

November 2007



Near West Side Master Plan Wausau, Wisconsin



November 2007

NEAR WEST SIDE MASTER PLAN

Wausau, Wisconsin

Prepared for:

Wausau Main Street Program

Prepared by:

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Madison, Wisconsin

In association with:

BEST Real Estate Group, Inc.

Cottage Grove, Wisconsin

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Wausau Main Street Program and its Economic Restructuring Committee commissioned Schreiber/Anderson Associates, Inc. and BEST Real Estate Group, Inc. of Madison, Wisconsin, to prepare a master plan for the West Downtown Neighborhood located on the west side of the Wisconsin River between Stewart Avenue and Elm Street. **Exhibit 1** shows the planning area for this project which is defined by Elm Street on the north, 4th Avenue on the west, Stewart Avenue on the south and the Wisconsin River on the east. This exhibit also identifies many of the key businesses that are located in the district. The planning area includes the following existing features:

- A large part of the planning area is included in the River District BID boundary.
- Combination of zoning that includes B2 Community Service uses on the west side of the area and B3 General Commercial uses on the east side of the area.
- A significant inventory of existing, established businesses.
- Approximately 50/50 ratio between building coverage and open space, parking lots and vacant properties.
- Typical blocks are characterized by few buildings and parking lots that front on the public street.
- A nine acre single owner property along river (East Bay).
- Isolated residential uses on some blocks.
- A grid street system that includes one way north - south arterial streets (60' ROW) and two way east-west local street (66' ROW). There are also public alleys (20' ROW) on all blocks between 1st Avenue and 3rd Avenue. Some street and alleys are in need of repair.
- Several residential and commercial properties are in poor condition.
- Lack of visible crosswalks at most intersections.
- Limited pedestrian and bicycle access to the river.
- No streetscape or open space amenities.

The Near West Side Neighborhood is an important part of the Wausau CBD Master Plan that was adopted in 2001. Since the adoption of the CBD Master Plan, the city and Wausau Main Street have focused their efforts on the redevelopment and revitalization of the historic Downtown on the east side of the river. In 2005, the City adopted the North Downtown Area Master Plan as a guide for expanding CBD revitalization activities north of the historic Downtown to Bridge Street, on both sides of the river. The Near West Side is the remaining CBD area to be planned. **Exhibit 2** illustrates the relationship of the Near West Side to the Wausau Central Business District. The purpose of this master plan is to provide comprehensive recommendations to guide public and private improvements over the next 15-20 years that will ensure the long-term economic vitality of the Central Business District.

Near West Side Master Plan

Wausau, WI

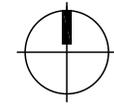
KEY BUSINESSES

- 1 East Bay
- 2 Sam's Pizza
- 3 Salvation Army
- 4 Scottie's Antiques
- 5 Chatterbox
- 6 Norde's Memorials
- 7 Frostman Fish Market
- 8 Kleinheinz Dairy
- 9 Builer's Cycle & Fitness
- 10 Eckert Law Office
- 11 Associated Bank
- 12 Brian Edward's Salon, Wausau Awards, The Needle Workshop
- 13 Paper Trail Printing, Wausau Computers
- 14 Clark Building
- 15 River District Antique Mall
- 16 Labor Temple
- 17 Papa Johns, Village Hearth, Katzenbarker's
- 18 Ministry Healthcare
- 19 KFC
- 20 Pizza Hut



LEGEND

- - - BID Boundary
- - - Planning Area Boundary







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November 1, 2007
Project No. 2275

Exhibit 1: Planning Area

PART ONE: MARKET ANALYSIS RECOMMENDATIONS

The Near West Side planning area has similar conditions as the North Area Downtown planning area. There has been very limited recent redevelopment of the real estate in this area. The age of the commercial properties range from the early 1900's to the early 1990's. The adjoining residential neighborhood is of modest homes, many which have become rental housing. Lands on the Wisconsin River are dominated by the East Bay complex and the MBX Manufacturing Company.

The planning area has a simple grid street pattern, with a one-way traffic on 1st Avenue and 3rd Street. These one-way streets (Business 51) are important north - south traffic corridors for the city of Wausau.

STRENGTHS

A mix of existing uses. This study area is fortunate to have the basic framework that most neighborhoods are looking for. There are retail uses, restaurants and bars, housing, social/civic groups along with significant employment with the East Bay complex. Many of these businesses have a long history in the area, and appreciate how they are situated within the Wausau market area.

Adjacent established neighborhood. The residential neighborhood to the north and east of this study area may be of an older housing stock, but it is a convenient and affordable place to live in the central city area. The tree-lined streets create a sense of charm and livability. Also, this area is located within a ¼ mile radius to the UW Marathon campus.

Defined business district. This west side business district is very compact and defined, which is a bonus for redevelopment. The entire study area is closely knit and easily walkable within minutes.

Development opportunities. There are significant opportunities for redevelopment with underutilized and vacant buildings, along with larger vacant land parcels. Current property values in this study area offer an affordable option to revitalized Downtown Wausau. Future property assembly may be assisted by the large property holdings by a limited number of property owners. Infrastructure is in place, i.e. streets and utilities, making this area an excellent candidate for consideration by developers looking for ready opportunity.

Historic renovation opportunities. Although limited in numbers, there is the potential to capitalize on the sound, historically interesting properties in the study area. These historic properties can add to the ambiance and attractiveness of the area.

Wisconsin River frontage. The Wisconsin River is a great asset for this study area, and should be capitalized on in any future redevelopment of the real estate adjoining the river.

Traffic counts and connections. Consistent, strong traffic counts are found on 1st and 3rd Avenue, and they provide excellent connections to Bridge Street and Stewart Avenue, allowing easy access within the community, and only minutes to the regional connection of I39/Hwy.51. These connections are great for businesses, but the traffic volumes can pose a problem for pedestrians.

Salvation Army. The Salvation Army is a great community partner, providing necessary services to the local population. They have proven to be a good neighbor, working hard to mitigate any impact their clients may have within the study area.

WEAKNESSES

Disconnect with the downtown. The Near West Side planning area has limited connections with Downtown Wausau. Separated by the Wisconsin River, there is an obvious physical disconnect with downtown, but more importantly, there are no visual or market connections with downtown Wausau.

Property and neighborhood conditions. Many residential and commercial properties are lacking in basic building maintenance. The area shows a decline in owner occupied properties and a pride of ownership. Accumulated trash, weeds, and poorly maintained parking areas are very evident. Sidewalks and alleys are in need of replacement or repair. The general visual image lacks energy and borders on apathy.

Set back from Stewart Avenue. Both Clark Street and the adjacent parking lot fronting on Stewart Avenue, push the front face of this district too far off of Stewart Avenue. This area looks like a “sea” of asphalt and concrete, with little green space or storefront interest. The underutilized public and private lands create a barrier to the business district.

Identity. The study area simply has no identity. The condition, age and uses of the existing real estate is hodge-podge. There is nothing that ties the study area together by design, streetscape or use, and it is not thought of as a business district.

Safety. Business owners and residents have expressed some concern about transients hanging out at the Laundromat and along the river. Although there doesn't seem to be any notable property vandalism from this situation, there is some concern about personal safety in the evening, and the perception of safety issues with clients and customers.

Lack of critical mass. Although there are many solid and varied businesses in the study area, these businesses are disconnected from one another physically. Their occupancy has taken place over a long period of time and there is nothing cohesive that defines the area.

Wisconsin River frontage. Currently, there is limited public access and visual connections to the river from the Near West Side. Also, the riverfront area has become a location for transients to congregate, which can be intimidating to the general public.

Lack of organization. The study area lacks organization that is specific to this area. Although this area is part of the River District BID, the issues in this area are very separate from those on the east side of the river. Currently, there is no specific sub-group or organization that focuses on this area.

Salvation Army. The clientele of the Salvation Army congregate in the neighborhood waiting for services. Some neighbors have expressed a concern that this can be somewhat intimidating for their customers or employees.

MARKET RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations have been based on a review of existing market data for the planning area and approximately 15 personal interviews that were conducted by Deb Erland of BEST Real Estate Group, Inc. and Tim Anderson of Schreiber Anderson Associates, Inc. Interviews were conducted with business and property owners of the Near West Side, city staff and members of the Economic Restructuring Committee of Wausau Main Street. These interviews also provided guidance for land use, transportation, and streetscape improvements for the Near West Side. A summary of these interviews is included in the Appendix of this report.

