

# Chapter 4

63

## Downtown Development Concept



Make not little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized.

- Daniel H. Burnham

The combination of the Fox River, two business centers and riverbanks connected by a distinctive bridge, and an interaction of the contemporary and the historical makes Downtown De Pere a unique environment for working, shopping, living, and recreation. During the last two decades, a community partnership has created a vital city center full of past accomplishment and future possibilities. This partnership has rebuilt much of the west bank, revitalized the east bank of the Fox River, supported the continued growth of a distinguished center for higher learning, revitalized traditional business streets, linked the city together with a symbolic new bridge, and established the basis of a strong management infrastructure. It has helped De Pere become a regional commercial and governmental center and a memorable destination for generations of visitors.

This chapter presents a unified concept that builds on these accomplishments and uses realistic market potential, new access, current initiatives and assets, and the city's distinctive character to create a city center for this century – a center that provides economic opportunity, urbanity, and delight for people of all ages.

## GOALS FOR DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

A successful effort that continues the dynamic process of development for Downtown De Pere will:

- **UNITE THE CITY.** Downtown is the bridge that unites the east and west sides of De Pere, and links the district to regional access routes. Downtowns are often viewed as common territory belonging to all citizens. However, De Pere's history as two municipalities with individual business districts has kept people from thinking about Downtown as a single, unified city center. Instead, both banks of the river should be part of everyone's vision of their city – and people should view their wonderful, wide river as more “canal” than “ocean.”
- **LINK DOWNTOWN'S DESTINATIONS.** Downtown's assets include two traditional business districts with destination businesses; a public riverfront with features such as the Fox River Trail and Voyageur Park; St. Norbert College; the iconic Claude Allouez Bridge; major public facilities; and, in the future, a unique RiverWalk and canal interpretative district. These features will be even more valuable when connected by a fabric of new private investments, pathways, and public spaces.
- **USE THE POTENTIAL OF TRANSPORTATION TO CREATE A HIGH-QUALITY ECONOMIC AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT.** Transportation is a powerful force in the formation of quality urban environments. Downtown's transportation system should move people efficiently and smoothly to their destinations, whether they are specific destinations or parking lots – and whether they are moving by car, foot, bus, or bicycle. It should serve business by increasing ease of access and convenience, and should be a “friend” rather than a source of anxiety to users. Transportation facilities should be thoughtfully designed and occasionally inspiring (exemplified by the new Claude Allouez Bridge) and should contribute to the health of individuals and sustainability of the environment. Our largest single public investment should do more than serve only as a conduit for cars, especially in Downtown De Pere. Effective transportation is a key to linking and unifying two business centers separated by a river.
- **IMPROVE THE SUPPLY AND CONVENIENCE OF PARKING.** Parking should be adequate in supply and convenient to use, without dominating the urban fabric and character of Downtown. Parking facilities and the street network should be integrated to guide people to parking as directly as possible.
- **INCREASE BUSINESS AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT.** The downtown development program should encourage new private investment and expand the district's share of regional consumer spending. It should support existing businesses, and reward productive reinvestment in buildings, new business starts, and other private decisions that strengthen the district. Strategic investments in the public realm create conditions for economic growth that is unlikely to happen spontaneously. These investments in turn create an economy that sustains itself and continues to grow productively.
- **CAPITALIZE ON KEY BUSINESS NICHES.** Downtown De Pere should build on a base of existing iconic retailers to both sustain these businesses and attract new, complementary enterprises. Destination businesses like Seroogy's Chocolates are widely known and bring customers Downtown. St. Norbert College is also famous as the training facility for the Packers, opening other business possibilities. Potential niches for retail growth include specialty retailing, home furnishings, eating and drinking establishments, the arts, sporting goods, and quality hospitality.
- **ADD LIFE TO THE DISTRICT.** Downtown should combine basic services with features and amenities that make the district more convenient and entertaining. Activating underused sites elevates downtown's cli-



mate as a destination for business, entertainment and culture. Emerging markets, such as tourism, housing, retail and office niches should be encouraged.

- **ADVOCATE SUSTAINABILITY.** The plan must consider the implications of today's decisions on future generations living in De Pere. Actions should always consider the effects on the triple bottom line - social, economic and environment.
- **CREATE NEW NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE DOWNTOWN.** Residential development has helped revitalize Downtown De Pere, creating a growing neighborhood on both sides of the river. An even stronger residential component supports a mix of retail uses and services in the downtown, and creates an atmosphere that customers from outside the district find comfortable and attractive. Future housing developments should mix incomes and occupancy types, and fully use downtown's assets of water, culture, and convenience. De Pere's past residential development has included both reuse of historic buildings, like the Lawton Foundry, and development of new ones, like Nicolet Highlands.

## PROGRAM FOR DEVELOPMENT IN DOWNTOWN

The vision for an evolving and unified Downtown De Pere begins by establishing a development program, much like the architectural program for a building project. This program identifies the ingredients of development – the amount of space that markets can absorb, present and future community needs, current projects that are pending, and other opportunities. The program includes three separate agendas: development, community and functional.

### DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The Development Agenda is largely based on the market analysis presented in Chapter One. It includes the ingredients of development: retail, office, residential, and nonprofit development needs and potential during the planning period.

- **RETAIL AND RELATED COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT.** Downtown De Pere's commercial strengths include eating and drinking establishments, general retailing, and lodging. The district also has several destination retailers that with metropolitan-wide market areas, most of which are located in the East Bank's Broadway/Wisconsin core subarea. Other retail business clusters, including jewelry, specialty items, and books, are relatively underdeveloped.

Several factors work against Downtown's short-term ability to attract significant national credits, including proximity to Ashwaubenon's Oneida Street retail corridor, a general over-supply of retail in the metropolitan area, lack of expansion by national retailers, and the likelihood of more conservative lending practices. Nevertheless, the downtown program should be adequate to accommodate specific growth markets based on:

- Growth in Downtown residential development. Residential development of the scale identified below (approximately 400 units) supports a potential demand for about 10,000 square feet (assuming an average of 2 people per household, per capita retail spending in the range of \$15,000 annually, and a 25% capture rate for the downtown study area).
- Attracting additional business from the St. Norbert community.
- Additional specialty retailing created by overall investment in the area.
- Growth in office occupancy in the downtown area. Assuming long-term growth of 100,000 square feet, an average allocation of 300 square feet per employee, and average daily workday spending of about \$15 in the district, new office development supports about 5,000 additional square feet of retail.
- Taken together, this suggests a program that should accommodate about 30,000 to 40,000 square feet of new retail space during the life of this plan. This may be a relatively conservative goal, but it provides a reasonable baseline expectation.
- **OFFICE DEVELOPMENT.** De Pere includes 935,000 square feet of multi-tenant, private office space, about 213,000 square feet of which are downtown. Downtown office space is roughly divided between office tenants in existing store fronts, and space in recently built office buildings. The market study prepared as part of this supports a modest level of office space that provides both adequate parking and features currently unavailable in the market, such as green buildings that translate to operational savings. This program assumes potential absorption of between 100,000 and 150,000 square feet of new office space, or an addition of 10 to 15% of the citywide total.

- **RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.** Population projections based on historic growth rates suggest that De Pere will grow by 4,700 residents between 2010 and 2025, producing a demand for about 2,300 new housing units. A market share of 10% to 20% for Downtown De Pere produces a demand for between 250 and 450 new residential units during this period. These units are most marketable if they provide river views. This projection assumes some assistance from the City through redevelopment financing, site assembly, or other incentives.
- **ST. NORBERT COLLEGE.** St. Norbert College is a major partner for De Pere and its downtown. The college's master plan indicates significant new development both within the current campus and, increasingly, between 3rd and 4th Streets. St. Norbert is also planning a significant sports complex south of the study area, near 3rd and Scheuring.



- **IMPROVED PARKING.** While parking supply approximately balances demand, parking supply is tight in core areas, and some customers have difficulty finding their way to lots. Sometimes, pathways from available parking to destinations are indirect or uncomfortable. In other cases, attractive development sites are instead used for surface parking. A district-wide parking strategy includes adding to the parking supply, using parking structures in key locations to use valuable land more efficiently, creating greener parking lots, improving directional signage, and providing better paths from car door to store door.
- **LINKAGES TO ST. NORBERT COLLEGE.** St. Norbert is a key part of the downtown community and more interaction between campus and business district will be mutually beneficial. Downtown is the college's logical business district, and the campus community should provide a customer base for businesses in addition to restaurants and bars. A strong Downtown also creates a more vital campus environment, and better connections between campus and business district will support St. Norbert's efforts to welcome De Pere citizens to campus shows, concerts, and events.
- **UPGRADED DOWNTOWN STREETScape AND GATEWAYS.** Downtown streets and gateways communicate the district's health and character to customers. The Broadway streetscape was recently complet-



ed and is in excellent condition, while Main Avenue's public environment is somewhat older and requires refreshing. An affordable streetscape program should support the business community by creating a street with detail, color, and customer accommodations to the street. Downtown's entrance points should also announce arrival into a distinctive central district with signage, landscaping and graphics. Overall themes included in the streetscape should reflect the concept of one downtown with two distinctive, complementary "riverbank districts."

- **SUSTAINABILITY AND PROTECTION OF VALUED ENVIRONMENTS.** De Pere and other regional cities have worked together to clean the once-polluted Fox River, and sustainability is an important community value. New development should respect and preserve environmental resources, and use design techniques that minimize negative impacts. But sustainability goes beyond management of negative impacts. The downtown environment should be "green" in every sense of the word – encouraging non-polluting active transportation, maintaining a human scale, and both protecting and showcasing its natural and historical environments.
- **RIVERFRONT REVITALIZATION.** The Fox River is De Pere's defining environmental feature and the city's long riverfront is a major community asset. Public and

## COMMUNITY AGENDA

- **GEORGE STREET LANDING.** The bridge landing at the foot of George Street west of Broadway has been a focus of considerable public attention, with debate centering on the extent of public versus private use. The site's temporary use is an open lawn with surface parking at the lower, Front Street level. Alternatives for its reuse are discussed below. However, every option should include substantial public access, maintain views from George Street to the river, and strengthen the connection between the Broadway district and the riverfront.
- **KATHERINE HARPER RIVERWALK.** The Katherine Harper RiverWalk is an ambitious city and private effort to build an interpretive pathway that extends from Voyageur Park, along the historic boat canal and historic Lock House Island, and ultimately to a viewing pier that stretches 300 feet into the Fox River. Extending the RiverWalk into the heart of the East Bank business core will increase its utilization, economic benefits, and experiential quality.





private investment in De Pere has produced great results along the Fox, completing such projects as Voyageur Park, the James Street Inn, the Fox River Trail, Lawton Foundry Apartments, Arbor Landing Townhomes, and the new Claude-Allouez Bridge. The RiverWalk is the next step in this process. The riverfront program should continue to make strategic public investments and encourage private residential, retail, and office projects along the east shore to create a productive and activated Fox Riverfront.

- **PUBLIC SPACE.** While Downtown has significant public spaces (most notably the 21-acre Voyageur Park), it lacks smaller urban spaces that provide customer amenities and platforms for smaller events. Many citizens have envisioned the George Street Landing as a “public square,” speaking to their belief in the need for effective, heavily utilized small urban spaces.
- **NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSITION.** Both the East and West Bank centers have common boundaries between residential and commercial/institutional environments. Unmanaged transitions can cause neighborhoods to deteriorate at the edges, and some homes show signs of disinvestment. Points of vulnerability include the southern and western edges of the Michigan-Superior National Register District, and the Wilson Park neighborhood adjacent to St. Norbert College and the West Bank business district. Clear boundaries



and buffers should be established along the edges of downtown; programs initiated to encourage reinvestment; and, with neighborhood consent, protective regulations adopted.

## FUNCTIONAL AGENDA

- **MAIN/REID TRAFFIC FLOW.** The one-way pairing of Main Avenue and Reid Street effectively channels regional east-west traffic to the Claude Allouez Bridge, but creates significant problems for the business district. These include circuitous routes and poor local access to businesses, sometimes excessive traffic speeds, friction between through traffic with local motorists slowing to find business destinations and parking spaces, and difficult pedestrian crossings. A better solution should maintain smooth regional flows while accommodating the slow-speed business and pedestrian traffic that characterizes a main street business district.
- **FORT HOWARD AND MAIN INTERSECTION.** This intersection, with a free-flowing eastbound transition curve from Main to Reid, provides poor access from Fort Howard Avenue, a well-traveled route to the Recreation Center and the Brown County Fairgrounds that continues north as Broadway in Ashwaubenon and Green Bay. The current configuration also places bicyclists who use the Fort Howard/Broadway commut-
- er bike route between Green Bay and Downtown De Pere in a precarious position.
- **THIRD STREET.** Third Street, now a collector street that continues south to Wrightstown as Lost Dauphin Road, is increasingly becoming part of the St. Norbert campus. In addition, 3rd Street transitions the one-way eastbound Reid Street to the Claude Allouez Bridge, and the 3rd and Reid intersection complicates pedestrian movement between the campus and Downtown. A desirable traffic solution would both incorporate 3rd Street into the campus environment while maintaining necessary regional traffic patterns.
- **PEDESTRIAN ACCESS.** Pedestrian crossings of major streets through Downtown, including Main Avenue and Reid Street in the West Bank and Broadway in the East Bank are uncomfortable for many pedestrians and discourage two-sided business patronage. Other pedestrian access concerns include the Broadway/Wisconsin roundabout, pathways along alleys with secondary storefront access, and pedestrian paths at both ends of the Claude Allouez Bridge to business districts.
- **MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION.** Downtown's transportation network should be multi-modal, providing safe and secure routes for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists within public rights-of-way. Upgrading on-street facilities that connect to pathways and providing convenient bicycle parking facilities improve bicycle access to the district. Public transportation is also an important component of a multi-modal transportation system and can help increase routine travel between the two banks.
- **PASSENGER RAIL.** There is a possibility that passenger rail may come to De Pere as part of a Wisconsin state system. A Milwaukee to Green Bay service is likely to use the track on the west edge of Downtown. Accommodation should be made for a possible station, the potential for transit-oriented development, and connections that bring passengers to destinations.

## DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The vision for the Downtown plan emerges from a program based on markets, existing projects and priorities, and community-wide needs. The components of this vision include:

- **Framework**, a conceptual diagram showing the relationships of major corridor elements.
- **Major Project Areas**, self-contained projects that contribute to the overall vision for the district.
- **Connections**, address the fabric that links major projects together and links the study area to the larger De Pere community.
- **Policies**, describing in more detail methods by which various needs and markets are met and projects are implemented.



### THE FRAMEWORK

The Framework considers the overall structure of the downtown development program. The Framework Diagram (Map 4.1) illustrates the transportation movements and development districts that comprise this structure. Its highlights include:

- **A two-way circulation pattern in the West Bank**, maintaining the existing regional dominant pattern while providing a local, one-lane “counterflow” lane. Among other benefits, this provides direct access to Main Avenue businesses from the west side of the city.
- **Establishing 4th Street as the primary collector route** to and from the south part of the city between Reid Street and Belle Avenue.
- **Reinforcing existing alleys with off-street parking that serve the two business cores as secondary business streets**, complete with efficient off-street parking and attractive pedestrian pathways. Using gaps in the building fabric to connect these “alley streets” with the peripheral main streets.

- **Establishing two large-scale opportunity zones:** the East Bank riverfront (including the George Street Landing and adjacent areas south to Wells Park) and the Nicolet Square area between Main and Grant from 3rd to 4th Streets.
- **Developing or enhancing trails on both sides of the river** with improved connections to the Claude Allouez Bridge and major community attractions. A new West Fox Regional Trail would follow the riverfront to link downtown De Pere with the Recreation Center and Fairgrounds, continuing to Ashwaubenay Park and Ashwaubemay River Trail.
- **Connecting the RiverWalk to the Broadway commercial core** and incorporated into major mixed-use development along Front Street.
- **Improving pedestrian and bicycle mobility in downtown** with convenient connections between the street and trail systems.
- **Reserving space for a passenger rail station**, incorporated into a transit-oriented development.

Map 4.1: Downtown Development Framework Diagram





## MAJOR PROJECT AREAS

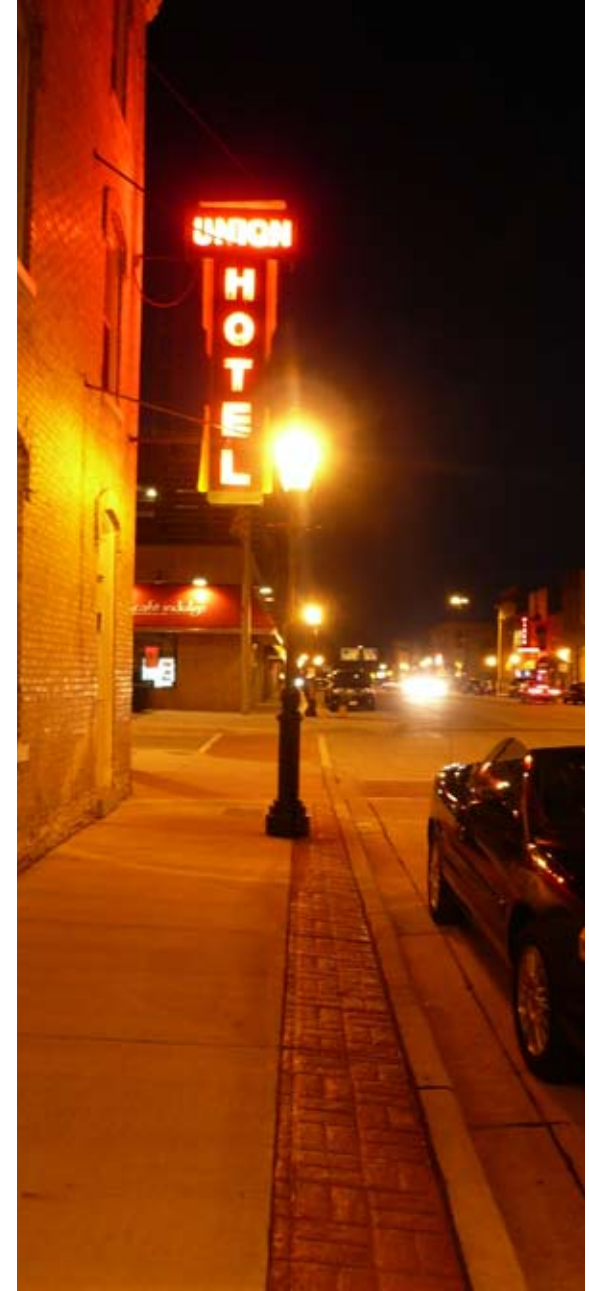
Map 4.2, Development Districts, identifies individual projects within the study area. The concept includes 10 major project areas, including:

### EAST BANK

- Broadway/Wisconsin Core
- George Street Bridge Landing
- East Shore
- George Street Corridor
- Historic Neighborhoods

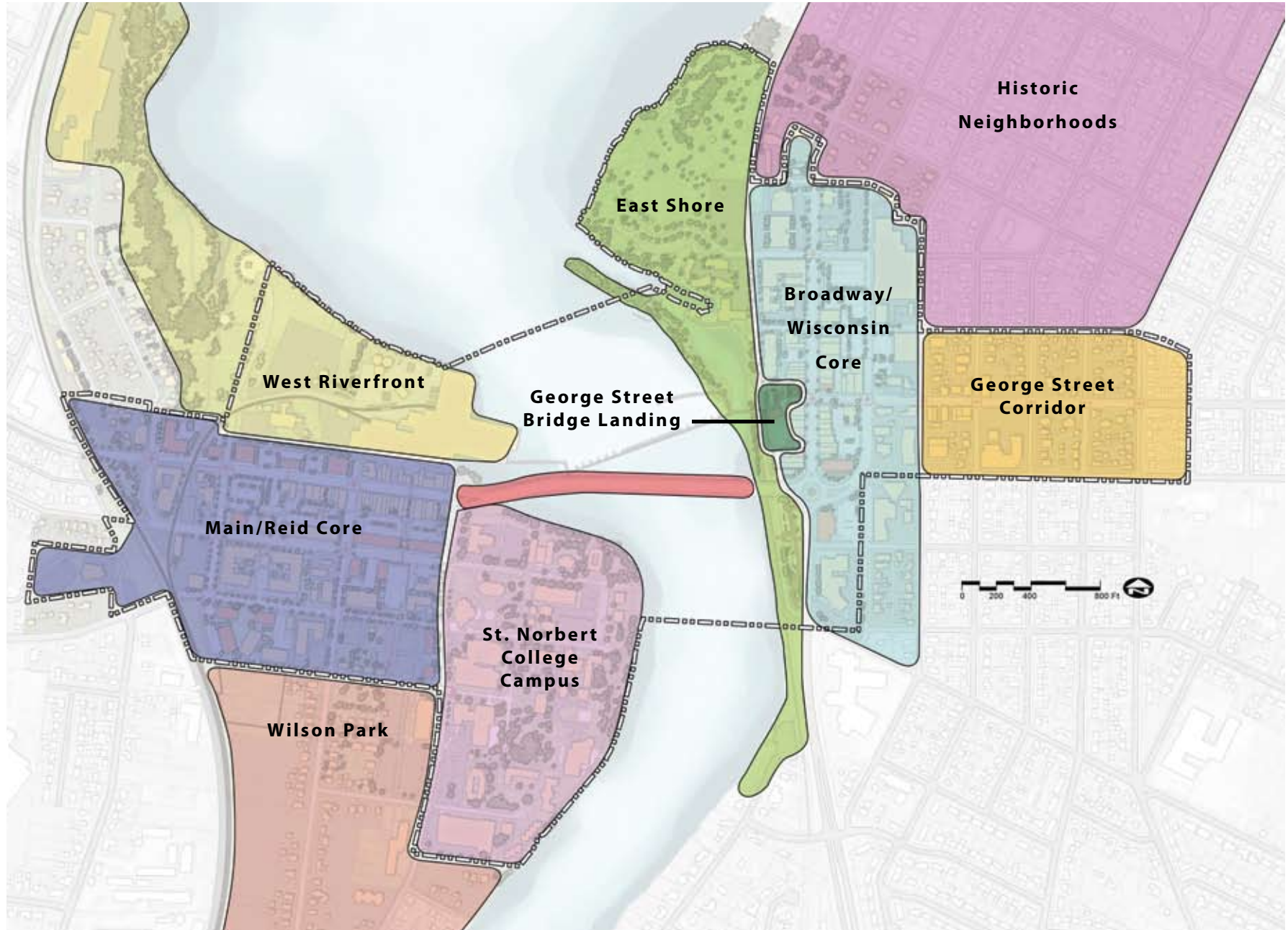
### WEST BANK

- Main/Reid Core
- Reid Street Redevelopment Areas
- St. Norbert Campus
- Wilson Park
- West Riverfront





Map 4.2: Downtown Development Districts



## EAST BANK

The East Bank vision concentrates on five project areas. The concept builds on the strengths of the area as a destination for specialty retail, recreation and riverfront, and entertainment. Recommendations for these subdistricts sometimes overlap because of their adjacency and reinforcing characteristics. These subdistricts include:

- Broadway/Wisconsin Core District
- George Street Bridge Landing
- East Shore
- George Street Corridor
- Historic Neighborhoods

Map 4.3: East Bank Districts



1. Kathryn Harper Riverwalk
2. Nature Viewing Pier
3. Lock Island Connection
4. Old George Street Bridge Landing
5. Alley Improvements
6. Seroogy's Connection
7. ShopKo Connection
8. Gateway Development
9. Wells Park Development Site
10. Mac Dental site
11. Streetscape Improvements
12. Parking Improvements



Map 4.4: Downtown Master Plan, East Bank





## BROADWAY/WISCONSIN CORE DISTRICT

The Broadway/Wisconsin core focuses on the East Bank's two traditional business streets, Broadway and Wisconsin Street, but includes the area between Front and Michigan Streets from Chicago to Cass Streets. The principal objective for this area is to sustain existing businesses and encourage new public and private investment that strengthens the character of a unified commercial district. Highlights of the strategy for the East Bank's business core include:

- BROADWAY STREETScape AND TRAFFIC CALMING
- THE ALLEY
- MISSION SQUARE REDEVELOPMENT
- BUILDING FACADES

### BROADWAY STREETScape AND TRAFFIC CALMING

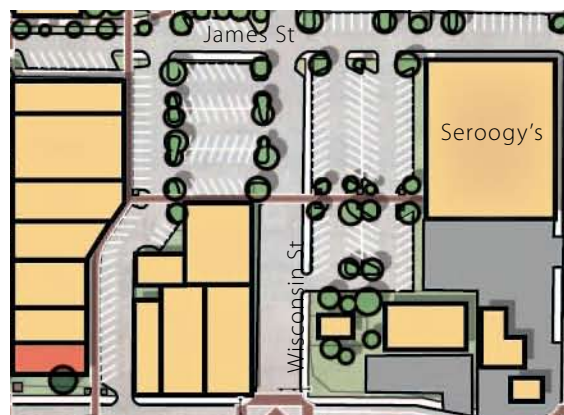
Broadway's recently completed streetscape is both attractive and consistent with De Pere's historic character. However, its four-lane section, relatively wide-open character, and lack of signalization between the roundabout and William Street, encourage excessive traffic speed and make pedestrian crossings difficult. Some existing features, including thematic lighting, on-street parallel parking, corner nodes, contrasting crosswalks, and street graphics tend to calm traffic. However, additional elements could further improve the street environment and calm traffic without reducing the street's lane capacity. These include mid-block nodes, additional street trees at specific locations, and other features that tend to enclose the street's open quality. The city and state should also consider a raised textured crosswalk or pedestrian-actuated signal at George Street, which may benefit from reversing the one-way traffic flows on George and James Streets. Substantial development at the George Street Landing will also tend to slow traffic at this critical point.

### THE ALLEY

The north-south Broadway/Wisconsin alley south of James Street serves both off-street public parking and secondary entrances for businesses and the multi-tenant Lee Building. This alley also includes a pedestrian pathway in places and uses Broadway's street lights. As a result, it takes on some of the character of a local shopping street, and receives significant pedestrian use. Off-street parking east of this alley fronts Wisconsin Street, reducing pedestrian access to businesses along that street. The alley provides a reasonably good customer environment, but safety and appearance problems are caused by dumpster placement, service bays, and motorist use of the alley as a short-cut. Projects and strategies to address this area include:

- ***Alley realignment and pathway continuity.*** Minor alignment modifications can improve smooth local traffic flow and visibility. In general, a continuous row of perpendicular parking should be developed on the west side of the alley. Some stalls may be used for groups of screened dumpsters or bicycle parking. A continuous pathway should be developed along the west side of the alley, serving rear business entrances from ShopKo to the Mission Square project, both described below. A midblock path between George and James Street should also connect the alley pathway to Wisconsin Street and connect to a pathway through the Seroogy Chocolates parking lot. Improved landscaping should set off parking areas and drives, and streetscape elements, consistent with other parts of the core district, should be used.
- ***Alley branding.*** This rear access alley should be identifiable as a mini-district, with an individual place name used in graphics and marketing information.

