

DE PERE

Downtown Master Plan





Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1

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Market Analysis



Successful City Planning:
Public action that generates
a desirable, widespread and
sustained private market
reaction.

-Alexander Garvin

MARKET ANALYSIS SUMMARY

AECOM was engaged by RDG Planning and Design through their contract with the City of De Pere, Wisconsin to evaluate economic conditions and market trends in support of a broader master planning effort for downtown De Pere. AECOM's research effort focused on the following tasks:

- Examination of market demographics and associated trends;
- A lifestyle segmentation analysis highlighting households with a propensity for urban living;
- As assessment of characteristics of De Pere's present urban housing stock and an overview of related residential trends including permits, home sales, and pricing;
- An evaluation of office market indicators, highlighting trends in office-using employment sectors;
- An analysis of downtown retail occupancy, and broader market retail trends, highlighting regional and sector specific pull factors and associated trends in the local retail environment;
- Overview of other Midwestern downtown markets that have added urban housing in recent years

The analysis highlighted a series of core recommendations, which have been broken down into separate market and strategic elements, as follows:

CONSIDERATIONS

The master planning effort for downtown De Pere is happening at a significant moment in time, partially because of the current economic recession, which continues to impact the nation, state, and local economy. One specific consequence of the recession is that expectations for the Baby Boom generation to begin to enter retirement and downsize have been dampened, with many boomers finding their retirement plans impacted by the

recession. Although their impact remains muted for the moment, expectations remain clear that this generation will regain its historic influence. On a broader level, other factors are equally relevant:

- Ongoing changes in household structure, some related to Boomer retirement, are also gradually influencing the housing market, with greater emphasis on smaller households with fewer children.
- While gasoline prices remain below historic highs, the probability of higher gasoline prices in the near to mid-term is likely. As such, interest in walkability and urban living will gradually increase.

DEMOGRAPHIC IMPLICATIONS

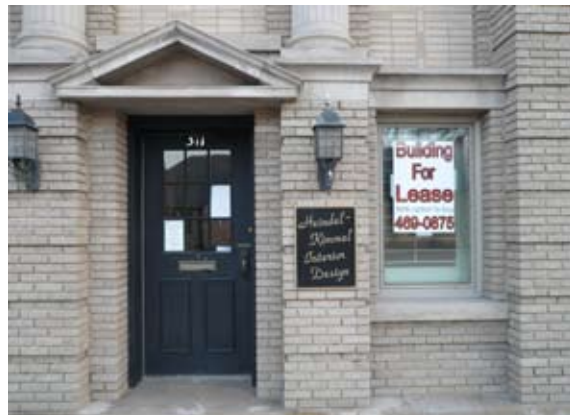
De Pere offers higher household incomes and educational attainment compared to Brown County, Green Bay, and the country. Key market implications are noted below:

- The State of Wisconsin forecasts that Brown County will continue to be one of the fastest growing counties in the state through 2025, with the potential to add about 32,800 residents. Over the same period, De Pere is expected to add about 4,500 residents; only Bellevue and Howard are projected to grow at faster rates.
- While the notion of growth is difficult to accept in the current economic climate, the economy will recover, albeit at a slower pace compared to past recessions. At the same time, there are underlying trends that remain in place, which will influence market opportunities. Key factors include decisions made by Baby Boom generation residents to retire or remain in the workforce, and potentially downsize their housing requirements.
- While the household structure of De Pere is evolving in a fashion similar to the US, with greater emphasis on households without children, the rate of change for De Pere is more than twice the national level, again



reinforcing the need for a housing stock with greater diversity, particularly for residents who wish to age in place within the community.

- Income levels are higher than adjacent jurisdictions and national averages. Consistent with higher incomes, educational attainment is also above average, supported to a certain extent by the presence of St. Norbert College as well.
- Analysis of immigration data for Brown County indicated that, of the top 20 counties for in-migration



to Brown County, 17 are Wisconsin counties. As well, overall migration trends for the past several years have been modestly negative; this information would suggest that Brown County is a more insulated market within the State of Wisconsin.

- Metro area GDP growth between 2000 and 2006 was positive for the Green Bay area, with overall economic growth at an annualized rate of 3.6%, similar to levels in Appleton, slightly below rates for Milwaukee, and well below Madison (growth of 5.7% annually).

RESIDENTIAL MARKET CONSIDERATIONS

The residential analysis suggests the following:

- Although the “walkable core” within a ½ mile distance of downtown De Pere supports significant housing, (over 1,200 units), the share of more contemporary rental and owner occupied housing is smaller (about 400 units), and concentrated within ¼ of a mile of downtown. This factor is generally consistent with other Midwestern cities.
- Of all households in De Pere, an estimated 24% of households prefer multifamily (urban) types of housing, some in addition to single family homes. These figures do not convey the number of potential buyers, but reflect on the share of households that, if moving within the area, could consider an urban product in a downtown setting, such as Downtown De Pere.

Future market opportunities for urban housing need to be consistent with broader trends for how De Pere is expected grow in the near and mid term.

