

*** All present are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with our City's Core Values ***



OFFICIAL NOTICE AND AGENDA

of a meeting of a City Board, Commission, Department Committee, Agency, Corporation, Quasi-Municipal Corporation or Sub-unit thereof.

Notice is hereby given that the PLAN COMMISSION of the City of Wausau, Wisconsin will hold a regular or special meeting on the date, time and location shown below.

Meeting of the: **JOINT PLAN COMMISSION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**
Date/Time: **Tuesday, December 17, 2019 at 5:00 pm.**
Location: **City Hall (407 Grant Street, Wausau WI 54403) - COMMON COUNCIL CHAMBERS**
Members: Mielke (C), Lindman, Peckham, Gisselman, Bohlken, Zahrt, Brueggeman

AGENDA ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION (All items listed may be acted upon)

PLAN COMMISSION ONLY ITEMS

1. Approve the minutes of the November 19, 2019 meeting.
2. Discussion and possible action on approving the Precise Implementation Plan at 1930 East Crabtree to allow for a service building.
3. Discussion and possible action on declaring the Eau Claire Heights District a Local Historic District.
4. Next meeting date and future agenda items for consideration.

JOINT ITEMS

5. Presentation by Neighborhood Planners LLC of the South Riverfront and Towers Area Master Plans.
6. Discussion and Possible Action on the South Riverfront Master Plan.
7. Discussion and Possible Action on the Towers Area Master Plan.
8. Adjournment

Mayor Robert B. Mielke - Committee Chairperson

It is likely that members of, and a quorum of the Council and/or members of other committees of the Common Council of the City of Wausau will be in attendance at the above-mentioned meeting to gather information. **No action will be taken by any such groups.**

This Notice was posted at City Hall and emailed to the Daily Herald newsroom on 12/12/2019 @ 10:00 a.m.

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the City of Wausau will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities. If you need assistance or reasonable accommodations in participating in this meeting or event due to a disability as defined under the ADA, please call the Planning Department at (715) 261-6760 or the City's ADA Coordinator at (715) 261-6620 or e-mail clerk@ci.wausau.wi.us at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting or event to request an accommodation.

Distribution List: City Website, Media, Committee Members, Council Members, Assessor, Attorney, City Clerk, Community Development, Finance, Metro Ride, Human Resources, Police Department, Hebert, Lenz, Sippel, DeSantis, Polley, County Planning

PLAN COMMISSION

Time and Date: The Plan Commission met on Tuesday, November 19, 2019, at 5:00 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers of Wausau City Hall.

Members Present: Mayor Robert Mielke, Eric Lindman, Gary Gisselman, Patrick Peckham, Andrew Brueggeman

Others Present: Brad Lenz, Brad Sippel, William Hebert, Melissa Engen, Bill Scholfield, Linda Lawrence, Deb Ryan, Mike Slavney

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and transmitted to the *Wausau Daily Herald* in the proper manner.

Mayor Mielke called the meeting to order at approximately 5:00 p.m. noting that a quorum was present.

Approve the minutes of the October 15, 2019 meeting.

Gisselman motioned to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2019 meeting. Brueggeman seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 5-0.

Discussion and possible action on approving a public sculpture along the River Edge Parkway at the end of Fulton Street extended.

Lenz said that the resolution is in the packet. The location of the sculpture has been identified on the river edge trail. It will not interfere with public or private development. It will be a highly visible site and a nice addition to the area.

Gisselman motioned to approve a public sculpture along the River Edge Parkway at the end of Fulton Street extended. Brueggeman seconded.

Peckham said that the RFP was extremely well done.

The motion carried unanimously 5-0. This item will go to Common Council on November 26, 2019.

Discussion and possible action on the dedication of right-of-way of South 18th Avenue from South 17th Avenue to South 18th Avenue.

Sippel said that the CSM is included in the packet and is part of the dedication from last month. A memo is also included. Three lanes are proposed with a sidewalk on one side. This item is for the CSM approval and not for the road design. The main concern of staff is that sidewalk would be best on both sides, but there wouldn't be enough public right-of-way if three lanes are included. This is a retail destination with lots of jobs and services. There may be new uses that could be coming. There are several hundred people within walking distance. The 51' right-of-way would be adequate if there were only two lanes of traffic. Mayor Mielke added that the future expansion is the biggest reason for the sidewalk request.

Peckham asked Sippel why the pedestrians would walk in the road, as noted in the memo. Sippel said that if the sidewalk is on one side, some pedestrians would just use the street instead of crossing multiple intersections. Mayor Mielke asked if a sidewalk is proposed for 17th Avenue, as he would like to have reassurance for connectivity. Sippel answered that it is a high priority from the Planning Department. Mayor Mielke asked who would maintain the sidewalks. Sippel answered that it would be the property owners' responsibility to maintain the sidewalk. Peckham asked if the diagonal parking would be south of this section. Sippel answered that it would be most likely the north parking lot since there isn't much room to the south. Peckham confirmed that the whole road if shifted north could compromise a row of parking in the lot.

Brueggeman asked what the impact of the development will be.

Deb Ryan, 702 Elm Street, said that she has an electrified bike and has seen people from the neighborhood biking and walking to this area and there aren't sidewalks in some areas. Ryan recommended that the sidewalks get extended to Motel 8. With the Mountain Lanes apartments, there will be more people and the city needs to make plans to make the area more user friendly.

Bill Scholfield said that he met with the planners and wanted to clarify a few things. Scholfield said that he spent years studying this west side and the sidewalk has become a bigger discussion for movement of pedestrians. It is important and serves a lot of citizens, but being careful on how they are moving forward. The north sidewalk would be very adequate and we would still need to convince people to use the sidewalks. The sidewalk would link the bus hub, which is a critical stop and will eliminate safety issues. Scholfield told the committee what they have already done to the area, but he does not feel two sidewalks is necessary. Scholfield said that he hopes that the CSM can be moved forward and said that the buffer to the sidewalk that was suggested does make sense. This will create additional tax base to the city.

Mayor Mielke added that he does see the need for the sidewalks.

Peckham said that the staff report indicates that it recommends approval, but goes over different solutions. Sippel said that the CSM is the only item for approval at this time, but the design could be discussed by the committee. Peckham said that he likes the sidewalks.

Peckham motioned to dedicate the right-of-way of South 18th Avenue from South 17th Avenue to South 18th Avenue. Brueggeman seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 5-0. This item will go to Common Council on November 26, 2019.

PUBLIC HEARING: Discussion and possible action on amending the city-wide zoning map amendment corresponding to an updated zoning ordinance.

Lenz said that the next two items go together. The first one is for the map and the second one is for the text. Staff would like to give some background and remind everyone how this proposed zoning code got to this stage.

Mike Slavney, Vandewalle & Associates, said that they have worked with staff for the last 18 months for this new zoning code. Some of the key points for the new code are that it will be highly customized to the Comprehensive Plan. The process started with a tour of the city and meetings with staff. This item would be to seek recommendation of map and code for an effective date of January 1, 2020. The proposed code is designed to be predictable and there will be more mixed-use areas and will be more user-friendly. This code will be compliant with state and federal law. The ordinance will be organized into ten articles. The new ordinance will use a new set of zoning districts and all parcels will be rezoned. All parcels will be fully legal and conforming. Some parcels will need to be up-zoned, while others may be down-zoned. This zoning code will give options for more mixed-use zoning and multi-family housing.

Mayor Mielke thanked Slavney and staff for the efforts and said that this is a long time coming.

Deb Ryan, 702 Elm Street, said that in the area that she lives in, it will be zoned SR-5 and SR-7, when the area has a lot of duplexes. Ryan said that the street parking from CISM should have been combined with this. Ryan said that she lives across the street from a two-family house with one garage and they are always parking on the street. On the 100 block of South 7th Avenue, there are three ranch homes on two lots. If one of the houses burned down, they would not be able to be rebuilt. These are small lots and the house size should have a maximum size of half of the lot size. Ryan asked where people will put things on these small lots. Ryan said that staff is being very premature. Habitat for Humanity has built houses

for 10-12 people. Ryan asked what has been done to notify the Hmong population with extended family. This has not been sent to the neighborhood groups. Ryan said that the city should try to eliminate the small lots. There is a lot of work to do.

Mayor Mielke read an email that Sara Eberlein sent about the lack of land zoned for building a duplex.

Peckham said that there are changes in the number of related and unrelated and asked what those are. Peckham said that there has been a lot of discussion about homeless issues in the last several weeks and asked if this code would allow for group homes for recovering individuals. Slavney said that the definition for family has been changed to make it easier and there is a diagram in the code. Unrelated individuals would be considered as three or four adults. Peckham asked if there is a way to serve more than three unrelated individuals. Slavney answered that there are several types of land uses that could be used. Peckham asked five unrelated adults could live in a five bedroom building. Slavney said that it could be allowed with city permission. Hebert added that there are seven different definitions and someone could pursue conditional uses. The restrictions have been lessened from the current zoning code.

Peckham asked about accessory dwelling units. Slavney said as an example that a detached garage would have the potential for an apartment above it.

Peckham said that the minimum dwelling has been adjusted to 800-1200 square feet and asked if that would allow for mini-houses. Slavney said that it would allow them and they would have to be 400 square feet to meet the building code. This would be for efficiency apartments. Sippel added that in higher density districts it would be, but in other zoning districts the amount is 800 square feet. Peckham asked if it would allow for low-income housing. Sippel said that it would allow for small apartments, but may not be low-income housing.

Peckham said that chickens are not listed on page 27 and asked if this is because a license from the Clerk's office is required. Hebert confirmed this. Peckham said that community living is 1-8 residents and is a good thing. Accessory buildings would need to be setback 6' for residential and 10' for commercial and asked if this is correct. Slavney confirmed this and said that the main thing is that accessory uses in residential areas are limited in scale. Peckham said that the two-flat apartment diagram looks as expected, but indicates a twin house. Peckham said that he has not heard of a twin house before. Slavney said the diagram is an error that needs to be corrected. Peckham said that there are changes to a bed and breakfast, but wasn't sure what they were. Slavney said that current rules were not consistent with state law, so it needed to be changed. Peckham asked if Airbnb's will be patrolled and monitored. Hebert answered that it is in the proposal and a license will be required.

Hebert said SR-5 and SR-7 existing two families will be allowed per Letter E of permitted uses. Slavney said that any new two-family would require approval. Ryan stated that a rental across the street has been vacant for three years. With the new code, a new develop would have to have it as a single-family house. Slavney said that with the current code, it is nonconforming for one year or more, the use cannot be reestablished. If the use is established, it can be used. In the SR-5 and SR-7 districts, any current two-family use will be permitted by right.

Gisselman asked if there will be historical aspects of districts in the new code. Slavney said that a new district will be called historic downtown and will have its own zoning district to protect the character. Right now the overall downtown district is not protected. The older neighborhoods will be identified and the code will specify building materials to protect the established neighborhoods. Gisselman said that last week, CISM voted to ban overnight parking in the winter time and asked if this code would affect this. There is potential for higher density apartments.

Linda Lawrence asked if this will be adopted in December. Mayor Mielke said that it will go to council next Tuesday. Lawrence said that she does not feel comfortable with it and asked if other council members do, as this is a big deal. Peckham suggested others may not know all of the details of the code.

Brueggeman said that this code is an improvement over the existing code as it is simplified and more modern. He said that he couldn't tell someone what exactly is in the existing code but that he looks to staff for that guidance.

Mayor Mielke said that throughout the process, feedback has been given. Lenz said that it will take a while for everyone to memorize the new code, but it is a vast improvement and the code can change if things come up. Peckham said that the commission can vote and send it to council and table it, if needed.

Mayor Mielke closed the public hearing.

Peckham motioned to amend the city-wide zoning map corresponding to an updated zoning ordinance. Gisselman seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 5-0. This item will go to Common Council on November 26, 2019.

PUBLIC HEARING: Discussion and possible action on repealing and re-enacting Chapter 23 of the Wausau Municipal Code (Zoning Ordinance).

Lenz said that this is the second part – for the ordinance text. The discussion has been mingled together with the previous item.

Ryan said that outreach should have been done for the Hmong community, which is a large minority in the city.

Mayor Mielke closed the public hearing.

Lenz said that the meetings were noticed as they normally are. Drafts and maps have been available online and a map has been displayed in the lobby at city hall. Ryan said it is the city's responsibility for outreach and people can't be expected to know.

Gisselman motioned to repeal and re-enact Chapter 23 of the Wausau Municipal Code (Zoning Ordinance). Peckham seconded, and the motion carried unanimously 5-0. This item will go to Common Council on November 26, 2019.

Brueggeman left the meeting at approximately 6:13 p.m.

Next meeting date and future agenda items for consideration.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 17, 2019.

Adjournment.

Gisselman motioned to adjourn, seconded by Peckham. The motion carried unanimously 4-0 and the meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

The Plan Commission is next scheduled to meet at 5:00 p.m. on December 17, 2019.



STAFF REPORT

TO: City of Wausau Plan Commission
FROM: Brad Sippel, Assistant Planner
DATE: December 11, 2019

GENERAL INFORMATION

APPLICANT: Thomas Monk (RMCM Partnership, LLC)
LOCATION: 1930 E Crabtree Drive
EXISTING ZONING: UDD, Unified Development District
REQUESTED ZONING: Approve Precise Implementation Plan
PURPOSE: To develop a service building for adjacent multifamily housing
EXISTING LAND USE: Undeveloped/wooded
SIZE OF PARCEL: Approximately 4.46 acres

SURROUNDING ZONING AND LAND USE:

North: **R1**, Single Family Residence District; Undeveloped
South: **R4-1**, Limited General Residence District; Undeveloped
R4-2, Medium Density Residence District; Multifamily residences
East: **Village of Maine**; Undeveloped
West: **Village of Maine**; Open Space (Botanical Gardens)

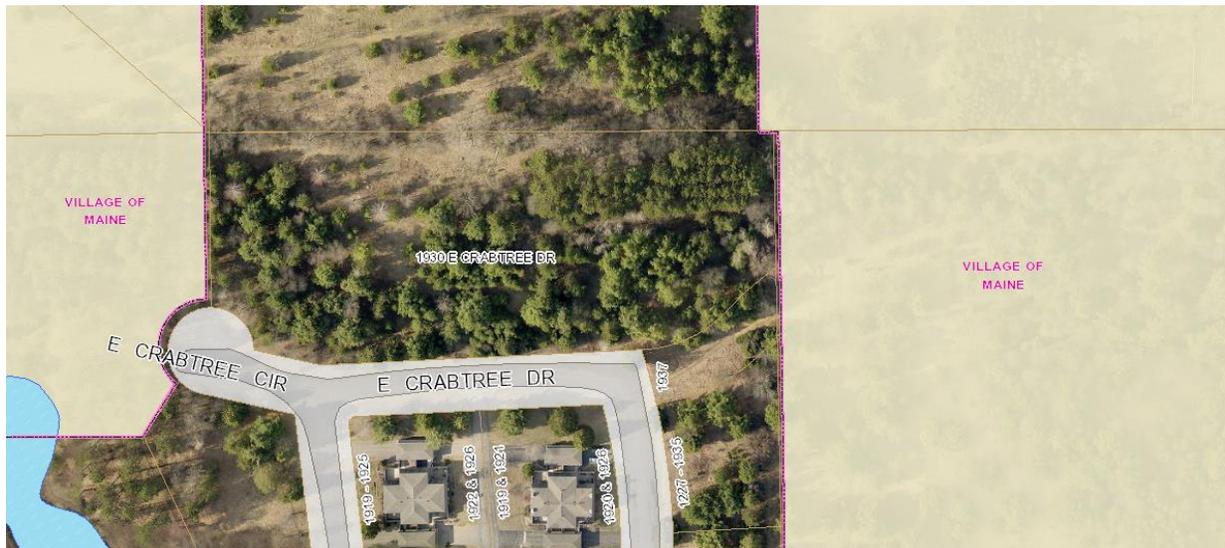
See attached map

SUMMARY

The RMCM Partnership is seeking approval to build an accessory service building. The applicant plans to build the service building that would be used for all of the RMCM properties in the area as phase 1, and follow that with new multifamily residences as phase 2. The requested PIP approval would cover the location of the service building and driveway/parking area for the

building. The applicant stated that the orientation of the building was to prevent the removal of some large trees.

Future phases would need a separate PIP approval at that time. The UDD zoning was approved in September of 2019. At that time staff recommended that the future precise implementation plan continues existing public streets through the proposed development to allow for future street connectivity to the north, providing common open space, and using design to minimize pavement used for driveways and parking to conserve natural features of the parcel to the extent possible.



ANALYSIS

The criteria applicable to a UDD are:

23.65.010 Statement of intent. The purpose of the unified development district is to promote the maximum benefit from coordinated area site planning, diversified location of structures and mixed compatible uses in developments conceived and implemented as comprehensive and cohesive unified projects. It is further intended to encourage and facilitate the conservation of open land and other natural features such as woods, streams, wetlands, etc., as integral components of a balanced ecology. To this intent the regulations provide for the development of land on the basis of comprehensive and coordinated site plans for a specific project development, regulated by objective criteria rather than through the application of fixed formulas, thereby allowing for greater flexibility and improved quality of environmental design. Such district may be established only with the consent of the owners of the land affected.