Figure 4.1: Seroogy's Chocolates Connection

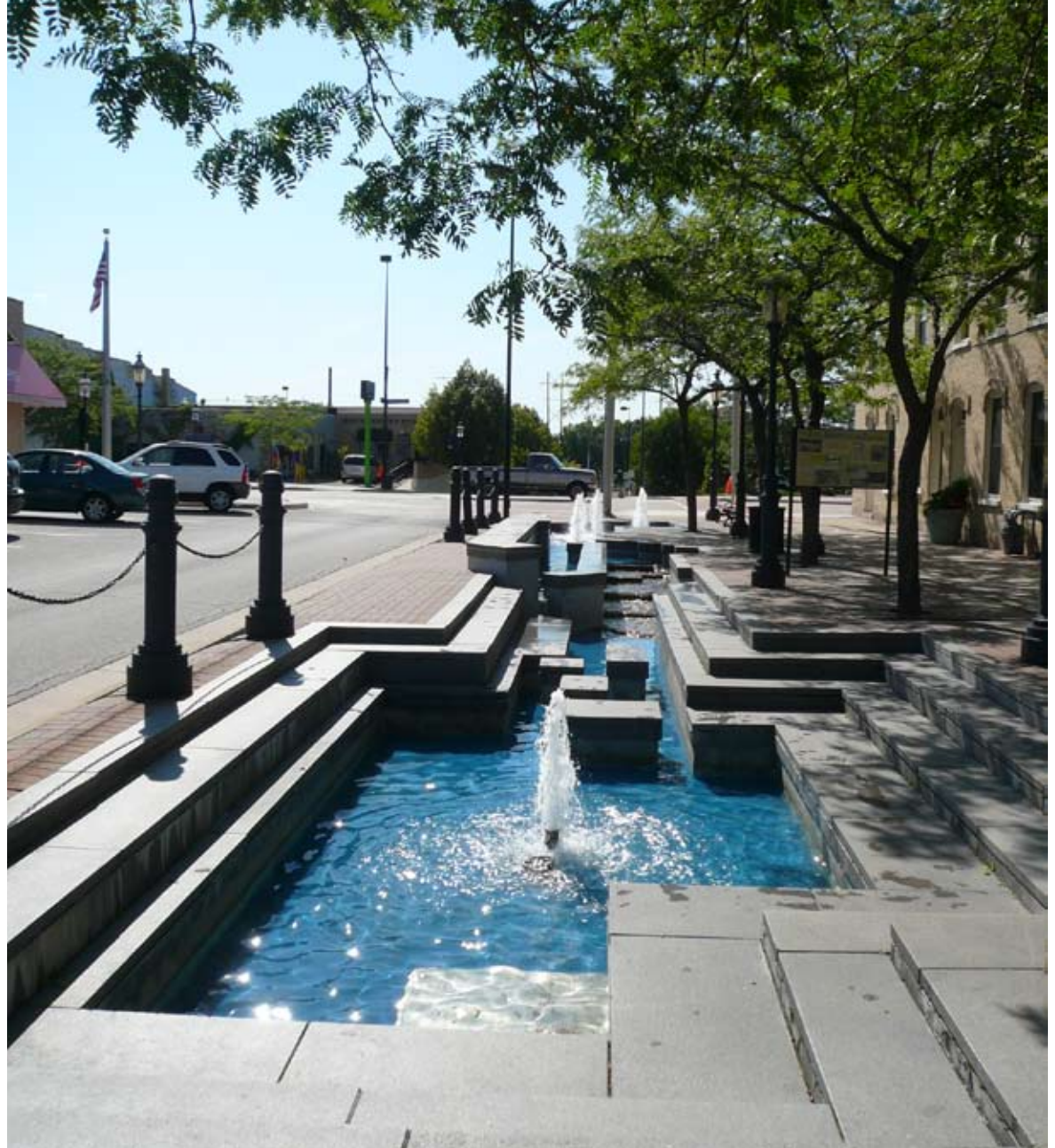


- **Seroogy's Chocolates Connection.** The entrances of Seroogy's Chocolates and the Lee Building, two major core district destinations, are separated by surface parking lots and the intervening Wisconsin Street. A pathway connection would connect Seroogy's to the rest of the district and help landscape a hard-surfaced parking lot. This pathway could be designed and merchandised as a "Walk of Chocolate," flanked by thematic lighting and banners that feature Seroogy's various products. Colored pavers or concrete across Wisconsin Street would reinforce this continuous path, and alert motorists to the pedestrian crossing.
- **Alley Plaza.** The alley circulation and parking design between Steckart-Falck building and Old Ford Square Building could be upgraded to promote the pedestrian over the motorist. Walkways should be unobstructed and provide opportunities for public art.
- **Shopko Connection.** Shopko's large surface parking lot separates the East Bank's largest retailer from Broadway, denying pedestrians a clear path to the front door. The parking lot should be redesigned to create a landscaped walkway connecting Broadway to the store's entrance. The alley walk described above would continue across part of the ShopKo lot to this walkway. Along Broadway, removing surplus parking spaces along the parking lot edge would allow the sidewalk to curve away from the curb line. Together, these paths would reduce the scale of the ShopKo parking lot, add landscaping, provide safe pedestrian passage, and connect ShopKo to the rest of the district.





Streetscape Images







- Rear Façade Improvements.** The appearance and maintenance of rear facades along the alley are very important because they provide secondary entrances off parking and are highly visible from Wisconsin Street. Rear building elevations need not look like primary facades. A simple, effective rear façade improvement program should incorporate paint or brick rehabilitation, upgraded storefront doors and windows when appropriate, attractive business signs, and details such as awnings can contribute to an appealing and functional commercial look for the alley.

## MISSION SQUARE REDEVELOPMENT

As development demand strengthens, the north side of the roundabout at the end of the Broadway/Wisconsin Alley becomes an attractive and highly visible redevelopment site. In 2010, the City of De Pere will upgrade the Mission Square public parking lots on this block, increasing the number of spaces and improving both the efficiency and appearance of the area. A potential redevelopment site on the south end of the block now includes a surface parking lot, the RiverCrest building, and an available storefront church. A new building would replace these uses with a prominent office or mixed use building, taking advantage of exposure to 27,000 vehicles a day. Parking would be provided both on the Mission Square block and under the proposed building.

## BUILDING FAÇADES

Street-fronting building facades along Broadway are extremely important and, in many cases, historic. Buildings along the east side of Broadway comprise the South Broadway National Register district, and other historically significant buildings along the street support expansion. Broadway already features excellent examples of historic rehabilitation or adaptive reuse, including the Union Hotel and Lawton Foundry. Desirable façade upgrades should restore windows to original scale, replace inappropriate storefronts, and include awnings, doors, and other features that add scale. However, in this architecturally diverse district, absolute uniformity is neither necessary nor authentic. This plan recommends a building development policy that encourages preservation and adaptive reuse. Strategies are discussed in more detail in the Policies, on page 120.

## GEORGE STREET LANDING

The reuse of this site, the approach to De Pere's bridge over the Fox River until 2007, has been a focus for extraordinary public attention and debate. The plan framework identifies the George Street site and adjacent land as one of two key opportunity areas for Downtown De Pere. This section presents principles that should guide the reuse of the site and three development options that adhere to both these principles and to market potentials.

### DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES FOR GEORGE STREET

The following principles and assumptions should guide development of George Street Landing (GSL).

- **Plan as part of a comprehensive development with surrounding sites.** GSL should not be viewed as an isolated site, but as part of a larger development, coordinated with other adjacent sites. These include the historically significant Turba Building and the entire Front Street block between George Street and the bridge approach (including the Anderson Apartments and city parking ramp). Long-term development planning should extend to the bowling alley and adjacent buildings on Broadway at the bridge. Viewing GSL as part of a larger, more comprehensive project changes the expectations of the site and sees it as a catalyst for much greater private investment.
- **Include an active mix of open space and development that attracts people and generates revenue.** Public debate over the use of GSL has revolved around development versus open space. Yet, these are not mutually exclusive concepts, and including both aspects is possible because of the site's level change. A solution



that preserves river views, provides living urban open space, and is activated by some form of private or civic development can both stand alone and catalyze other new investment.

- **Connect to the Katherine Harper Riverwalk.** A direct connection between Riverwalk and GSL is critical, offering RiverWalk users a richer experience and making this unique project an important business development incentive for Downtown. Without the connection, the RiverWalk is a one-way path from Voyageur Park to the viewing pier that provides a unique feature but has limited direct economic benefit for Downtown. With the connection, the RiverWalk channels visitors directly into the heart of the Broadway core.
- **Preserve river views.** A project concept for GSL should maintain the open, interrupted views of the Fox River, Thilmany plant, and West Bank that are highly valued by the citizens of De Pere.
- **Include unique uses that are also consistent with market potentials.** The market study documented a steady demand for housing with river views, and a GSL

master plan should take advantage of this potential. But development on the strategic GSL site should offer something new, rather than generic uses that could easily be located somewhere else on the street.

- **Provide good, barrier-free access between Broadway and the riverfront.** GSL is an opportunity to strengthen the relatively weak connection between the Broadway core and the riverfront. A three-dimensional access system should pleasantly serve pedestrians and bicyclists using the riverfront trail and promenade.
- **Include convenient, adjacent parking.** The GSL site is too important to be used for surface parking, but an overall project should accommodate areawide parking demand conveniently but relatively invisibly.
- **Respect existing site constraints.** Development of GSL must maintain a 30-foot circulation way adjacent to the south property line. In addition, the BAG building to the north has a lower level emergency access on its south wall, requiring comfortable clearance.

Map 4.5: George Street Landing



1. Katherine Harper Riverwalk
2. Lock Keeper's House
3. Nature Viewing Pier
4. Lock Island Connection
5. Old George Street Bridge Landing
6. Parking Deck
7. Possible Expansion



## GEORGE STREET LANDING DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

The former bridge landing site itself is a 150-foot wide parcel, extending from Broadway to Front Street. Of this, the south 30 feet must be retained as an open circulation way, leaving 120 feet of developable width. The plan recommends a vertically integrated project that can be explained in four parts:

- The east half of the bridge landing site, with frontage at Broadway street level
- The west half of the landing site, with frontage at Front Street level.
- Front Street redevelopment
- South expansion, a later phase of development north of the new bridge and including three existing buildings along Broadway.

### East (Broadway) Landing

Because reuse of this site has the greatest impact on openness and views from Broadway and George, it has been the focus of public attention. The efforts of groups and individuals who have developed ideas for this strategic site have contributed enormously to a thoughtful, constructive, and sometimes emotional discussion. This Downtown De Pere planning process has also considered a variety of options, before settling on two related but distinct options, referred to here as Old Bridge Marketplace and George Street Center.

### Option One: Old Bridge Marketplace

The Old Bridge Marketplace option envisions a public square at Broadway level, developed over a flexible retail marketplace that opens out to a multi-use open space at the lower, or Front Street, level. Its components include:

- **Broadway Square, an approximately 15,000 square feet public open space developed at the Broadway level.** The Square is envisioned as a simply and elegantly designed square featuring a lawn/green roof over lower level space; seating and park furnishings; public art and interpretive exhibits; space for vendors, art shows and small events; and a viewing deck to the west that overlooks the lower park level and river. The central feature of the Square is an iconic pavilion that provides access to a lower level Marketplace, discussed below. The pavilion provides natural skylight and vertical circulation to the Marketplace below, and would be designed to match the district's design character. Dramatic lighting could also establish it as a major nighttime feature. The Pavilion should be sited to define but not obstruct George Street's view corridor.
- **The Marketplace.** The Marketplace is a flexible "core and shell" retail space of 10,000 to 15,000 square feet, designed for a variety of occupants and vendors and located at Front Street level under Broadway Square. Models for such flexible spaces (on a larger scale) include Midtown Global Market in Minneapolis, Reading Market in Philadelphia or Pike Place Market in Seattle.

The Marketplace provides utility hookups and support spaces such as restrooms to such tenants as food stands and vendors, artists, craftspeople, start-up businesses, and others. It can also accommodate community events and even include meeting space. The Pavilion acts as a large skylight for the Marketplace that borrows natural light, and provides a stairway and elevator to Broadway Square. Natural light could enter the space through a skylight. The Marketplace enclosure may have overhead doors on its west and south, allowing it to function as a covered outdoor market in good weather.

- **Peripheral Pathways.** A 30-foot landscaped pathway would provide stairs down from Broadway, serving business entrances on the lower level of the Turba Building. This path would also connect to covered parking, developed as part of the Front Street development, described below. This pathway would be appropriately lighted and furnished as a city promenade, and also provides adjacent outdoor space for the Marketplace. A 10-foot wide, well-lighted ramped walkway would provide access to the BAG building north of the landing site.

Figure 4.2: Option 1: Old Bridge Marketplace



1. Pavillion
2. Public Marketplace
3. Multi-Use Open Space
4. Commercial
5. Condo or Hotel
6. Katherine Harper Riverwalk



Top: Reading Market in Philadelphia

Bottom: Pavillion for Educare in Denver

## Option 2: George Street Center

The George Street Center concept differs from the Old Bridge Marketplace option by substituting a mixed use building on the north part of the Square for the free-standing Pavilion. Possible programming may include:

- The lower-level of this building would be incorporated into the Marketplace with possible commercial retail on the storefront.
- The middle floor at Broadway level could be a public or private space reserved for museum or gallery, or possible commercial space.
- The upper floors could be commercial use with rooftop access.

The new building should maintain both a 10-foot area-way and access separation from the BAG building, and the building line established on the George Street block between Broadway and Wisconsin, limiting its width along Broadway to 30 feet and producing a footprint of about 4,000 square feet for each upper level. Retail entrances would be located along the south, plaza-facing façade.

The character of the Broadway-level public space changes in the George Street Center concept, becoming a rectilinear space in the range of about 10,000 square feet. Programming and features are similar of the plaza are similar for both options.

## West (Front Street) Landing

The lower level of GSL, with direct Front Street and river frontage, provides an excellent place for an small but lively urban space, lined with activity and offering an amenity to complement the Fox River Trail. This space is defined by the Marketplace on its west edge and the retail component of the Front Street project on the south. "Front Street Square," as a small space, should use a simple design to create a stage for activity. Its features could include:

- A paved plaza in front of the Marketplace, including an interactive water feature such as a spray pool. These are extremely popular with children and families.
- A sloping lawn grading up from Front Street and defined by a low retaining wall at the Marketplace Plaza. This forms a gentle amphitheater-like bowl for both events and unstructured activity.
- An area designed and wired for small performance events at the base of the slope near Front Street.