Create a new identity. The Near West Side area needs a new identity and image. Consider creating a place name for this area, such as **River West**, which can convey its unique character and identity. This area could truly be the gateway to downtown Wausau, but with its own image and feeling. Look at how this area could be better tied to the UW campus, providing shopping and social opportunities for students and staff, plus the current and future population of day time employees that include restaurants, a coffee shop, a small grocery market or ethnic grocery, recycled clothing such as Plato's Closet, or other specialty retail businesses. Change the image, capitalize on the existing demographics and its relationship to Downtown Wausau, and sell the affordability.

Activate more BID involvement. There is a strong need for the BID to help organize and activate the business and property owners in this area. Consider creating a sub-committee that focuses on the needs and goals of this specific area. There is much work to be done here, much of which can be modeled off of the great work done in the Downtown.

Define and extend a streetscape plan. Even the minimum streetscape work done on 1st Avenue by the property owner, really enhances that block. Create the same positive effect within this west district with streetscape, as what was done in the Downtown. Utilize the Stewart Avenue area to establish a gateway or entrance feature utilizing landscaping, public art, lighting, etc.

Look at adding building area at 1st Avenue and Clark Street. The current building face on Clark Street between 1st and 2nd Avenue is too sparse and too far back from Stewart. By reorganizing this block, the cul-de-sac, the parking lot across the street and the land in the public ROW, more building area could be added, parking could be organized and landscaping could really put a new face on the "front door" of this area.

Assist property owners with renovation financing options. There are a number of properties that are ready for facade upgrades or complete renovation. Consider holding a breakfast or luncheon in the area where renovation funding and city process can be discussed. Even if there are no current funds available, property owners can become informed and work with the city to apply for future financing options.

Consider new housing alternatives on redevelopment sites. There is very little in the way of new or newly renovated housing in the study area or adjacent neighborhood. This area could be a prime candidate for new infill housing opportunities, such as moderately priced housing options or housing needs that would support the UW campus student population.

Enforce building and zoning codes. The city needs to be proactive in supporting positive property values, by enforcing building and zoning codes. Parking lots are weedy and need paving, storage of certain materials in vacant lots does not seem compatible to the area, and general building maintenance needs to be monitored.

Look at long range development opportunities on the river. A long-range plan for future riverfront development is important for capitalizing on a key asset of this area, should any of these properties ever become available. Develop and maintain a relationship with the current property owners in order to understand their future space needs and long-range property plans. Future connection opportunities to the river will fortify the character of the area and its connection to Downtown Wausau.

Look at a consolidated site for the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army is a good neighbor and asset for this community. Track the Salvation Army current strategic planning process. If their goal is to maintain a presence in this neighborhood, support their efforts and work with them to create a consolidated facility that better meets their needs to serve the community.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Evaluation of a market area for the Near West Side needs to include its current demographic make-up, and projected changes to that data. In this review, we have compared the planning area demographics with demographics within a ½ mile and 1 mile radius from the intersection of Alexander Street and 2nd Avenue. We have also compared the planning area demographics to the larger Wausau statistical market area.

1/2 Mile Radius

2000 Population	3,567
2007 Estimate	3,225
2012 Projection	3,073
Growth 2007-2012	-4.71%
2007 Est. Median Age	33.12
2007 Est. Average Household Size	2.43
2007 Est. Median Household Income	\$33,848
2007 Est. Owner Occupied Housing	50.81%
2007 Est. Median Housing Value	\$98,706
2007 Est. Median Year Structures Built	1941

1 Mile Radius

2000 Population	12,918
2007 Estimate	11,947
2012 Projection	11,414
Growth 2007-2012	-4.46%
2007 Est. Median Age	34.38
2007 Est. Average Household Size	2.33
2007 Est. Median Household Income	\$34,700
2007 Est. Owner Occupied Housing	51.00%
2007 Est. Median Housing Value	\$97,886
2007 Est. Median Year Structures Built	1942

Wausau Statistical Market Area

2000 Population	125,834
2007 Estimate	130,880
2012 Projection	134,434
Growth 2007-2012	2.72%
2007 Est. Median Age	38.91
2007 Est. Average Household Size	2.49
2007 Est. Median Household Income	\$53,920
2007 Est. Owner Occupied Housing	76.49%
2007 Est. Median Housing Value	\$129,394
2007 Est. Median Year Structures Built	1972

The planning area represents a market that is typical of older central city neighborhoods. The planning area is projected to lose population over the next 5 years, has an older housing stock, with a higher percentage of rental units. In comparison to the larger Wausau statistical market area, the income levels are 36-percent lower, owner occupied housing is 25-percent lower, and median housing values are approximately 25-percent lower.

PART TWO: MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section summarizes the recommended land use and physical improvements for the Near West Side based on the results of personal interviews, site analysis and market findings. These recommendations are divided into Land Use Recommendations, Transportation Recommendations, and Urban Design Recommendations.

LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following text summarizes Land Use Recommendations for the Near West Side. This area is a special district that is different from other areas in the CBD. ***It is important to state that recommendations identified in this section will require the involvement and cooperation of existing property owners. Acquisition, rehabilitation, and redevelopment activities will occur when owners are ready to make changes to their properties.***

Near West Side Vision Statement

The Near West Side is a unique and special district within the Wausau Central Business District that offers a diverse mix of retail, entertainment, service business, residential and institutional uses that will serve the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods, UW Marathon County, Wausau Central Business District, and the community as a whole. The Near West Side draws its market appeal and identity from its historic past, its many established businesses, its spectacular Wisconsin River frontage and its position as the gateway to Downtown Wausau. The revitalization of the Near West Side will achieve a long standing goal of linking both sides of the Wisconsin River to create a unified Central Business District and reinforce its role as a major business, civic, and recreation destination for the City of Wausau, the region, and the state.

Neighborhood Context

The Near West Side is part of a larger neighborhood that includes Wausau's historic Downtown, the UW Marathon County and the west side neighborhoods. **Exhibit 3** illustrates the close relationship between these key land uses. These relationships should be promoted and strengthened to ensure the long-term economic vitality of the Near West Side and the CBD.

Branding and Identity

The Near West Side needs a new identity and image that complements the historic Downtown on the east side of the river. One of the attractions of the historic Downtown is the density of retail and entertainment businesses organized in continuous blockfaces with attractive streetscape amenities. This organization creates a walkable, exciting business district image. The area between 1st Avenue and 3rd Avenue should be organized in a similar way to create a strong sense of place and market identity. Other improvements that will contribute to establishing a new identity for the Near West Side include:

- Create a place name and branding identity for this special district.
- Incorporate a unique logo that symbolizes the new identity as part of the district's signage and streetscape design.
- Extend streetscape amenities (lighting, street trees, banners, planters) from the historic Downtown to the Near West Side to visually connect these two areas of the CBD.
- Market and promote the Near West Side as a special destination in the Wausau CBD.

- Create a visually dramatic “front door” entrance to the Near West Side with a new “town square” and attractive entrance signs on Stewart Avenue.
- Retain existing businesses and recruit new businesses to establish a mixed use destination that complements and expands the historic Downtown business mix. Look at how the Near West Side can be better tied to the UW Marathon County campus by providing shopping and social opportunities that support that market.

Land Use Organization

Exhibit 4 illustrates the recommended Land Use Organization for the Near West Side.

Area 1 – Mixed Use Business District

Area 1, between 1st Avenue and 3rd Avenue and between Elm Street and Stewart Avenue, is envisioned as a compact, walkable mixed use business district. The southern part of this area, between Alexander Street and Stewart Avenue, should focus primarily on retail and entertainment uses on the ground floor with service business and residential uses on the upper floors. The design intent of this area is to create an identifiable and cohesive business district with continuous storefronts along each blockface that will be created through the rehabilitation of existing buildings and new infill development on vacant and underutilized sites. The northern part of this area, between Elm Street and Alexander Street, offers the potential for diversifying housing choices in the neighborhood as part of the mixed use business district.

Area 2 – Institutional/Corporate Office

The area along the Wisconsin River should be planned comprehensively for a major civic or corporate campus use. This 9 acre area is currently occupied by a single property owner, East Bay. Redevelopment of this area, which can occur as the existing use transitions over time, should integrate and connect the Wisconsin River and the riverwalk system with the mixed use business district west of 1st Avenue.