23.65.040 Criteria for approval. The approval of a unified development proposal shall be based upon determination as to compliance with the following criteria:

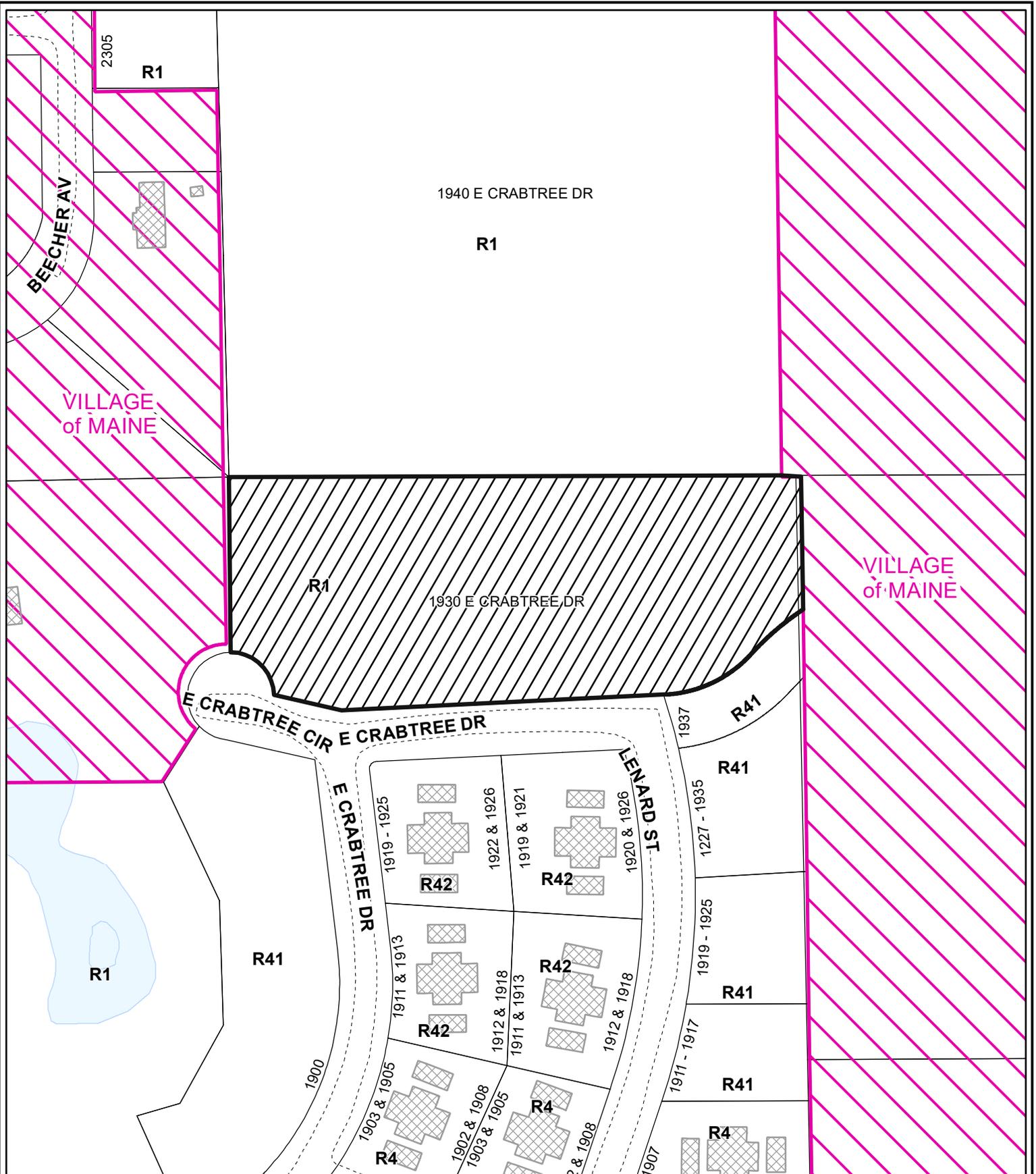
- (a) That the proposed development is consistent with the spirit and intent of these regulations, has been prepared with competent professional advice and guidance and produces significant benefits in terms of improved environmental design to justify the application of the unified development concept;*

- (b) That the site development plan reflects sensitive consideration of the physical nature of the site with particular concern for conservation of natural features, preservation of open space and careful shaping of terrain to minimize scarring, and insures proper drainage and preservation of natural terrain wherever appropriate;*
- (c) That the general character and intensity of use of the development produces an attractive environment appropriate to the uses proposed, and is compatible with existing development in the surrounding area and with general community development plans and policies;*
- (d) That the development can be provided with appropriate municipal services and would not conflict with or cause overload on such facilities as schools, highways, police, fire or utility services;*
- (e) That proposed design standards provide adequately for practical functioning and maintenance, based on actual functional need, in terms of circulation, parking, emergency services, delivery services and snowplowing;*
- (f) That adequate provision has been made to insure proper maintenance and preservation of any common areas provided for the recreation and esthetic enhancement of the development.*

Staff Comments: The proposed development would provide for centralized service building for many of the multifamily properties in the immediate vicinity. The proposed location of the service building on the site would allow for the future development of streets, residential structures, and common open space in a future phase of the development.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the Precise Implementation Plan for the service building. Lighting and landscaping plans should be submitted with permit application.



1940 E CRABTREE DR

R1

VILLAGE of MAINE

1930 E CRABTREE DR

R1

VILLAGE of MAINE

E CRABTREE CIR E CRABTREE DR

R41

R1

R41

1919 - 1925
1922 & 1926
1919 & 1921
1920 & 1926
1911 & 1913
1912 & 1918
1911 & 1913
1912 & 1918
1903 & 1905
1902 & 1908
1903 & 1905
& 1908

R42

R42

R42

R42

R4

R4

R4

R41

R41

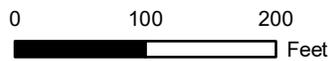
R41

R41



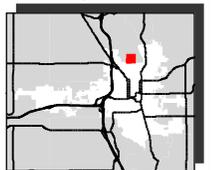
Map Date: August 29, 2019

City of Wausau
Marathon County Wisconsin



- Area of Interest
- Building

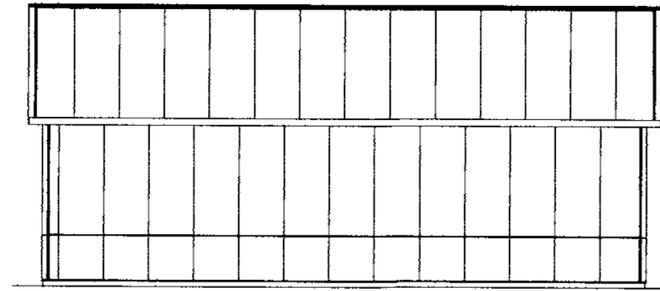
Map Location



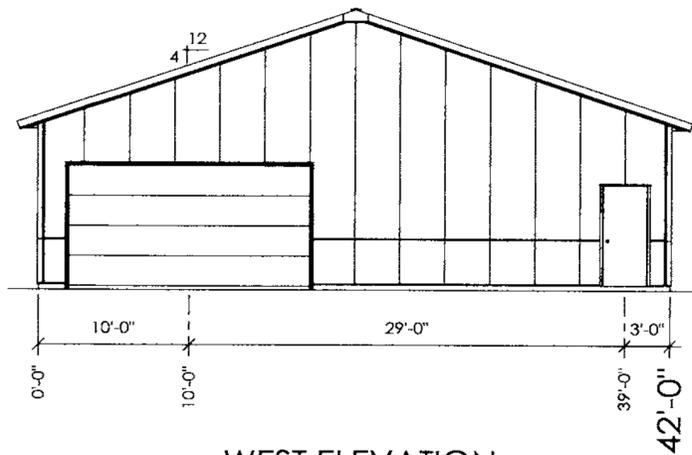
DESIGN AND EXPLANATORY NOTES

1.) EXTERIOR DOOR AND WINDOW LOCATIONS ARE TAKEN FROM THE EXTERIOR FACE OF THE NAILERS AND ARE TO THE CENTER OF THE DOOR AND WINDOW UNITS. VERIFY ALL DOOR AND WINDOW LOCATIONS WITH THE OWNER.

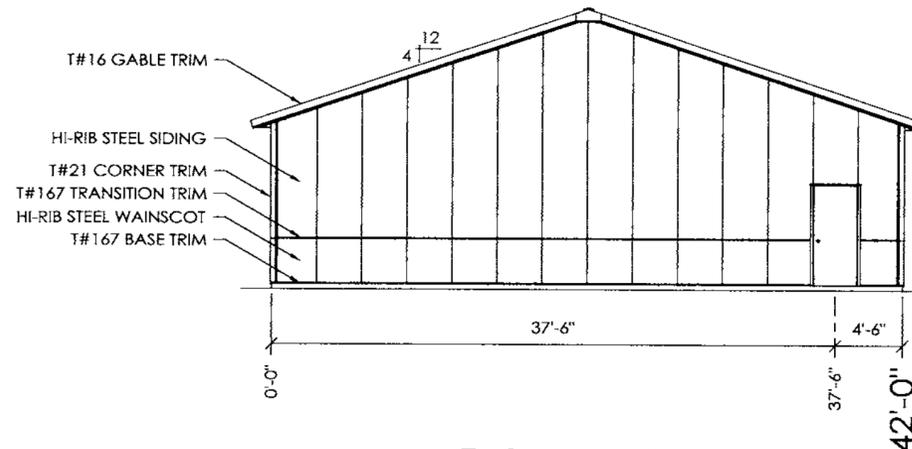
OFFICE: KAUKAUNA, WI
JOB NO. 095-093455



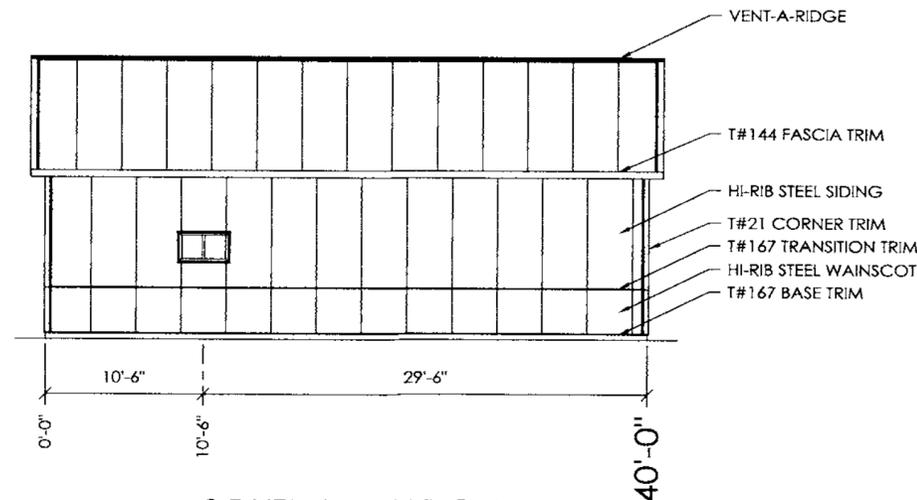
NORTH ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION



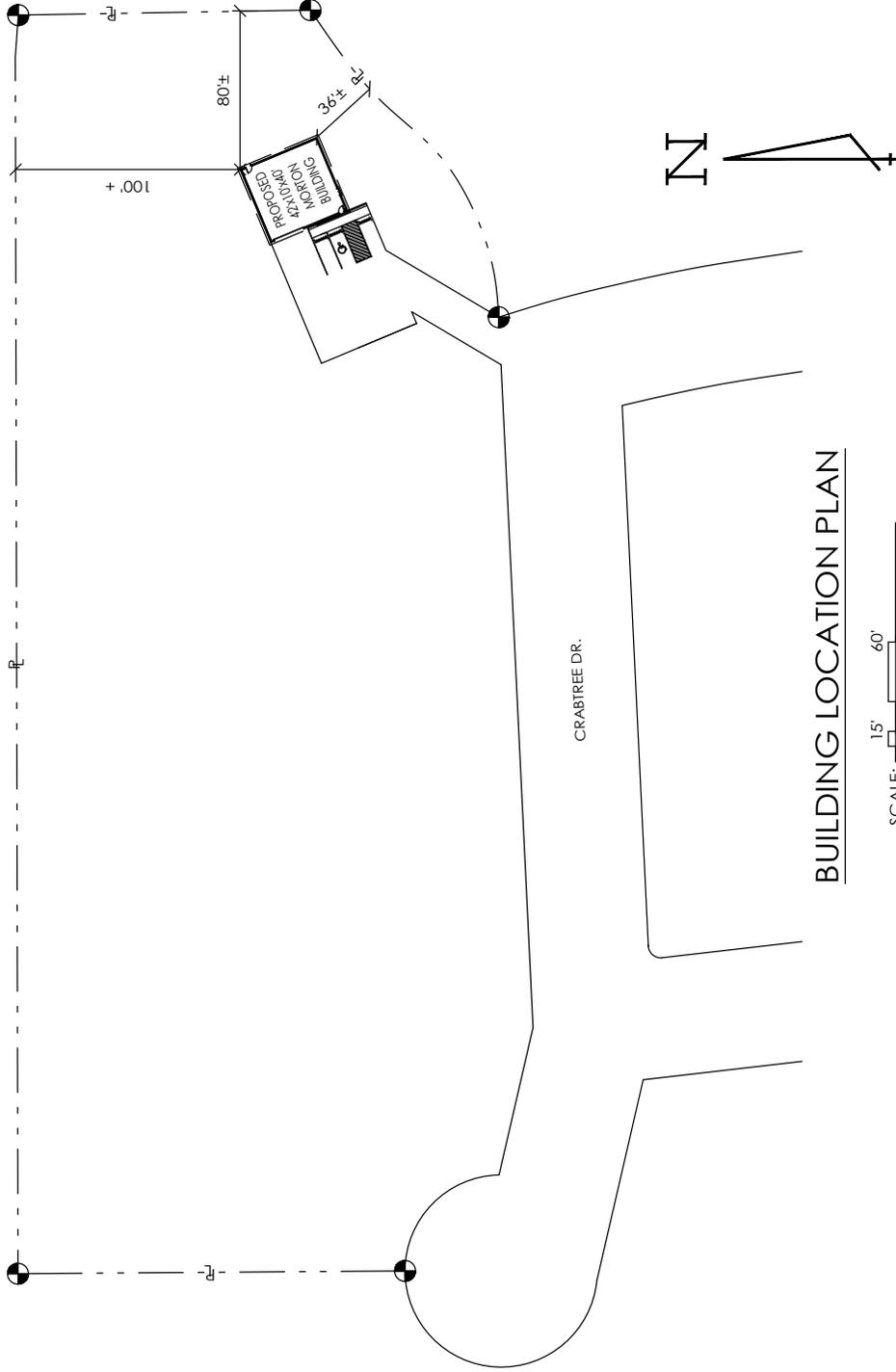
RMCM PARTNERSHIP LLC
WAUSAU, WI

WI **ALLIED DESIGN ARCHITECTURAL & ENGINEERING GROUP, P.C.**
100 S. PERSHING P.O. BOX 110 MORTON, IL 61550
PHONE NUMBER: 309-263-4105

DRAWN BY:	MILICH
DATE:	10/28/2019
CHECKED BY:	RLT
DATE:	11/4/2019
REVISED DATE:	---



SCALE: AS NOTED
SHEET NO. S3 OF S5



BUILDING LOCATION PLAN

SCALE: 15' 60' 7.5' 30' 120'



Memorandum

From: Brad Lenz
To: Plan Commission
Date: December 11, 2019
Subject: Eau Claire Heights Historic District

The city's Historic Preservation Commission has been discussing the Eau Claire Heights District as a possible local historic district. An old plat shows the area on the southeast side between Kent Street and Lake View Drive that was planned as an early residential development in the city. The streets were built with landscaped medians that are still in existence today and give the area a unique character. The housing stock in the district, from mid-century and before, exemplifies a number of historic architectural styles.

An informational meeting was held in November at the Wausau Downtown Airport to give interested neighborhood residents more information about the proposed district as well as local historic districts in general. Approximately 20 residents attended the meeting.

The Historic Preservation Commission held a public hearing earlier this month on the proposed district. Minutes from the meeting are attached (as well as maps of the original and proposed districts). The Commission voted unanimously to approve the district.

The Eau Claire Heights District is being proposed as a "Class II" historic district, which is the same type of district as the city's four other local historic districts. Class II essentially means that recommendations by the Historic Preservation Commission to property owners within the district are advisory only. Home owners within the district would need to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness for external renovations to their home that are visible from a city street and which require a building permit.

Per Wausau Municipal Code 2.82.060(b)(2), the plan commission shall review the historic district recommendation of the historic preservation commission and make a recommendation to the common council based on the following factors:

- (A) Will the designation of the property as a historic district interfere with the orderly, coordinated, and harmonious development of the city;
- (B) Will the designation of the property as a historic district conflict with parts of the master plan, official map or redevelopment plans;
- (C) Will the designation of property as a historic district promote the general public health, safety and general welfare.

Staff recommends approval of the district based on the three factors above.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Time and Date: Wednesday, December 4, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Wausau City Hall
Members Present: Gary Gisselman (C), Kevin Crooks, David Burke, Linda Tryczak
Others Present: Brad Lenz, Mike Moran

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and transmitted to the *Wausau Daily Herald* in the proper manner.

Chairperson Gary Gisselman called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. stating that a quorum was present.

Approve the minutes from the October 30, 2019 meeting

Tryczak motioned to approve the minutes of the October 30, 2019 meeting. Crooks seconded, and the motion carried unanimously, 4-0.

Public Hearing: Discussion and possible action on declaring the Eau Claire Heights District a Local Historic District

Gisselman opened the public hearing. Mike Moran, 2513 Elmwood Boulevard, said that he attended the information meeting at the airport and said that he was surprised not more people showed up to support this. He said he doesn't want to speak for everyone, but there seemed to be general consensus at the meeting in favor of it. He said he is supportive of it and that preserving history is a good thing, as some of our history has fallen aside. He would like to see more preservation. He said this district would not be too burdensome for the neighbors as a Class II district, and he would encourage the commission to support it.

Gisselman closed the public hearing. He went over the intent of the Historic Preservation Commission, from Chapter 2.82 of the Wausau Municipal Code, saying that it is a matter of public policy that the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of buildings of special architectural character or special historical interest or value is a public necessity and is required in the interest of the health, prosperity, safety and welfare of the people.

Gisselman said the district has a number of historic architecture styles as well as notable architects that distinguish it as an historic district.

Gisselman went over the process moving forward – this Commission could make a recommendation to the Plan Commission and city council would have the final vote.

Crooks asked about the proposed boundaries for the district, and if they were the same as the original plat. Lenz said that the boundaries haven't changed since the commission first started looking at this, but the western boundary is different than the plat. The proposed district includes homes along the west side of Mount View Boulevard so that all of the houses that front on one of the boulevard streets are included in the district.

