roads as illustrated by Figure 8-3, Priority Streetscape System.	Ongoing
<b>Green Space Pattern.</b> Continue to build a system of green open spaces for recreation, urban beauty and natural protection that are linked by linear parks (greenways), off-road paths and on-street bicycle lanes, and generously landscaped roads.	Ongoing

**Table 15-8**  
**Neighborhoods and Districts Plan Actions**

<b>Neighborhood Revitalization Task Force Report.</b> Continue to implement the initial stakeholder summit ideas recommended in report.	Ongoing
<b>Planning Annual Summit.</b> Initiate and organize the planning meeting(s) of representatives from the public and private sectors to advance this proposal for intensified and ongoing neighborhood improvement, including creation of a not-for-profit neighborhood development corporation. <u>Support growth of neighborhood associations and their annual summit to improve communication, address concerns, and share best practices</u>	2016 Ongoing
<del><b>Coordinated Community Development.</b> Seek to devise a comprehensive approach to neighborhood improvement. Focus and coordinate efforts that may already be underway by local organizations other than the City. Involve representatives of allied public or private organizations in planning and implementing this campaign.</del> [Combined with other items that accomplish this.]	2016–2025
<b>Neighborhood Revitalization Corporation (NRC).</b> Support the Historic Randall Park NRC non-profit to improve reinvestment and homeownership opportunities. <u>Implement a housing reinvestment plan within the Water Street TID #12 Project Plan.</u>	Ongoing
<b>Code Enforcement.</b> Become more proactive in the enforcement of external and nuisance violations of the City maintenance regulations.	Ongoing
<del><b>Rental Registration Housing Inspections.</b> Consider program requiring that Continue the Health Department's rental registration housing program for improvements and communication. be registered with the City or County and that such housing is inspected on a regular basis for conformance to the Housing Code.</del>	2016 Ongoing
<b>Alley Maintenance.</b> Schedule the repair, reconstruction and snow plowing of public alleys to the same level as public streets.	Ongoing
<b>Street Maintenance.</b> Upgrade the standards for the repair of potholes and cracks in local (minor) streets.	Ongoing
<b>Parking Regulations.</b> Review parking regulations in congested areas and determine if changes would reduce parking congestion.	2016 2021-2025
<b>Parking Sticker Program.</b> Consider a program in which residents of neighborhoods affected by a high number of cars parked by non-residents may receive a sticker that allows them to park on their street.	2016 2021-2025
<b>Neighborhood Plans.</b> Continue to update neighborhood plans with help from residents, property owners and tenants.	Ongoing
<b>Land Use Planning.</b> Work with the neighborhood organizations to identify specific locations that are most suited for or in need of redevelopment, including perhaps increases in density, to guide private initiatives. Consider amending the zoning map or text in response.	Ongoing
<del><b>Amend Zoning Regulations.</b> Consider amending zoning in older neighborhoods to accommodate the non-conforming status of dwellings because of setback requirements and area requirements that are generally applicable to newer residential neighborhoods.</del>	2022-2025
<del><b>Organizational Coordination.</b> Assist or facilitate Host meetings of the neighborhood associations to compare efforts and ideas, resolve any differences near shared boundaries, and provide unified requests to the City.</del>	Ongoing
<del><b>University Communication.</b> Assist or facilitate annual meetings between representatives of the University and the neighborhoods to exchange ideas about topics of mutual interest and communicate them to the City.</del>	Ongoing