## Front Street Redevelopment with Riverwalk Bridge

The Front Street Redevelopment concept uses the catalyst of George Street Landing to encourage a major new project to take full advantage of the East Bank riverfront. This proposed mixed use project includes:

- **A new mixed use building on the existing Anderson Apartments site.** This project would be connected to a new public parking structure and form the south edge of Front Street Square. The building would be a minimum of three stories, including retail space at the Front Street level, retail or office space at the sec-

ond level (equivalent to the Broadway grade), and office or residential use of upper stories. A pedestrian bridge over the Turba pathway would connect Broadway Square's river overlook to the second story of the new building. An arcade at this level leads to an elevator and stair core that both serves building needs and leads to the Katherine Harper RiverWalk bridge, described below.

- **Katherine Harper Riverwalk Connection.** This bridge leads from the stairway and elevator core at the third level of the mixed use project presented above across the Fox River Trail and canal to Governor Island. Here, a circulation and observation tower, located to provide unique views of the Fox River dam, takes visitors down to grade level. The tower's design could reflect the form of the previous bridge's iconic tower.
- **A new public parking structure to expand and replace the existing city parking ramp along Front Street.** The new garage would provide two flat levels, with access from Front at the lower level and Broadway above. This, combined with a larger footprint, more than doubles the supply of parking available in the existing ramp by providing up to 140 spaces. The new parking is also a base for an upper-level residential or hotel block, with lobby at street level. It would also include a bicycle ramp around its periphery, connecting the Fox River Trail to Broadway and the Claude Allouez Bridge bike lane and pathway.
- **Residential tower.** A residential or hotel tower with its long orientation providing river views would be developed over the parking structure. A three-story tower would provide approximately 30 housing units or 50 to 60 hotel rooms.



Figure 4.3: Option 2: George Street Center



1. New Development
2. Public Marketplace
3. Multi-Use Open Space
4. Commercial
5. Condo or Hotel
6. Katherine Harper Riverwalk

Top: Bayliss Park spray area in **Council Bluffs, Iowa**Bottom: Spray Park in **Boulder, Colorado**

## South Redevelopment Expansion

The Front Street development concept is designed to add an expansion phase south to the bridge abutment. This expansion:

Extends the parking structure, adding 90 parking spaces on two levels.

Adds a second residential tower, with up to 30 units and river views in three directions.

Provides additional retail storefronts on Broadway, just north of the new bridge landing.

## Crevier Commons Development

This small open space on the northeast corner of Broadway and George receives relatively limited use and is less necessary if George Street landing provides significant public space. This site could accommodate a new two- to three-story retail or mixed use building, built out to the south building line of the historic BAG Building across the street. Shop entrances and windows should be oriented to both Broadway and George Street. The remaining Crevier Commons green space between the right-of-way line and the building line would be aligned with the crosswalk, and is large enough to accommodate some of the features currently in the small park.



Top: Crevier Commons Site

Top: Redevelopment of parking ramp.

Bottom: Buildings in red identify possible new construction.

Bottom: Entrance from Broadway.



Figure 4.4: Options 1 and 2: South Redevelopment Expansion



1. Entrance from Broadway
2. Condo or Hotel Expansion
3. Upper Plaza
4. Additional Parking



Top: Anderson Apartments site to be redeveloped.

Bottom: Massing concept of structure on Lock House Island.



## EAST SHORE

The East Shore project area envisions a lively waterfront lined by active features and extending from Voyageur Park to the Bomier Street boat launch. The popular Fox River Trail is the spine that links these features for people enjoying De Pere's distinctive river. Elements of an East Shore development program are illustrated in Map 4.x and include:

- VOYAGEUR PARK
- KATHERINE HARPER RIVERWALK AND VIEWING PIER
- WELLS PARK PROMENADE
- FOX RIVER TRAIL ENHANCEMENTS

### VOYAGEUR PARK

The redevelopment of Voyageur Park reclaimed a former landfill site as a signature public park and major downtown asset. The park offers fishing, playgrounds, shelters, open space and direct access to the Fox River and the regional trail. Voyageur Park is also the venue of choice for community events and celebrations, and its improvement has spurred adjacent housing development.

However, many citizens believe that Voyageur Park can and should generate more activity. A key is giving people more reasons to come to the park, and better ways to connect the park to Downtown. The Katherine Harper RiverWalk, when complete, will attract park users, who in turn will stay and use its abundant space for other purposes. An expanded program of concerts and events also brings more people to the area. Other possibilities to consider include:

- Better internal trail circulation and more connections to the Fox River Trail and adjacent neighborhoods.
- Adding additional attractions or features that attract families, such as a Ferris wheel or carousel. These need not dominate the park or attempt to compete with Bay Beach, but could attract users who would then enjoy the park's other resources.
- An improved performance venue, such as a riverside performance or dance pavilion.
- Instituting water taxi service on the Fox with a port at the park. This may be coordinated with improvements at the Fairgrounds.
- Upgraded playground facilities.
- Fitness programs and innovative exercise courses
- Increased engagement with the water, with facilities like fishing piers, overlooks, and viewpoints.
- Possible rentals for bicycles and water recreation, including kayaking, canoes and paddle boats.

Map 4.6: East Shore





Voyageur Park &amp; Fox River Trail

## KATHERINE HARPER RIVERWALK AND VIEWING PIER

The Katherine Harper Riverwalk and Viewing Pier will make a unique contribution to the community and, with the connection to George Street Landing discussed earlier, will provide a substantial boost to both the Downtown experience and its retail economy. Current fundraising efforts are directed to an initial phase that begins at Voyageur Park, crosses the boat canal with a scissors bridge, continues past the historic lock house and lock tender's residence, and continues on a viewing pier that will stretch 300 feet into the river.



## WELLS PARK PROMENADE

Wells Park is a linear open space along between Broadway and Front Street from the Claude Allouez Bridge to the Front/Merritt Street intersection with Broadway. Currently, it is little more than a grassy slope, with head-in parking off Front Street. Yet, the park's topography, civic status as a front lawn for City Hall, and beautiful views of the river and the St. Norbert College campus open greater possibilities. The acclaimed High Line in New York City, an abandoned elevated railroad reclaimed as an urban park, shows how a civic promenade, devoted to changing views of a cityscape, strolling, lounging, environmental quality, and passive enjoyment can create a feature of extraordinary value. Wells Park, on a smaller scale, can become a similar jewel for De Pere.

The Wells Park concept envisions:

- A two-level development, with an urban promenade at the upper, or Broadway levels highlighting views of the river; and a lower, or Front Street, level cut into the slope and providing parking and walk-out retail or restaurant space.
- On the main upper level, a wide, specially lighted pedestrian processional from the Claude Allouez Bridge's pedestrian walk to the Front and Broadway intersection across from City Hall. The angle and gradual curves of the processional offer changing and unusual views of the city. Smaller, semicircular paths undulate around the main promenade, defining areas planted with ornamental grasses that surround lounge areas.
- A stairway and potentially an elevator, along with well-defined crosswalk, aligned on Lewis Street and serving the lower level of the promenade.
- Retail space and covered parking at the Front Street walkout level. Diagonal on-street parking is provided in front of storefronts.

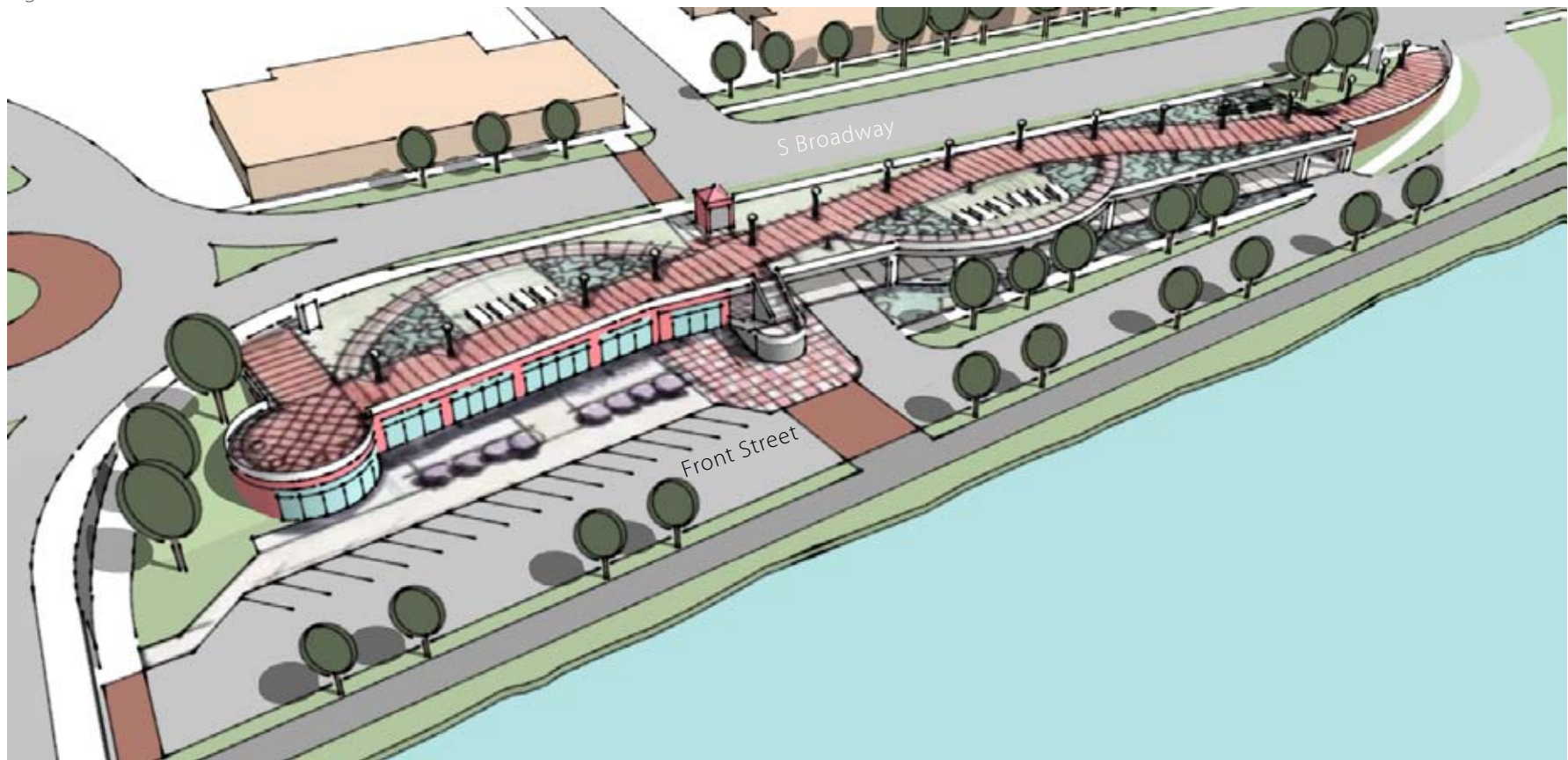
## FOX RIVER TRAIL ENHANCEMENTS

The Fox River Trail is one of Wisconsin's most heavily used multi-purpose trails, but local businesses have not fully capitalized on its economic potential. Business exposure to the trail is minimal and state regulations prohibit posting signs to direct people to businesses. Economic development is often used as a rationale for trail investments and De Pere can use some of the following strategies to both help make the trail a business asset and improve the trail experience for users:

- **Updating the trailside kiosk.** A city map displayed in a kiosk should identify city attractions, including restaurants, business districts, and cultural destinations.
- **Create and market development sites.** The George Street Landing and Wells Park proposals include many opportunities for trail-related businesses. These are particularly good locations for businesses related to recreation, and personal wellness.
- **Define trail connections to downtown.** Users do not "read" the routes from the trail to downtown. Physical connections should be clearly and effectively signed, and make users aware of nearby services. Connections at regular intervals also make the trail more accessible to De Pere neighborhoods.
- **Promote statutory changes to permit business information signage along the trail.** Private businesses, like bicycle shops, provide important and sometimes indispensable services to trail users. A controlled information program, analogous to the Tourist Oriented Destinations program implemented along freeways, should be instituted. This may require legislative or regulatory change.
- **Provide access to Bomier Boat Ramp.** The Bomier Boat Ramp and the Fox River Trail are adjacent but disconnected. A short trail connection should lead from the trail to the public restrooms at Bomier.



Figure 4.5: Wells Park Promenade



Wells Park Redevelopment Project. Project includes a linear park overlooking the Fox River while providing an opportunity for new commercial and parking oriented to Front Street.

Left: High Line in New York City

## GEORGE STREET CORRIDOR

George Street, although no longer the street leading the Fox River bridge, remains a healthy business corridor. The new bridge project also included street and sidewalk reconstruction with new street lighting, giving the street a fresh and clean quality that reinforces its commercial environment. George Street has the character of a pedestrian-oriented business district between Broadway and Superior Street, a natural extension of the Broadway/Wisconsin core. The rest of the business corridor, between Superior and Winnebago Streets, retains a neighborhood scale but includes set back free-standing structures and automobile services before transitioning to residential street. Commercial uses along George typically extend no more than two lots north of the street and are bordered by residential neighborhoods.

90

George Street's stable business environment and low vacancy rates suggest policies designed to:

- Maintain and improve the street's quality and economic health; and
- Insulate surrounding neighborhoods from negative business operating effects and unmanaged encroachment of non-residential uses.

Policy recommendations fall into two categories: design guidelines for sites along George Street; and use transition guidelines addressing the boundary between the George Street businesses and its residential neighbors.

