

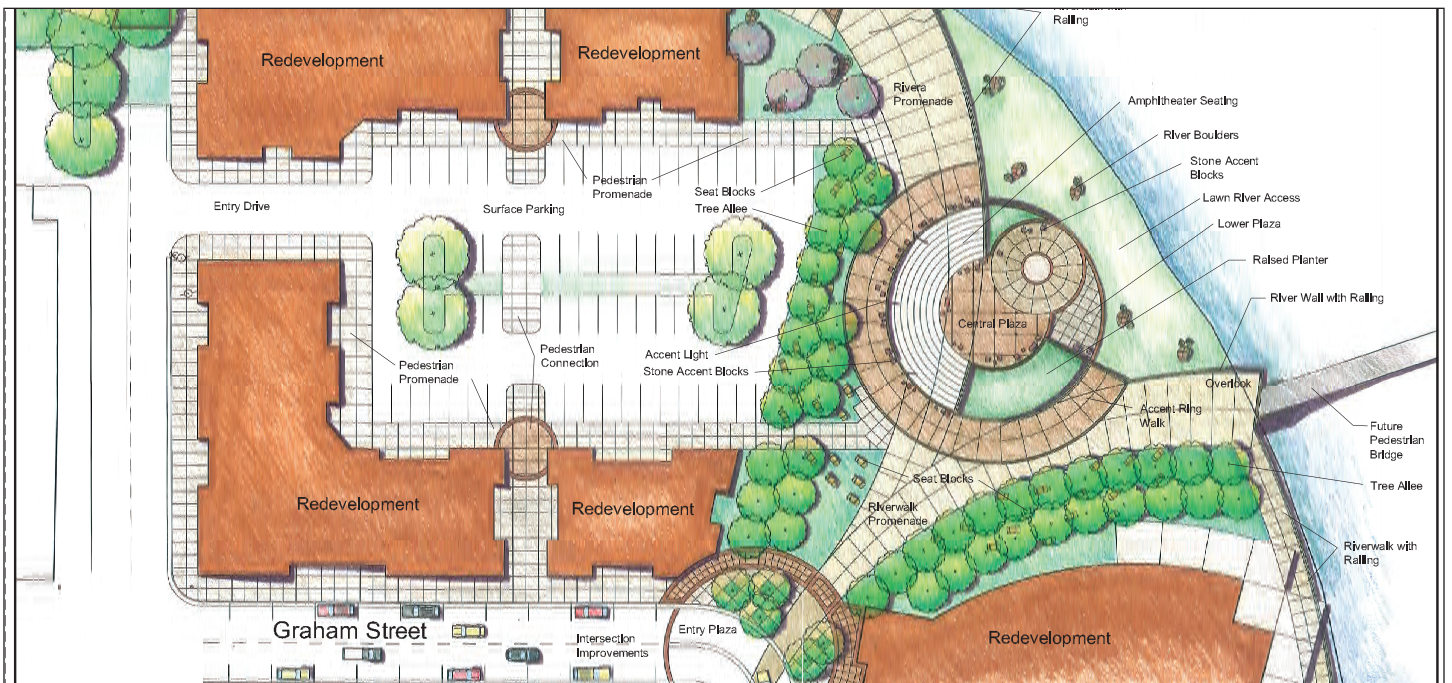
Eau Claire Downtown Riverfront District Redevelopment Strategy and Vision Plan



Vision Document Created for:
Downtown Eau Claire Incorporated
South Barstow Business Improvement District
May 03, 2012

Acknowledgements

Downtown Eau Claire Incorporated
South Barstow Business Improvement District



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Introduction

In October, 2001, The Eau Claire City Council approved a resolution adopting the Hyatt Palma Eau Claire Downtown Action Agenda 2001 as the overall guide for public strategies and actions related to the marketing and redevelopment of the downtown. In addition the City Council approved a resolution creating Downtown Eau Claire Incorporated (DECI) to implement the Downtown Action Agenda to provide strong, visible leadership for downtown issues by bringing together the public and private sectors, increase cooperation and coordination among downtown organizations and provide policy direction to staff. The City Council may ask DECI for recommendations on downtown issues including funding public improvements and redevelopment projects.

DECI has spent the last 10 years implementing the Downtown Action Agenda and has accomplished many of the recommendations outlined in the report. In the Spring of 2010, DECI held their annual retreat to set future goals and strategies. The board decided to explore looking into creating a new vision plan for downtown. At the June 2, 2010 DECI Board meeting, the board approved moving forward to solicit proposals for a new master plan based on the following ten criteria:

1. Alignment with current plans. (Comprehensive plan, Water Street plan, Med/ED, UWEC plan, Clear vision plan, community cultural plan, West Riverbank plan, North Barstow plan)
2. Focus on the South Barstow Street area.
3. Action plan of measurable and achievable steps.
4. Visible rendition of the development of downtown similar to the Med/Ed plan.
5. Address social and cultural elements in addition to bricks and mortar. (Philosophical goals)
6. Capture hearts, minds and imagination of people who use downtown.
7. Make it BOLD!
8. Define strategic vision for development of downtown.
9. Involve stakeholders and get input from community.
10. Strategic use of rivers.

DECI approached the South Barstow Business Improvement District (BID) to partner in the funding and development of a new master plan for the geographic area with the BID's boundaries and to help select a consultant.

On June 23, 2011 the South Barstow BID board of directors voted to select Ayres Associates, Design Studio etc and Redevelopment Resources and to fund up to \$11,069.00, half of the total cost of \$22,138.00.



On July 6, 2011, the Downtown Eau Claire Incorporated board of directors voted to select Ayres Associates, Design Studio etc and Redevelopment Resources and to fund the remaining \$11,069.00.

A subcommittee was then formed with three members from DECI and three members from the BID to work directly with the consultants on the new downtown master plan. The plan should cover the area defined by the Chippewa River to the west, the Eau Claire River to the north, Lake Street to the south and Dewey Street to the east.

The Planning Process

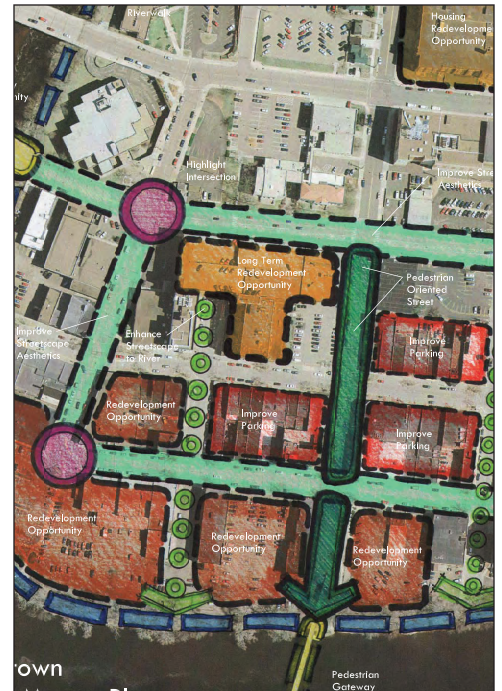
Throughout the Summer and Fall of 2011, the consultant team analyzed documents, data sources and categories of information on the downtown area, interviewed approximately 20 downtown stakeholders, met with the Downtown Riverfront District Steering Committee, spent time driving and walking the downtown area and visiting businesses, and conducted a stakeholder visioning session.

Work also included a review of potential redevelopment sites in the study area. Some of those sites are:

1. The Haymarket site at the intersection of the rivers.
2. The Wood Motors site at Lake Street and Farwell Street.
3. The existing bus transfer station on Farwell Street.
4. Above the parking structure in the 400 block of Graham.
5. The public parking lot at Grand Avenue and Barstow Street.
6. The school administration building at Dewey Street and Main Street.

While working on the analysis of these sites, it became apparent that analysis needed to reach beyond specific properties, and also how the downtown works as a whole and on various levels. Therefore, Vision Plan recommendations are structured into general recommendations which address broad areas of improvement and more specific recommendations on certain locations.

The current plan's goal is to provide a series of recommendations aimed at sustaining a healthy and economically viable downtown for the City of Eau Claire. Historically, the heart of any City offers challenges and opportunities for community leaders as they seek to build upon the past, and yet position the downtown for the consumers, residents and employees of today (and tomorrow).



REPOSITIONING AND REDEVELOPMENT IN CONTEXT

Over the last 25 years communities both large and small have struggled to reposition their business districts. Those storefronts that were once filled with vital retail-type businesses serving the local community may now be vacant or recycled into more service or professional uses. With much improved transportation systems, residents of smaller outlying communities now easily commute to work or shopping in larger metropolitan areas, spreading their disposable income much further outside the community than ever before.

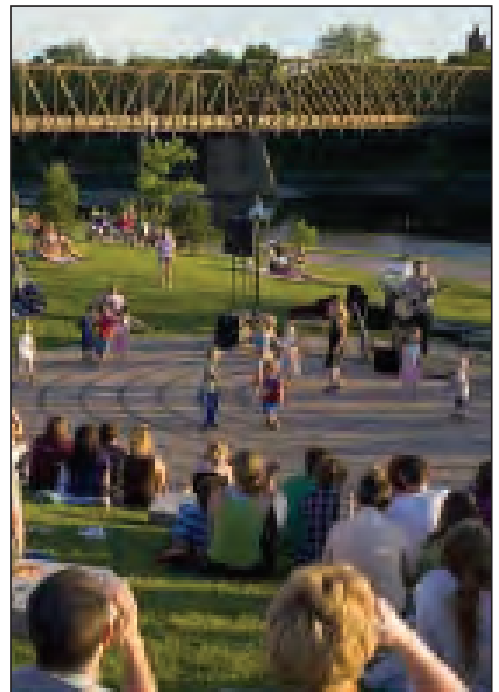
Local, independent businesses have suffered as a result of national or regional retail competition. These retailers are providing a broader selection of goods at lower prices (in more convenient locations with plenty of parking). Many of these independent operators have either closed their doors, or have moved to new locations hoping to fortify their competitive edge, leaving downtown shopping districts that are struggling for an identity.

This changing marketplace has also impacted the “old standby”: the shopping centers. Even though 60% of all retail dollars are spent in shopping centers, what worked 25 years ago in the shopping center world is not necessarily working well now. Shopping centers are being revamped, repositioned, reorganized and re-tenanted to stay in the game.

It's not at all unusual to see entire shopping centers being scraped in order to rebuild what is working today. But think of the major advantage that these shopping centers have, even when faced with impending change... they have control of the real estate! Imagine the challenge that communities face when they have multiple property owners and business owners, all who have different needs and goals! This is why creating and implementing a community plan is vitally important to the success of the downtown business district.

Redevelopment is one component and a process which is integrated with other downtown revitalization strategies, i.e., parking, public spaces, housing and business recruitment; and it is often the precursor to selecting and identifying and creating needed developments within the downtown. Helping to revitalize a downtown, or in this case revitalizing the Eau Claire Historic Riverfront District, may mean preventing and eliminating blighting influences via acquisition, code enforcement and demolition of buildings.

Because of its mix of both natural amenities and an urban setting, the Historic District could become a many-sided urban environment by creating mixed uses which meet and are sensitive to human needs with appropriate design in mind. The Father of American City Planning, Daniel Burnham said, “Make no small plans. If you do, that's what you'll end up with.” With this background in mind the following redevelopment recommendations are offered:



STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

PARKING:

1. Create efforts and policies that will support more long term employee and customer parking available in the downtown.
2. Consider moving the public transit facility to the east end of the Wood Motors lot.
3. Utilize the existing transit facility as a public lot that offers long term parking.
4. Continue utilizing the west end of the Wood Motors lot as additional public parking.
5. The public parking ramp on Farwell needs better signage.
6. Encourage the City Council to consider free parking every work day after 5:00 p.m. and on weekends.
7. Encourage the City Council to consider extending the parking time from 2 to 3 hours in the public parking lot at Grand Avenue and Barstow Street.
8. Encourage the City to create better signage directing visitors to current public parking options.
9. There are five blocks in downtown that need a more intensive look at current and future parking needs. A parking study should be considered for the downtown, specifically looking at the 200, 300 and 400 blocks of Barstow Street.
10. Explore the idea of infill parking development, which may include the acquisition of underutilized or blighted properties where appropriate.
11. Minimize surface parking when possible, and consider site and financial feasibility to utilize underground parking.
12. New developments along the riverfront should provide for parking that does not include large parking lots along the river.
13. Encourage maximizing on-street parking on all downtown streets where possible and do so in concert with current and future streetscape plans.
14. DECI and BID should work with the City to set up a parking fund that would support a study of existing and new downtown facilities.