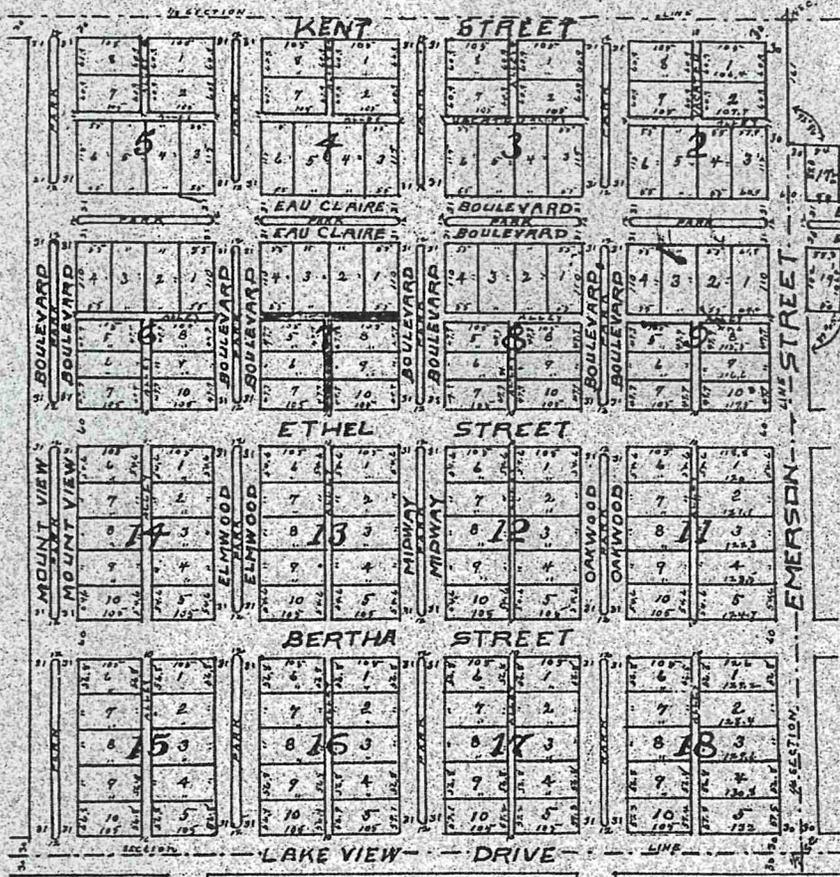
Crooks motioned to approve the proposed Eau Claire Heights District as a Local Historic District. Tryczak seconded, and the motion carried unanimously, 4-0.

Next meeting dates and future agenda items for consideration

Gisselman said the next regularly scheduled meeting would be January 29, 2020.

Adjournment.

Burke motioned to adjourn. There was a second by Crooks and the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:12 p.m.



SURVEYED JUNE 1924
SCALE 1" = 150 FT.

EAU CLAIRE HEIGHTS

ADDITION TO THE
CITY OF WAUSAU

W. H. GOWEN
SURVEYOR

DRAFT

SOUTH RIVERFRONT MASTER PLAN

WAUSAU, WI • DECEMBER 11, 2019



Prepared for the City of Wausau by:



Acknowledgements

City of Wausau Staff
Christian Schock, Community Development Director
Brad Lenz, City Planner
Brad Sippel, City Planner

South Riverfront Master Plan Stakeholder Group

Michael Lotter
Lance Leonhard
Jamie Polley
Kelly Zabrzebski
Kelly and Brad Ballard
Roger Deffner
Brian Scholz
Ashley Deering
Gene Davis
Amanda Ostrowski
Matt Ward

City Plan Commission Members

Mayor Robert B. Mielke, Chair
Public Works Director, Eric Lindman
Parks & Rec Chair, Pat Peckham
Aldersperson Gary Gisselman
Citizen Member, Ron Zahrt
Citizen Member, Andrew Brueggeman
Citizen Member, Bruce Bohlken

City Council Alderspersons

Patric Peckham
Michael Martens
Michael Martens
David E. Nutting
David Nutting
Tom Neal
Gary Gisselman
Becky McElhaney
Lisa Rasmussen
Linda Lawrence
Dawn Herbst
Mary Thao
Dennis Smith

Consultant Team

Andrew Dane, Neighborhood Planners
Eric Ponto, Engberg Anderson Associates
Michael Stumpf, Place Dynamics
Garrett Perry, Design Studio Etc

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INTRODUCTION

Wausau’s waterfront is undergoing significant changes in land use as brownfields, and underutilized properties are being put into more productive use. Class A office space, entertainment, and health services have helped revitalize Wausau’s riverfront to the north. South of Washington Street, the study area comprises approximately 30 acres of land currently under WPS ownership, County ownership, and private ownership.

Purpose

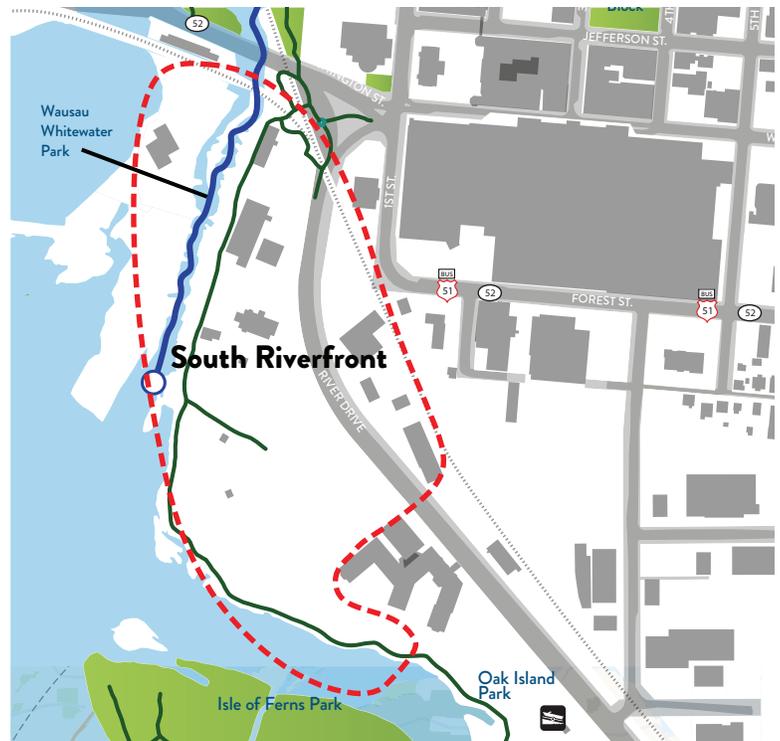
The purpose of this report is to provide recommendations for the redevelopment of the South Riverfront area within the City of Wausau, Wisconsin, including private development opportunities and desired public amenities. The overall goal is to set a foundation for future redevelopment that maximizes connectivity to the river and leverages the success and momentum of both Wausau Whitewater and the Farmer’s Market.

The area is envisioned as the “South Riverfront Neighborhood”, and would include a variety of housing options, limited commercial development, and a year-round public market/ farmer’s market. At the center of the new neighborhood is an outdoor public plaza on the expanded Wausau Whitewater boardwalk, which links to the River Edge trail network providing exceptional outdoor recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

Setting

The City of Wausau lies at the intersection of STH 29 and US 51 in northcentral Wisconsin. However, like many cities in northern Wisconsin, its history and physical structure is strongly shaped by the river, which enabled its growth during the booming lumber years and beyond. More recently, heavy industrial uses along the river have been replaced with new parks, restaurants, office buildings, and other uses.

Wausau is located within a short drive of several large midwestern cities, and serves as a regional retail and services hub for a large portion of northern Wisconsin. The City of Wausau is surrounded by outdoor recreational opportunities unmatched elsewhere in the State. State parks, mountain bike areas, camping, whitewater kayaking, forests, wetlands, rivers, and streams surround the City and broader metropolitan region.



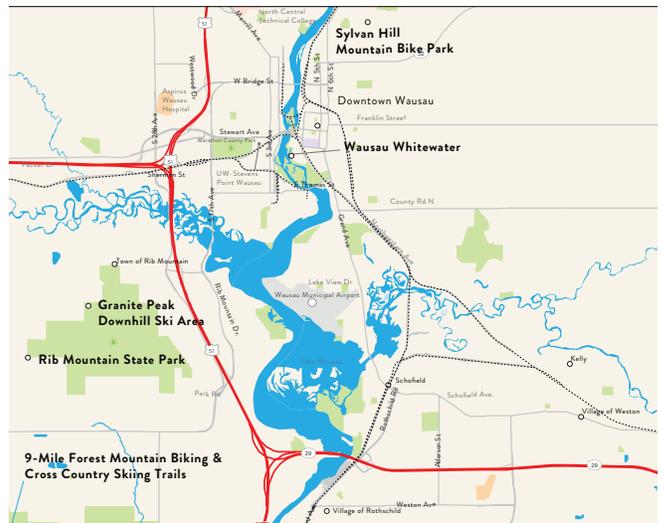
Study Areas



Wausau is located within a short drive of several large midwestern cities, and serves as a regional hub for a large portion of northern Wisconsin.

Study Area

The South Riverfront district is a 30-acre site bounded by railroad tracks to the east, Washington St to the north, the Wisconsin River to the west, and Island Park Apartments to the south. Much of the land base is former industrial land as seen in this historical photo from 1950. The site is within close proximity to downtown, as well as multiple destination outdoor recreational amenities within a 10-15 minute drive.



Planning Process

The study team analyzed market and physical conditions, reviewed prior reports, met with stakeholders, and conducted additional field work to prepare a set of recommendations for the study area.

May 2nd 2019 Stakeholder Kick Off Meeting. Project team met with stakeholders to discuss project expectations and goals.

May 25th 2019 Farmer's Market Vendor Interview. The project team met with the market manager and several vendors to discuss their hopes and concerns for a permanent market facility.

June 7th – 8th 2019 Stakeholder Meetings and site visit. Project team met with stakeholders to discuss and receive feedback on concept alternatives.

June 8th 2019 Farmer's Market open house. The project team facilitated direct interaction with over 300 market attendees

September 10th 2019 Stakeholder Meeting to review and discuss draft concepts.

September 10th 2019 Open House at Whitewater Music Hall.

December 17th 2019 Plan Commission and Economic Development Committee presentation.



Prior Planning

Whitewater Course Master Plan (2015)

Several proposed enhancements to the whitewater course were identified in a series of drawings and design plans. Key elements of the vision include a pedestrian bridge, park shelter, put-in/take-out ramps, deck extension, new trails, and emergency service accessibility improvements.

Wausau Strategic Economic Development Plan (2019, Draft)

This plan identified several relevant objectives:

- Urban revitalization and mixed-use development along the Wisconsin River
- Vibrant coworking spaces in downtown Wausau for entrepreneurs, freelancers, and remote workers.
- Creation of a riverfront development plan that extends from Winston Street south to Thomas Street.
- New market-rate housing development in downtown Wausau and adjacent urban neighborhoods.
- Events, festivals, and temporary “activations” of spaces throughout downtown Wausau that draw new visitors and economic activity into the urban core.

Wausau Center Urban Design & Transportation Master Plan (2019)

The study recommended realignment and reconstruction of River Road adjacent the study area. Additional recommendations from this study are described later in this report.

City Of Wausau Comprehensive Plan (2017)

The Plan identified several opportunities in the downtown area. Site 5 is located by the whitewater kayak course on the east side of the river. The site has the potential for riverfront development and to enhance recreational opportunities.

East Riverfront District Hotel Analysis (2014)

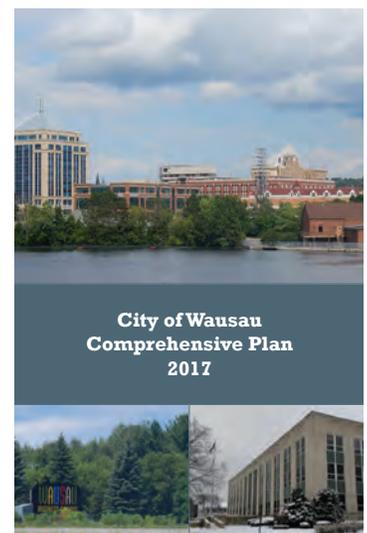
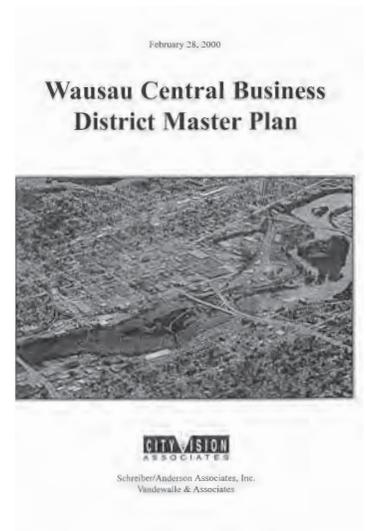
According to a 2014 Hotel Feasibility Study, a new hotel is not recommended until occupancy rates go up, or new room night generators are introduced such as a convention facility. However, due to the age of the report, an update may be warranted, including taking a look at the potential demand and feasibility of a banquet/convention space.

Wausau Mpo Bicycle And Pedestrian Plan (2015)

This study identified bike lanes and other improvements in the study area.

Central Business District Master Plan (2000)

Central Business District (CBD) Master Plan, 2000 In January of 2000, the Common Council adopted the Central Business District Master Plan as an element of the City’s Master Plan. It identified a convention center and hotel for the riverfront district, connected via a skyway to the Wausau Center Mall.



PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

LAND USE

To the west of River Drive, 1-story buildings front the kayak course and Wisconsin river and are surrounded by surface parking. Directly south lies a capped brownfield used as parking, open space, farmer's market, and camping. Further south is Island Place Apartments.

To the east of River Drive, adjacent the railroad tracks, there is a mix of light industrial uses, vehicular repair to the south, and a new café/microbrewery/event space to the north at the corner of N 1st and W Washington streets in the old Masonic Lodge. Sandwiched between these uses is lot No. 8, a municipal surface parking lot with 136 stalls.

Parcel No. 1

Size: 2.65 Acres

Use: Vacated, Historic Electric Building

Owner: Wisconsin Public Services Corporation (WPS)

Zoning: Institutional Zoning

Parcel No. 2

Size: 1.25 Acres within study area (2 Acres total parcel size)

Use: Whitewater Kayak Frontage

Owner: WPS

Zoning: Institutional Zoning

Parcel No. 3

Size: 3.4 Acres

Use: Government Office

Owner: Marathon County

Zoning: Institutional Zoning

Parcel No. 4

Size: 2 Acres

Use: Adult Supportive Services

Owner: Opportunity Inc

Zoning: Institutional Zoning

Parcel No. 5

Size: 12.9 Acres in study area (23 Acres total parcel size)

Use: Open Space

Owner: WPS

Zoning: Institutional Zoning

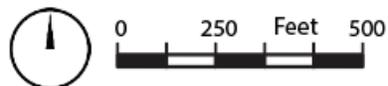
Parcel No. 6

Size: 1.25 Acres

Use: Surface Parking

Owner: City of Wausau

Zoning: Downtown Periphery Mixed Use



Parcel No. 7

Size: .88 Acres

Use: Commercial

Owner: Crescent Realty Corporation

Zoning: Light Industrial

Parcel No. 8

Size: .9 Acres

Use: Commercial

Owners: Dorothy and Jane Palecek

Zoning: Light Industrial

Parcel No. 9

Size: .6 Acres

Use: Light Industrial

Owner: Hadley Office Furniture & Machine

Zoning: Light Industrial

Future Land Use currently envisioned for this area includes Public/Open Space to the west of River Drive, and City Center to the east. The City Center designation promotes “an area of dense development and a mix of employment, commercial, and residential uses. It would include civic spaces for community gatherings and events. It would also be an area that is lively and designed for pedestrian access. Growth, development, and increased density would be encouraged.” In addition, a co-working space is being investigated for the WPS buildings on Clark Island.

ENVIRONMENTAL

A preliminary environmental review was conducted for the South Riverfront. Parcel No. 5 site is the Wisconsin Public Service (WPS) Property Environmental Repair Program (ERP) site (BRRTS # 02-37-552115). The site was opened in 2008 after a site investigation identified lead and arsenic soil contamination that exceeded the DNR direct contact limits. The ERP site was closed by DNR in 2011 with contamination in place. As part of the site closure, a cap is required to be implemented and maintained in accordance with a DNR approved maintenance plan. The required cap is a minimum of 12” of recycled asphalt, gravel, and “rotten” granite. The entire WPS property, including the parking lot, vegetative cover and River Edge Parkway needs to be maintained in compliance with the maintenance plan to prevent direct contact with residual soil contamination.

A significant portion of the study area is within the floodway.



MOBILITY

The downtown street network is dominated by two one-way pairs carrying the largest volumes of traffic along US 51 and STH 52. These arterial streets feed a mix of local streets with significantly less traffic volumes. River Drive provides access to the study area and is identified as a boulevard street type in the conceptual street type network diagram (blue line). A boulevard is characterized by wide sidewalks for strolling and street-oriented buildings which create an outdoor room effect.

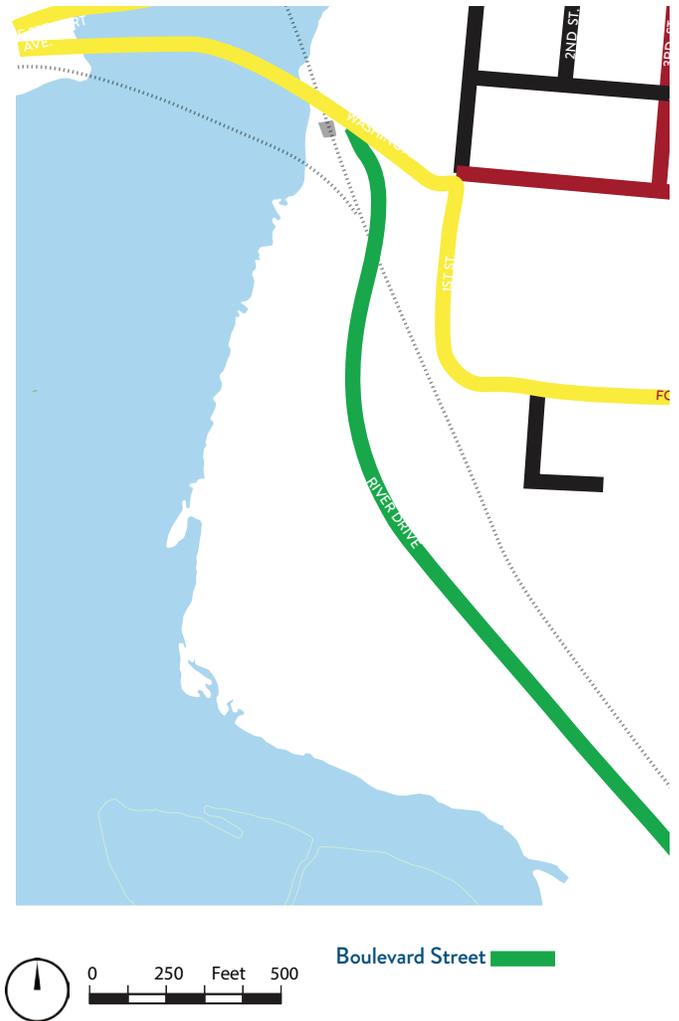
Two of the three basic types of boulevard streets are worth considering for River Drive.

Center Median Boulevard

- Wide central landscaped median flanked on either side by streets roadways or sidewalks
- Median may be a pedestrian promenade but more likely planted with grass, trees, or other vegetation.