**Table 15-9  
Housing Plan Actions**

<b>Housing Division.</b> The Eau Claire Housing Division will continue to administer programs supported by federal block grant money such as housing rehabilitation loans, weatherization and home ownership.	Ongoing
<b>Housing Authority.</b> The Eau Claire Housing Authority will continue to administer federal programs such as public housing and rent assistance.	Ongoing
<b>Code Enforcement.</b> Become more proactive in the enforcement of external and nuisance violations of the City maintenance regulations.	Ongoing
<del><b>Rental Housing Inspections.</b> Consider a program requiring that rental housing be registered with the City or County and that such housing is inspected on a regular basis for conformance to the Housing Code.</del>	2016
<del><b>Neighborhood Planning Summit.</b> Convene one or more meetings by representatives from the public and private sectors to advance the proposal of the Neighborhood Plan for accelerated improvements.</del>	2016
<u><b>Rental Registration and Housing Inspections.</b> Continue programs to improve rental communication and property upkeep for both rentals and owner-occupied housing.</u>	Ongoing
<u><b>Housing Summit.</b> Convene one or more meetings by representatives from the public and private sectors to advance the Housing Plan's goal and Housing Opportunities Commission's work plans for accelerated improvements.</u>	Ongoing
<u><b>Housing for the Homeless.</b> Continue to work with the Dairyland Coalition in helping guide the provision of homeless housing in the City of Eau Claire.</u>	Ongoing
<u><b>Comprehensive Housing Study.</b> Commission a comprehensive housing study that combines data on all types of housing in the city, evaluating the current housing supply and comparing it to the current and future housing demand. Data would include all types of housing, location, price points, condition, and size of units, and demographic shifts, with a review every 5 years.</u>	2022

**Table 15-10  
Historic Resources Plan Actions**

<b>Survey.</b> Regularly update the historic resource survey.	2016 - 2020
<b>National Register Nominations.</b> Prepare additional National Register nominations for properties and districts as warranted by survey results.	Ongoing
<b>Local Designations.</b> Continue to consider additional local designations particularly those properties listed on the National Register.	Ongoing
<del><b>Opt-Outs.</b> <u>Work with</u> Present options to City Council related to the status of the opted-out property <u>owners</u> from historic districts and individual properties <u>to re-designate these landmarks.</u></del>	2016 Ongoing
<del><b>Landmarks Ordinance.</b> Discuss amendments to the landmarks ordinance with the City Manager and City Council.</del>	2016
<b>Federal Funding.</b> Update the Programmatic Agreement for HUD-funded activities between the City and the Advisory Council of Historic Preservation	2016 <u>As needed</u>

<b>Design Advice.</b> Continue to provide design advice in neighborhood and downtown planning and in the structural rehabilitation of historic and older non-historic buildings.	Ongoing
<b>Amend Zoning Regulations.</b> <u>Consider amending zoning in older neighborhoods to accommodate the non-conforming status of dwellings because of setback requirements and area requirements that are generally applicable to newer residential neighborhoods.</u>	<u>2022-2025</u>
<b>Markers.</b> Expand the historic markers program.	Ongoing
<b>Education.</b> Continue educational outreach and interpretative efforts.	Ongoing

**Table 15-11**  
**Downtown Plan Actions**

<b>DECI Activities.</b> Downtown Eau Claire, Inc., will continue to market, recruit and advocate for Downtown, working with owners, tenants, the City and the Redevelopment Authority of Eau Claire.	Ongoing
<del><b>The Confluence.</b> Complete performing arts center and the plaza at The Confluence, the public and private multiple use redevelopment near Eau Claire Street and Graham Avenue.</del>	<del>2018</del>
<b>Block 7.</b> Accomplish the redevelopment of Block 7, possibly including additional parking in the Galloway Street ramp.	2018 <u>2022-2025</u>
<b>Graham Avenue.</b> Achieve redevelopment and remodeling along this street, particularly key riverfront parcels.	2016 - 2030
<del><b>Bus Transfer Center.</b> Study, relocate and improve the bus center.</del>	<del>2020</del>
<del><b>Eau Claire Street Promenade.</b> Improve the streetscape and rebuild this as a "convertible street" for use during festivals.</del>	<del>2020</del>
<b>Oxford Avenue Corridor.</b> Redevelop this area consistent with the recommendations of the <i>West Riverside District Plan</i> and <i>Cannery District Redevelopment Plan</i> .	2016 - 2030
<b>Riverfront Greenways.</b> Fill gaps and extend the greenway system along both rivers; improve neighborhood connector streets.	2016 – 2030
<b>Streetscape Loop.</b> Improve landscaping and lighting in the street loop of Barstow, Madison, Bellinger, Fifth and Lake.	2016 – 2030
<b>Farwell Street.</b> Study the feasibility of reducing driving lanes and adding streetscape and pedestrian amenities.	2025
<b>City Hall Plaza.</b> Redevelop the underused property between City Hall and the Phillips Library as either office or public park.	2025
<b>Bridges.</b> Build beauty and interest into replacement river bridges.	Ongoing
<del><b>Confluence Bridge.</b> Study the feasibility of building a walking and bicycling bridge at the mouth of the Eau Claire River.</del>	<del>2019</del>
<b>Master Planning.</b> Prepare a plan for the revitalization of the areas east of North Barstow Street and north of Madison Street.	2016-2020 <u>2021-2025</u>
<b>Parking.</b> Implement recommendations of the 2016 <u>and 2020</u> parking study.	2016 <u>Ongoing</u>