Area 3 – Commercial Office

Area 3, west of 3rd Avenue, is primarily occupied by large free-standing commercial office buildings with surface parking lots fronting on 3rd Avenue. This area should remain primarily as an office/employment use with improved pedestrian connections to the mixed use business district east of 3rd Avenue. As an office area, the day time employee population is an important customer base for the mixed use business district. Expanded office development on these sites may be possible with acquisition of adjoining parcels and the provision for enclosed parking. Additional development in this area should be sensitive to residential uses along 4th Avenue. Future development should also include the improved appearance of commercial buildings and sites bordering Stewart Avenue.

Area 4 – Gateway Office/Retail

Area 4 is a 2 AC riverfront site located at the intersection of 1st Avenue and Stewart Avenue. This area is part of the gateway to the CBD and should be reserved for a highly visible, river-related destination commercial or retail use when the property becomes available.

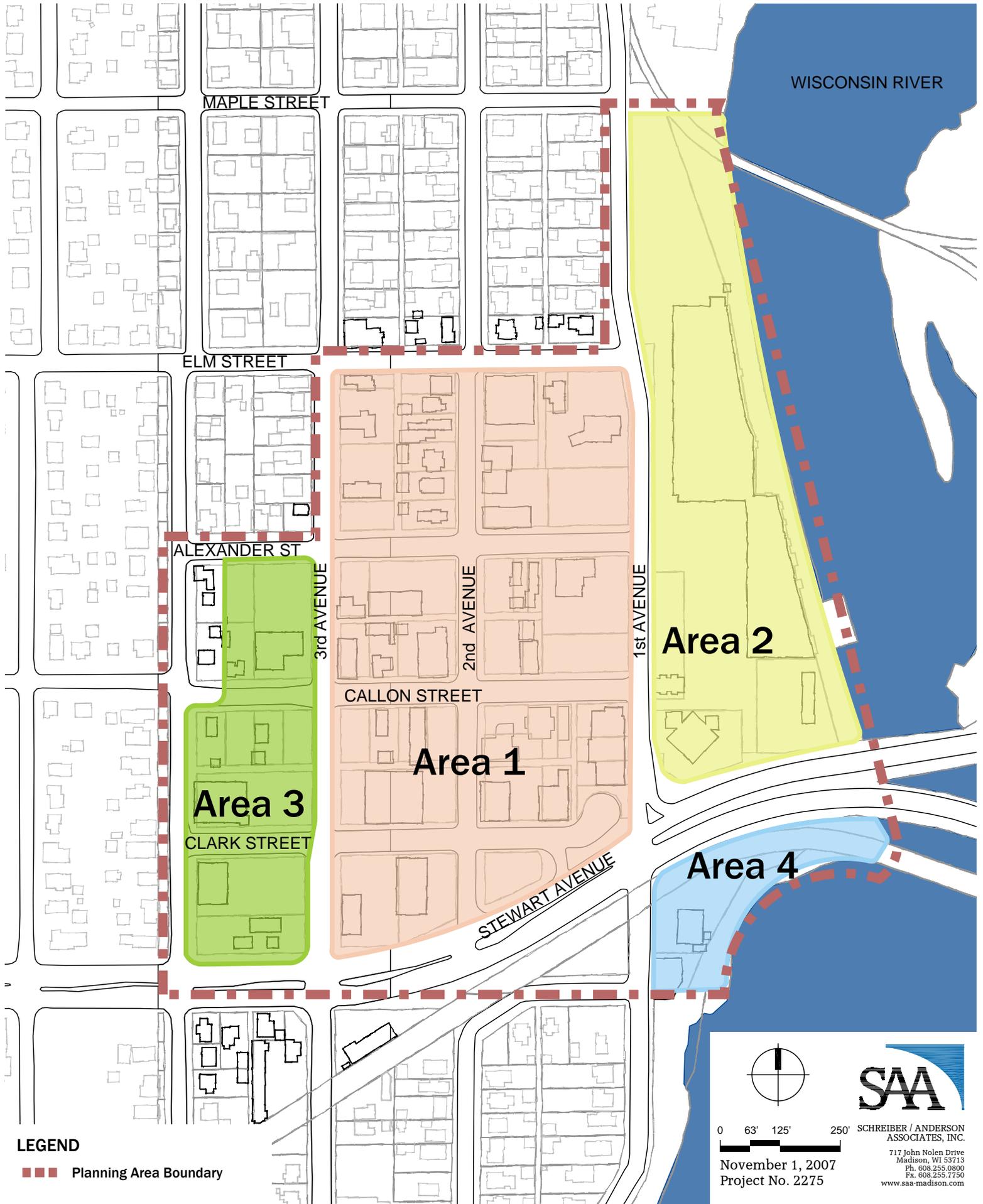


Exhibit 4: Land Use Organization

Redevelopment Approach

Redevelopment can be broadly defined as physical changes to existing buildings and sites that include new construction, building rehabilitation, historic preservation, and facade improvements. Important considerations for the redevelopment of the Near West Side include enhancing the district as an activity center for the community; strengthening the retail and business mix; preserving historic resources; improving the visual character and identity of the district; and strengthening the land use relationships between the district and the CBD, UW Marathon County, surrounding neighborhoods, and the community as a whole.

Several sites in the Near West Side are currently vacant and underutilized and offer the opportunity for redevelopment that will achieve a new business mix and design character. The redevelopment strategy for the Near West Side is focused on expanding and diversifying the existing business mix including new housing choices that are needed to increase the existing customer base and enhance the character of the Near West Side as a 24/7 activity center.

It is important to state that redevelopment recommendations in this master plan do not obligate property owners to improve or redevelop their properties. Redevelopment will take place only when property owners are motivated to make improvements.