Boulevard Street

- Basically a regular street but with broad tree lined sidewalks
- Wide walkways, potential bike accomodation

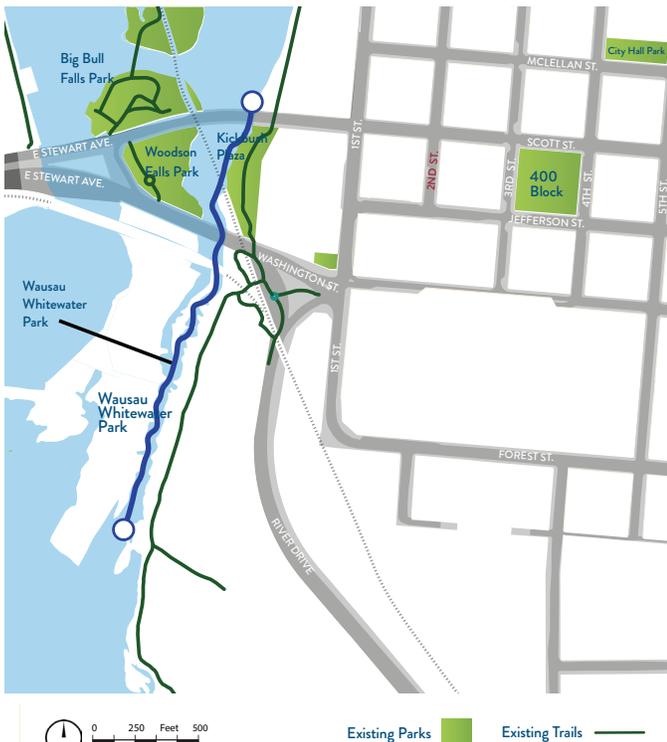


PARKS, TRAILS, OPEN SPACE

The South Riverfront includes over ½ mile of River Edge trail, as well as the Wausau Whitewater Park. It has direct trail connections to the south connecting to Isle of Ferns and Oak Parks and to the north connecting to Big Bull Falls Park and Barker-Stewart Island Park. The Whitewater Corporation has created a world class destination whitewater course on the Wisconsin River. They have proposed and are seeking funds for enhancements to the informal campground located on WPS property adjacent the river edge, a pedestrian bridge across the kayak course to Clark Island, improved ADA access, ambulance access to Clark Island, and more formalized kayak launch and lock up areas.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

While there are no historically designated areas within the South Riverfront study area, the Chicago NW RR Depot lies immediately to the north adjacent WPS land and the railroad flanking E Stewart Ave. On the WPS land south of the former RR Depot is a vacated electric building station which is being evaluated as the site of a potential coworking space.



MARKET CONDITIONS

The analysis supports a combination of uses that can be developed within the South Riverfront including:

Approximately 250 units of high-end rental housing, priced from \$1,200 per month or above. This may include some affordable units and units for seniors adjacent River Drive.

Approximately 250 condominium units priced from \$150 to \$300 per square foot, fronting on the river and open space in the South Riverfront area.

Due to its location away from the concentration of retail and dining, there are far fewer opportunities to develop commercial space within the South Riverfront area. **The river is the primary asset in this regard, and may support an isolated restaurant or limited types of retail, such as a sporting goods store which would tie to activities in the adjacent parks.**

TARGETED OPPORTUNITIES

Demand for Residential

Adequate demand exists to introduce new owned, multifamily housing at the South Riverfront redevelopment sites. The primary competition for downtown sites will be comparable units that may be developed in nearby city centers, and suburban-style units which have, so far, made up the majority of the available supply. **The South Riverfront will be a more attractive setting for either of two possible uses, for which it is reasonable to set a goal to capture a 20 to 30 percent market share, or about 250 units of both owner occupied and rental units:**

Multi-storied condominium buildings can be developed adjacent to greenspace and overlooking the Wisconsin River and proposed River Edge park. A mix of one- and two-bedroom units, and a small number of larger units can be supported. Amenities should include private outdoor space (walk-out patio or balcony), covered parking, and high-end finishes such as quartz or granite countertops and tiled tub/shower enclosures. The targeted buyers for these units are singles or couples without children, and active seniors.

Unit prices will vary based on size, views, and amenities, but can be competitive with pricing from \$150 to \$300 per square foot for finished units.

The South Riverfront presents a good opportunity to develop high-end rental units that can take advantage of river and open space views, along with proximity to recreational assets. The Urban West Apartments will serve as a good model for the kind of unit that can be developed in this location, marketed to young professionals, downtown workers, and older singles or couples who do not want the responsibility to maintain a home. These are renters who find urban living appealing and the design should cater to that desire.

With about 2,900 households able to afford rent in excess of \$1,000 per month, growing to over 3,300 households by 2029, the existing supply of higher-end rentals is insufficient to meet potential demand. While some will chose to rent a less expensive apartment to save money, others are doing so because the market is not offering what they want. The City might set a target to meet 30 to 40 percent of the demand for high-end rentals in the downtown, capitalizing on the riverfront and a walkable district with dining, entertainment, and shopping.



200-300
OWNER-OCCUPIED
UNITS NEEDED



200-300
RENTAL
UNITS NEEDED



\$150 TO \$300/SQ. FT
CONDO SALE PRICE RANGE



\$1,200 +
MONTHLY RENT RANGE

REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

VISION

The South Riverfront is a unique urban neighborhood that attracts residents and visitors year-round. Outdoor recreational opportunities including flat water and whitewater kayaking, fishing, running, bouldering, bird watching, and nature viewing attract visitors from throughout the region.

A diverse mix of housing types and price points helps create a thriving neighborhood where people can age in place or raise kids, own or rent. The neighborhood supports adjacent local businesses and a limited amount of new commercial development, primarily incorporated into new mixed-use buildings. The neighborhood is a fun place to live, with easy access to nearby cherished social gathering spots like cafes, coffee shops, breweries, music venues, restaurants, and arts centers.

A new pedestrian walkway connects downtown Wausau to the riverfront and year-round indoor market, culminating in a compelling outdoor plaza that serves as a focal point and social activity node for the entire development. The outdoor plaza hosts music, kayak, and neighborhood events, framed by a ring of covered outdoor farm market stalls and a world class kayak course. With views down the Wisconsin River and south to Rib Mountain the plaza becomes another signature Wausau waterfront destination.

GOALS + OBJECTIVES

By reviewing, discussing, and prioritizing the challenges and opportunities facing the study area, community leaders can continuously refine specific goals and strategies to help guide future decision making and communicate effectively with the public, downtown businesses, and downtown investors. The following goals and objectives were derived from stakeholder and public feedback, as well as a review of prior documents and input from City staff and elected officials.

1. Establish a thriving neighborhood along South River Drive and the River Edge Parkway, including new residential and mixed-use development
2. Support potential year-round market
3. Provide year-round activities for a variety of age groups
4. Embrace an “Outdoor Recreation” theme
5. Improve mobility and access to the river
6. Enhance walking, biking, kayaking amenities.
7. Green up and make the river environment more dynamic/destination

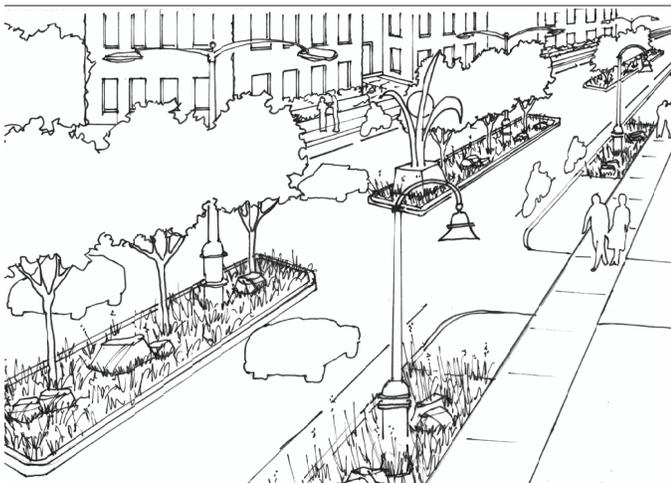


REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

1. Pedestrian bridge –Skyway. An elevated pedestrian bridge connects Forest Street/1st Street to the central development axis that includes the proposed Indoor Market, Outdoor Plaza, and Farmer’s Market. A bridge at this location could rely on an elevator or spiral ramp to accommodate the grade change. This connection should be considered as future planning for Wausau Center occurs.



2. River Drive. This plan envisions a boulevard treatment for River Drive. Further analysis is required to evaluate the feasibility of this vision, however the concept is to provide a street that will attract and frame future residential and mixed-use development. The “center median boulevard” would include plantings, trees, and possibly sculptural elements in the center median to reinforce an outdoor recreational theme for the overall development. The street section would accommodate two vehicular lanes (one on each side of the street), as well as bike lanes and on-street parking to help accommodate large events. A sidewalk with regularly spaced trees would create an attractive pedestrian environment and development address. Alternatively, River Drive could be modified to function as a boulevard street, keeping its existing section in place but adding a wider sidewalk and/or side path to accommodate both bicyclists and pedestrians.



3. Washington St & River Drive Intersection. Reconstruction of this intersection will provide multiple benefits for the study area. The proposed reconstruction as identified in the Urban Design and Transportation Plan (2019) of the 1st Street/River Drive/Washington Street intersection will achieve the following benefits:

- Creating a signalized, non-motorized crossing for the Rivers Edge trail crossing Washington Street;
- Providing westbound motor vehicle access to the Marathon County Library parking lot;
- Simplifying operations at the Washington Street / 1st Street intersection;
- Improving the visibility of the River Road entrance; and
- Creating space for an improved gateway entrance into downtown Wausau.



4. The Power House. Co-working space. The Power House would provide a venue for freelancers, entrepreneurs, and other contingent workers to patronize on the banks of the Wisconsin River. This office concept is currently being investigated, and would complement the South Riverfront neighborhood development. However, this building has several development challenges and WPS is currently in the process of securing permission to demolish the structure. The authors of this plan recommend the building be preserved, its history and physical location make it a very strong and unique asset around which to plan for the future. Other potential future uses include a brewpub or restaurant, a unique lodging venue or banquet/meeting space. As the South Riverfront neighborhood.



5. River Edge Park. The River Edge Parkway system is a bold vision for interconnected parks, waterfront, and trails along both sides of the Wisconsin River through the heart of the City. The proposed River Edge Park would transform a capped brownfield on former industrial land into an outdoor recreationally themed waterfront park providing year-round programming and adventure play opportunities. The park will include open space to support large kayak events and provide low impact overnight camping opportunities. An expanded trail network would connect to the proposed residential development to the east. Circulation within the park is centered around a new trail loop. An outdoor climbing wall complements the kayak course drawing new users to the riverfront throughout the week. Picnic facilities and outdoor fire rings create social activity nodes within the park, while a long looping outdoor ice-skating ribbon draws visitors outside during the winter months. Natural plantings and ecological restoration improves wildlife along the river corridor and supports diverse insect and bird life, which in turn attracts more bird watchers and walkers to the park.



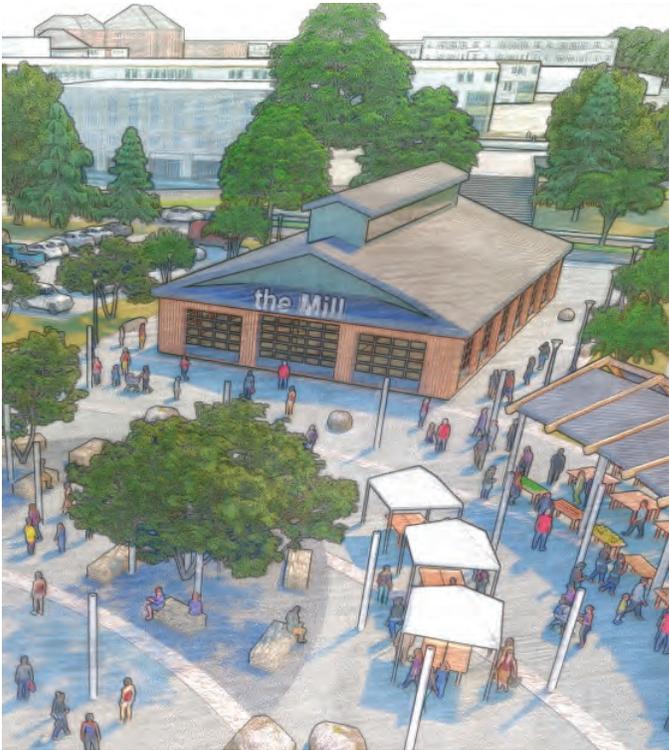
Based on initial discussions with stakeholder groups and limited public feedback the following program elements were identified and should be considered when a detailed site plan is prepared for the park:

- Dog park
- Community garden
- Wheelchair accessibility
- Beer garden
- Ice ribbon/skating
- Space for staging whitewater events
- Camping
- Natural playground
- Trails
- Picnic facilities
- Bathrooms

The park should extend the length of the water's edge adjacent Wausau Whitewater Park south from the railroad tracks all the way to Oak Island park. The park should extend into the middle portion of the parcel to reach at least 4-5 acres in size.

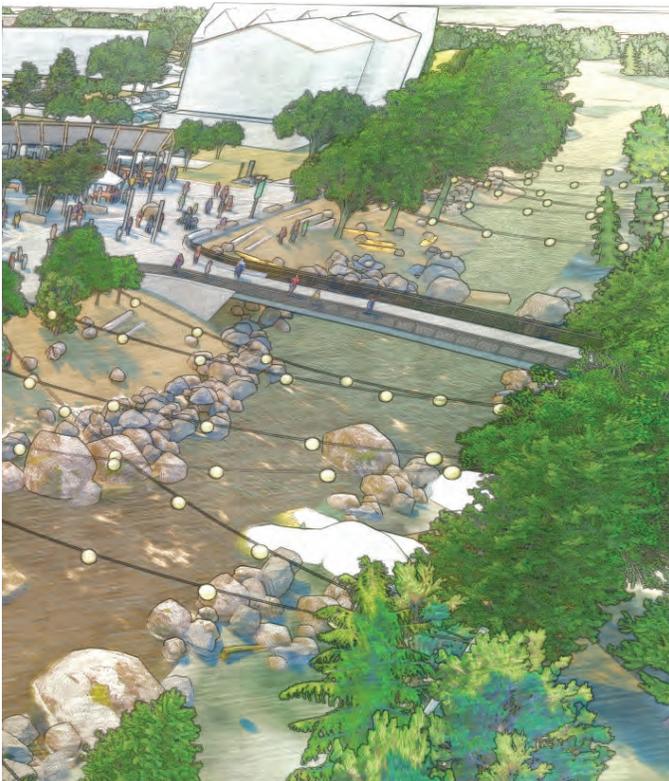


6. Outdoor Farm Market + Plaza. A U-shaped outdoor vendor market provides a unique venue for the farmer’s market and other vendor events. The farmer’s market and adjacent outdoor stall space along the Boardwalk can accommodate up to 80+ vendors. The structure will provide shade and shelter for a variety of user groups to enjoy the waterfront year-round. The structure will frame a round outdoor public plaza on the River Edge Boardwalk adjacent the kayak course. The public plaza will create a sticky pedestrian environment and encourage social activity among visitors to the waterfront. While not large enough to host bigger outdoor concerts like the 400 block, the plaza will feel more intimate and provide a variety of seating opportunities to support smaller concerts, kayak and farmer’s market related events.



7. Indoor Market. A year-round indoor public market is envisioned as part of the farmer’s market/outdoor plaza development. The market building, which could repurpose the old “Mill Building” or take design inspiration from it, would link River Drive to the waterfront along a strong pedestrian axis that connects the riverfront to downtown via an elevated pedestrian walkway west of River Drive just south of the Whitewater Music Hall. The market could include space for farm market vendors, food vendors, and possibly a limited commercial establishment catering to the outdoor recreation market. The facility and adjacent outdoor plaza may also provide a unique venue for smaller weddings and other special events.

8. Pedestrian bridge – Kayak Course. The planned pedestrian bridge will connect both sides of the kayak bridge, providing accessibility to viewing areas and connectivity between the river and proposed development sites. The bridge will also serve as a viewing area for whitewater events and will likely become a destination on the riverfront.

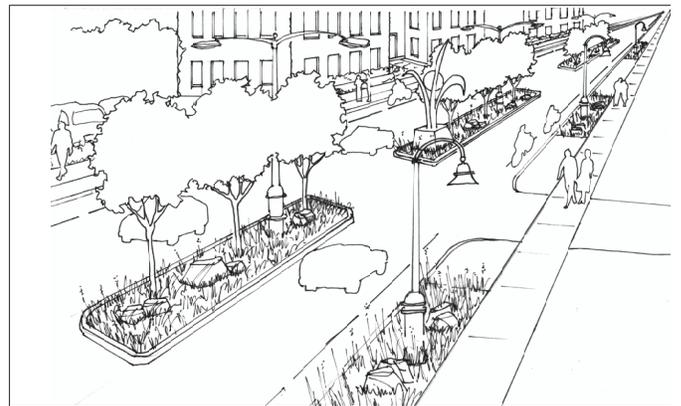
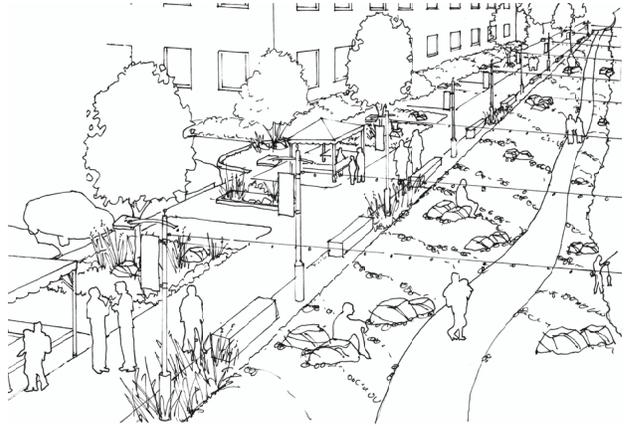


9. Boardwalk. This plan envisions a widened River Edge trail through the more intensively developed portion of riverfront adjacent the kayak course at the site of the current County-owned buildings. The boardwalk would continue to function as a multi-use trail, but would widen to accommodate larger event crowds, while also providing space fronting the riverfront for pop-up vendor stalls. String lights, stone seating, waterfront views, views of Rib Mountain, and proximity to the outdoor plaza and



pedestrian bridge would create an iconic destination for both visitors and residents year-round.

10. Hotel. This plan identifies a prime hotel location at the north end of the study area. However, according to current figures there may not be sufficient market demand to warrant development. If, after the property is assembled for future redevelopment, there is still not sufficient market demand, this site would be desirable for higher density residential or mixed-use development.