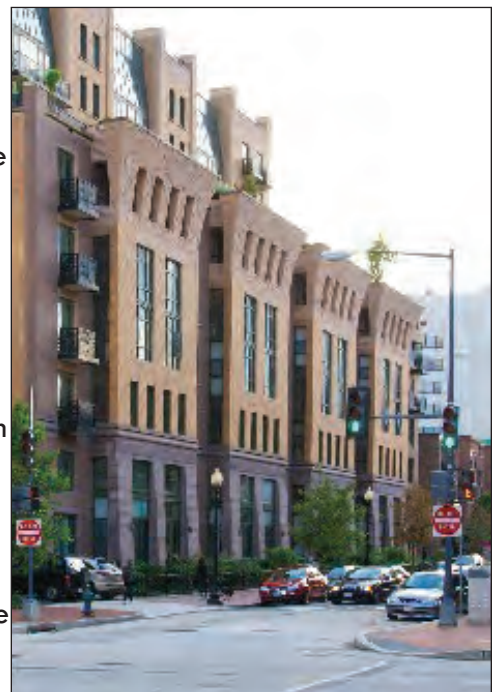
REDEVELOPMENT AND REHABILITATION:

1. Encourage the RDA to an inventory of redevelopment sites. Identify existing properties which are either blighted or underutilized and which are available for new use. Research existing owners; value assess-



ments; zoning classification; easements; leases, environmental status and delinquencies/encumbrances.

2. Monitor downtown properties that may play a role in long-term redevelopment, but are still serving a viable use. Vision planning includes looking at properties that are neither blighted or underutilized, but over time could create a new opportunity. DECI, the BID and/or the RDA should open dialogues with such property owners, so that there is an awareness of any future sales or changes in need by current owners.
3. Encourage the RDA to acquire important available properties necessary for all current and future redevelopment. Specifically several of the underutilized properties on Graham from Eau Claire Street southward should be considered for acquisition for future riverfront development. These efforts will best position the Eau Claire to attract local and out of town developers.
4. Given the age, current condition, and significant limitations of the State Theatre, along with the University's stated intention of collaborating with the great Eau Claire community to develop shared fine and performing arts facilities, serious consideration should be given to locating such facilities downtown. This recommendation is supported by the Clear Vision Eau Claire Community Events Facilities findings. While not location specific, the Clear Vision findings demonstrate significant public support for creation of Community Events Facilities, including an arts center, major events center and convention center. Because the State Theatre currently draws thousands of visitors to downtown annually, it is important to retain, and ideally provide enhanced fine and performing arts offerings in downtown. An Arts and Entertainment District can become a focal point that attracts businesses, stimulates cultural development, fosters civic pride and provides a needed multi-dimensional economic development approach for the downtown area. A joint venture with the University may provide the best opportunity to achieve this goal.
5. Encourage Public Works Department to review public infrastructure needs. Developers seek communities which have an attractive appearance and which have invested in their own streets, curb & gutter, sidewalks, lighting, parking and both public and private utilities.
6. Continue to preserve contributing and important historic buildings within the Riverfront District: the three National Register buildings on South Barstow and the six 'Contributing' properties on Eau Claire Street including the State Theater and the non-profit building on South Farwell at the entrance into the District from the north. Assist owners in rehabilitating both contributing and historic properties in the Confluence Historic Commercial District, e.g., the Union Auto Building (now Acoustic



Café). Other important commercial retail/office properties should also be assisted in renovation. All financial assistance should be closely tied with architectural design guidelines so that once rehabilitated those properties resemble their original style and character.

7. Create a destination. Downtowns should be an event and a destination. Seek a developer to create a “Live On Grand!” A small market model multi-use entertainment development ala “Live On 4th Street” in Louisville, Kentucky. The proposed development would consist of constructing a roof or cover over Grand from Graham Avenue west to the riverfront. Incorporate a portion of the pedestrian walkway over the river into the entertainment complex and rehabilitate and utilize the historic contributing properties into the new development. This “Live On Grand!, entertainment-based complex could incorporate a combination of spaces surrounded by both buildings, open air and the Grand Avenue pedestrian walkway and yet offer a vehicle free environment. A “roof” structure could cover Grand Avenue and provide a central space for public events and celebrations with surrounding elements to include buildings and open spaces for retail, dining and live music as well as performances and local theatrical and cinematic productions. Live On Grand! should be designed as an historic and river-themed venue establishing itself as a smaller version of “Rush Street” or ‘Beale Street’ or a ‘French Quarter’ styled destination.



8. Consider the redevelopment of aging and/or underutilized properties (on Graham Avenue from Eau Claire Street to Main Street) along the river for important new developments. One development concept could be a boutique hotel, with appropriately-sized meeting space, such as the Beloit Inn (Beloit) and the Jefferson Street Inn (Wausau). Setting themselves apart from large metropolitan hotels; boutique hospitality properties are developed as either rehabilitations of existing buildings or new construction within an urban in-fill setting. These properties are non-flagged (non-franchised) hotels which are crafted as community properties serving local tourism and visitor and commercial market segments. A new Eau Claire hospitality property should be nicely designed, well-appointed, affordable and properly managed to represent the best of the City of Eau Claire and serve as the leading hospitality property in all of west and northwest Wisconsin.

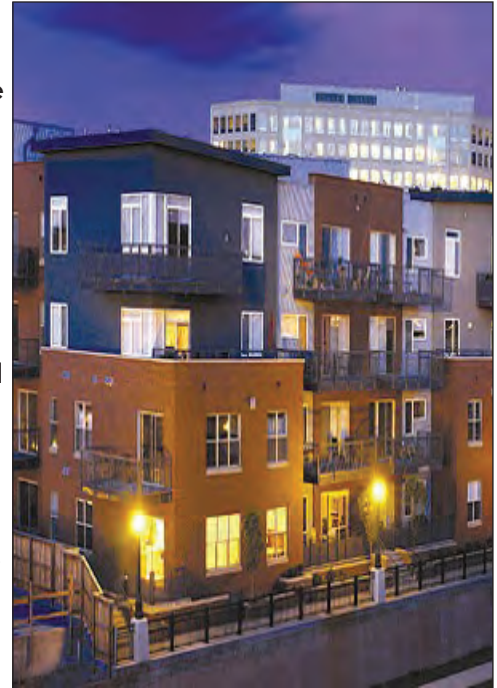


9. For long term redevelopment consideration are the four blocks south of Lake Street, those which are located north of Emery, west of Farwell Street and east of Graham Avenue. These four blocks are located just south of the Lake Street ‘Gateway’ from the west. The two blocks within this area which are between Barstow and Graham are smaller than the remaining two blocks between Barstow and Farwell Streets but together they create opportunity by virtue of their size when taken together. Other characteristics which more directly qualify them for re-

development include the fact that the buildings are one-level in nature, relatively low density in use, consume considerable space for surface parking and some properties appear to be occupied by uses which are private non-profit in nature. Although worthwhile to the community and important for adding to the downtown mix these uses generally result in neither high density employment nor economically rich centers. This area should remain on the long-term radar as a location for redevelopment that could still support the downtown waterfront district.

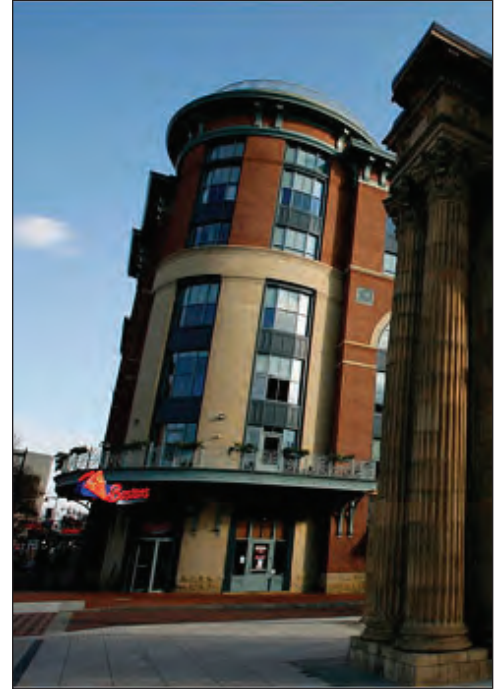
10. Long term redevelopment in Eau Claire’s Riverfront District should include the existing downtown hotel and convention center. The hotel and convention center has served Eau Claire for over 30 years. Although no new hotels have been developed within the downtown, the hospitality segment within the City of Eau Claire has changed since the downtown hotel was originally constructed. Given the relationship to the University, the density of downtown offices, adjacency to the hospital, and the riverfront amenity, this area deserves a great hospitality component, and the downtown business district should encourage the best hospitality possible. It might be time to consider a hospitality and meeting/convention study to understand if the current facilities are meeting current and long-term demands. This review of the market could be undertaken jointly by the Chamber, convention and visitors bureau, the UW, DECI, the BID and the City of Eau Claire.

11. The municipally-owned parking structure adjacent to the hotel was constructed in 1974 and consists of 405 stalls. A downtown parking study in 2008 revealed an average parking occupancy within the parking structure at 44% and a structural condition analysis in 2009 indicates that the structure has a longevity of 50 years (to 2024). With periodic repairs and maintenance the structure could last 60 to 75 years. Considering the repairs that are being budgeted at this point, the structure is at approximately mid- point of its useful service life. Replacement cost would be about \$9M considering 400 stalls at \$22,500 construction cost per stall and additional funds for demolition. So, it is recommended that the parking structure should stay in place. There is however, the potential to identify street level space that could be developed into taxable commercial space. The City should identify how much area this might encompass and market it via RFP to developers to see who may take an interest in the property. Another option could be to explore a partnership with the UW to develop business incubation space. In any event this parking structure is located at the Gateway to the Historic Riverfront District. It should be aesthetically improved in some very special way, with architectural treatments, mosaic murals using the existing elevated corrugated concrete exterior, or just large painted or color-stained surfaces. Be imaginative; be bold!!



STREETSCAPE

1. Explore a streetscape plan on Farwell Street that would accommodate landscaped boulevards. The street currently is a sea of concrete, with four lanes of traffic that is not welcoming, promotes faster driving and limited safety for pedestrians. Boulevards will help slow traffic, provide for a softening effect with landscaping and lighting elements, offer pedestrians “safe spaces” when crossing, and better connect the municipal block and the library to the downtown area.
2. Develop a streetscape plan for Lake Street that anchors and defines the south entrance to the downtown – primary streetscape zone.
3. Utilize the following four intersections with some sort of entrance element to frame the downtown area: Lake and Graham; Lake and Farwell; Eau Claire and Farwell; Eau Claire and Graham.
4. Develop a streetscape plan for Graham Avenue that is similar to the recent Barstow plan -primary streetscape zone.
5. Develop a modified streetscape plan for Gibson Street, Main Street and Gray Street. These streets can have a less intense streetscape plan, but one that visually links Farwell Street, Barstow Street and Graham Avenue together – secondary streetscape zone.
6. Vacate Grand Avenue from Graham Avenue to the River, between Graham Avenue and Barstow Street, and between Barstow and half way to Farwell Street – still leaving current access to the parking lot at Grand and Barstow. Utilize these vacated streets as new green space and pedestrian walkway connecting the riverfront area to Farwell and the City Hall and create opportunity for new storefronts facing the pedestrian plaza.
7. Develop the area between Graham Avenue and the River as a pedestrian plaza that creates an outdoor entertainment area. Pedestrian plazas have had mixed reviews in some communities, especially when they have taken important traffic and parking off of main retail streets. Grand Avenue is an underutilized street with little vitality or even storefronts. It provides an excellent opportunity for connection between the river and Barstow. This plaza should reflect an exciting, energized area, perhaps with an element of a covered structure over the plaza.
8. Consider a wonderful mural on the large faces of the public parking ramp on Farwell. Perhaps this could be part of a community wide arts contest, or in relationship with the sculpture walk. Utilization of these “blank canvases” can strengthen the arts theme in the downtown, as well as create interest and another draw to the area.



RIVERFRONT AND PUBLIC GATHERING SPACE

1. Riverfront views are a critical component to tying the river area to the downtown. Encourage the removal of invasive, aggressive and overgrown vegetation along the riverfront to reveal river views. Tree canopies and greenery are welcome to the area, but overgrown areas, especially when they block this very important view, should be addressed and maintained to achieve improved river views.
2. Create a riverfront pedestrian/ bike trail from the Haymarket site to Lake Street. This trail should be wide enough to be shared by all users, and offering “hop-off” points along the way.
3. Develop a plan for a future pedestrian / bike bridge from Phoenix Park to the Haymarket site. This is a critical component to connecting this important recreation place to the downtown area.
4. Create opportunities for riverfront overlooks that are not on the pedestrian / bike trail, as well as sight-line views of the river from Graham Avenue and the connecting perpendicular streets.
5. Provide opportunities for public access to the river, as new redevelopment happens along the riverfront.
6. Create a destination entertainment plaza on Grand Avenue, between the riverfront and Graham Avenue. This public plaza will anchor the riverfront at the existing pedestrian bridge, and should also have access from the riverfront pedestrian/bike trail.
7. Develop new green space and pedestrian walk-way by vacating Grand Avenue from Graham to Barstow Street and Barstow half way to Farwell Street.
8. The parking lot at Barstow and Grand Avenue should currently be maintained as both parking and multi-use space. One long-term opportunity for this corner could be a town square green space, if and when parking demands can be met in other suitable locations.
9. Explore opportunities for a fishing pier or platform along the riverfront in the downtown area.
10. Create improved and convenient launch points and end points for those using kayaks, canoes and tubes on both the Eau Claire and Chippewa Rivers. Explore a small dam down river that might allow for a tourist attraction, such as boat rides on the river.