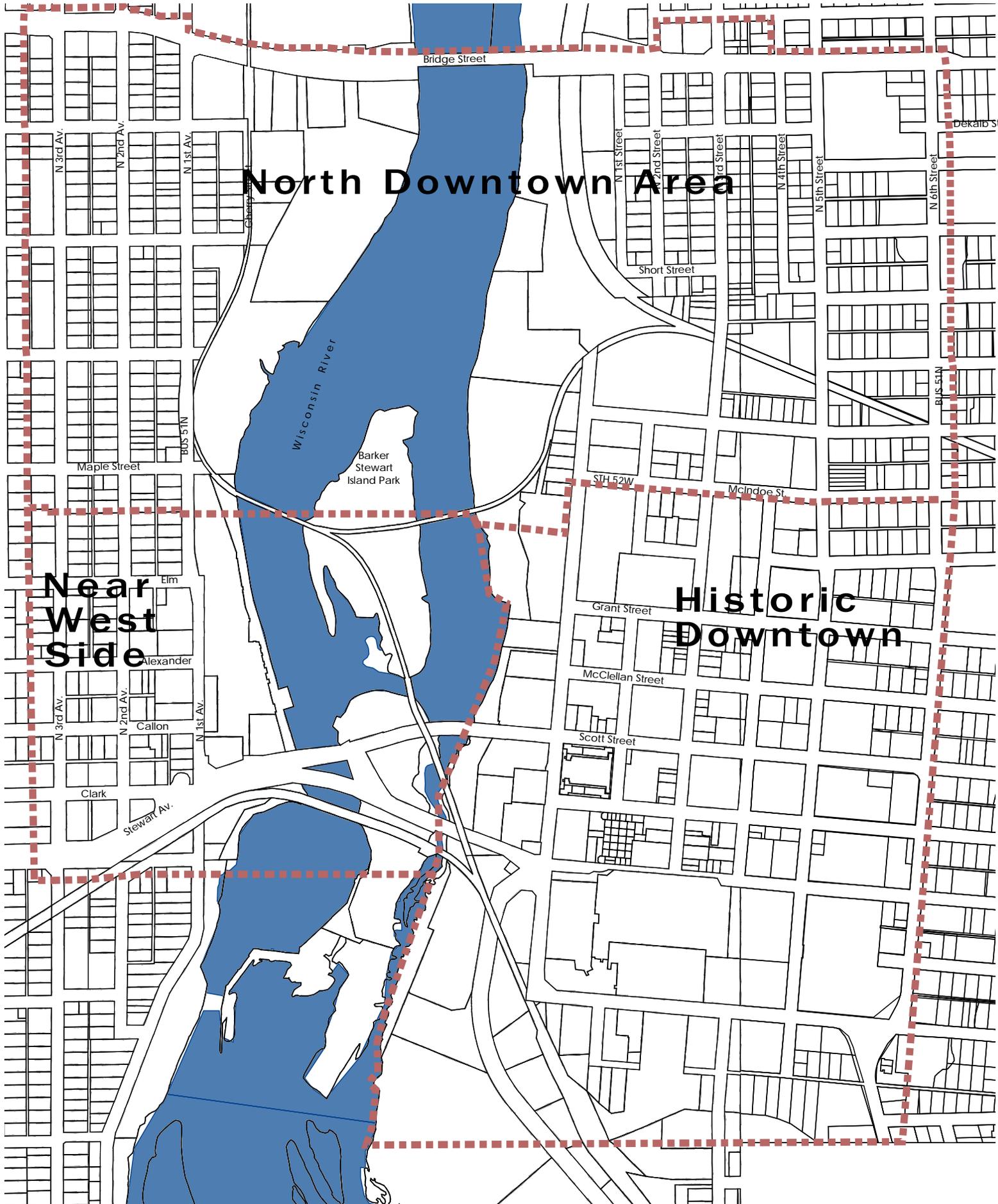
Comprehensive “Full-Block” Solutions

Development of single parcels should be considered as part of a coordinated plan for the entire block. Comprehensive “full-block” solutions will result in more efficient and cost effective development that emphasizes shared resources such as parking, access, service, utilities, landscaping, and site amenities that can support higher density development.

Comprehensive solutions for each block should also consider a complimentary business mix. By identifying what businesses currently exist within the block, it is possible to target the recruitment of businesses that would compliment the business mix on that same block. A block by block strategy should also strive to mix different types of businesses, so that all banks and lawyers are not located on one block, while the retail shops and restaurants are located on another. River West will function most effectively when these uses are mixed throughout the district.

The following summarizes the key aspects of the coordinated, block by block development approach for the Near West Side.

- Establish a dialogue with all property owners within the block.
- Replace vacant, underutilized or blighted properties with new infill development and sensitively integrates existing buildings and businesses.
- Utilize the public alley system to create shared parking and access for each block.
- Create continuous building frontages on the public street.
- Promote a diversified business and residential mix for each block.
- Provide parking solutions including shared off-street surface parking lots, enclosed parking with new infill developments, and expanded on-street parking to support higher density development.



Design Theme

The design theme for the Near West Side should focus on maintaining the, small scale, eclectic character represented by many long-standing businesses, such as Frostmans Fish Market, West Side Tastee Treats, and the River District Antique Mall, while integrating new structures that fit the scale and character of the district. Existing and new “franchise” uses should strive to complement the district theme and identity in their building and site designs.

Design Guidelines

The following summarizes the recommended design theme for the Near West Side and general design guidelines for the rehabilitation for existing buildings and sites and new infill development. Design guidelines are provided to encourage appropriate development and high quality design that is sensitive to the district’s historic context and that will create a stronger sense of place and market identity for the district.

Rehabilitation Guidelines

The rehabilitation of existing buildings and sites (parking lots, service areas, rear entrances, etc.) should create a positive design character and identity for the Near West Side. Historic buildings should be restored based on their original design and non-historic buildings should be improved to complement historic buildings and the blockface character. Rehabilitation guidelines include:

- Unify the storefront, upper story, and building cornice as primary building design features.
- Building entrances should be clearly identifiable and related to the street.
- Use high quality and durable materials.
- Select appropriate paint colors that complement adjoining buildings while creating visual interest and appeal for the building facade. Use a 3-color scheme with a base color, trim color, and accent colors for architectural details.
- Clean, do not paint, existing brick and stone.
- Storefronts should be as transparent as possible.
- Remove elements that do not fit the historic character for the building.
- Provide attractive and appropriate signs that do not conceal or overwhelm architectural details.
- Add awnings to protect window displays and create visual interest for the facade.
- Locate parking areas on the sides or rears of buildings.
- Screen parking lots that are adjacent to the public street.
- Pave, stripe, and light all parking areas.
- Rear building entrances and rear building facades should be attractively designed.
- Screen trash and utility areas.
- Provide landscaping for visual interest.

New Construction Guidelines

New buildings should be designed to honestly reflect the building’s specific use and architectural period while maintaining a unified appearance with adjoining buildings. Designs that copy historic

appearance are discouraged. Bland facades with very little detail should be avoided. The mass, volume, setback and height of new infill buildings should be compatible with neighboring buildings. This is true of continuous blockfaces or blockfaces with a series of detached buildings. The facades for new buildings should relate to neighboring buildings in terms of window sill or header lines, proportion of window and door openings, horizontal or vertical emphasis, and architectural detail. Other guidelines for new construction include:

- Relate building entrances to the public street.
- Provide site improvements (landscaping, furnishings, lighting, etc.) that complement the building design and the public streetscape character.
- Provide internal walkways that connect buildings and parking areas with the public street.
- Reinforce pedestrian activity in the district by orienting buildings close to the street and providing outdoor use areas that adjoin the public street.
- Buildings on Stewart Avenue should be designed to complement and strengthen the gateway image to Downtown Wausau.
- New construction should incorporate enclosed parking, if possible.
- Surface parking lots should be located at the rear or on the side of developments and screened from the public street.
- Promote “green” building and sustainable design practices for building rehabilitation and new development.
- Design “franchise” uses to complement the design character and theme for the Near West Side.

Property Maintenance

Well-maintained buildings and sites present a positive and attractive business district image to visitors, customers, prospective tenants and owners. Additionally, property maintenance can contribute to crime prevention. Buildings should be kept clean and in good repair. Parking areas and open spaces should be kept free of trash and debris. Landscaping should be maintained and plants replaced when they die. Business and property owners should maintain their public sidewalks through regular sweeping and removal of litter from terrace areas.

Redevelopment Recommendations

The following redevelopment recommendations are keyed by number to **Exhibit 5** and highlight some of the key development opportunities for the Near West Side.

R1 Near West Side Gateway Development

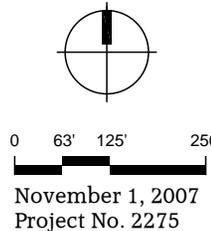
The area bordered by Stewart Avenue, 2nd Avenue, Callon Street, and 1st Avenue is a key block within the Near West Side mixed use business district. Redevelopment of this area will establish a new “front door” and market identity for the Near West Side. The redevelopment pattern recommended for this block should serve as an example for redevelopment for other blocks within the Near West Side.

The concept plan (**Exhibit 6**) and perspective sketch (**Exhibit 7**) illustrate the key features of this development opportunity.



LEGEND

-  Ped/Bike Connection
-  R2 Redevelopment Recommendations
-  T1 Transportation Recommendations
-  S1 Urban Design Recommendations
-  Planning Area Boundary