11. Mixed Use Development. This site, adjacent the proposed farmer’s market and outdoor plaza is suitable for both residential and mixed-use development. Commercial uses may include eating and dining options or a an outdoor oriented specialty store. Market rate housing may include rental or owner-occupied units.



12. River Edge Park Residential. This phase of development would occur on land currently owned by WPS. This is a prime development site with proven market rate senior housing immediately to south. Multifamily new market rate, owner-occupied and rental apartments anticipated. Given proximity to waterfront, parks, and trails, this site may be particularly attractive to active seniors and retirees.



13. River Drive Residential Development sites between River Drive and the railroad tracks can provide opportunities for conventional multi-story apartment buildings or missing middle type housing products, such as townhomes. These sites may lend themselves to affordable housing development, while reserving waterfront sites across River Drive for higher value development. It is anticipated these sites would be developed in later phases, as more desirable residential locations prove successful. Current land uses use may make economic sense for several more years.



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The City's primary focus should be on incentivizing desired and market driven development that reflects the community's values and future aspirations. The County and WPS have expressed a willingness to work with the City to achieve the overall vision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus is on creating new housing units in conjunction with farmer's market and Wausau Whitewater improvements. Seek out a diverse mix of rental and owner occupied housing products and types.

1) Establish MOU between City of Wausau and Marathon County. The MOU should describe each parties' roles and responsibilities for facilitating redevelopment, including the concepts described in this plan.

2) Meet with WDNR, Marathon County, and WPS to identify and discuss likely environmental permitting requirements necessary to achieve the vision of the plan. Begin investigating feasibility of removing WPS owned land from FERC requirements.

3) Review and discuss master plan with Parks and Recreation Committee and staff.

- Identify programming opportunities and challenges for River Edge park and proposed Boardwalk
- Explore alternate financing models to create a financially viable park
- Update CORP to include proposed River Edge\

4) Establish budget line items for property acquisition on City's CIP to include:

- Short and longer-term budget line items for property acquisition on City's CIP
- Detailed master planning and preliminary engineering for River Edge Park, Farm Market, Boardwalk, Public Market

5) Evaluate financial feasibility of a farmer's market and year-round public market.

6) Assemble properties for future redevelopment.

- Meet with property owners to share and discuss conceptual plans
- Work collaboratively with Marathon County, WPS, and private property owners to facilitate future development.
- Negotiate land purchases with current property owners.

7) Evaluate feasibility of hotel

- Market the hotel site to developers and local investors
- Share concept plans with potential hotel developers
- Consider updating hotel feasibility study (2014) in 2-3 years as redevelopment property is purchased and assembled.
- As part of future study, evaluate potential for banquet/meeting space to be incorporated as part of hotel development or as part of proposed Indoor Market building.

8) Investigate potential P-3 structures to support concept development. Explore potential partnerships with local government, private and non-profit businesses.

- Pro-actively issue RFEIs to identify and engage developers and investors with a strong interest in partnering with the City on future development.
- Consider hiring a master developer consultant team to prepare a final development plan and help the City orchestrate the desired vision. Through a public-private partnership the City can play a strong role guiding future development, while allowing multiple private development interests to bring forward economically viable projects that fit into the overall vision.

9) Prepare preliminary engineering feasibility studies to further design concepts and prepare land acquisition and site preparation costs associated with:

- Reconstructed Washington St & River Drive intersection/River Drive Boulevard
- Farmer's market/public market/Outdoor plaza/Boardwalk
- River Edge park – final detailed master plan to include 30% engineering plans

10) Prepare final design plans

- Public Market/Farmer's Market/Outdoor Plaza/Boardwalk
- Washington Street/River Drive

11) Evaluate feasibility of year-round market

- Identify and engage potential project partners
- Conduct a feasibility study to determine financial viability of a year-round public market
- Construct new public market

PHASING

Redevelopment is contingent upon land acquisition and assembly and will take several years to implement. This plan envisions the following major phases of development:

Phase 1:

- Land acquisition and assembly.
- More detailed master planning, preliminary engineering, community input, and engagement with multiple developers to identify a final vision for future phases of development.
- Reconstruction of the River Drive and Washington Street intersection.

Phase 2:

- Public Market/Farmer's Market/Hotel.
- Hotel development. If a hotel is not viable, an apartment building is envisioned for the site.
- River Edge Residential - New multifamily residential units adjacent Island Place Apartments will front either newly established River Edge Park or River Drive.
- Mixed-Use Development. This phase will establish a mix of residential units and limited commercial development between the outdoor plaza/farmer's market and River Edge park.

Phase 3:

- River Drive Residential



DRAFT

TOWERS AREA MARKET STUDY

WAUSAU, WI • DECEMBER 11 • 2019

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Public Works Director, Eric Lindman
Parks & Rec Chair, Pat Peckham
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Citizen Member, Ron Zahrt
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INTRODUCTION

Downtown Wausau continues to adapt to past and current market realities. In the 1980's, facing increasing competition from more suburban locations, downtown leaders transformed an 8-block area of downtown into the Wausau Center Mall. In the early 2000's city leaders and investors executed several catalytic projects downtown including the Jefferson Street Inn, the 400 Block, the Dudley Tower, and the Eye Clinic of Wisconsin. Today, several new projects are underway, primarily north of the core downtown including the Aspirus Clinic, YMCA expansion, Cloverbelt Credit, and River Life, a planned mixed-use development on the riverfront. Looking ahead, the City anticipates new investment and redevelopment within the Towers Area over the next 2-4 years as a final decision is made regarding the future of the McClellan ramp.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to identify potential downtown redevelopment opportunities within the Towers Area and to provide recommendations to accommodate future anticipated parking demand.

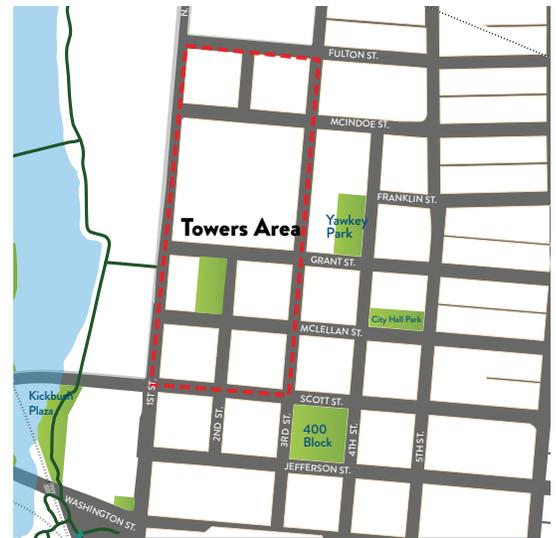


Wausau is located within a short drive of several large midwestern cities, and serves as a regional hub for a large portion of northern Wisconsin. Because workers are increasingly mobile, amenity rich communities like Wausau have the potential to draw in people who want to work remotely while enjoying easy access to outdoor recreation.

The study area is bounded by Scott Street to the south, McIndoe Street to the north, 1st Street to west, and 3rd Street to the east.

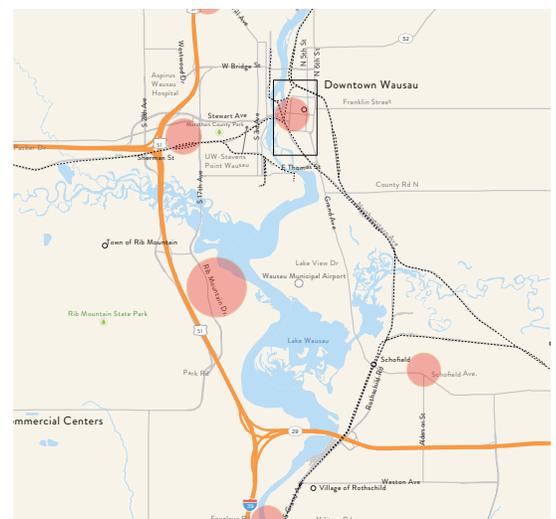
Within that area the project team analyzed the “Central Towers Area” in greater depth. The central towers area lies immediately adjacent the intersection of N 1st Street and McClellan Street and includes a mix of office, structured parking and surface parking.

Beyond the central towers area are a diverse mix of uses including a Main Street retail district along 3rd Street which includes retail, restaurants, and a downtown grocery store. On the northern edge of the study there is a growing number of fitness and health related businesses.



Above: Downtown Wausau is within a 15 minute drive of several Midwest destination outdoor recreational assets.

Below: Downtown Wausau is within a 15-minute drive of several distinct commercial districts offering a wide selection of products, services, and eating and dining opportunities.



Planning Process

The study team analyzed market and physical conditions, reviewed prior reports, met with stakeholders, and conducted additional field work to prepare a set of recommendations for the study area. Key milestones included:

- May 2nd 2019 Project Kick Off Meeting with Stakeholders. Downtown tour with City staff.
- June 7th 2019 Stakeholder Meeting. The project team met with stakeholders to discuss hopes and concerns for the project area.
- June 8th Site Visit and Field Work
- September 10th 2019 Stakeholder Meeting. Reviewed and discussed draft concepts. Public open house.
- December 2nd 2019 Stakeholder Meeting. Discuss and receive feedback on draft plan.
- December 17th 2019 Plan Commission presentation.

Summary of Prior Planning Efforts

Several prior studies were reviewed by the consultant team in order to provide context for the current study. See Appendix: Downtown Today Report Towers Area Plan & South Riverfront for more detail.

(insert plan cover pages)

Wausau Strategic Economic Development Plan (2019)

This plan establishes priorities for regional economic development efforts, several of which relate to the study area. A key opportunity identified in the report is development of new housing options, including downtown and urban residential, to help retain talent and support existing workforce

Wausau Center Urban Design and Transportation Master Plan (2019)

This study identified street network and intersection improvements to increase access to key destinations, add recreational value, and help activate the waterfront. In addition to identifying several 1-way to 2-way conversions, a significant recommendation is to realign the intersection of W Washington Street and S River Drive.



City of Wausau Comprehensive Plan (2017)

Sites within the study area were identified as having the potential to be utilized for mixed use housing, office, and retail.

Wausau Center Mall Analysis (2018)

There are 91,769 people within a 20-minute radius of downtown. Average household size is 2.4 and median household income is \$56,227.

Wausau MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2015)

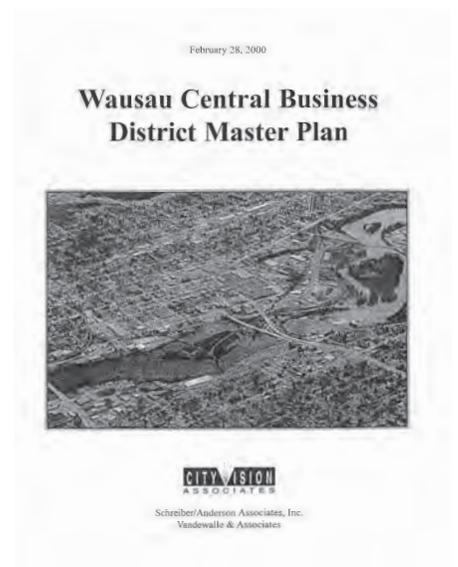
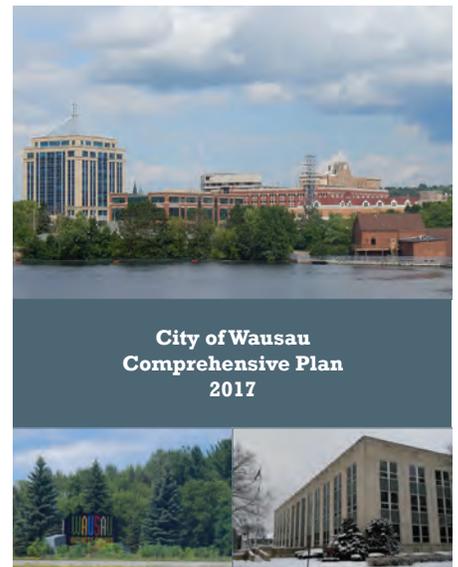
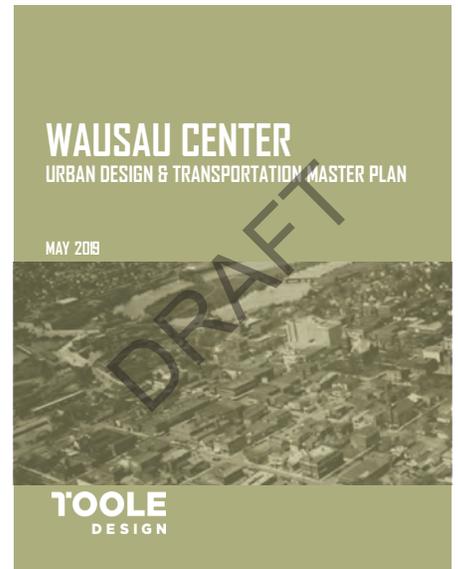
This study identified bike lanes and other improvements in the study area. These were further refined in the 2019 Urban Design and Transportation Master Plan for the Wausau Mall area.

Central Business District Parking Analysis (2014)

The study concluded that most of the study area has adequate parking supply, on- and off-street, to support the economic vitality of downtown.

Central Business District Master Plan (2000)

The plan contains a vision statement, general goals for the CBD, and many specific recommendations focused on land use, redevelopment activities, transportation, streetscape, and urban design for the entire downtown district.



PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

MOBILITY + PARKING

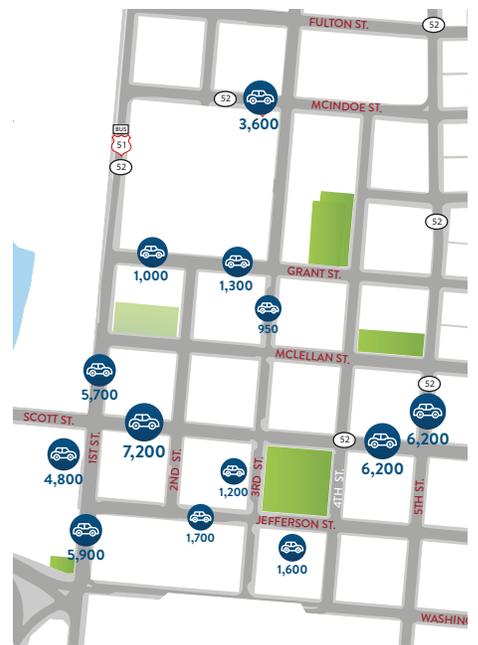
Vehicular Network

The downtown street network is dominated by two one-way pairs carrying the largest volumes of traffic along US 51 and STH 52. These arterial streets feed a mix of local streets with significantly less traffic volumes. The traditional grid pattern of blocks and streets which originally shaped downtown Wausau has been replaced in areas of the downtown with much larger “superblocks,” primarily for the purpose of redevelopment.

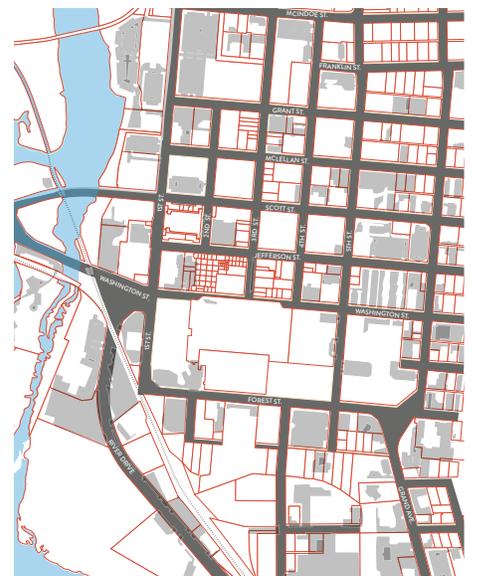


TRAFFIC + ACCESS

- Traffic volumes range from 9,500 average annual daily trips (AADTs) on BUS 51 near Washington Street to the single thousands on Grant Street and 3rd Street.
- 3rd Street between Washington Street and Grant Street is the primary retail and pedestrian oriented district.



Surface parking (shaded) is both an asset and a liability, providing access to important destinations but also interrupting and undermining the pedestrian environment which draws people to cities in the first place.



PARKING

The City of Wausau maintains an extensive system of public parking downtown. There are approximately 3,626 spaces available, which includes four parking ramps, 16 surface lots, and 300 street meters. Within the area bounded by McIndoe St (north), 4th St (east), Washington St (south) and Wisconsin River (west) there are 1,559 parking spaces in off-street parking facilities. Based on the 2017 Parking Study there are a little over 500 parking spaces available within these boundaries at peak usage times.

However, despite the excess supply, there are on-going concerns regarding downtown parking. A key issue is the design and functionality of the Jefferson Street ramp. Upper ramp levels are underutilized and some downtown users do not feel comfortable utilizing the facility. A second concern is the lack of available street parking to support the 3rd Street retail corridor. The McClellan Street ramp is scheduled to be demolished within the next 3-4 years, prompting concern over available, skyway-connected parking to serve major downtown employers.



LAND USE

The Towers Area is a mix of commercial, civic, and residential uses. The potential development sites border a downtown that has developed a concentration of businesses that enable it to draw visitors and will serve as amenities for workers or residents in the area. The river offers a different set of amenities, including its recreational and scenic qualities along its shores. The downtown area contains about eleven percent of all jobs in Marathon County, with a disproportionate share of office-based activities, and arts, entertainment, and recreational employment. The past decade has brought modest increases in many of these industries.

To the north of Scott Street there is a mix of several office and medical buildings, public parking, the Church of the Resurrection Catholic Church, and three single family residences along 1st Street. A combined estimated \$40M investment is being made into YMCA expansion and Aspirus clinic on the northern edge of the study area.

Future Land Use

The City’s official Future Land Use Map for this area identifies it as City Center, a designation intended to promote “an area of dense development and a mix of employment, commercial, and residential uses. It would include civic spaces for community gatherings and events. It would also be an area that is lively and designed for pedestrian access. Growth, development, and increased density would be encouraged.”



ZONING

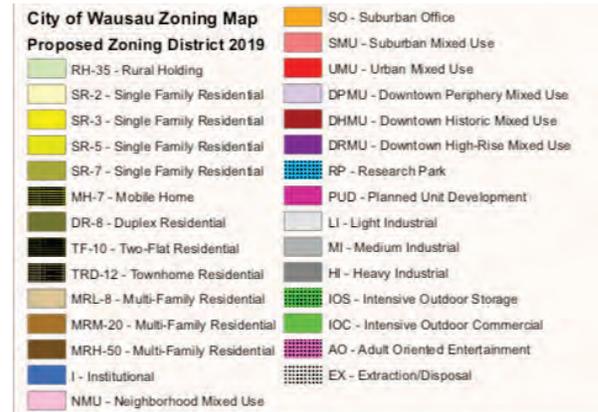
The immediate towers area is proposed as DRMU-Downtown High-Rise Mixed Use. This district is intended to permit large-scale established commercial, office, and institutional development at an intensity which provides significant incentives for infill development, redevelopment, and the continued economic viability of existing development. The district is also intended to retain the existing high-rise characteristics of the Central Business District without compromising the historic development areas. Residential uses are intended to occur at a minimum approximate density of 20+ dwelling units per acre.