WAYFINDING:

1. Develop a lighting plan for all bridges – vehicular and pedestrian – in the downtown area. This will help define the area as well as acting as



gateways and welcoming elements into the area.

2. Continue with public parking location signage efforts that are currently underway.
3. Identify the waterways on the bridge structures, and signage on the pedestrian bridge to tell you where you are going, i.e. “UW Campus”, “Downtown”, etc.
4. Expand the interpretive signage that references historic, natural or factual information located around the downtown, along the river corridor and in public open spaces.
5. Utilize public art – such as the Sculpture Tour exhibit – that helps to define an area. These kinds of efforts help inform visitors that they have “arrived” somewhere.

IMAGE/ BRANDING/ PROGRAMMING:

1. The downtown should develop its own unique name to give it a brand identity. However, it is important that the brand truly reflect who and what you are. Be careful not to brand yourself the same as so many other communities – a great place to live, shop and play – it will not differentiate you from anywhere else. Sell the experience that people can have while visiting downtown Eau Claire.
2. Consider utilizing the rivers somehow in your image, branding and marketing! This feature is unique to your community, and offers many ways to capitalize on the concept. The rivers can represent an attraction or gathering place, a hub of activity, a place of recreation, and history.
3. Look for opportunities in the adventure tourism market and how that might be tied to the river. Examples might include canoe or kayak events; an annual tubing weekend with prizes for the most creative tubes, longest tube chain; or maybe a special fishing tournament just for kids, etc. Creating new event concepts brings another group of visitors who may not have had a reason to be in downtown Eau Claire before. As the waterfront becomes more visible and accessible, it will be a great tool to encourage visitors and events to be in this area.
4. Visitors are looking for experiences, activities and different things to do. You can see the value that the Sculpture Tour had in the downtown area, bringing in many new visitors. This is an experience that can’t be found in many communities and has created a real draw. Capitalize on this fantastic effort, and consider other arts related ideas such as a cool graffiti wall in one of the visible alleys, murals on blank building facades – involve the arts department from the UW campus and the high schools.



5. Develop a strong internet presence for both attracting visitors and economic development in the downtown area. The internet is the most used resource for travel planning and business information. Because of its vital importance as a marketing tool, it is critical that the downtown/City’s web presence be good enough to “close the sale”.
6. Better utilize streets and sidewalks to support retail activity with more outdoor seating, carts, and stands. Encourage retailers to “spill” inventory out their front doors.
7. Explore ways to develop more cross-marketing campaigns among businesses. Support ways for business owners to get to know other business owners.
8. Facilitate collaboration among business and community leaders, city staff, DECI and the BID districts.



POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT SITES

Every property identified as a redevelopment possibility is unique due to its location; both its specific site and economic and geographic situation. When analyzing potential redevelopment sites, there are several universal requirements to be considered; including environmental reports, market studies, appraisals, value and special assessments, tax delinquencies, ownership, existing property easements and other similar documents and data. All of these requirements will need to be researched in an early phase of and during the redevelopment process.

THE HAYMARKET SITE

This site includes a privately held property on Eau Claire Street, an adjoining City owned parking lot, and a block of properties on Graham Avenue. All of the properties front either the Eau Claire River or the Chippewa River.

This redevelopment parcel is the key redevelopment site in all of downtown. Its presence across from Phoenix Park, the wonderful river views from this precipice of land, and the size of the development site make it an incredible opportunity for the downtown and the community.

The City should support and foster development on this site, as it will be a tremendous key to repositioning the downtown and nurturing other redevelopment nearby. The City, DECI and BID should support the potential that this development could bring to the downtown and what it could mean for the future.

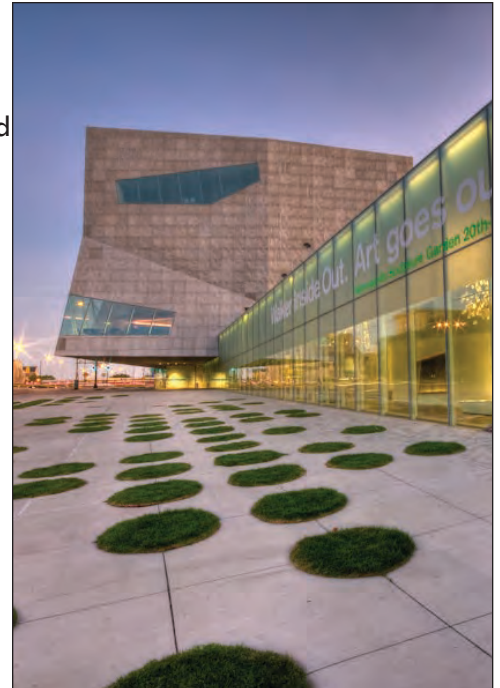


Encourage this redevelopment by:

1. Supporting the design and development of a river front pedestrian/ bicycle trail from the Haymarket site to the pedestrian bridge at Grand Avenue.
2. Supporting the future development of a pedestrian/bike bridge from Phoenix Park to the site.
3. Applying primary streetscape features to Graham Avenue.
4. Providing viable and applicable financing mechanism that would bridge economic gaps.

The City should request that the development:

1. Provide for a building design that is fitting to the area, and quality of nature.
2. Provide for multiple ways for the public to access the river front.
3. Provide for public space along the river front.
4. Provide river views when looking down Eau Claire Street if at all possible.
5. Provide for maximum allowable parking needs on site.



THE WOOD MOTORS SITE

The former Wood Motors site is situated on what could be considered the perimeter of the South Barstow Downtown District, east of Farwell Street, between Lake and Gray Streets. The Wood Motors site is sized and configured well for development purposes and has the added benefit of being void of buildings (to be razed) and residences and business (to be relocated).

However, when reviewed in totality, the District has an under served need for parking in the core of the district, which inhibits shoppers and restricts desirability for new retail to locate in the District. One concept for the highest and best use of the Wood Motors site is to move the Transit Center from its existing site to the east end of the Wood Motors block and to continue to utilize the remainder of the block for surface parking. The resulting benefit is to use the existing transit center site for long term parking as mentioned earlier in the Strategic Parking Recommendation.

Also, as mentioned in the Strategic Streetscape section, incorporate pleasant redesign of the existing transit site with softening landscaping and lighting. This surface parking lot then becomes the preferred parking site for nearly all of Barstow Street (but for its own on- street parking). Although this is a great future development site, we feel that currently there are higher priority redevelopment opportunities that exist on Barstow, Graham and along the Chippewa River.



THE PARKING STRUCTURE ON GRAHAM STREET

The Graham Avenue parking facility exists as two levels consisting of approximately 160 stalls serving adjacent office and other commercial/ retail uses. It's important to know whether this structure was originally designed and constructed to support development of its air space. Constructing parking (either surface or structure) on waterfront property is neither sought-after nor the highest and best use of waterfront land unless it provides for development on its upper levels. The structure measures approximately 160' by 120' consuming approximately 20,000 sq. feet of property or .44 of one acre; very similarly sized to the residential River Plaza development to its south.

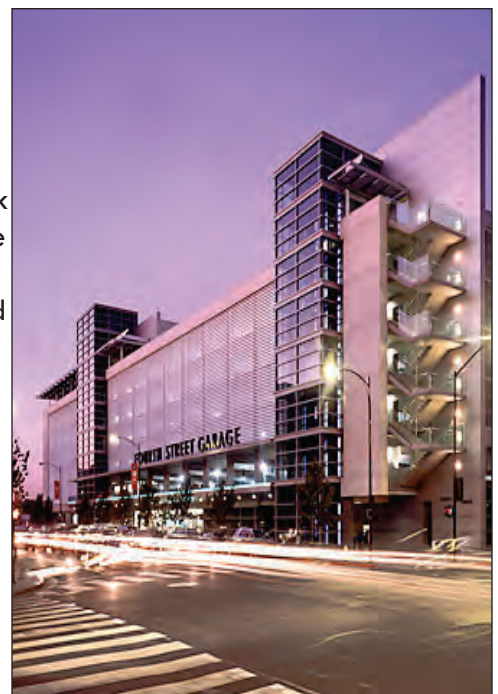
If structurally able, it is suggested that a taxable development be considered on top of, or over the Graham Avenue parking facility. This location would be ripe for higher end residential units, such as apartments, condominiums or townhomes if City building and fire codes would permit. Again, if structurally possible and code compliant, another idea might be to include one level of professional office space and two or more levels of residential development. Whether to be constructed on top of the existing parking structure or straddling the existing structure with new construction; the air space above the parking structure is developable and is correctly been identified as a redevelopment opportunity. The current parking demands of this structure need further study, as well as a final determination of the structural capabilities. Once this information is verified, exploration of this site by potential housing developers could begin.



THE PUBLIC PARKING LOT ON GRAND AND BARSTOW

The surface parking lot at the corner of Grand Avenue and Barstow Street could be considered redundant due to the fact that it sits on the same block as the existing downtown parking ramp. However, it serves a vital purpose for the Children's Museum and other retail and service businesses in the area particularly on Barstow Street. Currently, it provides not only needed parking for the area, but also multi-use event space that is critical for the vitality of the downtown.

Considering recommendations elsewhere in this document for the enhancement of Grand Avenue's "Live on Grand!", proposed green space and future redevelopment of blighted properties, the need for surface parking in this area remains critical enough to retain this lot as is. As a stand-alone site for redevelopment purposes, this surface parking lot is small with a capacity of only 30+ parking stalls. Currently, its value lies in that this parking lot is the only parking available of Barstow Street between Eau Claire



and Lake Street. Eventually the property also will lie at the eastern end of the proposed pedestrian walkway and ‘greening of Grand Avenue’ and the “Live On Grand!” entertainment complex.

As with many other possible redevelopment sites, its importance may be best realized once the hotel/convention center block is further studied. Redevelopment of this site should be reevaluated in the future but the recommendation for this property at this time is to continue its present use. Given that the property is privately held, and under lease to the City of Eau Claire, continued discussions with this property owner is critical to the long-term potential of this site.

THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Located east of Dewey Street between Grand Avenue and Main Street the School Administration property is one block from City Hall and only slightly more from the Library. The property is immediately adjacent to the monolithic communications building and appears more closely aligned with the surrounding residential character of its neighborhood than connected to the Historic District due to grade changes, the Farwell Street thoroughfare and distance to the Rivers.

Housing in any downtown is a critical component of vitality and success. Supporting the right opportunities for additional housing in downtown Eau Claire – apartments, townhomes, lofts and condos; for all types of users – students, seniors, young professionals, families and singles should always be a priority for DECI, the BID and the City of Eau Claire.

The UW-Eau Claire Master Plan supports ‘off-campus, upper classmen housing in higher density to promote redevelopment and retail demand in close proximity to the Water Street campus precinct’. Given the UW’s interest in off-campus housing, it would be appropriate to explore with them the potential of such housing in the South Barstow BID area.

The School Administration Building may offer a new housing opportunity. Redevelopment of such properties, due to the age of the structure, internal re-configuring of space(s) presents certain challenges. An example of a similar rehab is the former Wausau East High School which was redeveloped into apartments with full amenities by Stone House Development, Inc from Madison, Wisconsin. This Wausau development can be viewed at www.stonehousedevelopment.com.

Together with its location advantage, the School Administration Building is listed on the national Register of Historic Places, which provides additional significant tax credits to owners who rehabilitate historic properties in accordance with preservation guidelines. In many instances these tax credits



are the only way to redevelop properties in the current development and financial environment.

ACTION STEPS

A considerable amount of time and energy has gone into this planning process. DECI and the BID should capitalize on their positive work; and begin an effort to energize stakeholders and generate an increasing amount of momentum around downtown revitalization. Although plans and recommendations are only as good as their ability to be implemented, it is believed by this team of consultants that the bold priorities laid out below are indeed readily implementable and would create the energy and enthusiasm sought after by all stakeholder groups.

1. Develop a stronger working relationship between the BID and DECI. Both groups are invested in the redevelopment and revitalization of this area, but there seems to be a lack of cohesiveness between the two organizations. To accomplish bold change, you need everyone sharing a common goal and plan for the betterment of downtown. Analyze how the two groups are tasked to worked together and seek out positive leaders to help implement priority issues. This is a time to set aside personal agendas, be open to ideas that will serve the greater whole, and commit to being part of a cohesive implementation team.
2. The UW-Eau Claire is an important, strategic partner. Whether they have future space needs that could be accommodated in the downtown area – i.e. housing, classroom or office space, arts facilities, etc. - or they utilize other properties that may result in the relocation of groups that could also be accommodated into the downtown – tracking and maintaining a close relationship with the UW is critical. Make sure that DECI and/or the BID have a representative who is fostering such communication, and keeping the UW aware of development opportunities in this area.
3. Organize a specific committee that will work on a business recruitment and retention plan. See the business recruitment and retention outline at the end of this report.
4. Organize a specific committee that will handle developer outreach. Today, developers are less likely to be out seeking new projects and the developer pool is significantly smaller. Developer recruitment requires a planned effort, with the goal of matching the right project with the right, qualified developer. This recruitment effort demands that there is a total understanding of the project desired, the development financial criteria, as well as the financial incentives that are available to assist a developer.