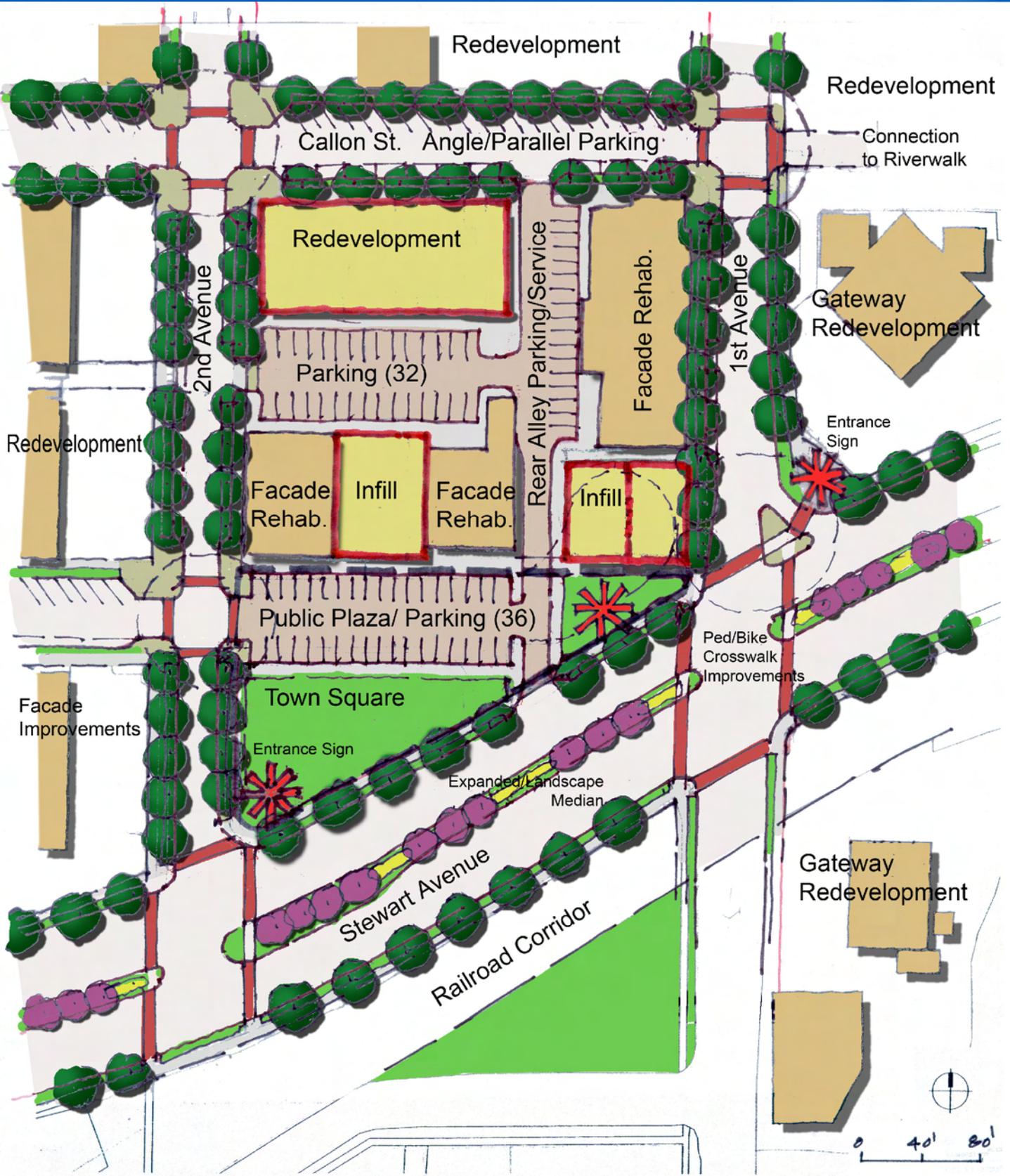


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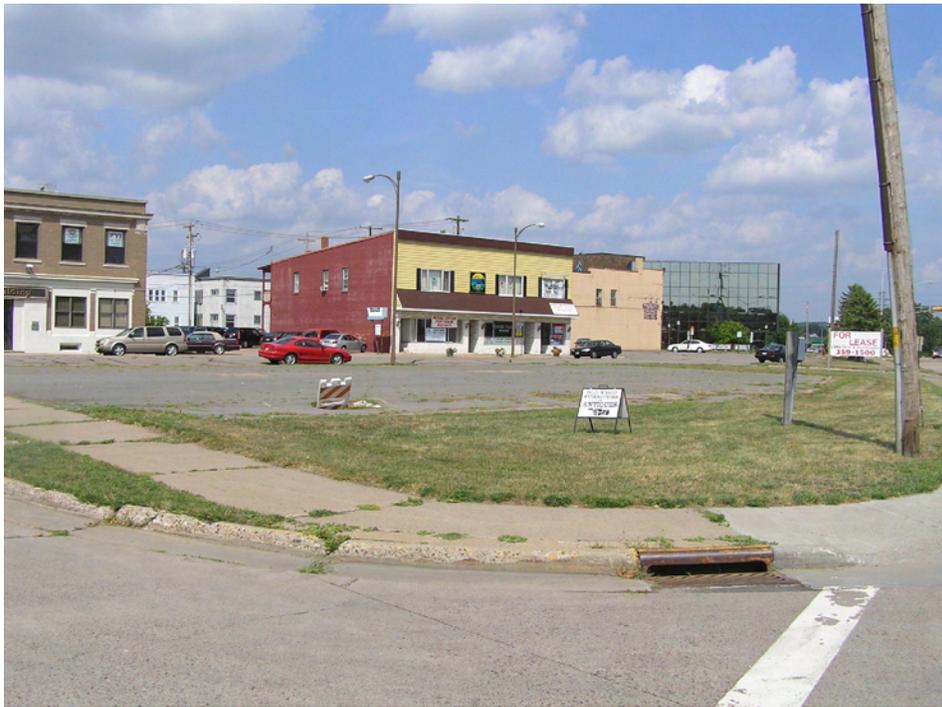
Exhibit 5: Master Plan Recommendations

Near West Side Master Plan

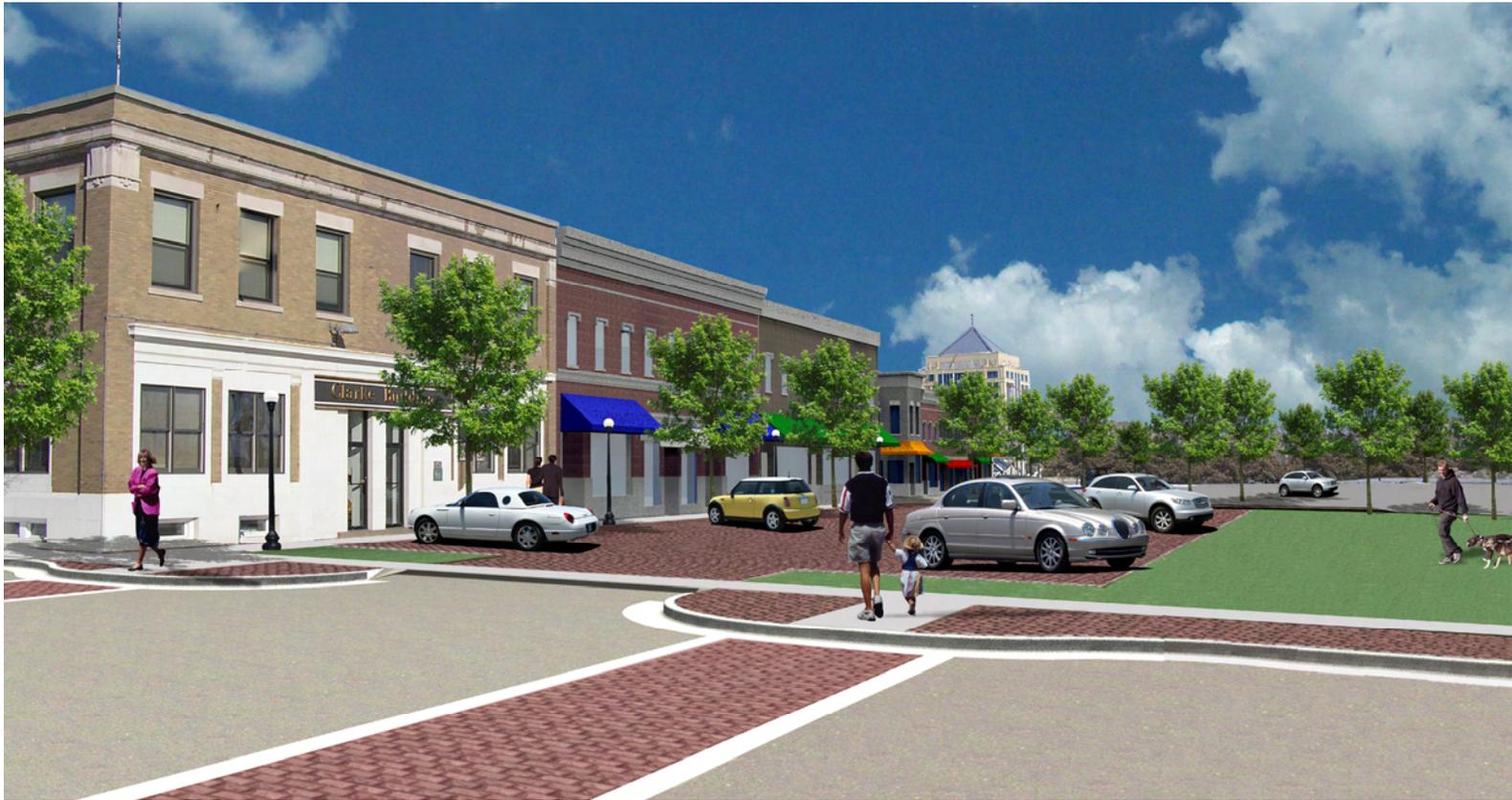


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Exhibit 6: Redevelopment Concept Plan



Existing Stewart Avenue, Clark Street, and Second Avenue triangle



Wausau Central Business District

Town Square-Near West Side District

This perspective sketch illustrates the Town Square Concept for the Near West Side District looking southeast from 2nd Avenue and Stewart Avenue. The key features of this concept include the removal of the Clark Street cul de sac and existing paved areas to create a new landscaped open space. The Clark Street ROW is proposed to be redesigned as a public plaza that can be used for parking and closed to traffic and used as a special events area. This sketch also shows how Clark Street has improved with facade renovations and new, infill development to present an attractive "front door" to the Near West Side District.