**Table 15-12**  
**Community Facilities Plan Actions**

<b>Fire Stations.</b> Prepare a study in 2016 of <u>Implement a fire station policy for improvements</u> to station locations, facilities and staffing and the advisability of any changes.	2016 <u>Ongoing</u>
<b>Schools.</b> Continue to cooperate with the School District for mutual benefit by locating schools and parks adjacent to one another.	Ongoing
<b>UW Campus Plan.</b> <del>Consider adopting into this <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> by reference the 2011 <u>Work with UWEC on implementing their <i>UW-EC Campus Master Plan</i> as the guidance for the properties owned by the University. Assist on redevelopment plans for Sonnentag Center. Work with the City Transit Commission on establishing a University Transit Hub.</u></del>	2016 <u>2022-2025</u>
<b>Convention Center.</b> Continue to investigate the feasibility of locating a convention center in the city.	Ongoing
<del><b>Airport.</b> Consider creating a new zoning district specific to the airport so that the airport's rights and responsibilities can be clearly established as they pertain to on-airport land use and development.</del>	2016
<b>Private Landfill.</b> <u>Continue to provide City oversight on the expansion committee of 7-Mile Creek Landfill so community waste needs are met. Support City or County programs to reduce the landfill demand through material conservation, reuse, composting and recycling programs.</u>	<u>Ongoing</u>

**Table 15-13**  
**Intergovernmental Cooperation Plan Actions**

<b>Intergovernmental Agreements.</b> Continue to follow the provisions of the agreements signed in 2011, <u>and renewed in 2021,</u> with each of the five adjacent Towns.	Ongoing
<b>ETJ Plat Review.</b> Continue to review all proposed plats and certified survey land divisions in the City's Extra-territorial subdivision review area to ensure compatibility with the City Subdivision Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan.	Ongoing
<b>Future Boundary with Altoona.</b> Negotiate a line to designate the areas that may receive annexation petitions to the City of Eau Claire and the City of Altoona in the Town of Washington.	2016
<b>Shared Services Initiative.</b> Continue to participate with Eau Claire County in the Joint Commission on Shared Services Initiatives.	Ongoing
<b>City-County Health Department.</b> Continue to work with the Eau Claire County Health Department on matters of public health and housing inspections, particularly in an accelerated neighborhood revitalization campaign.	Ongoing
<b>Highway T.</b> <del>Coordinate with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation on transferring to the DOT the jurisdiction of County Highway T, widening the road and building a bridge over the Union-Pacific Railroad tracks.</del>	2016 to 2030
<b>Passenger Rail.</b> Coordinate with the Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Transportation on bringing passenger rail to Eau Claire from the Twin Cities and siting the station.	2016 to 2025
<b>Lowes Creek.</b> Seek assistance from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on protecting water quality in the Lowes Creek watershed.	Ongoing