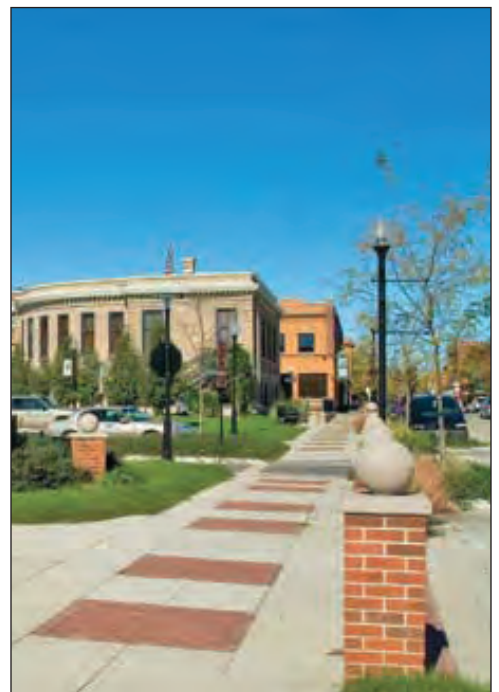


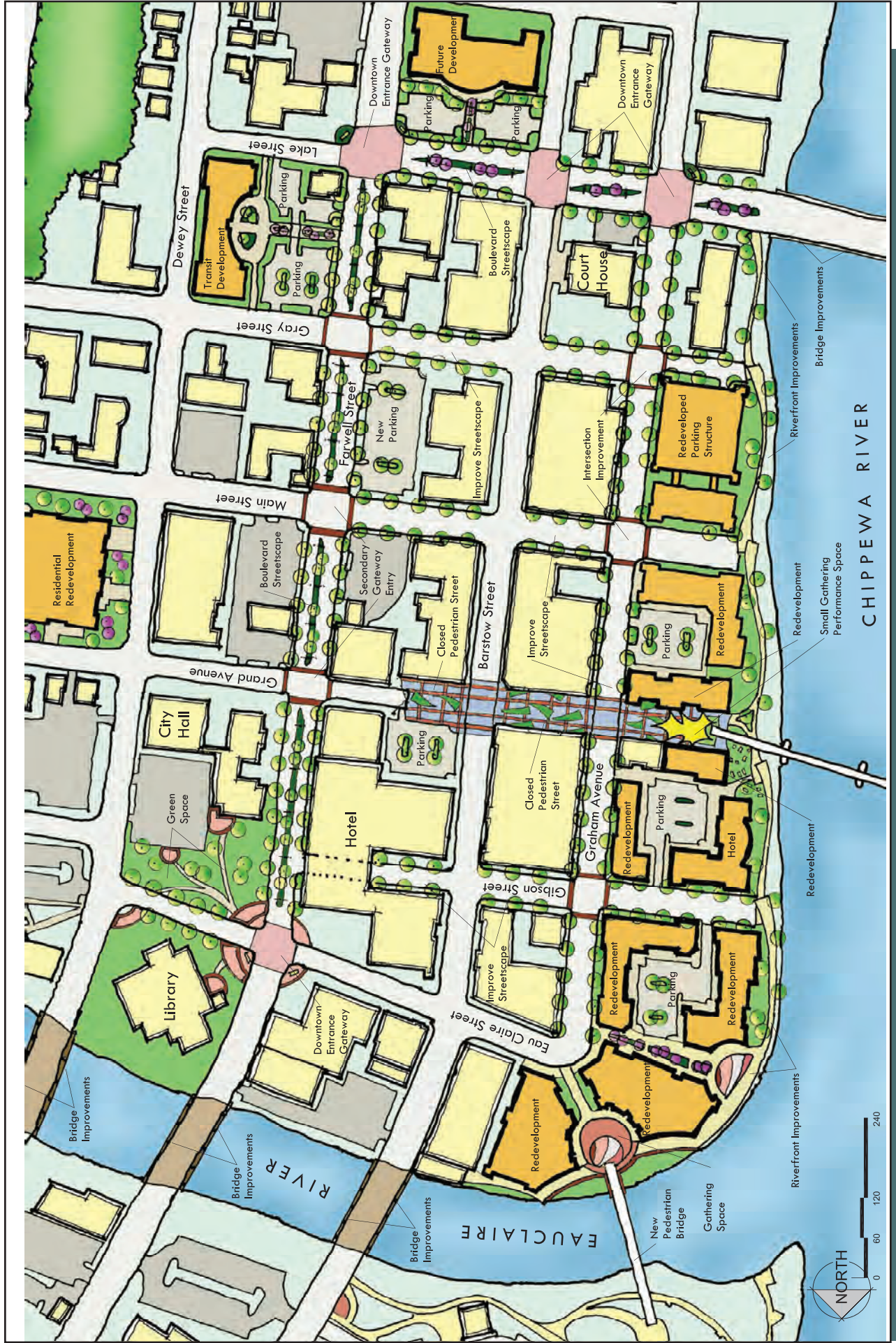
5. The RDA should create an inventory of privately owned redevelopment sites. Identify properties which are either blighted or underutilized, which might be available for a new use, new development, green space, public art space, or even infill parking. Research current owners, value assessments, zoning, easements, leases, environmental status and delinquencies.
6. Monitor downtown properties that may play a role in long-term redevelopment but are still serving a viable use at this time. Vision planning includes looking at properties that are neither blighted or underutilized, but over time could create a new opportunity. DECI, the BID and/or the RDA should open dialogues with such property owners so that there is an awareness of any future sales or changes in need by the current owner.
7. Create a destination - seek out a developer(s) to create "Live On Grand!" This pedestrian plaza concept includes a multi-use entertainment development, patterned after "Live On 4th Street" in Louisville, Kentucky. The proposed development would consist of vacating Grand Avenue from Graham Street to the river, constructing a roof or cover over that portion of Grand Avenue. Incorporate a portion of the pedestrian walkway over the river into the entertainment complex, renovate and utilize the historic contributing properties into the new development. Develop new retail on the south side of Graham to bookend the entertainment area. "Live On Grand!" would offer retailing, live music, food and beverage and spaces for events and celebrations.
8. Continue the above mentioned development and vacate Grand Avenue from Graham to Barstow and Barstow (halfway) to Farwell. Leave current access to the parking lot at Grand and Barstow. Utilize these vacated streets as new green space and pedestrian walkways connecting the riverfront area to Farwell and City Hall. In the future, the parking lot at Grand and Barstow could be a wonderful future green space / town square. This parking lot should not be vacated until a complete parking study has been accomplished and parking demands are adequately dealt with in other ways.
9. Conduct a current downtown parking study specifically looking at the 200, 300 and 400 blocks of Barstow Street. In order to revitalize and grow downtown, parking in general must be a priority consideration. DECI, the BID and a representative from the City of Eau Claire Planning Department should develop a strategic focus group about this recommendation and consider options as to how such a study could be funded.
10. The City of Eau Claire should study the implications of moving the Transit Center to the northeast end of the Wood Motors lot and create long



term employee parking on a small portion of the current Transit Center site.

11. Streetscape is important to defining an area. One of the initial steps that could be taken would be to continue developing a lighting plan for all bridges – vehicular and pedestrian. Potentially model this after the lighting and design plan on the Dewey Street Bridge
12. Create a riverfront trail from the Haymarket site to Lake Street. This trail should be wide enough to be shared by all users, i.e. pedestrians and bicycles, offering “hop off” points and interpretive signage or downtown information along the way.
13. Look for opportunities in the adventure tourism market, including canoe or kayak events, tubing events, and fishing events. Explore event oriented bike rides, Civil War memorial, multi-faceted, technologically oriented scavenger hunts, pumpkin boat races on the river and more.
14. Identify the rivers with signage.
15. Continue and more formally designate the area as a “cultural district.”
16. Encourage and support the upgrade of Graham Avenue.
17. Encourage more housing in the downtown district.
18. Support higher density in the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.
19. Recommend the City continue and implement downtown way-finding signage.
20. Recommend the City develop a downtown program and guidelines for new and replacement trees.
21. Recommend and give input to the City for a general plan for pedestrian street level lighting in the downtown.
22. Work with the City to review and make recommendations to the downtown sign code regulations.
23. Keep property owners near redevelopment sites involved in future planning efforts and informed of any ongoing analysis of concepts.