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- A “town square” fronting on Stewart Avenue.
- Facade and rear building improvements for existing buildings along Clark Street and 1st Avenue.
- New infill developments for Stewart Avenue and 1st Avenue to create a continuous blockface character with designs that complement existing buildings.
- Assembly of parcels along Callon Street for new infill development with enclosed parking to create a continuous blockface for Callon Street.
- Shared surface parking lot and service areas using the existing public alley system.
- Coordinated landscape, lighting, and pedestrian amenities that complement public streetscape improvements.
- Underground existing overhead utilities lines.

R2 East Bay Redevelopment

The 9 AC East Bay site offers a unique opportunity to plan for the comprehensive redevelopment of a single-owner riverfront parcel. One redevelopment option could consolidate East Bay and its significant employment base in a taller building with structured parking as part of a comprehensive redevelopment plan for the larger site. Another redevelopment option would reserve the entire site for a high profile civic/institutional or corporate office use if East Bay decides to relocate its operations to another site in Wausau. In this option, redevelopment could occur in phases as portions of the 9 AC site become available. **Exhibit 8** provides an aerial perspective view that illustrates a long-term redevelopment vision for Near West Side and the riverfront. Key features of this development opportunity include:

- High density development with buildings that are 4-6 stories in height.
- Structured parking.
- Minimize surface parking and service areas on 1st Avenue and the riverfront.
- Unified campus design.
- Open space system that incorporates pedestrian walkways and courtyards that are integrated with the public riverwalk system.
- Buildings oriented to the public street and the riverfront.
- Pedestrian and bicycle connections between the mixed use business district and the riverfront as extensions of Elm Street, Alexander Street, and Callon Street.
- Gateway building at Stewart Avenue.

R3 Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is currently undertaking a planning process to identify how it can better meet its customers’ needs through improved and expanded services and facilities. Options for expanding services at their current location or relocating their facilities to another area in Wausau may be considered.

In evaluating the option to expand services and facilities in the Near West Side, the Salvation Army should pursue a strategy to consolidate its operations on a single block. Two sites are recommended for consideration:



Wausau Central Business District

Near West Side District

This perspective sketch illustrates a future view of the Near West Side District looking north from the Wisconsin River. The proposed Stewart Avenue gateway corridor and Town Square is on the left, and the proposed redevelopment of the East Bay site into a coordinated corporate office or civic/institutional campus is in the foreground. At the center of the sketch is the proposed redevelopment of the commercial blocks between 1st Avenue and 3rd Avenue as a higher density mixed use business district.



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Exhibit 8: Aerial Perspective Sketch

One option is to consolidate and expand the Salvation Army facilities on its current Elm Street site. This option should include the following features:

- Adaptive reuse of the historic Kleinheinz Dairy buildings.
- Utilization of the existing public alley for interior parking and service.
- Infill development to create a continuous blockface along Alexander Street and 1st Avenue.
- Residential development as part of a full block solution.

A second option is for the Salvation Army to relocate its facilities to the Labor Temple block on 3rd Avenue. This option may include some or all of the following features:

- Rehabilitation and expansion of the Labor Temple building.
- Infill development with enclosed parking fronting on 1st Avenue.
- Acquisition of residential properties on Callon Street for new infill development.
- Vacation of Clark Street between 4th Avenue and 3rd Avenue for additional surface parking to support new infill development.
- Buffer residential uses along 4th Avenue.

R4 Stewart Avenue Commercial Frontage

Provide facade improvements and site improvements for commercial buildings bordering Stewart Avenue between 4th Avenue and 2nd Avenue to create an attractive entrance to the Near West Side and beautify the gateway to Downtown Wausau.

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following transportation recommendations, which the which are keyed by number to **Exhibit 5**, include provisions for on-street parking, pedestrian and bicycle crosswalks and neighborhood connections to support the revitalization of the Near West Side.

T1 1st Avenue and 3rd Avenue

1st Avenue and 3rd Avenue are one way arterial streets with a 60' ROW that is sufficient in width to allow for required travel lanes, parking on one side of the street and an on-street bicycle lane on the opposite side of the street. On-street parking should be provided on the west side of 1st Avenue and the east side of 3rd Avenue related to new retail frontages recommended for the mixed use business district. A one way northbound bicycle lane should be provided on the east side of 1st Avenue and a one way southbound bicycle lane should be provided on the west side of 3rd Avenue. Pedestrian crosswalks should be provided at all intersections between Elm Street and Stewart Avenue to provide safe pedestrian bicycle connections.

T2 2nd Avenue

2nd Avenue, a two way north-south local street with a 60' ROW, is the central spine of the Near West Side mixed use business district. Parallel parking should be provided on each side of the street with bumpouts and crosswalks at all intersections between Elm Street and Stewart Avenue.

T3 East-West Street

East-west streets between 1st Avenue and 3rd Avenue are local streets with 66' ROWs that offer the potential of a combination of angle and parallel parking options. These streets should include bumpouts and crosswalks at all intersections to promote pedestrian safety and character for the mixed use business district. Comprehensive redevelopment of adjoining blocks that include the use of the public alley system to access the block interiors, will reduce the number of private driveways on each street and expand the availability of on-street parking to support the business district.

T4 Stewart Avenue Gateway

Stewart Avenue has a wide, 120' ROW with a center median. Future reconstruction of Stewart Avenue should include:

- Increased width of the center median to allow for expanded landscaping and streetscape improvements.
- Improved pedestrian/bicycle crosswalks at all intersections including the addition of a pedestrian cycle for traffic signals at 1st Avenue and 3rd Avenue.
- On-street bicycle lanes.

T5 Neighborhood Connections

Several improvements are recommended to enhance the connections between the Near West Side and the surrounding neighborhood including Downtown Wausau and the UW Marathon County campus. Recommended improvements include:

- Pedestrian and bicycle connections to the riverfront and riverwalk system as part of the future redevelopment of the East Bay site.
- Completion of the riverwalk system between Stewart Street and Bridge Street.
- Construction of a pedestrian/bicycle trail on the existing railroad corridor over the Wisconsin River to connect the east and west sides of the river.
- On-street bicycle lanes and improved sidewalks and streetscaping on Stewart Avenue to visually and physically connect River West with the UW Marathon County campus.
- On-street bicycle lanes on 1st Avenue and 3rd Avenue to connect the Near West Side with neighborhoods to the north and south.

URBAN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations, keyed by number to **Exhibit 5**, identify general streetscape and public open space improvements for the Near West Side. Recommended streetscape improvements vary, depending on location, with more intensive improvements targeted for the mixed use business district between 1st Avenue and 3rd Avenue. Streetscape improvements include sidewalk and terrace improvements, decorative lighting, furnishings, entrance signage, and landscaping. Streetscape improvements are important for enhancing the pedestrian character of the district; enhancing the major entrances and approach corridors to the district; strengthening the connections between the district and the historic Downtown; providing public spaces to enhance the "street life" and activity of the district; and strengthening the sense of place and market identity for the district.

Streetscape improvements will visually connect the Near West Side district with the historic Downtown and visually unify the CBD on both sides of the river. Streetscape improvements will also

establish a branding identity for the Near West Side to distinguish it from other commercial areas. District identity is collectively expressed in public streetscape improvements and private building designs. Key urban design improvements for the Near West Side include:

S1 Primary Streetscape Zone

Provide decorative street lighting, street trees, and pedestrian amenities on 2nd Avenue as the central spine of the Near West Side and on the east-west streets between 1st Avenue and 3rd Avenue. Provide bumpouts at all intersections with colored and textured crosswalks to enhance the pedestrian safety and character of the mixed use business district. New infill development should be set back two (2) to four (4) feet from the public street ROW to expand the public sidewalk for outdoor activities including outdoor eating.