### DESIGN GUIDELINES

George Street's businesses are currently zoned B1 (central business district) or B3 (automotive-oriented commercial). Neither district precisely describes the more diverse and neighborhood-sensitive scale of George Street. A more appropriate district would establish a Neighborhood Pedestrian Commercial district, or create a form-based overlay district to use in combination with

the existing B1 or B3 base categories. This new district should contain design guidelines that:

- Use "build-to lines," a range of minimum and maximum setbacks that encourage buildings to be located near the street, and prevent separation by large parking areas.
- Encourage parking locations and designs that limit the amount of parking directly visible George Street, or provide a landscaped edge along the street.
- Require a clear, safe, and defined path from public sidewalks to the primary entrance of adjacent buildings.
- Require internal parking lot landscaping and establish maximum impervious surface percentages on a site.
- Provide specific landscaping requirements for front yards between the building façade and the street property line.
- Establish neighborhood-scaled sign and street graphic standards that place business identification signage at or near the ground plane, or use small, well-designed projecting signs attached to buildings.

### USE TRANSITIONS

Unmanaged expansion of commercial uses can degrade adjacent residential areas, and neighborhoods adjacent to shallow commercial corridors like George Street are especially susceptible. The existing B1 and B3 districts do not require buffering or other methods that can manage the commercial/residential transition. Recommendations to ensure the health of both George Street and surrounding residential neighborhoods follow.

- Through zoning overlay districts or limited local historic districts, establish clear limits on the expansion of non-residential uses north or south of their existing extent. Specific provisions may include:
  - Allowing no new non-residential uses north of James Street or south of Charles Street.



- Placing strict limits on any establishment of new non-residential uses between George Street and these two neighboring street limits, including mandatory use of existing structures, prohibition of off-street parking in yards oriented to streets, and limitation to low-intensity office use.
- Requiring public review and approval of any application for a new non-residential use between Charles and James through a conditional use permit and/or design review through the Historic Preservation Commission.
- For existing uses along George Street:
  - Maintain orientation of primary entrances and facades along George Street.
  - Screen high-impact elements such as loading and service areas to prevent visibility from adjacent residential areas. Require continuous landscaped buffering along the residential edge equal to at least 10% of the depth of the combined site after expansion.
  - Require site plan review of all expansion plans.
- Planned mixed-use developments may be considered on sites along George Street. Require that at least 50% of the gross floor area of expanded mixed use projects be in residential use.





Plan document recommends the continuation of current streetscape elements along the corridor.





## HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

Downtown's East Bank is bordered by three residential districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Michigan-Superior, Randall Avenue, and North Broadway neighborhoods (Map 4.7). Each of these neighborhoods participated in the preparation of the Historic Neighborhood Preservation Plan, developed at the same time as this Downtown Development Plan.

The Neighborhood Preservation Plan recommends creation of limited local historic districts, with specific regulations or review requirements addressing seven areas that have the greatest potential impact on neighborhood character.

- **Land Use Change**, addressing limitations and controls on expansion of non-residential land uses north of George Street in the Michigan-Superior neighborhood and Cass Street in the North Broadway neighborhood.
- **Ridgeway Boulevard**, preserving the street as a residential boulevard with a landscaped median, one lane of traffic in each direction, and on-street parking.
- **Subdivision of Large Lots**, controlling possible division of very large lots in the North Broadway district.
- **Demolition Review**, delaying demolition of contributing primary structures in the three historic districts for up to six months.
- **Architectural Compatibility**, requiring historical design review of construction of new primary structures on vacant lots.
- **Street Orientation**, requiring new primary structures to orient to their design and primary entrances to their fronting street, and to connect entrances directly to the public sidewalk.



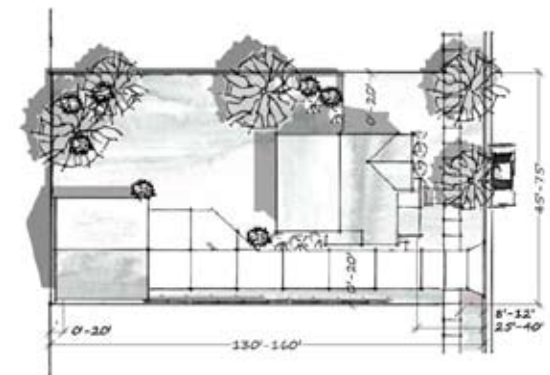
- **Garages along Streets**, requiring new garages to be set back a minimum of ten feet behind the building line of the primary façade.

The plan also recommends five key projects or policies involving city/neighborhood partnerships to enhance the three historic districts:

- **Neighborhood Identification**, renaming districts to their original addition names, and installing thematic monuments to define gateways.

- **Ridgeway Boulevard Enhancement**, adding improved street lighting, corner nodes, and landscaping to calm traffic and reinforce street quality.
- **Local Street Landscaping**, including street trees and stormwater management features.
- **Street Lighting**, using historically appropriate lamps.
- **ShopKo Buffering**, designing and implementing a landscape and screening master plan along the east side of the ShopKo site along Michigan Street.

Map 4.7: Historic Neighborhoods





## WEST BANK

In contrast to the East Bank, where change during the last two decades has focused around a public riverfront and transportation changes related to the new Claude Allouez Bridge, redevelopment has been the dominant force on the west side of the river. Projects like Reid Street Crossing, Marquette Centre, the Humana Building, and Nicolet Highlands, have rebuilt half of the West Bank. These projects, combined with the traditional Main Avenue district and the continued growth of St. Norbert, provide a foundation for continued ambitious development in this part of the district.

The concept builds on the strengths of the area as a destination for office and residential development with neighborhood qualities. Services, restaurants and bars are conveniently located to these uses and the college.

94

The West Bank vision includes major street system recommendations, designed to improve business access and customer convenience. In addition, the West Bank vision considers four subareas, with some overlap because of their close relationship to one another:

- Main/Reid Core
- St. Norbert College
- Wilson Park Neighborhood
- West Riverfront

Map 4.8: West Bank Districts



1. Main Street Development
2. Midblock Connections
3. Marquette Centre Expansion
4. Alley Improvements
5. Nicolet Square Development
6. 3rd Street Pedestrian Improvements
7. Joliet Expansion
8. Humana Development
9. Transit-Oriented Development Site
10. Trail



Map 4.9: Downtown Master Plan, West Bank



## THE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The West Bank's street system must fulfill two basic roles: east-west through access to a principal Fox River crossing and convenient movement around a downtown business district.

The one-way pair of Main (westbound) and Reid (eastbound) predates the new Claude Allouez Bridge and accomplishes the first role admirably. Unfortunately, it is less successful at promoting business access.

The one-way pattern presents a number of problems, including:

- Limited business visibility.
- Convoluted access for customers hoping to reach Main Avenue destinations from the west side of De Pere or Reid Street businesses from the east side.
- High traffic speeds because of the absence of oncoming traffic, producing very smooth flows that take motorists through the business district very quickly, and make it hard for local traffic to “read” business destinations.
- Difficulties for pedestrians crossing Main and Reid, especially in view of long east-west blocks. This discourages the two sided access that is highly desirable in pedestrian-oriented business districts.

Modifications presented in this section will require additional study. During the planning process, planners met with representatives from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to discuss possible reconfigurations.

This plan proposes the following transportation changes to address these issues without compromising the primary east-west regional role of the Main/Reid one-way pair:

- A two-way system on Main and Reid by modifying the streets to provide a counterflow movement.
  - The reconfigured Main Avenue would have two westbound lanes and one eastbound counterflow lane, along with a westbound bike lane and parallel parking on both sides. Eastbound counterflow traffic does not have access to the bridge.
  - The redesigned Reid Street would have two eastbound lanes with one westbound lane, with parallel parking on both sides. Eastbound bicycle traffic would be permitted on Reid, but directed to use the Grant Street bike lane.
  - The counterflow loop would continue on 3rd Street, with two northbound lanes to the bridge and one southbound lane; and on 6th Street, with two southbound lanes transitioning to eastbound Reid and one northbound lane.
  - The inner westbound lane on the bridge could have the option of proceeding straight ahead on Main Avenue as at present, or veering left to continue westbound on Reid Street in the counterflow lane. In this case, the eastbound Main Avenue lane would yield to local traffic coming off the bridge at a T intersection.
- Redesign of the Main and Fort Howard/6th intersection as a four-way signalized crossing. In addition to full traffic movements, this intersection concept includes:
  - A free right-turn bypass lane from eastbound Main to southbound 6th Street. This movement should be designed with the capacity to allow a free flow of eastbound traffic without being blocked by a queue of cars moving ahead on the eastbound local lane.
  - A southbound bicycle movement that continues across Main to a refuge in the right-turn bypass island, and continues across the free-flow lane with a marked crossing to an off-street bike track that merges into a lane.
- Modification of the 3rd and Reid intersection, including:
  - Two northbound to eastbound through lanes to the bridge.
  - Directing 3rd Street north of Grant into the campus circulation system, while providing emergency egress.
  - A southbound option on 3rd Street for eastbound Reid Street traffic.
  - Uninterrupted pedestrian connection from the campus to the south side of Reid Street.
  - A northbound bike lane from Grant Street to the bridge's bike lane.
  - Traffic signal removal at 3rd and Reid.



Map 4.10: Proposed Transportation Network



- Redesign of the 3rd and 4th Street intersection south of Lilac Lane (where 3rd and 4th Street split south of downtown) to make 4th Street the dominant traffic movement.
- New or improved pedestrian crossings, including:
  - The existing crossing at the west bridge approach, with median refuges that require pedestrians to cross only one lane at a time.
  - A midblock crossing of Main between 3rd and 4th Streets.
  - An offset and protected crossing across 3rd Street between Main and Reid, with a refuge median between opposing directional lanes.

Benefits of this revised network include:

- No interruption of existing regional traffic flow.
- Full two way access to all businesses along Main and Reid.
- Direct access to Main Avenue businesses for east-bound traffic and Reid Street businesses for west-bound traffic.
- Primary access from the south into the center of the West Bank business district.
- Improved pedestrian access and safety.
- Greater St. Norbert campus continuity across 3rd Street.
- Safer access on Fort Howard/6th Street at Main Avenue.

Urban design details of this network are discussed later in combination with specific development areas.



## MAIN/REID CORE

The core of the West Bank business district has experienced major redevelopment since 1990, and still presents good opportunities for new projects. The proposed transportation network changes along with other public and private actions can set the stage for new development. Components of this concept include:

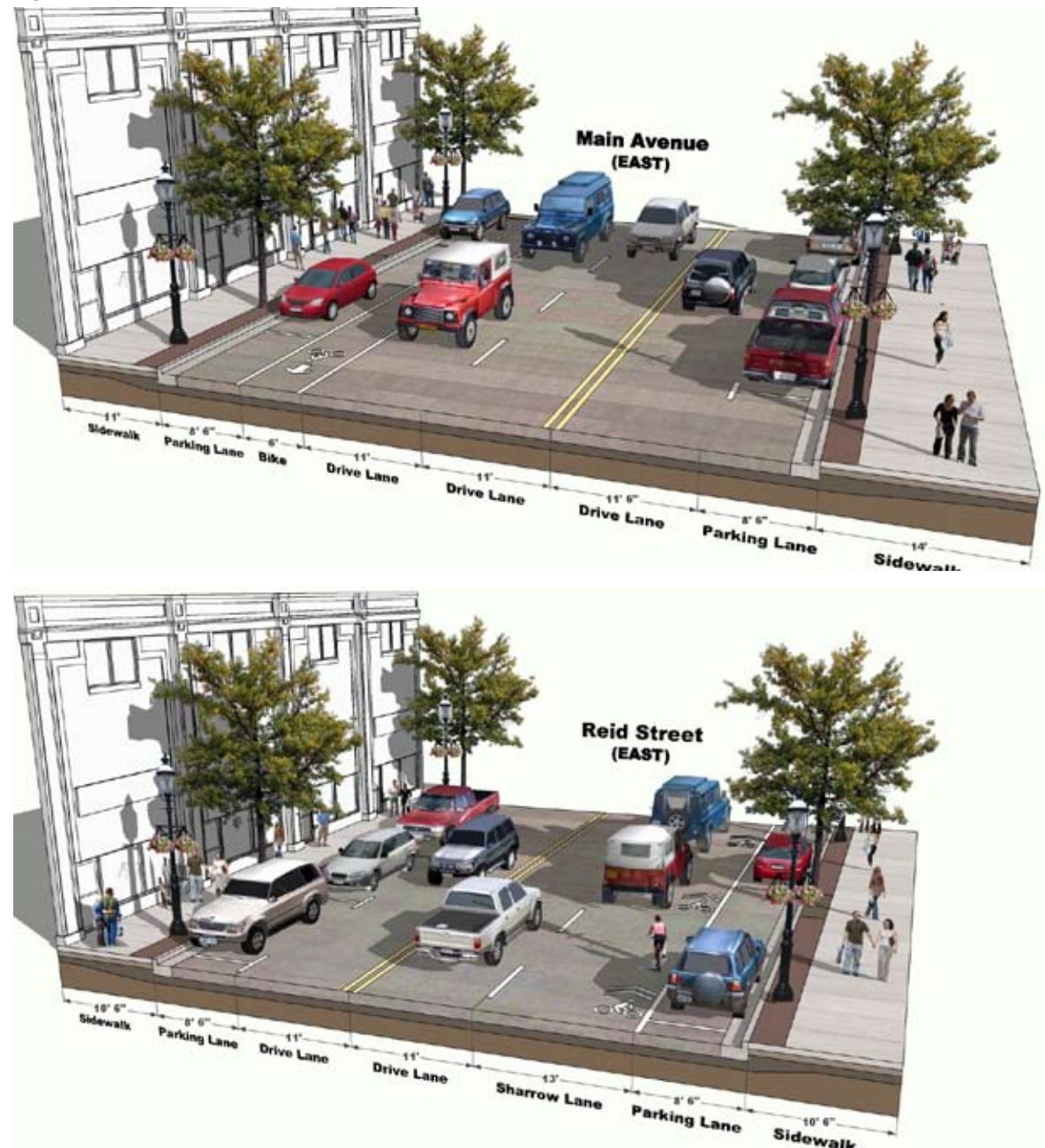
- THE STREET ENVIRONMENT
- THE ALLEY WITH PASSAGEWAYS
- MAJOR DEVELOPMENT SITES

### THE STREET ENVIRONMENT

The major change to the Main and Reid corridors anticipated by this plan involve conversion to two-way traffic flow as discussed earlier, and Figures 4.6 and 4.7 illustrate the proposed cross-sections of these two streets. However, the space between curb and building line is a strong contributor to the character of a downtown district. While the city has made significant investments in the sidewalk environment of Broadway on the East Bank and Reid on the West Bank, Main Avenue needs further attention. A basic Main Avenue streetscape project should include new curbs, sidewalks, and upgraded street lighting. Minor enhancements to the Main Avenue should include seasonal flower baskets, bicycle parking, permanent graphic panels, and new street furniture.