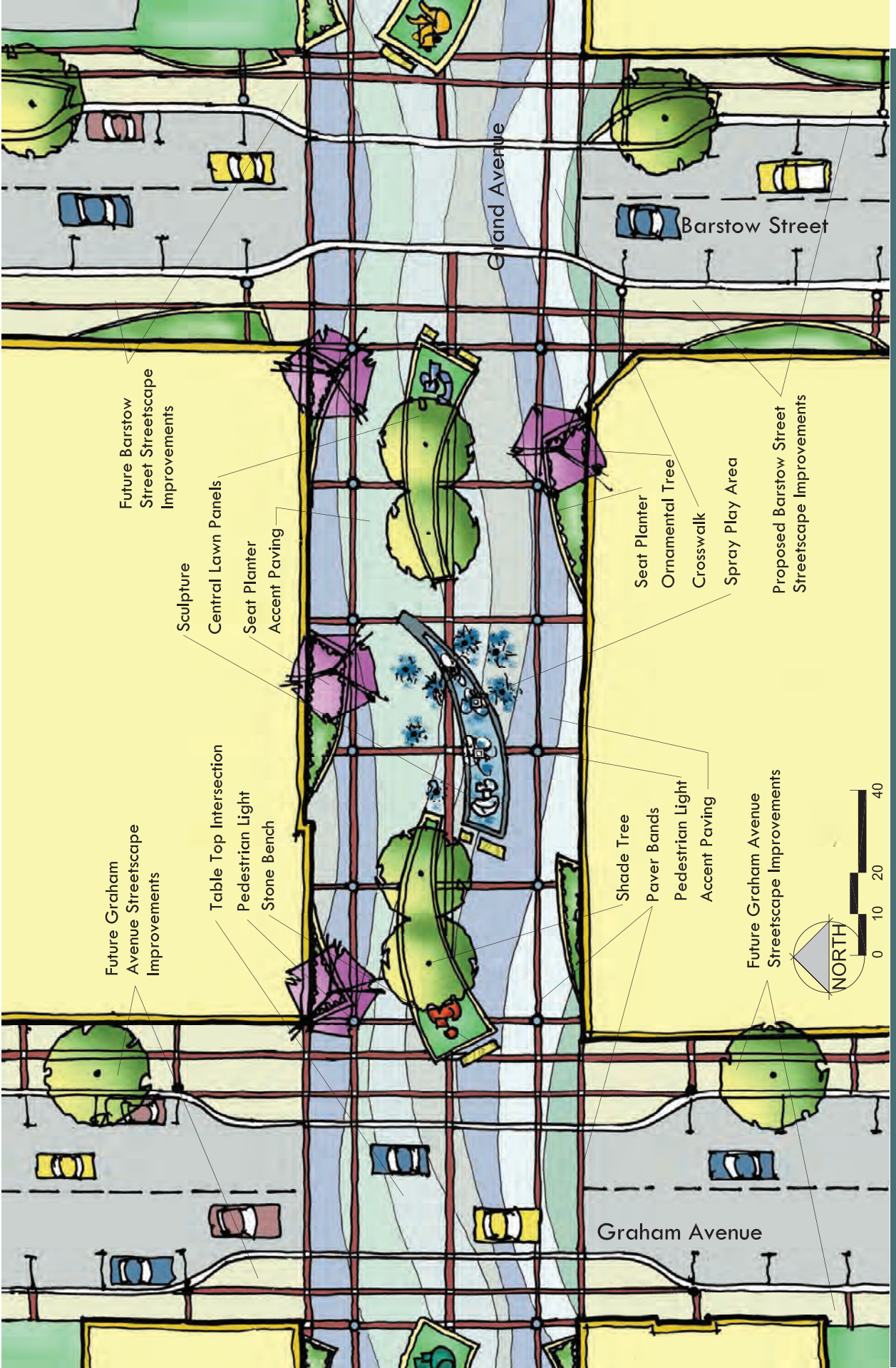




Downtown Riverfront District Master Plan



Farwell Gateway Intersection

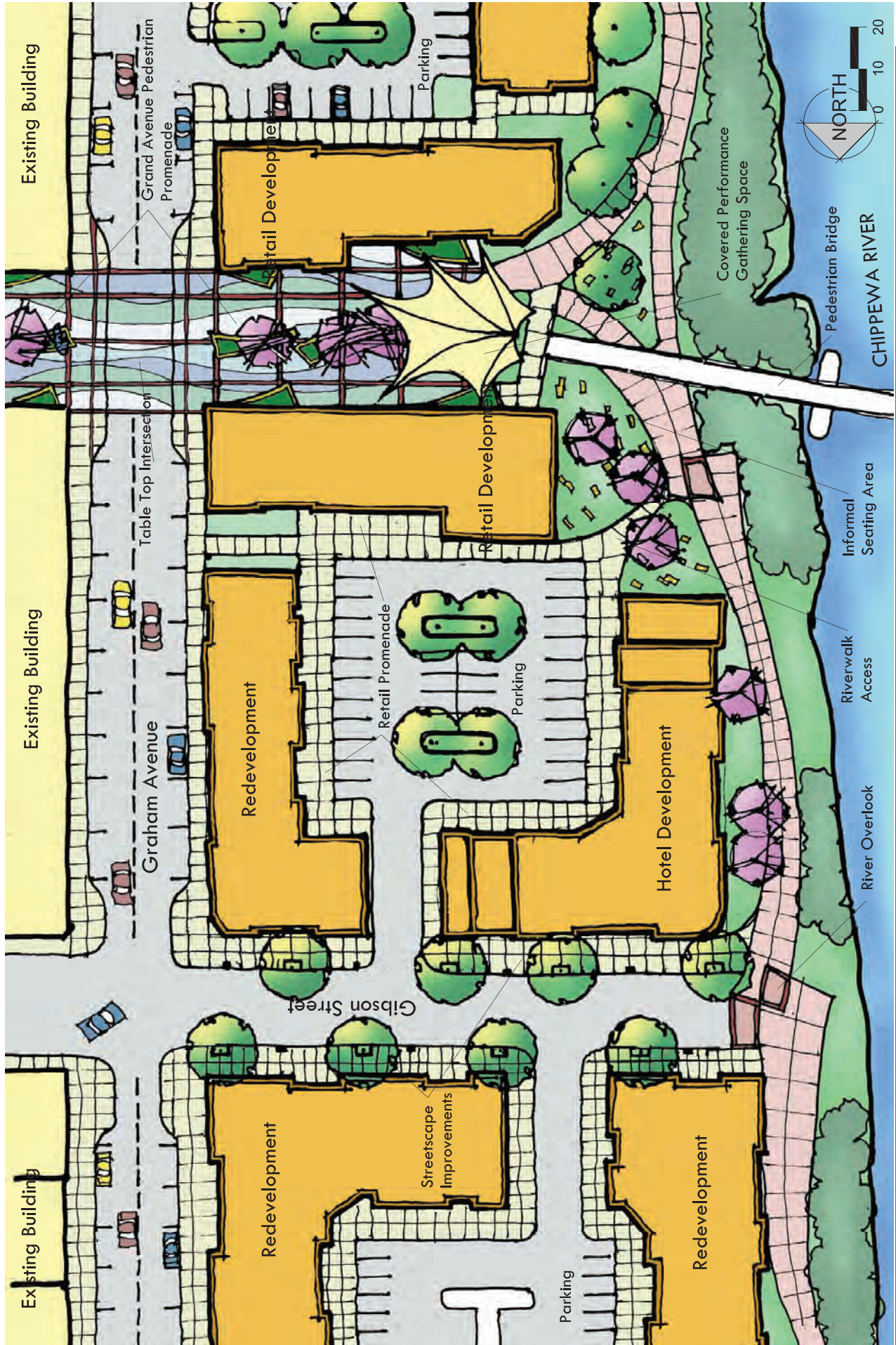


The Grand - Pedestrian Promenade



James Feeckel / JG, 2012

The Grand - Pedestrian Promenade - Illustration



Grand to Gibson Riverfront Redevelopment



Gibson To Grand Riverfront Redevelopment - Illustration

DOWNTOWN EAU CLAIRE

MARKET DATA AND DEMOGRAPHICS

As a part of the market review, an extensive report of demographic information was collected. Reports include a Community Comparison Report, Comprehensive Trend Report, Retail Market Potential, Demographic Income Profile, Recreation Expenditures and a 2015 Retail MarketPlace Forecast and Lifestyle Report. Demographics reports were chosen for a 1/2 mile, a 1 mile, and a 2 mile radius from the center of the study area.

Let's first look at general trends:

	1/2 mile	1 mile	2 miles
Population 2010	3,566	13,643	35,921
Population 2015	3,588	13,749	36,284
Households 2010	1,471	5,887	14,178
Households 2015	1,494	5,980	14,440
Median HH Income 2010	\$31,765	\$34,241	\$40,573
Median HH Income 2015	\$36,682	\$40,573	\$50,108
Owner Occupied 2010	416	2,070	7,078
Owner Occupied 2015	424	2,108	7,253
Renter Occupied 2010	1,055	3,817	7,099
Renter Occupied 2015	1,070	3,872	7,188
Median Age 2010	27.2	25.0	28.2
Median Age 2015	27.8	25.3	28.7

Although there is only modest projected growth in each category, at least the trend is not static or going backward. As typical with most communities, the median age becomes slightly higher.

Lifestyle / Tapestry Segments:

Another way demographers look at a local market is by profiling residents. Demographic, lifestyle and spending data can provide insight into local consumer buyer behaviors and preferences – these are called Tapestry Segments. Here is a brief overview of the 1/2 mile, 1 mile and 2 mile areas:

In the 1/2 mile radius - 57.6% of residents are considered College Towns, and 42.4% are Great Expectations. Education is the key focus for College Towns residents. College and graduate school enrollment is 41 percent and the media age for this market is 24.4 years, with a high concentration of 18-24 year olds. They frequently eat out, order in, own a laptop computer, jog, play pool, attend concerts and college games and go to bars.

Great Expectations neighborhoods are located throughout the country, with higher proportions found in the Midwest and South. Young singles and married couple families dominate. The median age is 33.2 years, and the labor force participation is high. Approximately 1/2 of the households are owner occupied. Great Expectations residents enjoy a young and active life style; they go out to dinner, movies, bars and nightclubs.

In the 1 mile radius – we now have 45.3% as College Towns, 29.1% are Great Expectations, but we have added 12.9% as Rustbelt Traditions, 9.4% as Dorms to Diplomas and 3.2% as Midlife Junctions.

Rustbelt Traditions neighborhoods are the backbone of older, industrial cities bordering the Great Lakes. Most employed residents work in the service, manufacturing and retail industries. Most residents own and live in modest single family homes. The median age is 36.1 years. Residents prefer to use a credit union and invest in CD's.

See the complete demographic package for further information on Dorms to Diplomas and Midlife Junctions.

In the 2 mile radius – College Towns remains the dominate segment at 26.6%, with Great Expectations at 20.2%, Rustbelt at 15.7%, Midlife Junction at 7.9% and Dorms to Diplomas at 5.8%.

What this particular report demonstrates is the significant effect of the UW campus within the community, as consumers. Retail and service businesses in the downtown should acknowledge this consumer profile, and look for goods and services that would satisfy this group.

2015 Retail MarketPlace Forecast:

Another demographic tool is the Retail MarketPlace Forecast. This study looks at the potential demand, and then the supply of certain retail categories. According to this forecast for 2015, within a half mile radius of S. Barstow Street, there is an over-supply of dining and drinking establishments, and health and personal care stores. However, there is a demand for clothing, general merchandise, groceries and specialty foods, beer, wine and liquor stores.

Within a one-mile radius you do pick up some demand for limited-service eating establishments, and home furnishing retailers. In the two-mile radius you also pick up the demand for used merchandise stores, sporting goods, and book stores.

This information will be useful as an active business recruitment plan is begun, and may help set a direction on marketplace opportunities. The following is a portion of the 1/2 mile radius study. Note, that the Retail Gap numbers in green represent the unmet demand, and the Retail Gap numbers in red represent an oversupply of product.

Summary Demographics

2015 Population 3,705
2015 Households 1,539
2015 Per Capita Income \$21,057

	NAICS	Demand	Supply	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Industry Summary		(Retail Potential)	(Retail Sales)			
Total Retail Trade and Food & Drink	44-45,722	\$26,890,961	\$34,778,980	-7,888,019	-12.8	92
Total Retail Trade	44-45	\$22,723,001	\$23,331,169	-608,167	-1.3	63
Total Food & Drink	722	\$4,167,960	\$11,447,811	-7,279,852	-46.6	29

	NAICS	Demand	Supply	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Industry Group		(Retail Potential)	(Retail Sales)			
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	441	\$5,200,821	\$243,515	4,957,306	91.1	1
Automobile Dealers	4411	\$4,431,394	\$243,515	4,187,879	89.6	1
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	4412	\$364,468	\$0	364,468	100.0	0
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	4413	\$404,959	\$0	404,959	100.0	0
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	442	\$574,856	\$1,713,628	-1,138,771	-49.8	2
Furniture Stores	4421	\$439,136	\$1,336,463	-897,327	-50.5	1
Home Furnishings Stores	4422	\$135,720	\$377,164	-241,444	-47.1	2
Electronics & Appliance Stores	4431	\$815,164	\$3,597,365	-2,782,201	-63.1	11
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	444	\$684,543	\$253,336	431,207	46.0	2
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	4441	\$591,467	\$253,336	338,131	40.0	2
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	4442	\$93,076	\$0	93,076	100.0	0

	NAICS	Demand	Supply	Retail Gap	Leakage/Surplus Factor	Number of Businesses
Industry Group		(Retail Potential)	(Retail Sales)			
Food & Beverage Stores	445	\$3,818,671	\$1,271,198	2,547,474	50.0	3
Grocery Stores	4451	\$3,131,172	\$1,271,198	1,859,975	42.2	3
Specialty Food Stores	4452	\$53,306	\$0	53,306	100.0	0
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	4453	\$634,193	\$0	634,193	100.0	0
Health & Personal Care Stores	446,4461	\$745,557	\$6,192,582	-5,447,025	-78.5	6
Gasoline Stations	447,4471	\$4,492,831	\$5,559,244	-1,066,412	-10.6	2
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	448	\$915,854	\$391,933	523,921	40.1	3
Clothing Stores	4481	\$710,155	\$265,966	444,190	45.5	2
Shoe Stores	4482	\$77,436	\$0	77,436	100.0	0
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	4483	\$128,263	\$125,967	2,296	0.9	1
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	451	\$389,142	\$1,595,594	-1,206,452-60.8	-60.8	14
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	4511	\$154,671	\$862,936	-708,265	-69.6	11
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	4512	\$234,471	\$732,658	-498,187	-51.5	3
General Merchandise Stores	452	\$4,157,909	\$0	4,157,909	100.0	0
Department Stores Excluding						
Leased Depts.	4521	\$1,919,680	\$0	1,919,680	100.0	0
Other General	4529	\$2,238,229	\$0	2,238,229	100.0	0
Merchandise Stores						
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	453	\$263,803	\$858,176	-594,373	-53.0	18
Florists	4531	\$13,550	\$108,660	95,110	-77.8	2

Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	4532	\$95,636-	\$243,907	-148,271	-43.7	6
Used Merchandise Stores	4533	\$27,639-	\$84,875	-57,236	-50.9	4
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	4539	\$126,979	\$420,734	-293,755	-53.6	6
Nonstore Retailers	454	\$663,849	\$1,654,599	-990,750	-42.7	2
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	4541	\$293,788	\$1,147,993	-854,205	-59.2	1
Vending Machine Operators	4542	\$96,156\$0	0\$	96,156	100.0	0
Direct Selling Establishments	4543	\$273,905	\$506,606	-232,701	-29.8	1
Food Services & Drinking Places	722	\$4,167,960	\$11,447,811	-7,279,852	-46.6	29
Full-Service Restaurants	7221	\$1,309,956	\$3,981,952	-2,671,995	-50.5	8
Limited-Service Eating Places	7222	\$2,414,780	\$2,694,115	-279,334	-5.5	4
Special Food Services	7223	\$210,144	\$1,618,855	-1,408,711	-77.0	2
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	7224	\$233,079	\$3,152,890	-2,919,811	-86.2	15

Data Note: Supply (retail sales) estimates sales to consumers by establishments. Sales to businesses are excluded. Demand (retail potential) estimates the expected amount spent by consumers at retail establishments. Supply and demand estimates are in current dollars. The Leakage/Surplus Factor presents a snapshot of retail opportunity. This is a measure of the relationship between supply and demand that ranges from +100 (total leakage) to -100 (total surplus). A positive value represents 'leakage' of retail opportunity outside the trade area. A negative value represents a surplus of retail sales, a market where customers are drawn in from outside the trade area. The Retail Gap represents the difference between Retail Potential and Retail Sales. Esri uses the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) to classify businesses by their primary type of economic activity. Retail establishments are classified into 27 industry groups in the Retail Trade sector, as well as four industry groups within the Food Services & Drinking Establishments subsector. The vintage of the Retail MarketPlace data on this report is 2015.

The complete demographic package, which includes many reports not noted above, can be reviewed in the Appendix of this report.

Retail / Office Analysis:

Each year, Commonwealth Development Corporation performs an Eau Claire Area Market Analysis. This summary includes the Cities of Eau Claire, Altoona, the Town of Washington and the Village of Lake Hallie. The report focuses on retail and general office properties and does not include automobile dealerships, industrial properties, financial institution branch offices, government owned buildings or hospitals.