The area north of Grant St is proposed as DPMU-Downtown Periphery Mixed Use. This district is intended to permit both large- and small-scale established commercial and institutional development at an intensity which provides significant incentives for infill development, redevelopment, and the continued economic viability of existing development. The district is also intended to act as a buffer between the historic and high-rise characteristics of the Central Business District and the lower-density residential neighborhoods surrounding it, however minimum height, maximum parking, and minimum floor area ratios will be required. These requirements will facilitate higher density development than the existing buildings within the district. Residential uses are intended to occur at a minimum approximate density of 10 dwelling units per acre.

Most of the 3rd Street Corridor is proposed as DHMU-Downtown Historic Mixed Use. This district is intended to permit mid-scale downtown commercial development at an intensity which provides significant incentives for infill development, redevelopment, and the continued economic viability of existing development. The district is also intended to retain the existing “Main Street” characteristics of the core blocks in Wausau’s historic downtown. Residential uses are intended to occur above the first floor at a minimum approximate density of 10 dwelling units per acre.

Representative principal uses permitted by right in all three of the districts include:

- Single family living arrangement
- Apartments with limited commercial
- Mixed-Use Building
- Live/work units
- Office
- Personal + professional services
- Indoor sales or service



PARKS, TRAILS, OPEN SPACE

Key features of the existing parks, trails, and open space network include:

The 400 block. The City’s main plaza is a popular special event space and outdoor gathering area located immediately southeast of the study area between 3rd and 4th Streets between Jefferson Street and Scott Street.

Plazas. There are several other small plazas and parks scattered throughout downtown. However, they remain somewhat disjointed from one another, which minimizes their collective impact on the public realm downtown.

The River Edge trail is the backbone of a growing trail system that runs north-south along the Wisconsin River. There are opportunities to better connect the existing trail network and river experience to downtown.

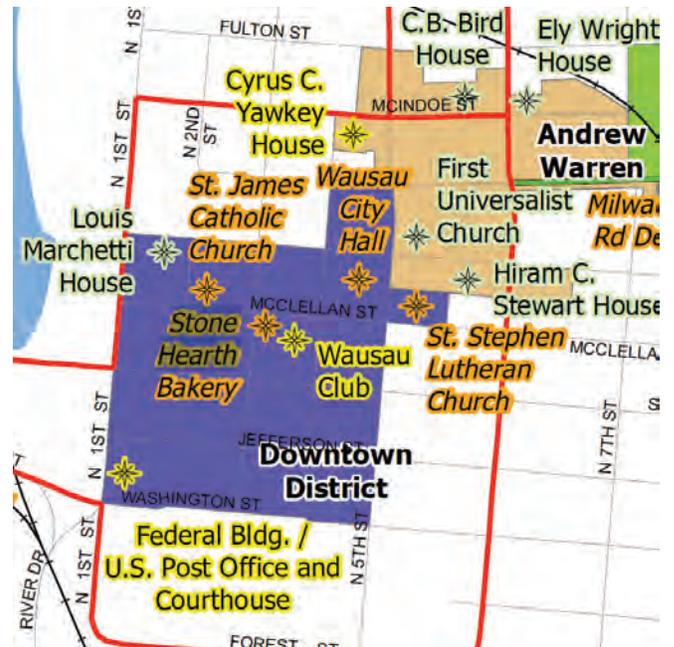


HISTORIC RESOURCES

The City has historic districts bordering downtown. The Downtown Historic District, an area of approximately 100 buildings bounded by Washington Street to the south, N 1st Street to the east, Grant Street to the north and N 5th Street to the west is more commercially oriented.

The Andrew Warren Historic District is located just northeast of downtown Wausau and is named after a sawmill owner who once owned most of the land comprising the district. This 10-block district includes 59 buildings, most of which are houses. The houses were built between 1868 and 1934 and include a diverse mix of late 19th century and early 20th century homes. (City Comprehensive Plan).

Finally, the diagram identifies three historic homes on N 1st Street in the northwest portion of the study area.



MARKET CONDITIONS

The analysis supports a combination of uses that can be developed within the Towers Area including:

Approximately 200 to 300 units of mid-market rental housing, priced from \$600 to \$1,200 per month. This may include some affordable units and units for seniors. These should be targeted for development in mixed-use buildings in the Towers area.

A range of 84,000 to 112,000 square feet of office space within the Towers area.

About 5,000 square feet of commercial (retail, dining, and services) space annually within the downtown, the majority of it provided in the Towers Area on the ground floor of mixed use buildings.

TARGETED OPPORTUNITIES

Demand for Residential

The Towers Area still offers the experience of downtown living with less immediate access to the river, greenspace, and recreational amenities. Rental housing can be developed in this area (including within vertically-mixed use buildings) to target downtown workers and other tenants who want to live downtown, but at a middle price point. Development of these units may utilize program such as Section 42 Tax Credits for some portion of the total units. Some portion of the total may also be targeted to senior housing.

Underground or structured parking should still be provided as an amenity as well as to reduce the overall footprint of the development. Finishes can be mid-tier, but renters will still appreciate conveniences such as dishwashers and in-unit laundry, and amenities like balconies.

There is a projected need for about a net increase of 350 rental units leasing between \$600 and \$1,200 per month. As with higher-end units, more can be developed as existing units age, and new buildings are able to compete on location, design, and amenities. A similar number of these mid-tier apartments – 200 to 300 – could be added in the downtown area over the next decade.



Demand for Office

Aside from the question of whether the Wausau Center Mall may be redeveloped to create office space, there is a second issue that casts shade on the potential to add significant new office space in either of the two redevelopment areas. While there has been employment growth in Marathon County (and downtown Wausau) since 2002, over the next decade, the number of people in their working years will decline by about 4,500. This is consistent with the findings of the 2017 Metro Region Economic Development Assessment prepared by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, which projected a shortage of 4,000 workers by 2026.

Employment in core office-based industries (information, finance and insurance, real estate, professional, scientific, and technical services, management of companies, and health care, grew by 6,303 jobs from 2002 to 2017, or an average of 420 jobs per year. Downtown Wausau has captured about 44.6 percent of that growth, or an average of 187 jobs per year.

That pace is not expected to be sustained. The Wisconsin Department of Commerce has projected a six percent rate of job growth for the northcentral region, including Marathon County. If that rate is used, the county could be expected to add 1,255 new office-based jobs through 2029, with 560 of those in downtown Wausau, assuming the downtown maintains current share of growth. Assuming that the average office worker occupies 150 to 200 square feet (including an allocation for common areas), this would result in demand for 84,000 to 112,000 square feet of new office space over the next decade.

There may be fluctuations in demand for office space as office-based industries generally expand or contract. Individual businesses may also make locational choices that can alter the general distribution of jobs. A business on the outskirts of the city, for example, may choose to build or lease new space in the downtown. This will be particularly true as some of the older office space in the region may become obsolete or less competitive in relation to new office buildings. This could add to the demand for downtown offices.

The Towers area is an attractive location for office uses. The proximity to commercial businesses, and particularly restaurants and other services, will be attractive to potential tenants. In general, younger workers have a preference for workspace in a mixed-use, walkable environment. Nearby housing will be an additional attraction. To be competitive, these offices will still need to

be able to provide adequate free parking, as a majority of workers will still commute to the site.

Demand for Commercial Space

While the mall may struggle to fill vacant space, the opposite is true of the remaining traditional mixed use blocks in the downtown, mostly on 3rd Street, but extending to some intersecting streets as well. There are many restaurants along with stores selling clothing, jewelry, books, food, antiques, sporting goods, and gifts, among other things. The few vacancies that occur are reported to fill quickly. This concentration of businesses is stronger to the south, in the vicinity of the mall, but does extend to the Towers Area, where there is a greater concentration of large office buildings. Civic and cultural attractions such as the City Square, Grand Theater, art museums, YMCA, city hall, and several churches are also located in this area.

The downtown is an attractive environment for these mostly independent businesses, which seek an eclectic specialty shopping district and prefer the flexibility to operate outside the structures of a typical mall contract. **An annual increase of three or four new businesses would create demand for about 5,000 square feet of new commercial space annually.** These numbers can be supported or increased by initiatives the City and its partners can consider, such as developing pop-up retail or restaurant space, offering technical assistance to emerging retail stores and restaurants, or other programs to incubate new commercial businesses.

The Towers area, as an extension of 3rd Street, has the potential to capture most of the demand for new commercial space. This should be developed at the street level in vertically-mixed use buildings. While much of the parking demand will be met in structures, it will be important to provide some short-term on-street parking in the immediate vicinity of storefronts.

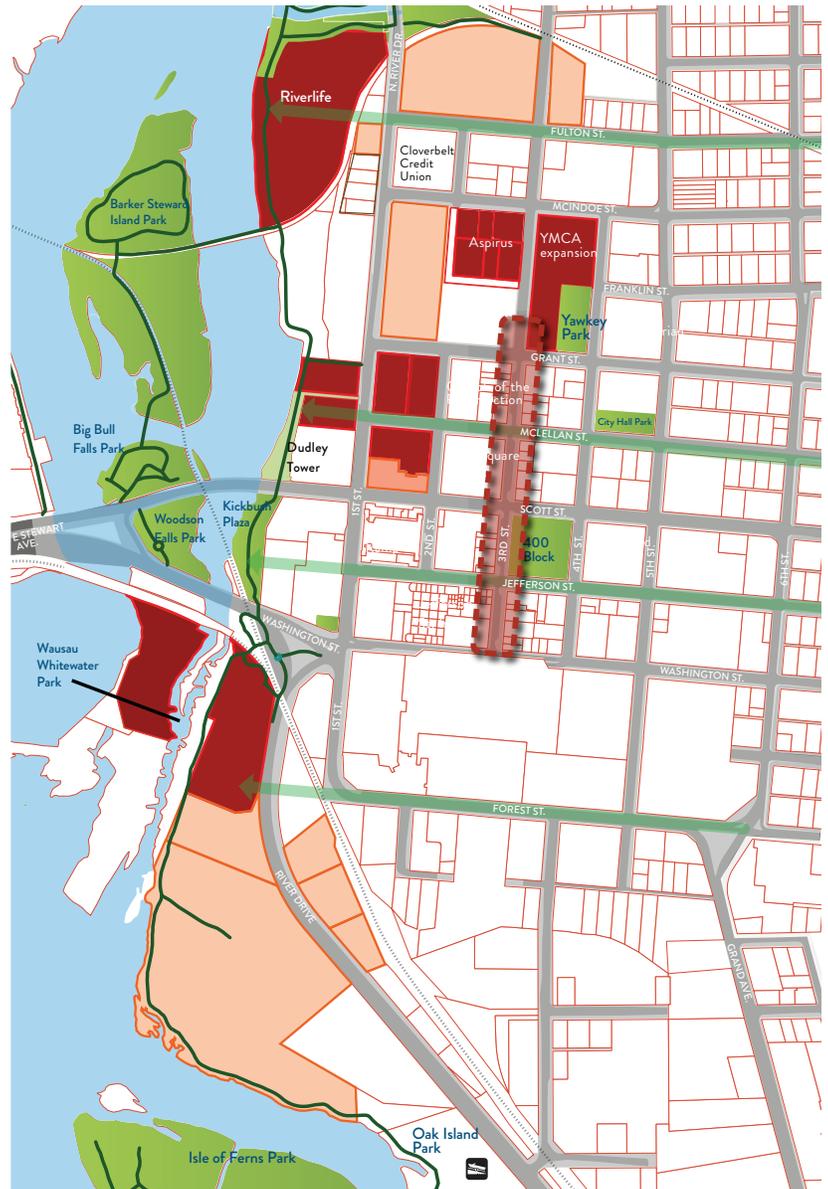
FRAMEWORKS

The frameworks summarize the results of prior and current planning efforts into a coherent diagram. With a more holistic understanding of future planned improvements, decision makers and investors can more effectively shape and respond to evolving market conditions.

REDEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The redevelopment framework identifies mobility, parking, parks/open space, and redevelopment opportunities within the study area. The proposed development scheme seeks to leverage existing assets (proximity to employment, river, outdoor recreational assets) to support the creation of new downtown neighborhoods. The key components of the redevelopment concept include:

1. New residential and mixed-use development in close proximity to downtown amenities including shopping, eating, entertainment, employment, and outdoor recreation along the Wisconsin river. A residential spine along N 1st Ave to N River Drive and River Life provides a strong customer base for a thriving 3rd Street commercial district, and may support a limited number of neighborhood commercial establishments, mainly eating and dining, as part of future mixed-use developments.
2. New office development at the terminus of McClellan Street complimenting the existing Dudley Tower.
3. Pedestrian oriented green streets as well as new trail connections, plazas, and open space linking existing and proposed downtown neighborhoods to the river.
4. Distributed parking solutions which minimizes the need for new large, single block structured parking.
5. Preservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings.
6. Street oriented buildings and well designed streets create comfortable outdoor rooms supporting outdoor dining and entertainment uses.



REDEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



STREET TYPE FRAMEWORK

Boulevard (River Drive, Slough & Scott St. Bridges)

- Wide sidewalks for strolling, tree-lined and closely spaced; broad medians and street-oriented buildings create an outdoor room effect; mix of housing types and densities may be present.

Community Connector (5th & 6th, Forest)

- Links neighborhoods across the City and region
- Higher traffic volumes

Main Street (3rd, Washington)

- Narrow traffic lanes, on-street parking, and small corner radii help slow traffic and make pedestrians feel safe
- Mixed-use and walkable; street-oriented buildings invite people to shop, eat, and explore

Downtown Streets (Multiple)

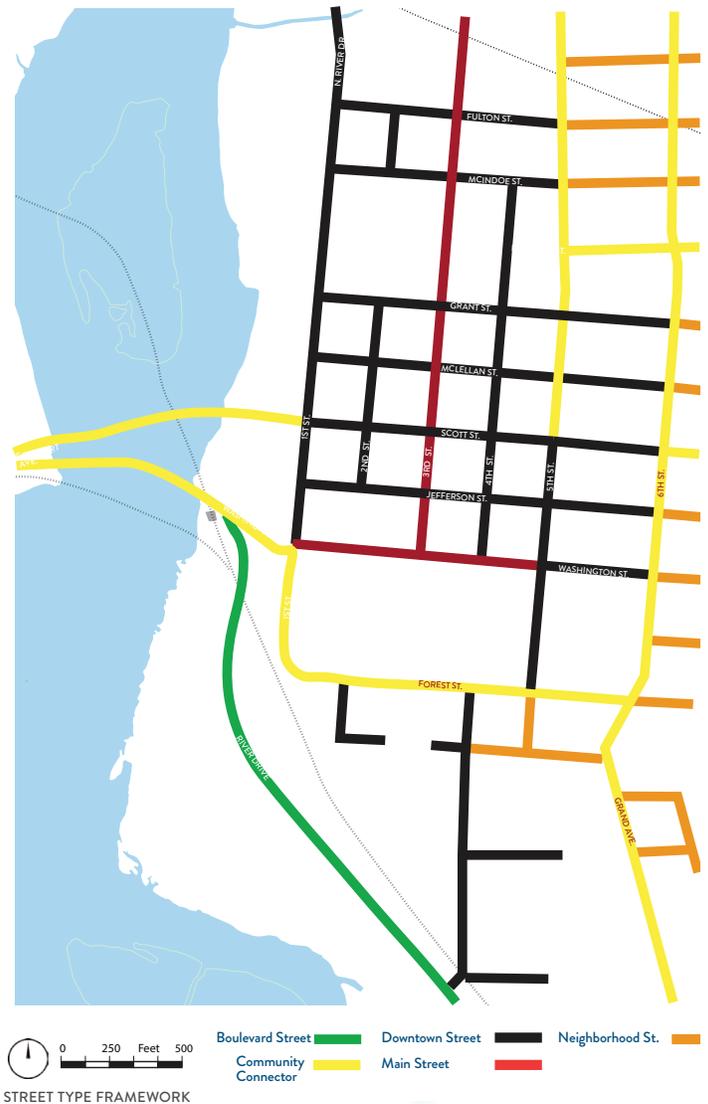
- Buildings form a continuous street wall, and building heights are in proportion to street widths
- Wider sidewalks and on-street parking.

Neighborhood Streets (Multiple)

- Narrow, tree-lined streets typically include at least one side of on-street parking; narrower sidewalks; green terrace
- Slower traffic speeds, tree canopies, and front porches facing the street encourages biking and walking

Green Streets (Fulton, McClellan, Jefferson, Forest)

- This plan defines green streets as those which provide environmental benefits, in addition to social and economic benefits. **In the context of a growing downtown, with limited R-O-W, the focus is more on providing street trees at closely spaced, regular intervals than it is about providing stormwater management benefits.**
- These streets should invite walking and promote sociability. They are human scaled, connected to the river via unique pedestrian passage ways including plazas, pedestrian bridges, staircases, and trails.



VEHICULAR CIRCULATION FRAMEWORK

The circulation framework identifies opportunities to improve the flow of cars, bikes, and pedestrians in the study area. Key Features:

S1) 1-way to 2-way conversions. This would likely require transfer of roads from WisDOT to the City.

S2) Extend Fulton Street. The second phase of Riverlife residential development will occur at the terminus of Fulton Street.

S3) Intersection reconstruction. A significant realignment of River Drive with Washington Street will improve connectivity between downtown and the river and north-south along River Edge trail system.

S4) Extend 4th Street. To better utilize parking structures around the mall extend 4th street to connect to existing parking garages.

S5) River Drive Boulevard. Reconstruct River Drive as a boulevard to support new residential development and create a new neighborhood with direct access to the waterfront.

S6) Investigate opportunities to improve access and functionality of the Jefferson Street ramp. Evaluate potential benefits of converting 2nd Street from a 2-way to 1-way.