S 2 Secondary Streetscape Zone

Provide decorative street lighting, street trees, and pedestrian amenities along 3rd Avenue and 1st Avenue through the Near West Side.

S3 Gateway Corridor Streetscape

Beautify Stewart Avenue between 4th Avenue and the Wisconsin River with decorative lighting, banners, street trees, and landscape displays to visually connect the Near West Side with the historic Downtown on the east side of the river. Create an entrance feature to the Wausau CBD at 3rd Avenue and Stewart Avenue that includes attractive signage and landscaping. Provide a wider center median for street trees, decorative lighting, and seasonal landscape displays and colored and textured crosswalks at 3rd Avenue and 1st Avenue with the future reconstruction of Stewart Avenue. Provide landscape displays in open spaces that border the rail corridor on the south side of Stewart Avenue.

S4 Riverwalk Streetscape

Complete the Riverwalk system between Stewart Avenue and Bridge Street with decorative lighting, overlooks, selective clearing to open views to the river and new landscape displays. Integrate outdoor spaces that are planned as part of new developments along the river with the public riverwalk system.

S5 Near West Side Entrances

Provide entrance signage with the Near West Side logo at 2nd Avenue and Stewart Avenue and 3rd Avenue and Elm Street.

S6 Near West Side Town Square

Redevelop the 1.25 AC triangular area adjoining Stewart Avenue between 2nd Avenue and 1st Avenue for a town square. This new public space will create an attractive entrance to the Near West Side, add parking to support existing businesses, and provide a setting for special events. The concept plan (**Exhibit 5**) and the perspective sketch (**Exhibit 6**) illustrate improvements for this area which include:

- Removal of the Clark Street cul de sac and replacement of the existing parking lot adjoining Stewart Street with new landscaped open spaces.

- Creation of a public parking lot in the Clark Street ROW to support the daily needs of existing and new businesses fronting on Stewart Avenue. This new parking lot should be designed as a public plaza that can be closed to traffic and used for special events.

PART THREE: IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the Near West Side Master Plan provides a table that outlines the priority, responsibility, and potential funding for implementing key plan recommendations.

Priority

A priority is assigned to each recommendation: (1) Immediate, 1 year, (2) Short-term, 2-5 years, (3) Mid-term, 5-10 years, (4) Long-term, 10+ years. As projects move forward, priorities may be adjusted and projects timing may be shifted.

Responsibility

This part of the table, which is identified under the heading of Partner(s), identifies the key responsible party for implementing key recommendations. It is important to note that multiple partners, both public and private, will likely be involved in all implementation activities but that the identified partner will initiate and coordinate implementation activities related to each of the planning recommendations. The following is a list of potential partners for implementing the Near West Side Master Plan recommendations.

- Wausau Main Street and a proposed Near West Side Subcommittee
- City of Wausau (staff, committees, and commissions)
- River District BID
- Central Wausau Progress (CWP)
- McDEVco
- Marathon County
- UW Marathon County
- Alexander Foundation
- State of Wisconsin and its agencies
- Railroad
- Property owners
- Business owners
- Developers
- Neighborhood

Potential Funding

This part of the table identifies possible public and private funding sources that may be used in implementing planning recommendations. Key funding sources include:

- Business Improvement District (BID)
- TIF – Tax Incremental Financing (City)
- CDBG – Community Development Block Grants (City)
- CIP – Capital Improvement Program (City)
- Commercial Rehabilitation Fund (City)
- Developer
- Private (foundation, private donations, private organizations, etc.)
- State (funding administered through DOT, DNR, Commerce, and other State agencies)

Implementation Table

Key Projects	Priority	Partner(s)	Potential Funding
General Project Activities			
1. Adoption of the Near West Side Master Plan	1	City	—
2. Create a Near West Side Subcommittee of Wausau Main Street	1	Main Street	—
3. District clean-up and beautification (banners and planting program)	1	Main Street	BID
4. Expand River District BID boundary to include the Near West Side planning area	1	Main Street/City	—
5. Branding and identity		Main Street/BID	BID
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a place name for the Near West Side • Create a Near West Side logo • Near West Side entrance signs (S5) • Develop marketing/promotional materials 	1		
6. Building inspection, code enforcement and property maintenance program	1	City/Main Street	—
7. Establish a Near West Side TIF District	2	City	—
8. Establish targeted Near West Side facade improvement program including design assistance	1	City	Private/CDBG/Commercial Rehab Fund
9. Establish developer and business recruitment program	2	Main Street/City	—
10. Coordinate the Near West Side Master Plan with other plans including UW Marathon County, Marathon County Bicycle Plan, etc	1	Main Street/City	—
11. Create a Near West Side Overlay Zoning District with design standards for building/site rehabilitation and new construction	2	City	—
12. Establish “Block Captain” Program	1	Main Street	—
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate block-wide clean up, maintenance, safety programs • Facade improvement program • Business retention and recruitment program 			

Key Projects	Priority	Partner(s)	Potential Funding
Private Development			
1. Near West Side Gateway Redevelopment (R1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infill development on Clark Street • Acquisition and redevelopment of Callon Street properties • Building rehabilitation and façade improvements for Clark Street and 1st Avenue properties • Master agreement for shared parking and service • Town Square design and construction (S6) • Public street and streetscape improvements (S1, S2) 	2	City/Property Owners/ Developer/CWP	Developer/TIF/CDBG
2. East Bay Redevelopment (R2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve East Bay in discussing future expansion and redevelopment plans • Phased redevelopment of East Bay site • Riverwalk connections and riverfront beautification (T5,S4) 	1 3, 4 3, 4	City/East Bay/ Developer	Developer/TIF
3. Salvation Army (R3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete strategic plan • Site selection, acquisition, development 	1 2, 3	City/Property Owners/ Developer	Developer/TIF) Historic Tax Credits (State)
4. Stewart Avenue Commercial Frontage (R4)	2	City/Property Owners	Private/Commercial Rehab Fund
5. Other “full-block” redevelopment projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building/site rehabilitation • Facade improvements • Infill development • Shared parking/service agreement • Public street and streetscape improvements (S1, S2) 	2, 3, 4	City/Property Owners/ Developers	Developers/TIF/CDBG Commercial Rehab Fund

Key Projects	Priority	Partner(s)	Potential Funding
Public Improvements			
1. Initial street/sidewalk repairs including pedestrian crosswalk striping for all Near West Side intersections	1	City/Main Street	CIP
2. Construct River West Town Square (S6)	2	City/Main Street	TIF/Private
3. Phase One 1st Avenue and 3rd Avenue improvements (T1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-street parking • On-street bicycle lanes 	2	City	CIP
4. Phase One Stewart Avenue improvements (T4, S3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-street bicycle lanes • Pedestrian crosswalk and pedestrian signal improvements at 1st Avenue and 3rd Avenue • Near West Side District entrance feature at 3rd Avenue and Stewart Avenue • Install decorative lighting, banners and street trees on north and south sides of Stewart Avenue between 3rd Avenue and the Wisconsin River • Install landscape displays in open spaces bordering the railroad corridor on the south side of Stewart Avenue 	2	City/State Main Street/Railroad	TIF/CIP/Private
5. Phased local street improvements between 1st Avenue and 3rd Avenue coordinated with private redevelopment projects (T2, T3, S1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angle/parallel parking • Intersection bump outs and crosswalk improvements • Decorative lighting, street trees and streetscape amenities 	2, 3	City/Main Street	TIF/CIP/Private
6. Phase Two 1st Avenue and 3rd Avenue improvements (S2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decorative lighting and street trees 	2, 3	City/Main Street	TIF/CIP

<p>7. Phase Two Stewart Avenue improvements (T4, S3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of center median • Intersection improvements • Decorative lighting and landscape displays in expanded center median 	<p>3, 4</p>	<p>City/DOT/Main Street</p>	<p>State/TIF/City</p>
<p>8. Construction of Near West Side entrances at 3rd Avenue/Elm Street and 2nd Avenue/Stewart Avenue (S5)</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Main Street</p>	<p>BID/TIF</p>
<p>9. Completion of Riverwalk between Stewart Avenue and Bridge Street (T5)</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>City/Main Street</p>	<p>TIF/State/Private/CIP</p>
<p>10. Construction of ped/bike trail on railroad corridor over Wisconsin River (T5)</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>City/Main Street</p>	<p>TIF/State/Private/CIP</p>