As felt throughout the State, 2011 was a year of negligible new development or re-development. When and where there has been demand for office or retail space, it has been absorbed by existing product, somewhat helping vacancy rates.

Regarding Retail in the downtown: “Construction in the North Barstow Redevelopment District added retail space to Downtown Eau Claire and some new businesses in that area lowered the vacancy rate overall from 6.18% to 5.69%. The Downtown area, particularly the Phoenix Park development, appears to be gaining momentum with other projects in the planning stage.”

Regarding Office in the downtown: “Total office space in downtown Eau Claire was reduced by approximately 10,000 square feet due to reclassification of space - from office to retail, or other uses. Downtown Eau Claire has over 840,000 square feet of office space without considering government buildings, financial institution branch offices or hospital space. This clearly indicates that the downtown has by far, the most office space and the greatest daytime population of any of the other market sectors. The reduction in the total amount of office space, and some positive absorption reduced the downtown vacancy rate from 12.98% to 10.62%.”

The current soft development market is helping existing space to be absorbed, albeit in small amounts. The Eau Claire retail / office market is not growing substantially, but remains stable – which is a positive.

An important note to take away from the Commonweal report is the amount of office space in downtown, and how that translates to daytime population. Retail and service businesses need to consider this consumer segment as an important part of downtown, and look for new ways to satisfy or supply their daytime wants and needs.

The complete Commonweal Development Corporation, 2011 Eau Claire Area Market Analysis is provided in its entirety in the appendix of this report.

RETAIL TRENDS

Consumers have changed over the last 25 years. Today’s customers are much smarter, more sophisticated and more demanding than ever before. They have an expectation for low prices with a broad selection (such as Best Buy), or niche product lines with excellent service (such as Ann Taylor). Additionally, they have an unprecedented number of ways to shop outside of the traditional retail store, i.e. specialty catalogs, home shopping networks like QVC who launch 250 new products each week, firms selling via in-home party events, telemarketers selling hundreds of products utilizing infomercials, and more than 100,000 world wide web based retailing sites, each one taking their piece of the retail expenditures pie.

The economy of recent years has totally changed the face of retailing. For the majority of consumers, buying habits have dramatically shifted away from the “wants” to the “needs”, and the higher price points to the affordable price points. National trends can tell you what kind of businesses are more likely to be “in the market” and viable in our current economic times.

A good monitor of these trends is to look at which national retailers are opening the most new stores in 2011. The number to the left indicate the total number of U.S. stores each retailer anticipated opening domestically in 2011. All of these retailers reflect affordable price points, or “do it yourself”, such as Advance Auto Parts and Auto Zone.

-
1. Dollar General
 2. Dunkin Donuts
 3. Family Dollar
 4. Quizno's
 5. 275 CVS Pharmacy
 6. 225 Walgreens
 7. 200 Advance Auto Parts
 8. 200 Five Guys Burgers and Fries
 9. 200 GameStop
 10. 140 Auto Zone
 11. 130 Popeye's Restaurants

Another great category to follow is franchising. Entrepreneur Magazine identified 10 franchise categories to watch in 2011. They were services that “people can't afford to live without, such as child care and healthcare, or luxuries made more affordable through franchising, like fitness and spa services, these are businesses that kept growing strong right through the recession and show no signs of slowing”.

Child Care

Fitness

Green – Eco-conscious businesses

Spa Services

Tutoring

Health Services

Moving & Storage

Senior Care

Sandwiches

Pets

Other interesting consumer and retail trends to consider:

Customers are more connected and in control. By 2015, technology will pervade our living and shopping experiences. Consumers will have even more instant access to comparison pricing, “deals of the day” websites, and of course the ability to shop the world on-line.

The future of retail is selling less of more. With expanded access, consumers will buy less of what's “popular” and more of what “suits me”. Retailers that can figure out how to deliver what niche markets are looking for will reap the profits.

Retailers will need to allow their customers to purchase when and where they want to. That includes traditional in-store commerce, e-commerce, m-commerce (mobile), f-commerce (Facebook), s-commerce (social) and v-commerce (video enabled like YouTube).

Vintage retail (secondhand) will continue to be an emerging trend. Used will be huge, it is eco-conscious and affordable.

Retailers will define themselves more by the customers they serve, rather than the products they sell. Retailers will grow by positioning themselves as more than just purveyors of “stuff” but also as one-stop purveyors of lifestyles or need states.

Shopping centers of the future will shift with the demise of the anchor store as the main draw. The place becomes the destination. Consumers will be attracted to areas that offer the ultimate in simplification and convenience – a “pre-packaged total lifestyle experience” where busy consumers can shop, work, socialize, eat, be entertained and live. Sounds like a healthy downtown!

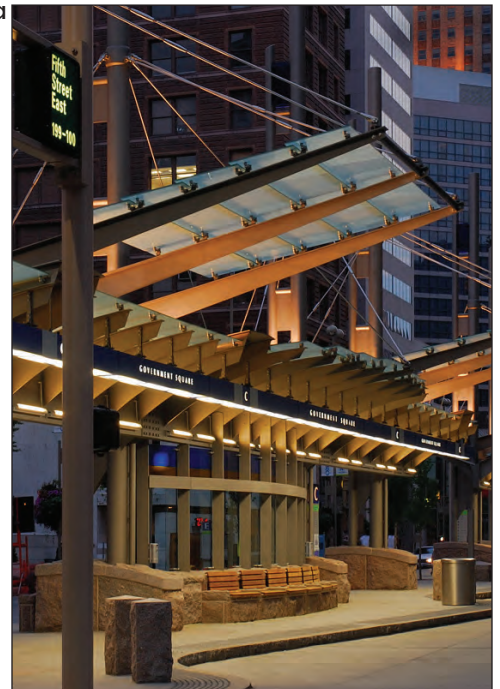
HOW YOU CAN COMPETE

Successful retailers know that in good times or in bad, they must focus on core retailing principals. Selection, value, customer service, innovation and convenience, are the foundation to a sustainable business. Briefly, let’s look at each category:

Selection: Overall, selection has topped out as the number one reason that customers choose a place to shop, followed by convenience and then pricing. Shoppers define selection as being “what I want is always in stock”, “a good selection” and “unique merchandise”.

Value: Today’s consumers demand value, which can be defined as low prices, or competitive pricing for the quality of merchandise being purchased. Discounters such as Best Buy, Target and Kohl’s Department Store have raised the bar with product quality at value pricing, and they have realized that perceived value is more than just low price. Even more traditional department stores have found that they can only be competitive in the market by continually running deep discounted sales to attract customers.

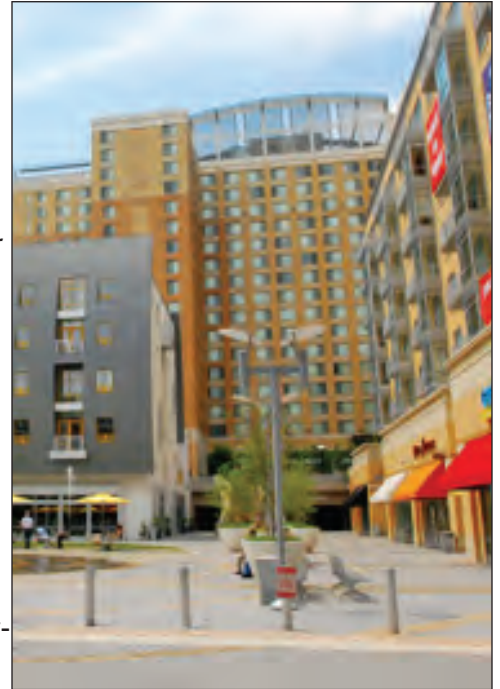
Customer Service: Customer service is an important component to all businesses, but especially those who may not market themselves as a “value” oriented retailer. Even in difficult economic times, the consumer desires quality service. Good service means products are in stock; staff is knowledgeable and helpful; and shopping is an easy and pleasant experience.



Innovation: Smart retailers understand that you simply can't compete in today's retail world by doing business "the same old way", and that they must be innovative in their approach. Today's customers are too smart, sophisticated and demanding, and they are seeking out retailers that have a vision and an intuition for their retail category. These retailers are watching trends and spending dollars to understand their customers. They know that new customer acquisition costs ten times more as current customer retention, and they work hard to provide the products, customer service and pricing that will keep their customers coming back.

Convenience: Lastly, customers are looking for the "ease" of the shopping experience. This would include: ease of locating the storefront (great signage, inviting windows that tell your story); ease of parking (adjacent parking, street parking or directional signage that is simple to read and follow); ease of locating the merchandise they want (well designed stores with identifiable categories of merchandise, excellent customer service); ease of transaction (well-trained and staffed register counters, clear understandings of store policies about returns, etc., assistance to take packages to their car if needed). Retailers need to examine every way that they can simplify their customer's needs and enhance their overall shopping experience.

Retail and service businesses have "softened" over the past two years with less new store/business openings. Current economic conditions have dealt a blow on the national, regional and local business fronts. However, those businesses that pay careful attention to their market and their operations will weather this period, and come out stronger. It's definitely a time for independent businesses to be as smart as possible and look for ways to create a competitive edge. Today consumers want a compelling reason to spend. They want to shop in stores where the service is attentive and knowledgeable, the prices are fair and the quality of the product is consistent and reliable. Retailers must have a clear understanding of their key internal strengths, their competition, and most importantly, their customer.



BUSINESS RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

BUSINESS RETENTION

One of the most important components of maintaining a downtown business district is to have healthy merchants. Healthy merchants are those that are successfully meeting their market niche, and who are achieving their own goals for growth and financial viability. Very often, no one within the community is really monitoring the state of

their downtown businesses. For example, is it known which businesses are doing well (and why?), which businesses that may be slipping (and why?), which businesses that could benefit from specific technical assistance (help in marketing merchandising, inventory control, etc.), those business owners who want to retire or sell their businesses, those businesses who want to move to larger or smaller space, etc.

A Business Retention/Recruitment Committee should provide a resource data bank for ongoing support to local businesses. This support can stabilize or even save a business by offering resources (technical assistance, workshops, training, speakers, connections, referrals, etc.) in store merchandising, inventory control and buying, internet opportunities, financial planning, promotion/marketing/advertising, customer service, employee hiring/retention and succession planning. Additionally, programs that offer façade design and financing assistance, joint marketing plans, downtown promotions or events that increase pedestrian traffic, ongoing newsletters, updated consumer surveys, demographics and marketing materials can all be of assistance to existing businesses.

BUSINESS RECRUITMENT

The other half of the work for this committee is obviously business recruitment. As we better understand the current situation of our existing merchants, we will be able to identify those market areas that could be expanded upon or filled by a new business. There are many tasks for a Business Recruitment Committee, some of which are:

1. Establish and maintain a data base of all businesses by category.
2. Establish and maintain a database of relevant property information.
3. Update or conduct a consumer survey.
4. Update or conduct a business survey.
5. Assess the current tenant mix.
6. Understand market conditions and trends that impact business district vitality.
7. Establish a recruitment action plan.

Knowledge is strength when trying to find the right businesses for your downtown district. Knowing everything you can about your downtown, such as your successful merchants, your not-so-successful merchants, your demographics, your real estate, your zoning or signage constraints, planned public improvements, etc. will give your community the edge in the recruitment process.

The process of business recruitment requires a plan of action that is organized, supported by a group of interested and involved persons, and has the financial means to do the necessary work. The following is a series of steps that a business recruitment effort can use to move forward:

- 1. Form a Business Recruitment/Expansion/Retention Committee:** The founding members of this group are extremely important for establishing the enthusiasm, momentum, professionalism and organization that will be needed. The initial impetus for forming this group may come from a grass roots effort within the community, but typically happens with the guidance of a Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Group, a merchants association or a BID. The committee should represent a diverse group within the community, i.e. accountants, attorneys, property owners, retailers, Realtors. These need to be people who can represent the “big picture” of the community and can leave their personal agendas at the door. They need to be problem

solvers, and action oriented. This committee and process needs effective leadership to stay on track and organized. Carefully choose a committed and enthusiastic leader. Attitude counts! Remember, that all kinds of support are important to this committee, so take contributions of money and services whenever possible.