Reconstruction of Main Avenue sidewalks should also incorporate good stormwater management practices for functional, aesthetic, and educational purposes. For example, sidewalk width along Main permits the use of small bioretention basins (or rain gardens) to delay the flow of rainwater into storm sewers. Curb cuts channel runoff into planter beds that replace panels of concrete, allowing water to infiltrate and eventually be directed at lower volume into storm sewers. Pollutants leach into the retention areas and do not enter the storm sewer system.

Figures 4.6-4.7: Main and Reid Street Sections



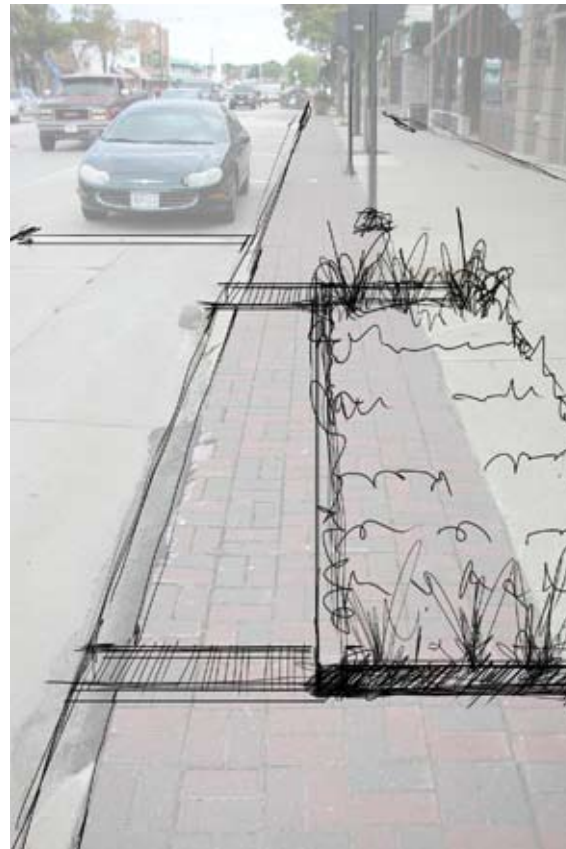
## THE ALLEY AND PASSAGEWAYS

The Main to Reid core blocks between 3rd and 5th includes interior parking and secondary rear storefront entrances, served by an east-west alley that has some of the characteristics of a local street. The mixed use Reid Street Crossing project was designed with rear parking and storefront entrances from both the street and the rear parking lot. In addition, the alley provides a counterflow route for the Main/Reid one-way pair, allowing customers to backtrack after passing their storefront destinations. The resulting mix of pedestrians, customers searching for parking, and motorists using the alley as a local street, compounded by dumpsters and service bays, creates both functional and safety problems. The alley, redesigned to be more like a street, could provide a pleasant and highly functional local accessway by:

- Defining a clear, continuous pedestrian path along the north side of the alley, serving rear entrances of Main Avenue storefronts.
- Providing a regular pattern of perpendicular or angled parking, either in a head-in or back-in configuration, along the north side of the alley. This adds parking and reinforces the street-like character of the alley.
- Enhancing the alley environment with features such as overhead lighting, landscaping, and street furnishings. As suggested for the Mission Square Alley on the East Bank, identify and market the alley as a special commercial environment in the business district.
- Redeveloping the alley to “green alley” standards, using techniques such as bioretention basins and permeable pavers in combination with subsurface drainage systems to reduce the rate and quantity of storm-water runoff. The “green alley” concept could be part of the identity of this area, acting as a demonstration of sustainability practice.



Wauwatosa, WI



Concordia, KS



Council Bluffs, IA

Top Left: **Wauwatosa, Wisconsin** shows where a building gap has been converted to a private gathering space connected to an adjacent business.

Top Right: **Concordia, Kansas** shows where a building gap converted to a passageway between the business district and available parking.

Bottom Right: **Council Bluffs, Iowa** shows a building gap converted to a small passageway.

Bottom Left:

Figure 4.8: Main Avenue storm water management





Figure 4.8: Passageway Proposed enhancement to passageways between buildings.





Figure 4.9: Alley, Alley improvements with defined parking, screened trash storage, lighting, and public art.

- Upgrading gaps between buildings on Main Avenue as permanent, landscaped, and lighted paths between buildings and rear-façade parking areas. These passageways may be adorned by features that represent community themes.
- Developing the north-south midblock alley on the 300 block of Main Avenue as a pedestrian axis between the north side of Main and the Humana block. This pedway would line up with midblock pedestrian crossings at Main and, ideally, at Reid, connecting public parking along the Thilmann alley north of Main with parking, a new Nicolet Square Development, an enhanced Humana site development, and St. Norbert College.

## MAJOR DEVELOPMENT SITES

Redevelopment projects have revitalized a West Bank district that still has abundant opportunities for new, market-driven growth. In addition to developing new commercial or residential space, new projects should fit their specific contexts and expand the West Bank parking supply. Specific projects include Nicolet Square, the Humana block, Marquette Centre II, Main Avenue North, Fort Howard and Main, Joliet Square, and, in the long-term, a transit-oriented development south of Grant Street.

102

### 1. Nicolet Square Redevelopment

This project would continue the successful design of Reid Street Crossing, developing two buildings lining Reid Street with retail or services at street level and one office or residential floor above. Similar to Reid Street Crossing, public surface parking would be provided at grade along the alley. The design also can provide employee or resident parking below the building, with controlled access from the surface lots. The buildings would be split at the midblock pedestrian axis, described above. The completed project provides 20-25,000 square feet of street level retail and service space, up to 20 upper level units, and up to 150 parking stalls (with parking under buildings).

Figure 4.10: Nicolet Square Redevelopment (looking northwest)



### 2. Humana Block

This project would increase utilization of the 300 block between Reid and Grant Streets, a major development block occupied by the Humana Dental building, Kress Inn, and The Abbey restaurant. Additional development on this site envisions:

- **A parking structure, oriented in a north-south direction between Reid and Grant.** The garage's rectangular footprint should be cut back at its southeast corner to preserve views from Kress Inn rooms, and the first level can be depressed below street level to reduce the height of the structure. It could also include a covered path to Humana and a bridge over Reid Street to

the upper level of the proposed Nicolet Square project. The garage provides 84 spaces per level, or about 330 spaces assuming four parking levels. It reduces demand on the existing surface parking across the street, eliminates the need for remote Humana parking, and should serve the needs of the adjacent Kress Inn (which now uses a college parking lot across Grant Street).

- **Two commercial buildings, one lining the edge of the garage and the other along 4th Street.** These buildings, along with a new green area and visitors' parking lot, would define a path from Reid Street to the Humana building entrance. Together, they yield a gross floor area (GFA) of about 10,000 square feet.



Map 4.11: Downtown Master Plan, Major Development Sites





### 3. Marquette Centre II

Marquette Centre was conceived as a two building development. A second building could be sited at the 5th and Reid intersection, along with continuing the east-west Main/Reid alley and pathway to 5th Street. As another option, it could be sited along Main Avenue. A three-story office building to complement the first Marquette Centre structure has a GFA of about 27,000 square feet, and a net leasable area of about 19,000 square feet.

### 4. Main Avenue North

Existing, low-intensity development on the north side of Main between 4th and the rail spur could be redeveloped with a new, four-building project composed of one- or two-story buildings. The concept illustrated includes buildings that define both corners and a street building line, with parking between them to provide front door access. Second levels could include residential use, taking advantage of river views. The three buildings together provide about 33,000 square feet on one level.

### 5. Fort Howard and Main

This site is currently occupied by commercial building with a walk-out lower level, now converted to church use. Redevelopment here could reinforce a major downtown entrance, complement a neighborhood-scaled commercial building across Fort Howard Avenue, and use an important site more effectively. This project envisions a three- to four-story building, with primary residential use with covered resident parking and a visitor lot at the lower level, accessed from Fort Howard. The project concept includes up to 30 units with a street level lobby and associated commercial space.

### 6. Joliet Square Expansion

Joliet Square, south of Grant between 4th and 5th, anticipates three high-density apartment buildings and two street-facing commercial buildings at full build-out. Two of the apartment buildings are complete, and this

plan envisions completion of the project. Depending on markets, the proposed commercial buildings may be replaced by residential or mixed-use structures.

### 7. Wisconsin International School

The Wisconsin International School, at 4th and Grant, is an important part of the downtown community and benefits from its location near St. Norbert College. While it may eventually outgrow its current home, downtown benefits from retaining the school. Problems with the current site include inadequate staff parking and drop-off areas, and a lack of adjacent play space, causing students to cross 4th Street to use Wilson Park. Solutions to these problems include:

- Redesign of the parking lot at 4th and College to expand parking and provide an improved drop-off area.
- Devoting a part of the parking lot south of College to green space and playground use. This lot now provides overflow Humana and St. Norbert parking, but is not fully used.

### 8. Transit-Oriented Development

New passenger rail service along the Fox River corridor between Milwaukee and Green Bay is likely to restore passenger service to the former Chicago and NorthWestern line along the western edge of Downtown. In this event, sites such as St. Norbert's College parking lot and sites along the west side of the tracks may become candidates for transit-oriented mixed use development.

### 9. St. Norbert College and Wilson Park Neighborhood

St. Norbert College is vital part of the De Pere community and a major downtown development partner. In 2003, the college completed a campus master plan that anticipates additional growth on the west side of 3rd Street and establishes a campus influence west to 4th Street. The college has started plan implementation by com-

pleting major buildings as the Miriam B. and James J. Mulva Library and Gries Hall. Campus improvement and downtown development are mutually reinforcing developments, and the plan should accommodate campus development needs to the greatest degree possible. In addition, the college community should view downtown as a logical source for goods and services, and campus planning should desirably invite public use of features such as the riverfront. Elements of cooperative campus/downtown planning include the following:

- **Traffic Redirection.** As discussed earlier, this plan recommends shifting traffic from 3rd to 4th Street by intersection redesign south of Lilac Lane. Third Street becomes a local street south of Grant, and part of the campus circulation system north of Grant. Traffic calming measures should be used along along 4th Street.
- **St. Norbert College Pedestrian Median.** The plan's traffic concept proposes a median on 3rd Street to separate opposing directions and prevent local counterflow on Main Avenue from accessing the Claude Allouez bridge. The median provides a pedestrian refuge and includes an innovative off-set mid-block for greater pedestrian safety. Figure 4.11 illustrates this concept.
- **Wilson Park Upgrades.** Wilson Park is a popular destination used by neighborhood residents and students at the Wisconsin International School. Cautionary signs should alert motorists to the presence of children in the area. Playground equipment should also be regularly inspected and upgraded.
- **Gateways.** College Avenue is a logical pedestrian gateway into campus, and may be developed as an east-west mall, enhanced by trees, paving, and wayfinders. The north-south pedestrian axis from Main Avenue may be a logical frontage for new campus development, including student housing or other facilities.
- **Riverfront Path.** A continuous path along the west bank of the riverfront, expanding an existing path and overlook, could become a major campus and community amenity.



Figure 4.11: St. Norbert College Pedestrian Median





Figure 4.12: Traffic redirection from 3rd Street to 4th Street



## WEST RIVERFRONT

The largely undeveloped riverfront between the Thilmany Nicolet Mill and US Paper Mills presents an unusual recreational and environmental opportunity. On a larger scale, the west riverfront also incorporates the city's ice rink and recreation center, Brown County Fairgrounds, public space adjacent to the De Pere wastewater treatment plant, and Ashwaubenon's Ashwaubomay Memorial River Park and Trail. The two cities, Brown County, and other agencies should cooperate to develop an integrated master plan to take full advantage of the riverfront's potential. Some initial possibilities for the future of this area follow.

- **Thilmany Nicolet Mill.** The Thilmany mill is a regional landmark that is expected to continue operations for the foreseeable future. However, should this situation change, historic parts of the plant are excellent candidates for adaptive reuse. Possibilities include housing, conference and meeting space, and offices. Should reuse prove unfeasible, the building's platform over the Fox could provide additional public waterfront access.
- **West Bank Trail.** A West Bank Trail could extend from the West Bank business core along the riverfront north of US Mills. The trail concept would follow Fort Howard Avenue around a residential neighborhood with private riverfront land, and return to the public riverfront at the De Pere boat launch. From here, the trail would continue along the Fairgrounds and De Pere wastewater treatment plant, continuing to Ashwaubomay Memorial River Park and River Trail. A network of nature trails could lead from the spine trail into the woods and return back to the spine route.
- **New Shoreline Park.** A new environmental park along the west bank could include educational programming and facilities and habitat stabilization and restoration. Trailheads could provide parking and gathering spaces for outdoor classes.