BIKE + PED CIRCULATION FRAMEWORK

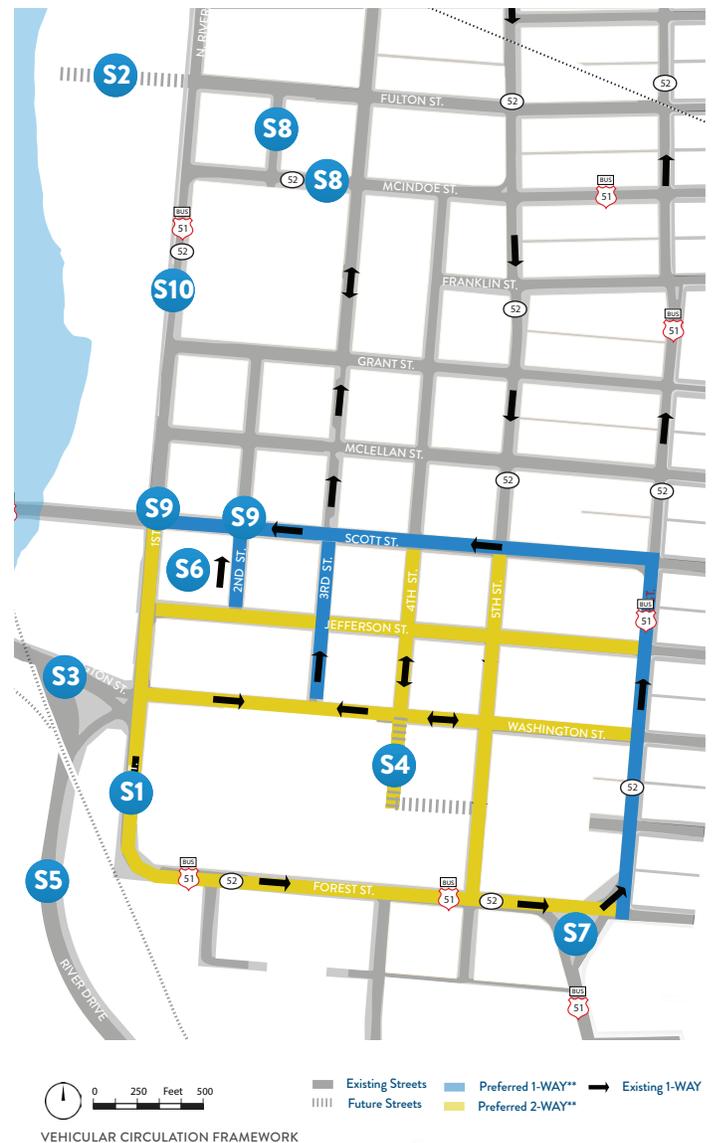
The bicycle and pedestrian framework identifies opportunities to enhance non-motorized transportation opportunities.

Key features:

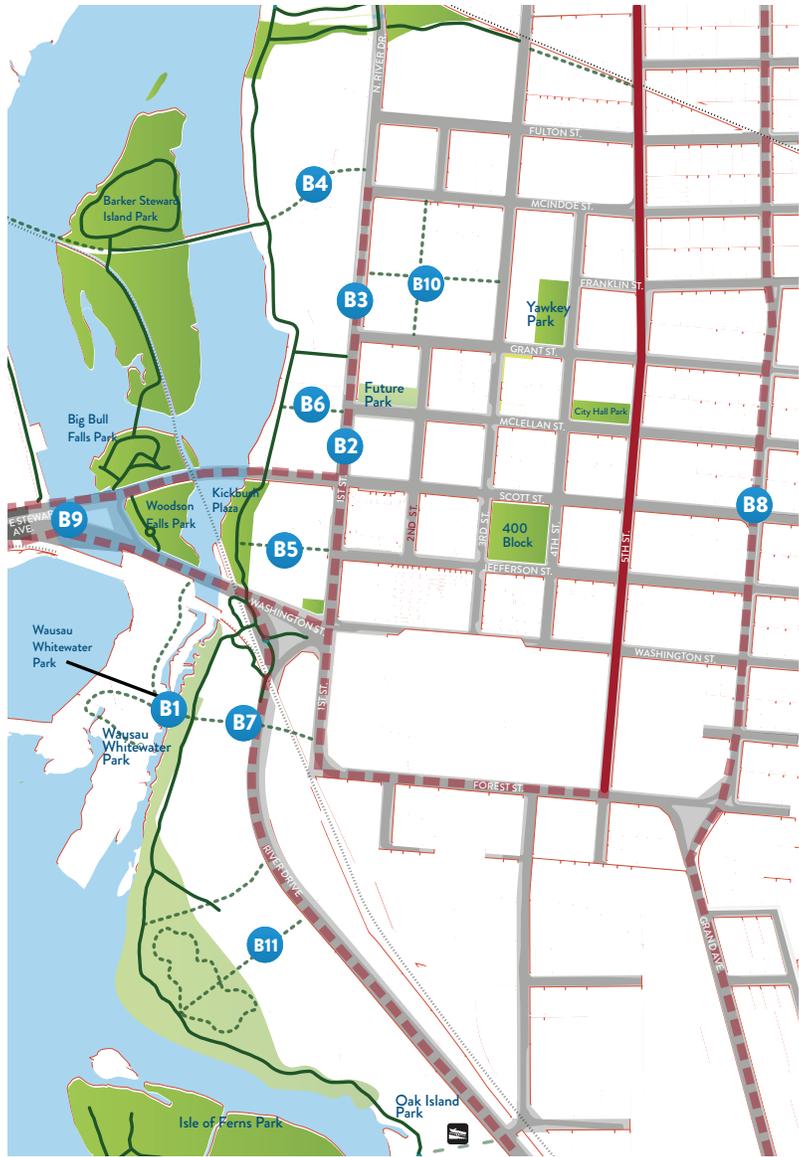
B1) Wausau Whitewater Park. The Whitewater park will include expanded viewing areas, a pedestrian bridge, and a mix of seasonal and year-round activities. New trail connections will link W Washington Street to a pedestrian bridge across the Wausau Whitewater Park to the proposed farmer’s market and event plaza.

B2) *Bike Lanes. Implement road diet with bike lanes on 1st Street between Washington Street and Grant Street.

B3) *Bike lane on 1st Street from Grant Street to Franklin Street. Right-of-way is too constrained to add facilities. Recommend bike lane when reconstructed.



- B4) Expanded trail network through Riverlife development connecting to 1st Street.
 - B5) Strengthen existing pedestrian passage past library to Kickbush Plaza.
 - B6) New pedestrian connection to River Edge Trail system.
 - B7) New elevated pedestrian connection between South Riverfront neighborhood and the Wausau Center Mall area.
 - B8) *6th Street road diet (3 lanes to 2). This will match northbound capacity with southbound capacity on 5th Street and affords room for a buffered bike lane to match the southbound bike lane on 5th.
 - B9) *Stewart Avenue Bike Lane. Existing bridge is too narrow to add bike lanes. Recommend adding when reconstructed. Alternatively, perform road diet.
 - B10) Mid-block pedestrian passages. Encourage private developers to provide mid-block pedestrian passages especially on large super blocks such as the one bounded by Grant Street, 1st Street, McIndoe Street, and 3rd Street.
 - B11) Expand trail network off of River Edge Trail spine to link new development sites to the riverfront
- *Source: Wausau MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan



BIKE + PEDESTRIAN FRAMEWORK

0 250 Feet 500

Wausau Whitewater Course Existing Trails Existing Bike Lanes
Future Trails Future Bike Lanes

PARKS + OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK

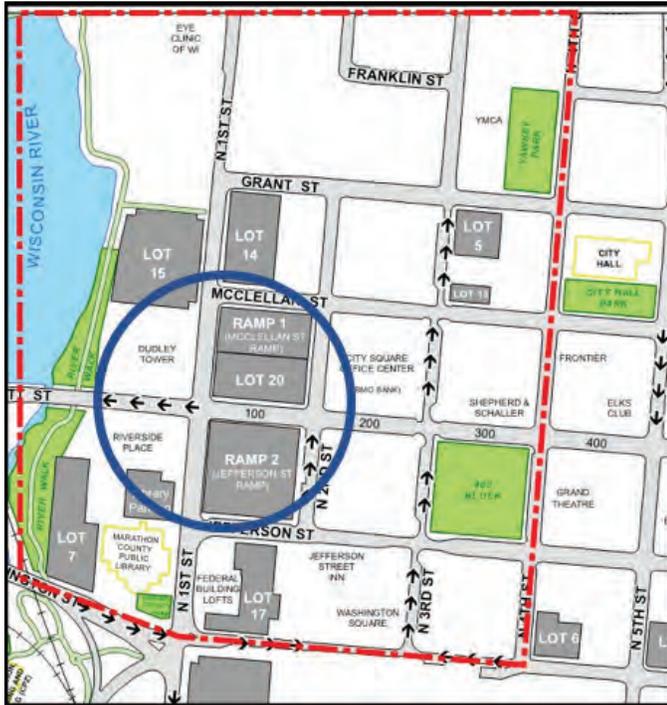
The only proposed park addition to the study area is the reorientation of the planned Diocese Park so that its longer edge fronts McClellan Street.

The park can play several important roles in terms of helping spur redevelopment. By providing a green oasis in a dense urban center it can attract residents. By providing a place to eat outside during the day it can attract office workers. It can serve as a spark for the creation of a new urban neighborhood envisioned along 1st Street. It can help attract modest amounts of retail or new eating and dining establishments.

PARKING FRAMEWORK

Development Area

The larger area, generally bounded by McIndoe St (north), 4th St (east), Washington St (south) and Wisconsin River (west), was identified to develop a more thorough understanding of the parking situation.



Within the larger area, there are 1,559 parking spaces in off-street parking facilities. Based on the 2017 Parking Study there are a little over 500 parking spaces available within boundaries at peak usage times.

Available parking during morning hours

Minimum available – 513 Spaces

Maximum available – 617 Spaces

Available parking during afternoon hours

Minimum available – 511 Spaces

Maximum available – 649 Spaces

Future Parking Demand

The City has determined that the McClellan parking garage is nearing the end of its service life and will likely be demolished by 2024. The site is a prime redevelopment location. The McClellan garage and adjacent parking lot, collectively, contain 418 parking spaces. The loss of these spaces could be absorbed by the available parking within the area based on the peak parking availability provided in the prior study. The most likely location for vehicles is the adjacent Jefferson garage that is currently 49% utilized and has approximately 400 empty spaces at peak times.

While the existing parking supply could likely absorb the current parking demand without the McClellan Garage and lot, any substantial new development would require additional parking. The additional parking could be integral to the development site, most likely through structured parking incorporated into the development.

A small portion of the parking demand could be accommodated in the underutilized mall garages, but a strategic pricing strategy would be required to move people willingly. For the new development to be accepted by the community, on-site or near-site parking is the best option. This is especially true for residential parking.

The potential land use options identified for this study include office, residential and retail building space. The following development scenarios were used to estimate future parking demand. The scenarios are not based on specific projects, but broad conceptual ideas. The parking ratios are from the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and National Parking Association (NPA) guidelines.

Wausau Development Parking Estimates						
Development Scenarios	Office Space	Retail	Residential	Estimated Parking Demand	Approximate Available Parking*	New Parking Spaces Needed
	Square Foot	Square Foot	Residential Unit			
	1 / 250 sq. ft.	1 / 200 sq. ft.	1.5 / unit			
Scenario 1A	0	0	100	150	100	50
Scenario 1B	0	5,000	100	175	100	75
Scenario 1C	80,000	2,500	100	483	100	383
Scenario 2A	0	0	200	300	100	200
Scenario 2B	0	5,000	200	325	100	225
Scenario 2C	80,000	2,500	200	633	100	533
Scenario 3A	0	0	300	450	100	350
Scenario 3B	0	5,000	300	475	100	375
Scenario 3C	80,000	2,500	300	783	100	683

*After removal of the McClellan garage and lot, there are approximately 100 parking spaces available in the immediate area. All development scenarios shown would require more parking than can be accommodated with the current parking supply.

The table above presents nine hypothetical development scenarios and the net parking impact of each assuming the McClellan ramp is removed.

Scenario Assessment

Scenario 1

The residential and retail components (1A and 1B) potentially could be incorporated into parking lots or moved to the mall garages. Scenario 1C would require structured parking.

Scenario 2

It would be difficult to accommodate 2A and 2B into surface parking lots. It would require almost an entire city block to build a 200-space parking lot. Scenario 2C would require structured parking.

Scenario 3

All three options in Scenario 3 would require structured parking to accommodate the parking demand.

Parking Supply and Administration

Over the past few decades, downtowns have once again become a desired location for living, working and entertainment. Downtown revitalization across the country has created activity and development, drawing people back to urban cores. New development opportunities and changes in the way people move about communities have changed the way municipalities approach parking and transportation. The scope of this parking review is high level. Without a deep investigation of the City of Wausau policy and parking goals we are unable to explore the full potential of the operation and recommend tasks associated with achieving future growth. However, the following national parking trends and best practices should be considered as Wausau considers how parking intersect with development opportunities.

Mixed-use buildings with parking as a component (many times a minor component on a sq. ft. basis) that allow a development to provide on-site parking are becoming more common. Full block parking structures, similar to the Jefferson garage, are less common in urban settings.

The public parking supply should have various price points to accommodate the needs of patrons:

- Prime locations near parking generators should be priced the highest due to convenience.
- Low cost or no cost parking on the perimeter should be available to cost sensitive patrons. This could include shuttle service depending on the distance and weather.
- Pedestrian access with continuous sidewalks, good lighting and wayfinding signage are essential to link parking to destinations.

Generally accepted parking policy is to price premium parking spaces the highest, with further away parking spaces at a lower cost. On-street parking is the premium parking in a downtown setting. Free on-street parking, with paid off-street parking creates abnormal usage patterns because people seek the free parking first and fill those spaces.

The goal of parking rates is to balance parking demand based on consumer choice. When rates are properly applied, patrons choose where to park based on their needs and willingness to pay. This balance, from higher priced premium parking to free perimeter parking, encourage turnover and create availability for patrons. Most patrons want predictability, not free parking. They would rather know where to find a spot and pay, than have to search

several locations for “free” parking. A free parking space defeats its purpose if always occupied.

The only way to make free, time limited parking on-street function properly is through regular enforcement to ensure people don’t overstay the time limits. Cities with this approach risk being labeled as heavy handed with parking tickets.

Some municipalities have utilized Public / Private Partnerships (P3) to bring additional public parking into the inventory. As part of the development and site plan approval process, the developer agrees to add public parking as part of the project. This may allow the City to add a small number of spaces (50-200) to their current supply, without committing to a large parking structure.

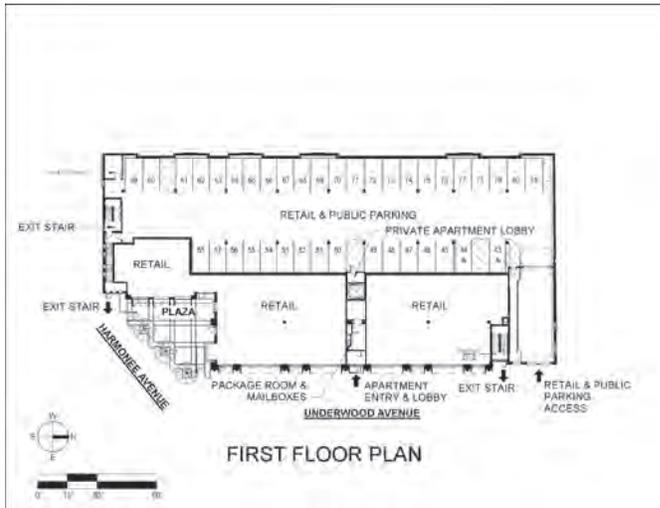
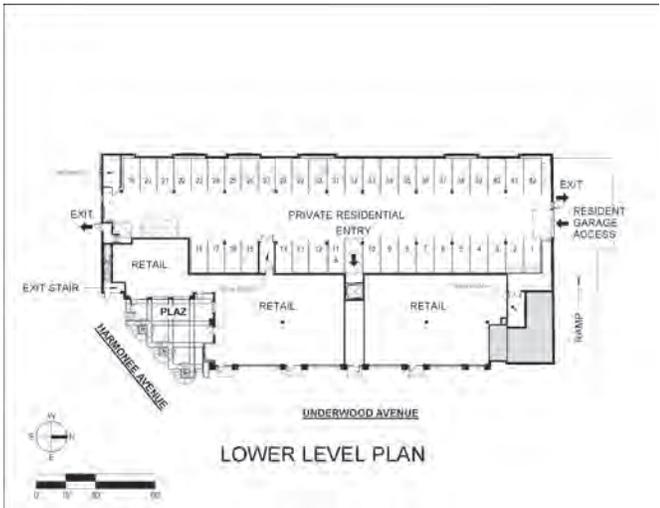
- The City pays the developer a set fee per additional parking space for construction and has long-term administrative control of the spaces.
- The City has a long-term lease for the spaces and has administrative control throughout the lease. The long-term concerns arise from determining:
 - Quality of design and construction for public parking – City should have Owners Representation during development phase.
 - Daily operational responsibilities and costs
 - Assurances of public and private use of the combined facilities.
 - Structural maintenance responsibilities and costs.

P3’s allow cities to add parking inventory without the large scale land and financial investment of a parking garage. However, they do have risks and the City must protect the public interest through strong agreements and a long-term plan to manage the parking assets.



ABOVE: Harmonee Square, located in the village of Wauwatosa, is a three-story mixed use development that includes 30 apartments and 7,500 square feet of first-floor commercial space.

BELOW: Harmonee Square mixed-use development example providing retail and public parking on first floor, with private residential parking on lower level. This concept applied in Wausau could help provide more convenient ground floor parking for 3rd Street shoppers.



Even though people choose to live in downtown and urban settings, they do so with the idea of easy access to their vehicles. While some residents may be willing to walk a few blocks to store their vehicles, most want on-site or close proximity parking. The lack of proximal parking can be more of a hindrance in marketing downtown residential units than the added cost of having to pay for parking on-site.

Generally, the cost of structured parking (debt service plus operations) exceeds the revenue generated. While there are several variables to consider, a garage needs to generate \$150-\$200 per space, per month to be self-sustaining. Supporting these rates can be a challenge. Municipal parking operations utilizing revenue from off-street garages, surface parking lots, on-street meters and citation revenue can often meet the debt obligations of a parking structure.

There are over 1,000 available parking spaces in the mall garages south of Washington St. These spaces are not in close proximity to the development zone and may be considered too long of a walk by some users. However, these spaces could provide a low cost option for price sensitive parkers if there were no longer inexpensive parking in the study area.

These spaces could have greater acceptance if there were significant differences in cost between on-site parking at the new development, and the mall garages. Significant may be at least \$50 - \$75 per month.

Based on the analysis described above, the parking framework identifies potential improvements to help solve for parking within the downtown, with a focus on the Towers Area.

P1) Incorporate parking into new development including but not limited to River Life.

P2) Evaluate future need for structured parking at this location. If needed, consider providing as part of a mixed-use parking structure with a residential component.

P3) Enhance the image of the Jefferson Street Ramp including pedestrian improvements along street frontage.