- 2. Draft a Work Plan:** The first step for this group is to start with an initial work plan. All initial steps should be listed and prioritized. These steps might include the following: gather current data and demographics about the community; inventory the real estate in the target area, particularly the vacant or underutilized buildings; meet with the property owners of these vacant or underutilized buildings to garner their support in the process; utilize market data in this report; outline all incentives for business and retail development, create a simple sales package; develop your prospect list, etc. Realistic time frames need to be assigned to every step. The right committee member(s) need to be assigned to every step (match skills to tasks). Most importantly, involve the community in your work. Let everyone know that you are beginning this task and their assistance, ideas and contacts will be valuable to the process. This work plan is not static and should be reviewed, updated and modified as needed.
- 3. Lay the Groundwork for Business Recruitment:** The “business” of business recruitment is really being able to SELL your community is the right way, to the right parties. To sell anything, you must know as much about your product as possible. Gather all the data you can about your community, i.e. demographics, trade area definitions, financial incentives that may be available, tourist information, parking data, planned improvements, zoning and building code conditions or restrictions, traffic counts and pedestrian counts. Much of this data is available, and just needs to be compiled into a format that can be useful later on. As mentioned above, inventory the real estate and secure the cooperation of the building owners and the real estate brokers if the property is listed for sale or lease. You need to survey the business situation. This requires a look at the present businesses and why they are working, who are the “anchor” tenants, the previous failures or relocations, a current shopper profile and an estimate of potential retail demand. Identify all of the national retailers within a 30 minute drive time of Eau Claire. Retailers want to know about the trade area they will service. They look to know what the trade area looks like in terms of driving distance as defined in minutes, not just miles or rings. Look at competitive market areas for ideas on tenant types that may find your community a good match. All of the data should be analyzed to identify trends or niches that seem apparent, and used to support your community profile and image. Finally, this information will be the basis for developing a simple sales package that is interesting, informative and current. The package should summarize the major assets and cultivate a positive image of the community in the prospects mind.
- 4. Laying the Groundwork for Business Retention and Expansion:** Business Retention programs assist businesses to prevent their relocation or to help them survive in difficult times. Retention programs typically involve partnerships among public and private organizations that assess the assets and opportunities of individual companies through period surveys, interviews and visitations. The purpose is to establish relationships between community businesses and economic developers to strengthen existing companies, establish early warning systems to flag at-risk businesses that require assistance, and ensure that public programs meet local business needs. Eau Claire needs to concentrate efforts on ways to keep their healthy business strong and to provide necessary support to those that are not. A Retention/Recruitment organization should provide a foundation of resources and support to local businesses that might change the course of their existence. This support might include such resources (technical assistance, workshops, training, speakers, connections, referrals, etc.) as in store merchandising, inventory control and buying, internet opportunities, financial planning, promotion/marketing/advertising, customer service, employee hiring/retention and succession planning. Addition-

ally, programs that offer façade design and financing assistance, joint marketing plans, promotions or events that increase traffic, ongoing newsletters, updated consumer surveys demographics and marketing materials can all be of assistance to existing businesses.

- 5. Strengthen Business and Retail Entrepreneurship:** Communities today realize that they must prepare fertile ground for new businesses to grow and succeed. Entrepreneurship initiatives are a vital component of economic and community development. In Eau Claire, these initiatives might include creating entrepreneurship activities that showcase resources available to entrepreneurs; building a network of entrepreneurs utilizing various media such as Facebook and Twitter; identify local investors, i.e. Angel Network; provide marketing assistance for emerging entrepreneurs; provide a single source for local, regional and statewide incentive data; assist in the business development approval process; identify and manage current and potential physical and virtual incubators; develop a co-working arrangement with space to work, meet and connect with a professional creative community, i.e. Milwaukee’s “Bucketworks”; determine the need for additional resources or incentives for entrepreneurs; consider low cost housing and work space opportunities for artists/craftsmen.
- 6. Design an Ideal Tenant Mix:** This is perhaps the most subjective section of work. It requires evaluating the information you’ve gathered on the community, a look at your available real estate opportunities, and the likely business types that could succeed in your community. You will be looking for businesses that fill a market demand, can blend with and enhance existing businesses, can utilize the available vacant space wisely, creates a synergy and offers a uniqueness of business type, merchandise or style. Fortify your existing niches by targeting businesses that will give shoppers a deeper range of products or experiences. It can be useful to “lease” your vacancies on paper first. Create a lease plan of your target area and insert all current businesses and note the anchor tenants. Identify the vacancies and acknowledge their size and relationships to other businesses. Test your ideas in the vacant spaces and see if the idea has merit. For example, you’ve identified a potential opportunity for a specialty food/kitchen shop. You need to research this business type enough to understand their typical space needs. Does that match a vacancy you have? This type of business needs to be with like minded specialty shops, not between a hardware store and a plumbing shop, even if that’s where your vacancy is located. By going through this process, you can put your best foot forward as you introduce a specific space opportunity to a potential tenant.
- 7. Identifying Prospective Tenants:** Once you’ve identified an appropriate business type to target, the question remains...how do you find them? Consider the following ideas: 1) research this business category fully online, 2) you can purchase lists for just about any business category or product line, 3) utilize online telephone directories and city directories 4) collect retail merchant lists from other communities, 5) look for frequent advertisers in local and regional newspapers, 6) see if there is a trade association for this retail or business category and advertise in their trade publications, 7) utilize national retail tenant directories, 8) visit other communities, 8) network, network, network. Additionally, don’t forget to look in your own backyard...businesses that are currently operating out of homes, expansions of existing businesses, struggling businesses that might benefit from a more appropriate niche strategy, or current store managers that want to start their own business. Again, you must inform the rest of the community! Let everyone know what kind of business you are looking for - you’ll be surprised how these connections pay off. Keep your eyes and ears open, be creative and be selective. Business recruitment requires determination and time when seeking out the right businesses for your community.
- 8. Making Contact with Prospective Tenants:** The first contact one has with a prospective tenant is important. Whenever possible a personal contact is the best – whether in person or by phone. If the first contact must

be via written correspondence, make sure it is well-written letter and ready to garner their attention. Be personal when making a contact, and impress them with your knowledge of their business. You need to express why you feel your community would be a perfect match for their business type. A smooth, direct sales pitch should be developed to explain the benefits of this opportunity. Don't forget to talk about any incentives, and how your community is prepared and ready to assist a new business. Be patient with your contacts. Provide them with any other information they might need, don't speculate or guess about information you give them, and, if their answer is NO, turn that rejection into a referral!

- 9. Getting a Prospect to Say Yes!:** Even if a potential business is interested, how do you get them to complete the deal? The most important part is to make it so simple to work with you, that the "yes" will just happen. Every step of the way, you must be prepared to handle their objections, their concerns, and any obstacles that might come up. If they are concerned about financing their inventory or improvements, you take them to see the local banker. If they want outside dining but the zoning doesn't allow for it, help them work through the process with the municipality. If they object to some of the lease terms, assist in negotiating with the landlord. It's important to provide a single contact person for every prospective business to work with. This contact person is responsible for keeping negotiations moving and follow-up on all remaining details.
- 10. Retaining the Businesses You Recruit:** Your work is not complete once you have successfully found a new business for your community. It's important to generate a welcome for this business and make sure that they are settled in and operating according to their plans. Keep up contact with your business in both good times and bad. Involve the new business in community activities and organizations, and by all means, involve them in your future business recruitment efforts! They can speak from experience how the process worked and what changes could be made to the action plan.
- 11. Develop Your Sales System:** During your business retention/recruitment process, you need to critique your work plan and update it based on the experience you have had. You want to create a repeatable sales process that will work again. Keep all your contact files and sales materials updated. Reevaluate your retention and recruitment criteria for the next situation and modify it as necessary. Don't forget to get what ever help you need from...consultants, Realtors, leasing agents, developers, bankers, Wisconsin Department of Development, UW Extension, merchandising analysts, national demographic firms, etc.
- 12. Maximize Your Success!** When you have been successful in recruiting a new business or expanding an existing one, all efforts and contributions should be recognized. Celebrate a grand opening with your new business, run a special ad announcing the new business or expansion in your local paper, get the local paper to run a feature article about the business recruitment/retention work and your success, speak at the Rotary, Lions, etc. about your accomplishments. After the "dust has settled" make sure you get testimonials from the new business, their landlord, from elected officials, other businesses, etc. that you can use in your next round of recruitment.

WORKING WITH DEVELOPERS

Many communities must ponder how to position themselves to work with developers, or even how to attract developer interest in their community. With the current economic situation, new development is challenging for even the most qualified of developers. Multi-family housing development will likely lead developer interest, with other commercial development, (i.e. retail, office) following residential growth.

Sometimes, securing developer interest in a central business district redevelopment can be more challenging, due to the economic constraints or seemingly endless hurdles that must be overcome. Communities can help make their projects in these districts competitive with more typical development opportunities, if:

There is an overall redevelopment or master plan in place that acknowledges not only the specific project or area, but how that ties into the larger community
Leadership within the community, both public and private, is supportive of the master plan and its goals.
Design guidelines are in place.

1. Appropriate zoning is in place.
2. The community has control of the property.
3. The development process within the community is clear and directed, perhaps with one point of contact.
4. Community management and key decision makers are “on the same page”, so the development process doesn’t get bogged down in an inability to come to consensus.
5. All incentives that are available for this project are defined, and there is an understanding of how and who can use them.
6. A developer “hit list” is organized, reflecting the specific project and the developer’s capabilities.
7. A concise RFP is developed, with clear directives and a method for weighing responses.
8. Each RFP response is evaluated for how it supports the master plan aesthetically, financially and fulfills a market niche.



Appendix

COMMENTS FROM NOVEMBER 1, 2011 VISIONING SESSION

STREET SCAPE:

No access to the river
Eat by the river
Add connections to the river
Improve views to the river
Side streets are old need improving
Landscaping all along the riverfront
Capture opportunity of the river front by marketing as the front door rather than the back alley
Pedestrian mall or pedestrian oriented development along the riverfront
Keep greenspace along the river
Develop urban riverfront without losing natural character
Continue greenspace at City Hall
Winona MN changing the seasonal accents and decorations
Themed decorations to tie downtown together
Identity to let people know they are in the downtown
Flower and landscape change out
Create an area like Black River Falls downtown greenspace and informational area
Murals in the alleyways
Add greenspace at the intersections to add seasonal display and directional opportunities
No place for people to hang out
Convert High School back to High School – improve grounds to make as public greenspace
Greenspace on streetscape
Walking tour for sculptures
Kid Friendly fountain or interactive fountain
Green Pedestrian Mall at Grand – Retail facing the Mall
Want to see and touch get in and out of the river
Connect the downtown to the river
More landscaping on the ground
Signage
Building façade improvements
Development facing both ways along the river
 Streetscape side is business
 River side is pedestrian, housing, leisure, and landscape
Hotel parking ramp is ugly
Something artistic under ramp – collection of sculpture or something to draw people
Make it feel more inviting
Ramp is under utilized
Maybe add continuous mural on walls and columns
Activate under the ramp maybe skateboard park or play park active that will bring kids and parents
Boulevard Farwell

Spray play and surface spray fountain in Grand Pedestrian Street
Linear Ice skating element in grand
Melt the snow or haul it somewhere maybe use the snow in an urban park for sculpture or snow caves for kids
Buildings that are an extension of greenspace at the four corners - blur separation of buildings from greenspace
Create more gathering spaces like infinity teas Acoustic Café and the river confluence
Sculptures brought people to the downtown – keep it going with other similar events
Wipe out Riverfront and start over
Create small two people greenspace similar to Water Street
Teeter-totters in the streetscape to sit and have ice cream
Greenspace with children emphasis
Close off Grand Street and make Green
Make great pedestrian/green/gathering space at Grand between ped. bridge and Graham
Improve aesthetic of Graham
Expand sculpture walk
Historic Markers
Improve river front
 Spots of Shade
 Open up
No tree Haymarket area
Grand south keep trees
Access to buildings
Gathering areas
Buildings fairly close to Riverwalk
Keep views to river
Leave space between buildings and Riverwalk for green and ped space
Investigate closing off Grand and making tie to River
Destination gateways showing you are here
Secondary gateways at Main Barstow Grand and Lake
Archways physical structures
Pretty wayfinding (alluring, hot, sexy)
Main / Farwell Intersection is gateway to Hastings way
Green Parking – Color
Façade Improvements
Improve downtown lighting. It's too dark. Increase pedestrian lighting.
Riverfront
Green /Natural up to Grand
Lush green along paved bike trail
Transition to more urban from Grand to Barstow
Green = more residential scale, patio seating
Urban = Terracing (Seating above bike trail below)
 Buildings facing river
 Many connections to buildings from bike path
Design style
 Charm

Ivy
Wrought Iron
Brick with capstone
Design theme
 Tribute to historic past
 Intentional design to link the old with the new
Do something with the hotel parking structure aesthetic
Roof top festival and skate park
Utilize second story opportunities for gathering and events
Balconies
Confluence is a community space
Multiple green spaces around downtown
Investigate gathering space on Grand between Graham and River
Light on pedestrian bridges – LED
Acknowledge historic points of interest
Pedestrian kiosks – many
More sculpture
Poetry in signs and paving
Perpendicular business signs
Improve facades along Graham
No more mannequins in windows
No more creepy music – use local bands
Themed music and costume days Elvis, Beatles....
Independent music festivals
 Outdoor venue that can hold large events but still used for smaller events
Utilize courtyard greenspace
Putting more pattern and theme to the streetscape
Create seating along streetscape
Covered ganged parking for bikes
Garden space on buildings
Terraced elevated views
Create public opportunities on 2nd floor
Improve connections to river
Accommodate bikes
Streetscapes
 Arches
Cool lighting
Seating facing onto corners
Trees both sides
Adding more sculpture to the streets
Riverfront
 Seating along
Opportunity for bird watching
Add history into the walk

Open
Buildings fronting the river
Balconies
River side green Landside Built/Urban
St. Anthony Falls MN (example)
Need to touch the river