Map 4.12: West Riverfront



- **Riverfront Port.** The west shore could provide a new dock on the west side of De Pere. Public officials report that shoreline here is shallow because of debris and soil deposits, preventing a boat dock without significant dredging. Development of a true dock may also include a water taxi that operates along the Fox River or connects to Voyageur Park during special events. Dredging may be required if boat access is desired.
- **Brown County Fairgrounds.** A Fairgrounds Master Plan should be developed to create a strategic program for the site. This plan should include a careful study of necessary buildings and spaces to both serve the county fair and expand utilization of the site. A more efficient grouping of buildings could open valuable space for private development, which in turn could help capitalize fairgrounds and waterfront improvements.



Figure 4.13 **Proposed trail along the west bank on St. Norbert College.**



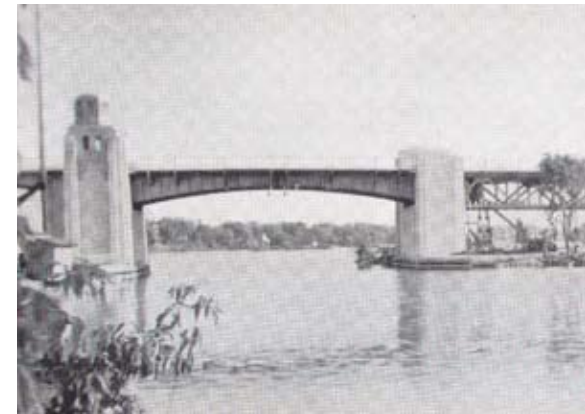
## CONNECTIONS

Much of the success of this downtown development program depends on the concept of one, united district with two riverbanks, encouraging freer interchange and community “ownership” of both sides of the river. This unity is symbolized by the sleek Claude Allouez Bridge, with its modern pylons and rusticated piers that suggest both a link with tradition and a strong orientation to the future. The bridge suggests a palette of design elements for a communitywide art program. Just as the bridge is the structural link between the riverbanks, art can express this sense of unification. An approach to developing art that unifies the East and West Banks includes:

- Identifying potential themes
- Identifying potential public art projects
- Downtown and Community Theming

De Pere has a rich and long history that provides important source material. The city’s current logo is a silhouette of the tower of the 1933 vintage Claude Allouez Bridge. While a recognizable form that can be used for capital projects, the design does not relate to contemporary De Pere. Other possible themes for a new community graphic program include:

- **Fox River and Rapids.** Early explorers to the area landed on the east shore of the Fox River and named the area – les Rapides des Peres, meaning “The Rapids of the Fathers”.
- **Bridges.** Bridges have spanned the Fox River at De Pere since 1839, and the 2006 bridge is the fifth to connect the two sides of the community.
- **Relics.** Jesuit missionary Father Claude Allouez established the St. Francis Xavier mission on the shores of the Fox River. A French explorer, Nicholas Perrot presented the mission with the silver ostensorium before the camp was decommissioned in 1687. This historic relic is now displayed at the Neville Public Museum in Green Bay. The design shows a sun emitting rays of sunlight. This symbol could become part of a unifying graphic and public art program.
- **Industry.** The power generated by the dams provided needed energy for sawmills, foundries, blacksmith shops, flour mills and granaries. The Nicolet Paper Mill began in 1891 on the west shore of De Pere and continues to operate as the Thilmany mill at its original location.
- **Railroad.** The advent of the railroad ignited development in communities along the rail lines. West De Pere was platted as a result of this expansion.
- **De Pere Green.** De Pere is becoming a premier community in the green movement for preserving the environment and proceeding with green, sustainable practices.



## Public Art Projects

Public art not only adds beauty and interest to the landscape, but also creates a sense of identity and place. Public art can interpret a community's unique history and heritage, be educational, interpretive, experimental, or even just fun and interactive. De Pere has several opportunities for major public art installations, including:

- **Piers.** The series of massive bridge piers that project above the road deck offers a perfect location for an art installation that bridges the divide between East and West De Pere. Possible concepts for this include:
  - **Operators Tower.** This concept recalls De Pere's heritage and connection to the Fox River, by recalling the operators Tower that once stood watch over the locks just to the North of the new bridge. At night these pieces would be up-lighted from the outside, with backlighting of glass panels representing the windows of the operator's house.
  - **Light Tubes.** Tubes of LED light, reflecting the bridge's contemporary design, would hug the bridge piers and extend out over the water and create a glow on the surface of the river.
  - **The Solé.** Recalling the heritage of De Pere as a mid-17th century missionary outpost, these installations would be cast of two pieces of steel and connected by glass enclosures that house LED lights. At night these glass enclosures would give off light, creating an aura surrounding the soles.

Figures 4.14-16: **Pier Functional Art**





Figure 4.17: Roundabout Monument



- **East Bank Roundabout.** Given the size of the roundabout, an art installation for this site should be monumental to be noticeable from a distance. This project could recall De Pere's industrial heritage. The form of the installation could be an unfurled paper scroll, or express the dynamic of hydropower used to provide energy for machinery.



- Streetscape Markers.** Markers on downtown streets could bring interpretive and historical art narratives into the public realm. These installations could interpret historical events with art panels that represent different stages in De Pere's story. Alternatively, they could express aspects of historic structures within the community, such as the operator's house of the old bridge, and the brick work of historic façades.



Above: Streetscape markers in Urbandale, Iowa that interpret the historical events and community values.

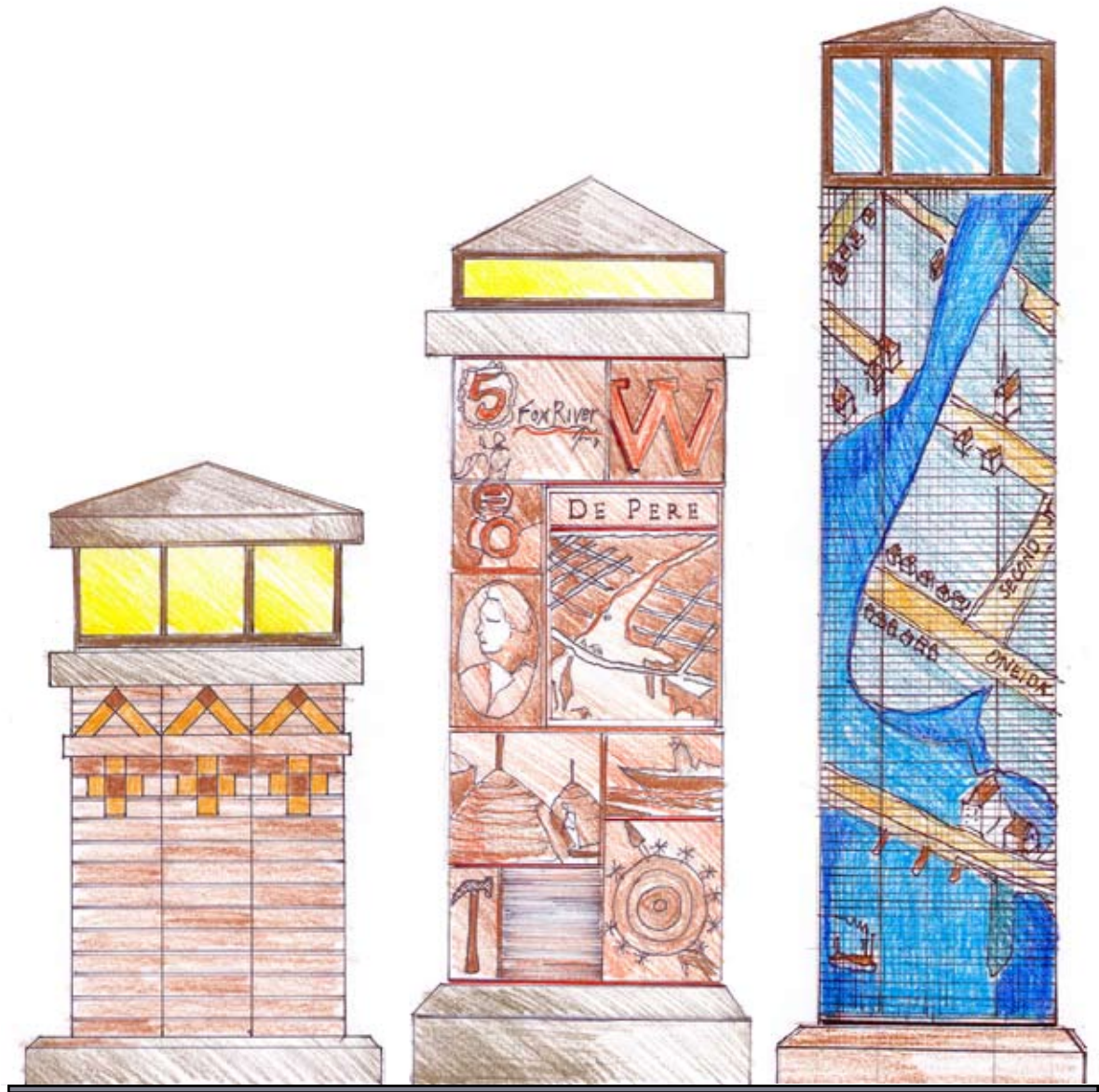


Figure 4.18: Streetscape Markers



### Calming Traffic

Traffic on the bridge has a tendency to operate at higher than posted speeds. The roundabout at the east end of the bridge slows traffic, but the Main Avenue chicane at the west approach is less effective. Radar signs that notify drivers of their actual speed are often very useful in calming traffic, and could be creatively incorporated into the public art program and bridge design.

### Non-Automotive Connections

The act of free physical movement across the bridge can contribute to the unification of the two banks of Downtown De Pere. The bridge provides a very pleasant walking experience and a reasonably good bicycling environment, and recommendations presented in this plan are designed to improve access at each end for these users. However, most people continue to use automobiles to move across the river, and autos are inherently isolating and individual, discouraging the experience of the entire district that unfolds for people outside of cars.

Alternative transportation techniques can encourage a greater visitor engagement with the district as a unity. Concepts to consider that supplement existing pedestrian and bicycle pathways include:

- **Transit.** While Green Bay Metro's Route 17 crosses the bridge, its route is too indirect and headways too infrequent to serve as a reliable connector between the districts. A good connecting service has the simplicity and frequency of a shuttle, and should use a special, small vehicle with a distinctive appearance and large windows. To be effective and economical, such a service should include a predictable route that serves several important destinations, and should operate at times when it will actually be used.
- **Bike Sharing.** Several communities (such as Louisville and Montreal) are implementing district-wide public bike sharing programs. Users capable of cycling a short distance could secure a public bicycle at a station on one side of the river, and leave it at a station on the opposite bank or other served destination. Green Bay and Madison have attempted these programs in the past, but experienced a high level of theft. Contemporary bike sharing programs require users to swipe a credit card or provide other security before the bike will release.
- **Segway Rental.** The Segway vehicle is another option with a speed and range well suited to the bridge crossing. This could provide an attractive tourist novelty feature as well. However, Segways are specifically prohibited on the Fox River Trail.
- **Water Taxi.** A regional water taxi system or ferry could provide a popular way to move along the Fox River, and could supplement the event service offered in the area by the Foxy Lady.



## POLICIES

The previous elements of this vision plan presented the physical concepts of the Development Plan. The principles discussed here allude to many of these concepts, but are emphasized here as a framework for policy considerations. These continuing policies include:

- RETAIL AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT
- HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION
- GATEWAYS, GRAPHICS AND WAYFINDING
- DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT
- BUILDING REHABILITATION AND ADAPTIVE REUSE
- HOUSING DEVELOPMENT
- PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

## RETAIL AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

### *Overall Policy:*

- Consolidate and strengthen the existing retail and service environment, stabilizing existing retailers, expanding the number of people who come Downtown for activities, filling available space, and expanding the supply of space.
- Concentrate new businesses in areas of demonstrated potential strength for the downtown: specialty retail, furniture home furnishings (specialty or general), pharmacy or drug store, clothing stores (women's clothing), jewelry, food service and drinking establishments, and office support retail and services.
- Increase the demand for retail space in the market by increasing the number of people who use Downtown as a destination, and connecting Downtown to other community attractions, including Voyageur Park, the Fox River Trail, and St. Norbert College.

### *Actions and Program Directions:*

- Encourage retail, restaurant, and personal services in downtown storefronts with street exposure.
- Consider recommendations for the Main Street Program that are identified in Chapter 5, Implementation, of this plan. This program could become a stronger tool for improving De Pere's downtown.
- Engage De Pere's proven and innovative retailers, such as Seroogy's, as mentors for potential new retail and service entrepreneurs.
- Aggressively market and recruit retailers in the Downtown area, matching needs with available space. Focus on areas of demonstrated potential for Downtown and in-town retailing, including submarkets where local retail spending exceeds the locally-based sales.
- Reinforce the City's program of events with other special themes and promotions. Provide high quality ongoing events that complement traditional celebra-



tions, and extend fun and festivity throughout the year. Target events to both families and young people, including college students.

- Promote high standards of customer service to strengthen the district's identification with local consumers. Publicize these standards through a Customer Commitment Contract, prominently posted in all retail and consumer service businesses. Assure that the most convenient parking in the area is reserved for customers.
- Take extra steps to put fun and festivity into the Downtown shopping experience. New amenities, including public art, should enrich the experience of living and working in the District.
- Identify special niches and help put projects together that responds to these concepts. Projects may group a number of related, small retailers, artisan, or service providers in a single large space.
- Encourage recreation and water-oriented retail near the Fox River, possibly in the proposed retail space along Front Street.



## HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION POLICY

Historic preservation and adaptive reuse are important to downtown. This plan recommends a building development policy that encourages preservation and adaptive reuse.