APPENDIX

1. Summary of Interviews
2. Demographic Information

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

APPENDIX: 1

Personal interviews were conducted by Tim Anderson, Schreiber Anderson and Associates, and Deb Erslund, Best Real Estate Group on August 7, 2007 and September 24, 2007. These interviews, which involved various business and property owners within the Near West Side planning area included the following:

Sandy Smith, Dean, UW Marathon County
Skip Ellenbecher, Property Owner
Brad Marquardt, City of Wausau, Dept of Engineering
Mike Williams, West Side Business Association
Dave Eckert, Eckert Law Firm
Dennis Kepchar, Ministry Health
Terry Geurink, Associated Bank
Dan Damaas, Chatterbox
Lois Beanjar, Katzenbarkers
Bob Fehl and Jim Schaffer, River District Antiques
Sharon Morehead, Morehead Building
Thom Passow, Wausau Awards
Kari Bender-Burke, Quilting Workshop
Randy Hahn, Salvation Army
Amy Nelson, East Bay

The following represents a collective and random summary of interview comments which are in no particular order of importance:

Our area is disjointed, dysfunctional and messy. There is no structure to what is going on.
The dairy building just sits around. Why can't something be done?
Our area is very separate from the downtown. The community doesn't consider this the downtown.
The river area is totally underutilized.
The Laundromat is a draw to the area, but not a positive one.
This is a forgotten district of the city.
A grocery store in this area would be very welcomed.
Make 1st and 3rd Avenue two-way traffic.
Loitering from the Salvation Army causes business problems.
The area image needs to be improved. Sidewalks need repair, too many ugly parking lots, landlord apathy, and neglected properties.
Why don't we have nice lighting like the downtown?
We need more of a hometown feeling here.
The alleys by our buildings really need repair. Do we have to pay for that work?
Let's not tear down good buildings, let's fix them up.
The traffic flow is challenging, and there is little pedestrian traffic.
Why don't we use the river better?

The neighborhood is a friendly place.
There are 1,350 students at the UW Marathon campus, with dorm space for only 160.
It would be helpful to have public parking somewhere in this area.
There are people out on the island that drink and sleep there. It is not safe.
We need better wayfinding.
The downtown plan seems to exclude this area.
We need a better, stronger organization for the Near West Side area.
Our neighborhood issues are the empty lots, rundown and empty buildings.

We need the community to be more biker-friendly.
There are “unusual” people in the park and around the river.
This area needs a lot of cleaning up. Why don't we enforce our building and zoning codes?
A good coffee shop and a good place for a business lunch are needed.
More restaurants in this neighborhood would be good.
The perception of this area is that it is just old.
There needs to be a bigger draw in this area.
I have a concern about the drug dealing and access to alcohol.
Clean this area up.
The Salvation Army is a good neighbor - they just have a challenging situation and clientele.
Remove most of the buildings. Nothing fits, buildings are old or in bad condition.
There's good history in this neighborhood.
People don't really think about this as a business district.
Other restaurant types would be good for the neighborhood.
The Westside Business Association is not a very active organization and does not have a unified voice.
There is not a lot of owner-occupied housing in this area.
We're kind of lost in this area, and there is no draw to get people here.
Why does Main Street boundary stop in the middle of the street? That's crazy!
We need to recreate a neighborhood here.
Condos on the river would be a positive.
Bring in more offices/employees - they will need better services and retail.
UW students are isolated with limited recreation and entertainment opportunities on or near the campus.
Improve the rear alleys.
There has been poor communication with the BID.
More restaurants in this area would be great.
Close off Alexander Street, there are no building entrances on the street.
This area is not an inspired location.
There has been limited involvement by this side of the river in anything.
Bring the River District identity to the west side.
The palette storage business should go.
I don't see a need for more residential in this area.
There is just a hodge-podge of land uses in this area.
A grocery / deli would be appreciated.
More daytime jobs in the area would help.
Access to our site can be tricky because of the one-way street.
We need to deal with the litter situation.
The East Bay building looks pretty nice.
Drive by traffic doesn't stop here, it's only destination stops.
The UW is excited about what the revitalization of the Near West Side means for its students.
Current location is a good place for business, very accessible to east and west Wausau.
The Laundromat is an eyesore and should be removed.
We don't have Christmas lights or a retail friendly environment.
Our business would feel much better if there were more revitalization going on here.
Bike paths please.
The BID hasn't paid attention to the west side.
There are some safety issues in this part of town.
Get rid of the isolated residential uses in the area.
Property maintenance is a problem, housing is run down.
There should be more BID involvement – marketing and promotion.
The neighborhood looks unsafe and uninviting to customers and potential business and property owners.

The police are responsive, but we have no beat cop.
The BID could help more to organize people to work together on common issues like crime and property maintenance.
We need to solidify the business environment. Clean it up, add planters.
Visually, we lack character!
Traffic moves pretty well around here.
We need more affordable housing and green space.
Add similar amenities as Downtown – make it look like it is part of Downtown.
I can't utilize my upper floor because there is no parking for tenants.
There is great access to this area.
People can't quite tell what this area is.
We should be capitalizing on those times when East Bay has big sales. They do bring in a lot of retail traffic.
Get the City to take some initiative here.
The first priority for the plan should be beautification.
The Laundromat attracts transients.
Develop upscale shopping and restaurants, like a good fish restaurant.
The BID needs to promote the west side better.
People don't really walk across the bridge to the downtown, but I guess it is not that far.
We could use a few other restaurants in this area.
The neighborhood may feel threatening, but safety is not an issue.
Why aren't we having these interviews in our district?
Extend the decorative street lights and streetscaping throughout the neighborhood.
Close off Clark Street.
We have had some security concerns with loitering and panhandling.
Mandarin Restaurant is a positive addition to the neighborhood.
The businesses need to be better organized. They will support a plan. Let's get them involved.
When the Cosmetology School left, it was felt by our business.
I would say this area has "blight".
Our business has not had a crime problem, but there may be a perception of crime in the area.
The City should get the old sign off the Laundromat.

Work Session with the River District Economic Restructuring Committee – August 7, 2007

Participants:

Deb Ersland, Best Real Estate Group
Leah Alters, River District
Kari Rasmussen, River District
Jim Rosenberg, City Council / Main Street
Alfred Nakhla, Associated Bank / BID Board / ER Committee
Phil Valitcka, Main Street Board
Steve Foley, City Council Dist 10
Sarah Werth, Creative Communication & Design
Ann Werth, City of Wausau
Jim Tipple, Mayor City of Wausau

Planning Issues and Opportunities

Destination/specialty shops/disconnected history/anchors
West Side left out
Inaccessible riverfront
Isolated un-noticed river could take advantage of river
Awkward part of town
No attractions – but recognize historic, unique buildings – Scottie's Boutiques
No themes

The neighborhood together
River disconnected
Expand Downtown
Percolating character
University blocks away – incorporate University functions
River edge should tie folks together – ribbon
Doesn't feel like Downtown – mirror Downtown feel
Adventures in misused service parking create dead spots
Thrift Mart/T-Mart needs to go like Clarke Bldg
Not vital
Doesn't feel walkable – too many gaps
Residential ok
Need more green space or trees
Cohesive
Don't know what's there – no attractions
People want to get in and get out
Where does Salvation Army belong? Diversity? Asset?
Also neighborhood pride
Specialty shops key
Stability in quaint housing
Live – non-existent/work/eat/shop/housing blend
Create viable, stable neighborhoods
Re-energize with new housing types

Potential Development/Business Opportunities

Need destination, nice restaurant – river as opp.
Antique stores lacking
Sam's Pizza
Post Office – excuse to go to West Downtown
Service businesses, create action
VA Hospital
UW Marathon County is landlocked in Marathon Park
UW Theatre and residential district unfriendly
East Bay huge! At all hours

Where should development occur?

Maytag/ex-grocery
Kleinheinz Dairy
Pizza Hut parking lot – Associated Bank
Echo Chatterbox phenomenon still rooted in community
Corner bars preserve tradition
Bring in ownership and residential
Nobody owns it
Need neighborhood oversight for public safety
Nobody even slows down to look
Not a refined district
Unidentified place