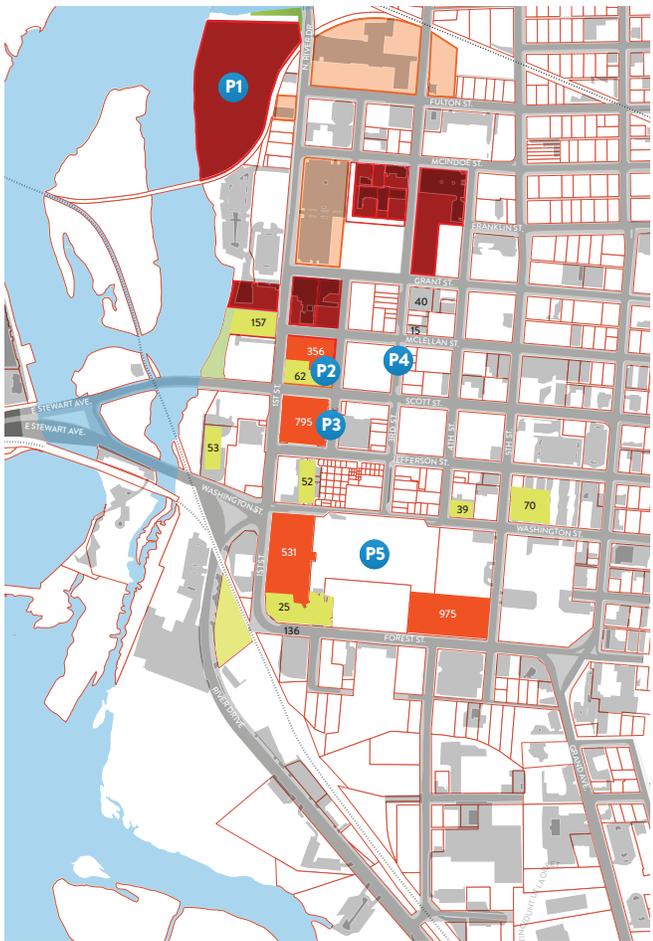
P4) Evaluate effectiveness of current free parking policy in meeting the needs of downtown retail and restaurant businesses.

P5) Identify opportunities to increase utilization of Mall site parking ramps.



ABOVE & BELOW: Bridge and Stacking Development in Grand Rapids. It includes a grocery store, garage, medical office space, residential and general office.





0 250 Feet 500
 PARKING FRAMEWORK

■ PARKING LOTS (PUBLIC)
■ PARKING RAMPS (PUBLIC)



ABOVE: Pedestrian walk links new downtown residential and office development to Chippewa River in downtown Eau Claire, Wis.

REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

VISION

The 2000 Central Business District Master Plan sought to position downtown as the “nerve center of retail trade, financial transactions, and government activities in the region.” This plan recognizes the critical role that central business district functions continue to play in our downtown, bringing thousands of workers into the heart of the City every week day. However, this plan also places emphasis on future residential development as critical to the future success of downtown Wausau. This plan envisions a thriving “central social district” that attracts downtown residents and employees looking for easy access to jobs, outdoor recreation, eating, shopping, and entertainment venues.

Carefully planned and executed residential and mixed-use developments in the Towers Area and beyond will create a vibrant urban neighborhood with access to walkable amenities downtown and along the river, as well as convenient vehicular access to regional shopping, health care, and outdoor recreational amenities.

GOALS + OBJECTIVES

By reviewing, discussing, and prioritizing the challenges and opportunities facing the study area, community leaders can continuously refine specific goals and strategies to help guide future decision making and communicate effectively with the public, downtown businesses, and downtown investors. The following goals and objectives were derived from stakeholder and public feedback, as well as a review of prior documents and input from City staff and elected officials.

1. Create additional tax base for the City
2. Support new residential and mixed-use development
3. Support existing and planned office uses
4. Develop and execute a parking strategy to support growth
5. Improve mobility and access to the river
6. Design and construct a high-quality public realm
7. Strengthen visual connections to the river



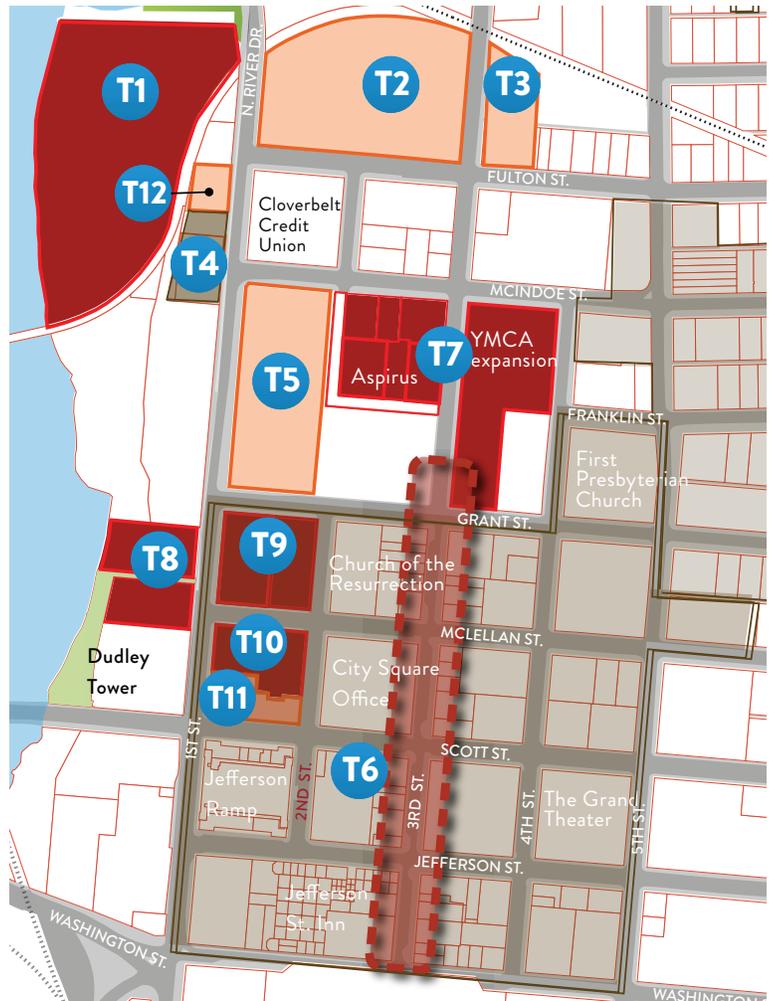
REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The City's 2000 Master Plan identified higher density residential development adjacent the river north of Scott Street. This concept plan also recommends apartments for the Towers Area. The redevelopment opportunities framework identifies shorter term (<3 years, dark red shaded parcels) and longer term opportunities (>3 years, light orange shaded parcels).

T1) Riverlife South. This portion of the overall Riverlife development contains a vacant 4.8-acre site which is permitted and being developed as an upscale residential neighborhood within walking distance of amenities. Higher density apartments with limited commercial space will be developed on both sides of an extended Fulton Street west of 1st Street.

T2) ABC Supply Company. A building supply company currently occupies this roughly 4-acre site north of Fulton Street between, bounded by N River Drive and 3rd Street. Because of the large site, potential longer-term redevelopment opportunities may include medium density multi-family residential, commercial, or mixed-use development. A variety of housing products such as low-rise apartments, townhouses, duplexes, or pocket neighborhoods may be considered for this site given its location at the edge of downtown and proximity to existing neighborhoods.

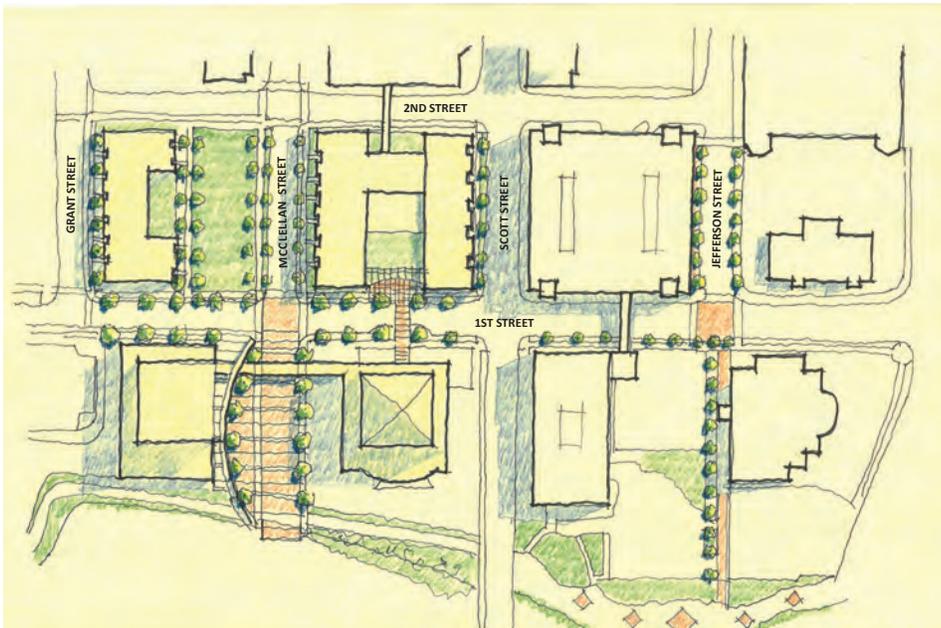
Buildings should be sited to take advantage of both the proposed green corridor along Fulton Street, as well as the existing trail on the north side of the site providing direct pedestrian access to Riverlife. The site is zoned Urban Mixed Use district, intended for established commercial corridors, that are or are planning to become mixed use in character. The district allows for a variety of employment, retail, and community service opportunities, while allowing some residential uses at an approximate density of up to 36 dwelling units per acre.





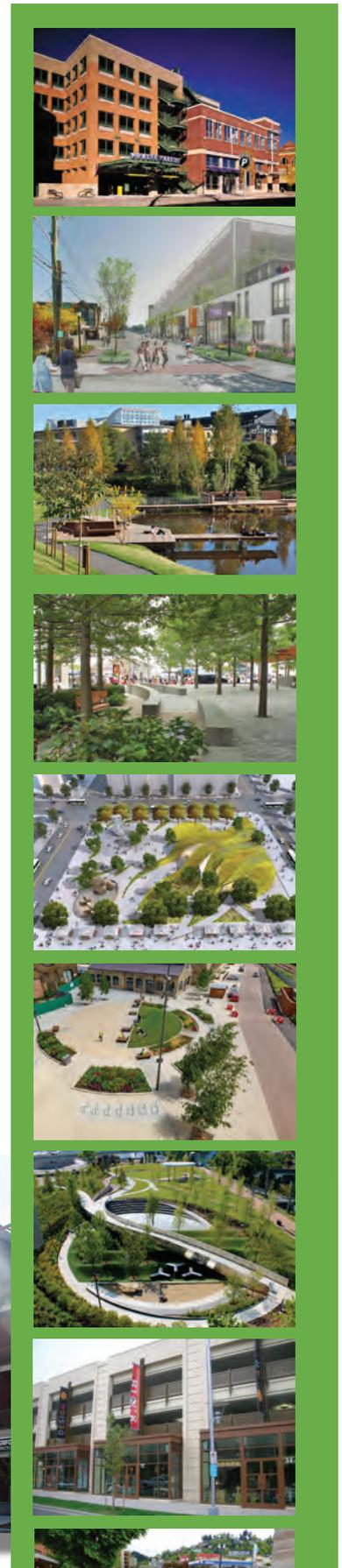
CENTRAL TOWERS AREA-EXISTING

Jefferson Street ramp underutilized
 McClellan Street ramp nearing end of useful life
 Development opportunities at 1st/Scott, 1st/McClellan
 No strong connection to river



CENTRAL TOWERS AREA-POTENTIAL FUTURE

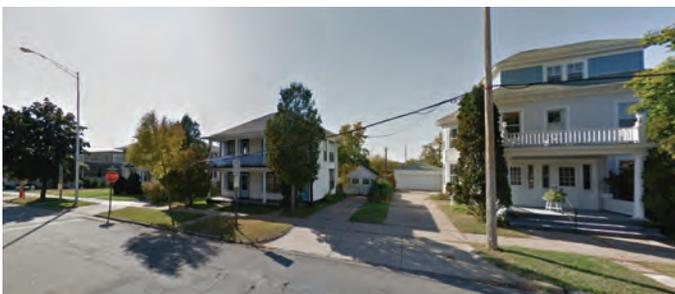
Strengthen Jefferson street Riverwalk connection
 McClellan Street potential central Riverwalk Plaza
 Church Block green benefits future adjacent developments
 Mixed use developments with Decentralized parking



T3) 3rd Street & Fulton Street. This site, approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre, fronts 3rd Street just south of the railroad tracks. The site contains a couple existing single-story commercial buildings near Fulton Street, with open land to the north bordering the railroad tracks. Proximity to the neighborhood commercial node just north of the railroad tracks and nearby trail access to the river makes this an attractive location for residential development, possibly row homes or townhouses oriented toward 3rd Street. The site is zoned Urban Mixed Use district.

T4) Historic single family homes. The three older single-family homes on 1st Street provide a window into the history of the neighborhood north of downtown and should be preserved. This site is part of the Riverlife planned unit development and zoned Single Family Residential.

T5) 1st Street surface parking lot. This site, approximately 2.5 acres in size, is currently used for surface parking. As new development occurs to the south and north, this site may become more attractive for redevelopment. Medium density residential or mixed-use development would complement a growing concentration of residential and office uses, such as 3-4 story apartments with one or two levels of above grade parking below the concrete deck. This site is zoned Downtown Periphery Mixed Use.





MCCLELLAN STREET-POTENTIAL FUTURE

- Strengthen Jefferson street Riverwalk connection
- McClellan Street potential central Riverwalk Plaza
- Church Block green benefits future adjacent developments
- Mixed use developments with Decentralized parking



T8) Dudley Tower surface parking lot. This site (approximately 1-acre) is currently used for surface parking. Potential redevelopment includes a second office tower connected to the Dudley tower via a skywalk. A pedestrian plaza would connect McClellan Street to the river trail network. This site is zoned Downtown High-Rise Mixed Use, and permits large scale commercial, office, and institutional development as well as mixed residential/commercial uses.

T9) Former Diocese school block. This block, which formerly housed a Catholic elementary school, is bounded by 1st Street, Grant Street, 2nd Street, and McClellan Street. It is approximately 1.35 acres and is being used for surface parking. Its location provides great access to nearby amenities and could serve as a catalytic development for downtown Wausau. If successful, it could anchor future residential development by creating a high impact social activity node with open space and limited commercial offerings such as a café catering to new downtown residents and workers.

Potential redevelopment includes medium density residential development fronting a new park along McClellan Street. This redevelopment site would physically and visually connect strongly with the river via a green corridor connection that incorporates a new public plaza in conjunction with a second Dudley Tower direct west of N 1st Street. The intersection of McClellan and N 1st Street would serve both as a neighborhood hub, as well as a destination attraction for downtown visitors, drawing additional foot traffic west off of 3rd Street down McClellan to the river.

T10) McClellan parking ramp. This site, approximately .7 acres, is currently occupied by the McClellan parking ramp, which provides direct access to the City Square Office complex via a skyway. Potential redevelopment opportunities include a new parking structure, medium to high density residential, or mixed-use development. This site is primed for redevelopment following successful execution of development on the former Diocese school block.

T11) Scott and 1st Street. This site, approximately .7 acres, sits adjacent the McClellan Street ramp and is currently used for surface parking. Potential redevelopment opportunities include office or medium to high density residential development. This site is zoned Downtown High-Rise Mixed Use, and permits large scale commercial, office, and institutional development as well as mixed residential/commercial uses. Traffic impacts and microclimate may limit residential development appeal.





IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The City's primary focus should be on incentivizing desired and market driven development that reflects the community's values and future aspirations. The City has control of the McClellan Street parking ramp block, as well as the former Diocese elementary school block within the central towers area.

Careful implementation planning will foster intelligent decision making and ensure that new development complements existing uses and parking concerns are pro-actively addressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Market potential development opportunities. Using the results of this study, the City should pro-actively engage local and regional investors in order to share the vision and identify potential project partners. This can be done formally through Requests for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) for city-owned properties, and informally through discussions with local investors and presentations to the downtown business community. An annual 'State of the Downtown' event can showcase development trends and opportunities to local and regional developers and investors.

2) Meet with downtown property owners to discuss redevelopment concepts identified in this plan. Identify potential opportunities and challenges associated with the plan's vision.

3) Support new downtown housing development. The redevelopment site with the greatest short-term potential is the former Diocese elementary school block and should therefore be a priority. Key to success will be the integration of the Diocese park open space to the development. If the current development proposal for the site is not feasible, the City should utilize a RFEI process to identify additional developers with interest in the site. The McClellan block is another potential site for residential or mixed-use development.

4) Determine feasibility of a second office tower north of the Dudley Tower. The site has strong potential synergy with the proposed residential developments in the immediate vicinity. The McClellan green corridor

and outdoor plaza would create a compelling location for a new office building. Alternatively, this site remains highly attractive for new residential development as well. The City should establish a positive working relationship with the property owner and investors to identify and address key issues such as financing a potential skyway to a second tower, public access and ownership of the proposed outdoor plaza, and how best to address future parking needs.

5) Pro-actively plan for the demolition and redevelopment of the McClellan ramp. The existing ramp will need to come down within the next four years, so the City should determine if a replacement ramp is needed within that time frame.

The City should continue to update parking assumptions and utilization rates as new development occurs, and compare those results with the parking demand estimates presented in this plan. If a new parking structure is warranted, the City should consider utilizing a PPP approach to help finance new structured parking. This approach may be more cost effective than financing a new, entirely city-owned structure while providing a better parking experience.

6) Implement framework recommendations. Key recommendations to enhance the desirability of towers area redevelopment opportunities include:

- Design and construct planned green corridors as depicted in redevelopment framework
- Design and construct Diocese Park in conjunction with proposed residential development
- Establish bike lanes on N 1st Street
- Design and construct McClellan green corridor enhancements
- Establish new pedestrian connections to River Edge trail

TIMELINE

PHASE 1 (2020 to 2022)

- Redevelopment of former Diocese block into residential or mixed-use development
- Construction of new downtown park as part of former Diocese park redevelopment
- Monitor parking impact as development occurs within the study area
- Determine feasibility of second office tower

PHASE 2 (2023 to 2025)

- Demolition of McClellan parking ramp
- Redevelopment of McClellan block to include public parking as part of mixed-use development

ON-GOING

- Market potential development opportunities
- Share and discuss plan concepts with downtown property owners and investors

BELOW: *The 102 Luxury Apartments in downtown De Pere, Wis.*