*Components of this policy include:*

- **Adopting flexible building codes that encourage upper level residential adaptive reuse.** Housing development is a foundation of successful downtown revitalization around the country and has also been important to De Pere. Federal tax incentives, construction costs, the nature and preferences of residents in urban districts, and knowledge of successes in other Wisconsin cities and historic districts can encourage residential use of upper levels. De Pere should review building codes to ensure that they encourage adaptive reuse without compromising health, safety and welfare. In addition, the City should provide technical assistance to help downtown property owners to rehabilitate downtown structures. The city should also consider reasonable design standards to guide reuse and rehabilitation projects.
- **Providing gap financing for major rehabilitation projects.** Appropriate historic rehabilitation may not be economically feasible without financing assistance. Elements of a potential financing program are discussed in detail in Chapter 5, Implementation and are identified below:
  - Historic tax credits. The historic tax credit provides a 20% investment tax credit against passive income for certified rehabilitation projects. Eligible blocks include the 100 S. Broadway and 200-400 Main Avenue.
  - Tax Increment Financing. The city should consider TIF to leverage substantial rehabilitation efforts. Alternatively, a portion of other, energy-related revenue sources may be used to assist with financing of downtown projects.
  - Community Development Block Grants. CDBG funds can be used to provide gap financing for projects that meet statutory requirements for the program.
  - HOME Housing Investment Partnership funds may also be used for projects, including new construction ownership developments that are targeted toward low and moderate income households.
  - Preservation Easements. Donation of façade easements can provide meaningful tax advantages to building owners and can open some avenues of public financing for façade restoration.
  - Other local public and private resources. The public and private sectors could collaborate to offer financing that provides a real incentive to participants. The result could have major benefits to both property owners and the community's business community.



- **Infill development along Main Avenue and Broadway should respect the existing character of the district.** Sometimes, rehabilitation is not feasible because of structural deterioration or economic issues. Downtown growth is a process, and natural growth includes change as well as preservation. However, new downtown construction should retain a strong street orientation and preserve the fabric and patterns of traditional Downtown buildings.
- **Using design guidelines.** De Pere is preparing design guidelines through Main Street Organization volunteers. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards provide an excellent starting point for evaluating downtown rehabilitation projects. Particularly important is restoration of buildings that have been "modernized" or severely modified with unsympathetic facades. New development in the downtown core should preserve the scale, materials, and character of traditional architecture in the District. The illustration at right shows potential retrofits for a building facade, as an example. Priority elements include display windows, upper-story window installations, restoration of façade materials, and awnings. This is discussed in greater detail in the next section.

## GATEWAYS, GRAPHICS AND WAYFINDING PROGRAM

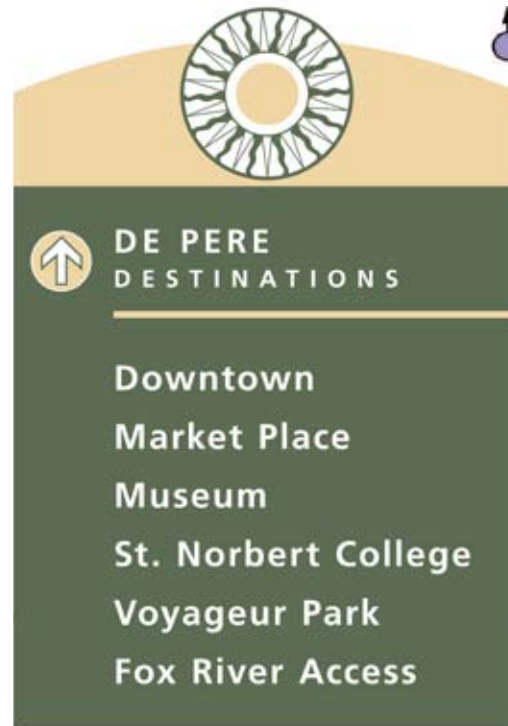
Gateway features at key community entrances welcome the traveler to the city. All gateway features into De Pere should have a consistent theme that strengthens the city's overall identity. Elements of the design should consider construction materials, fonts, color, and graphics. The use of brick is prevalent throughout Main Avenue, Broadway and St. Norbert College. The pediments (semi-circular and triangular) are also forms that could be adopted in the gateway. These design details should be carried throughout the community, including banners, flags, street signs and wayfinding.

Wayfinding signage directs people to destinations throughout the downtown districts. An example of a wayfinding program is in downtown Des Moines, Iowa, with both auto- and pedestrian-oriented directional signage. Figure 4.19 is an example of how this program may be adapted to De Pere.

116

- Directional signs at key decision points.
- Destination arrival signs.
- Pedestrian-scaled signs, such as blade signs that indicate the number of blocks to a destination.

Continuous guidance to destinations, including St. Norbert College, City Center Campus, Fox River Trail, White Pillar Museum and Voyageur Park.



Above: **Figure 4.19: Wayfinding Sign** shows an example for directional information for the City of De Pere.



Above: **Des Moines, Iowa** Wayfinding program prepared by RDG. This program includes a mix of auto-oriented and pedestrian-scaled signs.



Map 4.13: Wayfinding



## DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

De Pere's Main Street organization is developing a set of detailed design guidelines to direct the appearance and character of new development and significant rehabilitation in Downtown. Revitalizing Downtown will include rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of traditional buildings. In De Pere and other cities, remodeling and alterations have often compromised the quality of buildings downtown. Newer development projects on De Pere's west side attempt to remain true to the historic character of downtown. Reid Street Crossing and Marquette Centre have building details that imitate commercial vernacular from the early twentieth century.

This policy section does not establish detailed or rigid standards but suggests possibilities, creating a framework for design guidelines for new construction and rehabilitation. Guidelines should not attempt to dictate design or inhibit flexibility. Rather, the consistent patterns that have emerged in the city over 150 years of building should be considered in order to ensure that new investments reinforce these patterns. The following discussion considers patterns in the District's built environment and suggests guidelines based on those patterns.

### Materials

- Most of Downtown's "Main Street" commercial buildings are brick.
- Many of the facades in West De Pere have ornamental details, including cornices, pediments (semi-circular and triangular).
- More contemporary office and financial materials are dominated by materials like concrete and glass.

### Design Guidelines

- The dominant façade material for commercial buildings in high exposure settings (Main Avenue) should



generally be masonry, including brick, stone, cast stone, and designed concrete. Concrete masonry, vinyl siding and EFIS are usually inappropriate in these settings. Major modern buildings may use appropriate high quality materials.

- Pre-engineered metal buildings, even with façade treatments, should not be used in high exposure settings.
- Ornamental details should be carried throughout, but should not dominate the design.

### Composition

- Traditional multi-story buildings include three distinct façade "zones" – a base, body, and terminus, such as a cornice.
- Typically, the street level or base is defined by such elements as a storefront with windows, changes in materials, or a clear horizontal element.
- Building elements display a degree of order and symmetry, often but not always around an entrance or the centerline of the façade.

### Design Guidelines

- Major facades should typically include a base, body, and a terminating element such as a cornice or other



articulation at the roofline. The base should relate to the street and could be a storefront or base courses of a contrasting masonry material. Even single-story buildings should incorporate a base feature.

- Façade composition should incorporate symmetry or a discernable order around an entrance or another central element.
- As with all design "rules," no guideline on façade composition should be inflexible. Quality design is paramount, and innovative design should never be excluded.

### Scale

- Many of De Pere's Main Street buildings include details or small-scale elements at the human level.
- These details or elements may be quite small, such as brick details, ornaments, columns, or other features. All are related to the scale of a person.
- Structures setback from Reid Street exhibit details that are sometimes more oriented to motorists than pedestrians.

### Design Guidelines

- Buildings should incorporate small-scale details at human scale, generally below eight feet in height. These



details should be incorporated into the overall composition of the building.

- Public entrances should be clearly articulated and defined. Methods of doing this can include arches, awnings or canopies, defined frames, recesses, and extensions in front of the building line.

### ***Rhythm***

- Building elements such as windows, columns, solids, and ornaments, typically display a repetitive rhythm, rather than being randomly placed.
- The proportion of solids to voids appears appropriate to the eye. When the ratio of the width of solids to voids (exceeds about 1 to 1), the façade loses its continuity and openings appear to be punched out.

### ***Design Guidelines***

- Buildings should include repetitive elements that are appropriately spaced across the façade. Repetitive elements may include windows, contrasting materials, ornaments, columns, pilasters, or compositions of solids and voids.
- Building elements should not be randomly placed or appear to be punched out of the elevation. The 1.5:2 solid to void ratio may serve as a general guide to evaluate façade rhythm.

### ***Transparency***

- Downtown buildings typically have a high degree of transparency – providing people with the opportunity to see the activity taking place within.
- Transparency is usually greater at street level than upper levels.

### ***Design Guidelines***

- Buildings should display a reasonable degree of transparency, provided by windows and doors.



- Possible guidelines to evaluate transparency are 50% of the street level façade area for retail buildings, restaurants, and similar establishments; 30% of the street level façade area for offices and other commercial uses; and 20% of the façade area for upper levels.

### ***Street Definition***

- On Downtown's major commercial streets, buildings strongly define the street edge and are usually built to the property line.
- Voids in the building line, such as parking lots adjacent to the property line, weaken the street edge and create gaps in the district's fabric.

### ***Design Guidelines***

- New buildings in high exposure settings should strongly define the street property line.
- Off-street parking should not be located in front of buildings along streets in the District. Where parking is located along a street property line, a structural or landscape feature should be used to define the property line.



- In some cases, a building line may be appropriately set back from the property line. The setback should not be so large that the building loses direct contact with the street, and generally should not exceed 10 to 15 feet. This area should be used for purposes that extend the public realm, such as a garden or outdoor dining area.

### ***Building Height and Scale along the Street***

- Most of Downtown's buildings display a flat roofline, or hide the roof form from the primary street exposure with a parapet, typically semi-circular or triangular.
- Many of the District's buildings present two or three levels to their primary street exposure.

### ***Design Guidelines***

- New buildings should present a flat roof line to their primary street behind a parapet or be hidden behind the façade design.
- Pitched or gabled roofs are appropriate for residential buildings, but should be used very carefully in commercial structures. Shallow pitched roofs, mansards, or false roofs that are part of the façade are not appropriate and should be avoided in the downtown setting.

## BUILDING REHABILITATION AND ADAPTIVE REUSE

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation remains one of the best single sources of standards and criteria to guide appropriate investment in traditional buildings. In addition, it is the standard used by the State Historic Preservation Office to evaluate projects utilizing tax credits for financing. Other excellent publications provide detailed guidance for historic rehabilitation. The following presents general guidelines that should guide property owners and developers, and should assist in evaluating projects for inclusion in its financing programs.

### Architectural Features

- Preserve or repair architectural details and stylistic elements that are in good condition or can be repaired in place. When details have been covered but remain relatively intact, the coverings or additions should be removed and the detail repaired.
- Avoid installing elements that are out of context or scale with the façade of the original building. New rehabilitation projects should remove these elements unless they have become so identified with the building that they have, in fact, become part of its history.
- Limit repair or replacement only to those elements that are deteriorated or need replacement. Replace missing or deteriorated elements with the same material, if possible. If substitute materials are used, they should be indistinguishable from the original to the viewer. Have the least possible construction impact possible on historic façades.

### Materials

- Preserve original building materials to the greatest degree possible. Minimize replacement of damaged or deteriorated materials, and put an emphasis on repair. When materials must be replaced, replace them with the same material.

Figure 4.20: Possible Facade Rehabilitation



- Avoid covering original building materials. Rehabilitation projects should place a priority on removing inappropriate covering or siding of the original façade.
- Use the gentlest and least invasive method to clean masonry façades. Repoint mortar joints according to National Park Service practices.
- Maintain historic signs on both the exterior and interior of buildings when possible.







### Building Elements

- Maintain or restore key façade features, including windows, doors and transoms, recessed entries, and cornices. Restore upper story windows to their full size, and remove panels that have reduced the glass area. Replace bricked or boarded-up window openings with appropriate glazing and window coverings, even when an upper level remains unoccupied.
- Restore storefronts to the original design, or a reasonable interpretation of the original design, unless a later alteration is of such significance that it in itself is important to the history of the building.
- Contemporary but sympathetic alterations or façade designs that still display the basic patterns of the district are often appropriate. Simplified interpretations of features such as cornices, when literal replacement is impossible or unfeasible, are also appropriate.
- Parapets should be rebuilt or repaired rather than removed. Parapet walls hide the roofline from the street façade and are part of the waterproofing system.
- The position, size, and number of windows and doors in a significant façade should be maintained or restored. Glass in doors should be retained or reinstalled. The traditional rhythm of voids to solids should be maintained in rehabilitation, as well as in new facades.



### HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

The downtown development program should place a high priority on new housing development and adaptive reuse of upper levels for residential development. As discussed earlier, housing is a key element of most downtown revitalization programs and is important to this plan's vision of the future of business district as a lively mixed-use neighborhood. Residential development makes downtown a living, 24-hour neighborhood.

Housing development policy in and near the downtown core includes both upper level adaptive reuse and new construction where opportunities present themselves. Many upper-level units will initially be rental, although some may provide owner-occupied apartments for people who live over their businesses or otherwise seek equity settings. Existing tax-driven incentives such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and Historic Tax Credits are oriented to rental housing.

Public actions and policies necessary to encourage delivery of downtown housing include preservation codes and building permit policies that encourage upper level reuse, production financing programs including the use of available federal tax credits, and shared use policies for residential use of commercial off-street parking lots. In

some cases, shared vertical circulation and cooperative development of several adjacent buildings can improve project feasibility.

The waterfront is likely to generate higher market values than the downtown core. Higher-density housing here uses the valuable resource of the urban waterfront exposure more efficiently than lower density townhouse projects. Mixed use development, with commercial development at street level, accommodates both the retail and residential markets and, ultimately, produces a more active waterfront.

### PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

The creation of a public art master plan can help to guide the location and nature of the public art that a community chooses to incorporate into the street environment and public spaces of the community. At the same time a public art committee should be formed to oversee the community's public art program and decide project priorities.. Map 4.14, Public Art Master Plan shows the beginnings of a Public Arts Master Plan for Downtown De Pere. The graphic identifies specific installation sites.

Map 4.14: Downtown Arts Program