IMAGE AND IDENTITY:

No signs to get people here
What is the downtown foot traffic to central area?
People don't go downtown
It's old and tired but in transition!
People aren't familiar with what is here
They think nothing is downtown
Parking issue – Baird and Erberts & Gerberts moved because of the parking problem
Educate visitors about what is here and the history of the area
What is the identity of this area?
Boundaries and neighborhood of downtown
Promote the river and trails
What is the name of this area?
Music – live music is growing downtown
State Theatre – is a draw
Good fishing on the river
Parking is a major image issue
Downtown marketing needs to be better
The districts need each other – makes us stronger
We have an identity crisis
Space is unique and priced low
Water Street was the place to be
Barstow has and needs
River walks
Restaurants
Shops
River views
Sculptures
Beautiful Barstow / Slummy Graham
Tired downtown
Barstow is charming
We lack identity
Wasted river opportunity!
It's Barstow or nothing
Phoenix Park is great but not part of this area

Barstow feels cluttered and congested
We need a place where there is something for everyone
Hip scene
A place for families
A place to spend a day downtown
A great place to live
Center of cultural entertainment
 A little here
 A little Phoenix Park
 A little UW
 A little Water Street
A stone's throw back
River is the front door not the back door
Sense of arrival to this area
Archway
Mini – Lollapalooza battle of the bands would be cool
Wedding tax Phoenix Park
Don't compete with Phoenix Park – compliment it
Festivals centered on Barstow not on the river
Clashing outdoor identity
Phoenix Park – not officially programmed
Historic versus new urban – can it work?
Market as a unique area
Historical walking tours
Intentional architecture
Capitalize on talent in town
 Music festivals
 Showcase the talent
 Jazz on Barstow
 Sculpture tour
We need daytime / night time use
Doesn't feel clean – tired and used up
New places feel cleaner
Seasonal changes – deal with winter
 Indoor area
More professional buildings?
Daytime workers and night time component
There are multiple camps about downtown
For some people downtown is off their radar
75% don't feel there is much there
Not enough to sustain me downtown
Downtown is a destination – eat, shop = minority
Generational image is so-so
Without 35 and under crowd downtown would be struggling

Phoenix Park brings younger generation
Retail is not impressive
Younger night life is happening – we have hit a tipping point
Some bars have stayed current with the market
Younger professionals – after 9:00 pm
Rarely recognize people on the street anymore
Phoenix Park really draws to this area, not necessarily downtown
If you think Wausau is nice come to Eau Claire!
Is local media niched out enough?
What you sell has to be there and real
Baby boomers and the young brains – market ideas
Energy – must be real
Most people relate downtown to Phoenix Park
Lack of parking
Run down
Locally owned
4 shops moved because downtown wasn't working for them
Doesn't think of it as a vital area
I think there is potential
There needs to be stuff to do
Retail
Events bring them down
What's in it for the consumer?
Not cool enough
Wants more out of downtown
Nuggets of good stuff
2 summer festivals are the best draw
Growing young professional market
Parking problem, and hard to get to downtown
Only retail/food on first floor
There should be an eclectic experience
Historic vs. modern
Would walk the whole street (Barstow) if mix was better
Old buildings nice looking
Facade improvements – controls
Need a better collection of shops
After hours life is needed
More bars – need to create a core
Needs to be a destination of something to do
I can feel the momentum of change
Downtown is changing to be something else
Phoenix Park was a game changer
Changes with blighted buildings
Concerts, events all helping image

Children's Museum – Sculpture Walk are awesome
Parking doesn't have to be a problem
No complaints about parking
It's a community – not just a retail location
It is a vibrant area
Last 5 - 6 years have been better
Something like Shakespeare Festival would be great
We've done a great job already in downtown
Taste of Eau Claire is terrific
Area of re-birth - use consistency
Renaissance!
Arts and entertainment is one idea, but downtown isn't just one thing
You can live your whole life downtown!

PARKING:

Parking is available
Parking increase should be at 200, 300, 400 block
Nobody thinks about ramp at Barstow
New development needs to include parking
Graham is used for parking and better for drop off / pick up area
Barstow Str. at Eau Claire River - parking at lot near river is used by public – no enforcement
Parking is enforced – good thing
 Deterrent to employee parking in front of stores
Ramp should be free
Meters elsewhere (charge for parking on street)
Strategy for now:
 Free ramp
 Charge for parking on Barstow
 Free parking on Graham
 Charge for parking on side streets

No cones on Eau Claire Street
Timing – charge til? Defer to city
Problem area 300 block Barstow
Boys/Girls Club – Parking & loading issue (moving out)
Ramp on river – full (employees primarily)
More enforcement
Lost business due to lack of long term parking commitment
Parking on Farwell in 300/400 block
 - feeds into Barstow businesses
As demand grows – construct better ramps that are attractive / friendly
Employee parking area – biggest issue

Event parking

People are more willing to walk to events more than to businesses

Snow removal compresses parking

25% of parking on Barstow is employees parking

Graham is always open for parking

Much wasted parking near river

Would BID be willing to subsidize employee parking in ramp?

Transfer station should be moved

Move all parking off the river

Ramp – poor visibility

poor access to street

Weather affects parking

“Trolley” to parking

Future parking will be driven by major development

Accommodate elderly parking with redevelopment

No surface parking on the river

Consider developing “destination” area along Graham

Trolley – Madison to Lake

Farwell to Carson

Transportation center in Downtown

Bring people to downtown via mass transit – will reduce parking need in long term

(15-20 years)

“Trolley” investment gives unique feature plus addressing parking problem

ANCHORS AND USERS:

Current Anchors

YMCA

State Theatre

Library

Post Office

City Hall

Children’s Museum

(RCU HQ)

Rivers / Parks

State Theatre

Ramada / Conference Center

Library

Government Buildings

Law Firms

Banks (3)

Lawn area on Federal Building

Shopping & Eating

Children's Museum
Events/Festivals
RCU Corporate Center
State Theatre
Government Building/City Hall
Bus transfer Center
Library
Ramada/Convention Center
Farmers Market
Post Office
RCU
School District
City Hall
Banks
Churches
Library
YMCA
State Theatre
Hotel
Federal Building
AT&T
Call Centers
Housing*
(*users interact more)
State Theatre
Library
Post Office
Phoenix Park
City Hall
Federal Building
Children's Museum
Ramada
YMCA
Churches
Graham Riverside building
Apartment buildings (Park Towers, etc.)
Banks
Other office space

Mini Anchors

Quilting shop
Chamber
Acoustic Cafe

Hotel / Conference Center
Downtown Cinema
Valleybrook Church
Thursday night concerts
Farmers Market
B-Framed
Specialty destination retail
 - quilting store
Antique Emporium
Acoustic Cafe
Obsession
Pizza Plus
Firehouse (bar)
Livery
Calico Shop
Acoustic Cafe (restaurant)
Art galleries
Cameo Theatre
Specialty retail
Children's Museum
Live Music Venues
Calico Shop
Acoustic Cafe (restaurant)
Art galleries
Cameo Theatre
Specialty retail
Children's Museum
Live Music Venues
Restaurants/bars
Specialty Shops
JAMF – tech company

Capitalizing on our Anchors:

Regional art
Children's Museum
Specialty events committee
Special offers on Thursdays; after concerts
Hotel does not capitalize (new management?)
Hotel informed downtown businesses which conferences were in town
Capitalizing by chance, reactively
Not capitalizing on mini anchors

How do we define a great downtown business?

Someone who tries

Broad appeal (strong)

Specific appeal (strong)

(Active) Participate in initiatives / events / promotions

Willing to invest in themselves/property, “place on the block”

They advertise/promote themselves

Businesses who utilize highest and best use – maximize character of property

Wish anchors could:

Stay local

Draw attention of non-typical downtown user

Franchises could be spread out evenly...

Be 24/7, draw people down different times and days

Be the rivers

Be performing arts

Restaurants (fine dining)

Dinner theatre opportunity

Walking / bike trail

Different concert venue (than Phoenix Park)

More women’s clothing

Better connection to University

Who should be using downtown?

Locals

Tourists

Creative’s

People who aren’t using it now

Parents of University students

Younger urban demographic – young professionals

Students

Bicyclists /walkers (casual or occasional)

People who have multiple tasks/destinations

Every district should be connected by pedestrian bridge/path

Employees

Residents (should target those who live near mall)

Tourists

University parents

Tourists / Travelers

People who come for weekend

University parents

Students (clubs/events/etc.) (

Those who need community service hours

Desired Anchors:

- More housing – condos (not rental)
- Grocery store
- Auditorium/convention center
- Transportation center (train depot)
- Civil War Memorial (along the river)
- Barstow Street trolley
- Fishing piers
- Bike trail
- Mixed use (front and back along the river)
- Parking areas away from downtown and utilize trolley
- Green space
- Large employers
- Legal offices
- Quality residential
- An anchor that will use the river
- Enhanced regional art center
- Really good hotel
- Bike/pedestrian trail – enhanced
- Really good conference/convention space
- Large employer
- Additional housing
- High density mixed-use development
- Riverfront restaurants
- University building
- Green space (riverfront)
- Activity center, architectural tours, kayak rental, etc.
- Big restaurant on river
- Microbrewery / Martini bar / Wine bar
- Condo residential (upscale) (non-rental)
- Events venue (like Florian Gardens)
- Match up opportunities better: children's clothing store next to children's museum;
coffee shop next to bus transfer
- Encourage more restoration
- Boutique hotel
- Small, free-standing franchise retail
- Larger nodes along riverwalk with activities
- Community center with activities/programming
- More housing
- Electric vehicle charging stations
- Bike friendly amenities

Activity-based amenities (kayakers, walkers, bikers...)

Medical?

CONNECTIVITY:

Getting people into the downtown from the west seems to be the greatest challenge relative to flow into and out of the Historic River District:

From the north (Chippewa Falls) or east enter south onto 53 then onto Galloway; within the east side of the city most utilize Hastings to Main and west into the downtown.

Moving into the District from south (Oakwood Mall and Claremont) isn't good for visitors and guests (locals know the way).

Need a more welcoming entry as a gateway into the Historic District southbound on Farwell coming into the downtown.

Most flow in and around downtown is via automobile followed by bicycles and then pedestrians.

People coming in by bus was mentioned only once.

Moving the bus transfer station to the Dewey and Gray Street location was not viewed as problematic.

Most downtown visitors flow into the historic district by parking at Library and walking or if a new central parking facility would be created then they would park and walk from that location.

Add green space, trees and slow speed on Farwell (which is viewed as the downtown by-pass)

Ease of flow would be enhanced w/ additional way-finding/ signage for out-of-town guests & visitors. More benches and bike racks downtown!

Discussed having parking on the periphery (both south of Lake and north of North Barstow area) with street or trolley cars shuttling people along Barstow and back to original parking lots on periphery.

A popular variation on that theme was creating a short bus (route) loop from the bus transfer station encircling the Historic District only w/ a short run up to north Barstow area and return to Historic District to begin loop again.

Need to connect south Barstow St. to the Chippewa River both visually and physically (in some design way).

Downtown was considered too small to need to connect destinations within the downtown.

Some discussion on the State Theater as a destination. Someone thought that the State Theater needs serious analysis on longevity. It's too small, violates the 2/3 rule (understood to be where the costs of renovation are

2/3 the value of the property rendering property infeasible. Need to reconfigure the entire State Theater site [no room for parking, loading shows, etc]

Need to consider creating/constructing more walkways like those in St. Paul where downtown folks wend their way through and along interesting event, restaurant and retail corridors. Much improved connection with the Historic District, would be created by constructing a new pedestrian and bicycle bridge from Phoenix Park to the Haymarket site. That would substantially add to the bike paths and create a needed expansion to the bicycle path network.

Extend the proposed Riverfront Access Trail from Haymarket site to Lake Street (and maybe further south if possible). Trail should accommodate both pedestrians and bicyclists. Discussion of Riverfront Trail east from Haymarket site may not be possible from an engineering standpoint.

Create more connections to the Chippewa River wherever possible.

Bring Historic District east west streets (Eau Claire, Gibson, Grand, Main and Gray streets) to the waterfront making small public spaces available once one arrives at the river.

Not only should people see the river from the downtown but people on and along the river should also be able to see some action looking back into the downtown.

Add more fishing piers along riverfront. Civil War markers exist behind River Plaza apartment building at Lake and Graham Streets.

Create improved and convenient launch points and end points for those using kayaks, canoes and tubes on both Eau Claire and Chippewa Rivers.

Lake and Farwell Streets are main arterials into and out of downtown but also viewed as barriers to the Historic District. Farwell is a by-pass to the downtown and is not pedestrian friendly. Speed limit is 25 but everyone goes at 40mph. All groups mentioned softening Farwell w/ landscaping in medians from Eau Claire Street south to Main and creating pedestrian islands midway to crossing Farwell.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPENDIX:

A complete electronic demographic package was developed for this report but is not being displayed for the purpose of brevity. A complete demographic report can be viewed or obtained by request from the Director of DECI.