Current forecasts for the community point to a return to historic housing growth rates, i.e. below recent trends, offset by the likelihood of further decreases in the average housing size. Using State forecasts as a baseline, De Pere is positioned to add about 4,700 residents by 2025, which could break down to demand for about 2,300 new housing units over the same period. If the core (1/4 mile) downtown just maintains its current “fair share” of potential new inventory over the forecast period (4%), that would point to an overly conservative urban housing construction factor of 100 more urban units through 2025. Given the acceleration in changes in the structure of households (fewer families with kids), as well as the practical reality of delayed Baby Boom generation downsizing, we expect that overall demand for urban housing will increase above this threshold, with a target for 250 to 450 units in the downtown core by 2025. In practical terms, the ability of the market to deliver on these estimates would be influenced by the following:

- The limited number of sites in the downtown core that are realistically developable at current market prices, along with the impact of unique site features (brown-fields, etc.), and related factors which impact construction costs, and corresponding unit prices.
- City policy regarding the encouragement of urban housing in addition to, or as opposed to suburban housing, covering entitlements, zoning, and related planning factors.
- City investments to improve connections between downtown and the Fox River, and the extent to which available building sites are positioned to benefit from this public investment.
- The assumption that St. Norbert continues to require the majority of its students to remain in on campus housing.

RETAIL MARKET IMPLICATIONS

Downtown De Pere supports a total inventory of about 773,000 sq. ft. of leasable space, which is currently being occupied by an array of retail, service, office, government, and institutional tenants. Within this total inventory level, downtown retail trends include the following:

- Across Brown County since 1982 there has been an average of about 100,000 sq. ft. of new retail space delivered annually. In 2005, approximately 400,000 sq. ft. was delivered, making this year the peak year since 1982. This significant increment of space will take several years for the local economy to work through, dampening rent growth and reducing demand for new space.
- Downtown street level vacancies are below regional levels. In downtown west of the river, 9.7% of street level space is vacant; east of the river only 6.1% of space is vacant. The overall downtown vacancy rate is estimated at 7.4%. Countywide retail vacancy is now over 10%.

- Based on survey information, it would appear that downtown rents are in alignment with store sales. Moving forward, efforts to grow sales for downtown merchants will be a key focus of strategic recommendations, as growth in rents will support reinvestment in downtown. Quoted rents appear to fall in the \$8 to \$12 per sq. ft. range.
- There is approximately 142,000 sq. ft. of space in retail use on the west side of the Fox River and approximately 253,000 sq. ft. on the east side of the Fox River. While the overall inventory amount is regionally significant, it is divided by the Fox River, which raises core planning questions for how the two halves of downtown can be better connected.
- On both sides of the river, Restaurants and Bars constitute the largest cluster of space, covering about 130,000 sq. ft. Restaurant clusters are effective traffic generators for emerging or revitalization retail / restaurant districts. People, generally, will travel farther and into new areas for restaurant options as opposed to retail products.
- Aside from restaurants, hotels, office, and residential, other typical downtown retail store clusters remain under developed. Segments such as jewelry, shoes, and books would benefit from further growth, particularly on the East side of downtown De Pere.
- Ashwaubenon is the primary regional retail hub, where the majority of national chain stores have located. While it is unlikely that many of these stores would consider a second store in De Pere, it is likely that individual stores will consider moving into a downtown environment. For example, chains such as Ann Taylor and Talbots have moved into similar downtown markets. The arrival of these stores tends to generate the interest in other chains to consider a downtown location.

Quantifying market opportunities for downtown De Pere for the next several years is complicated by several factors. In the short-term, there are a very small number of national retailers who are in expansion mode, driven by opportunities to lease lower cost space in attractive market locations. In principal, these opportunities are tending to focus in several areas:

- Value oriented apparel: TJ Max, Dollar Tree, Staples, and Goodwill Industries. Stores in this class are less likely to consider a downtown location.
- Non-traditional stores: health clubs & family fun centers. Stores in this category would be appropriate for downtown.
- Smaller grocery stores: Trader Joes & Aldi. Stores in this segment could be located in a downtown, but site / parking factors are critical.

As well, while financial markets have begun to stabilize, a significant amount of distressed commercial real estate is about to enter the market, which will limit near-term opportunities to build new space. Perhaps more importantly, bank lending requirements have come back to earth, with logical emphasis on tenant quality dictating lending terms. In this context, the premium rents that would be required to support construction of new space will be difficult to support in the short-term.

Although the overall market across Brown County is likely oversupplied with retail space at present, the existing inventory of downtown space in De Pere is well positioned to move out of the recession in reasonable shape, with vacancy levels that are well below regional trends

In the context of average downtown store sizes smaller than 5,000 sq. ft. and rents in the \$8 to \$12 range, existing space in downtown De Pere will be well positioned as an affordable option in the regional market. Importantly, opportunities to rent existing space will be driven initially by strategic decisions made by the City of De Pere and the Chamber regarding the future structure and funding support for the Main Street Program. Recommendations in this area follow below.

OFFICE MARKET IMPLICATIONS

The market analysis suggests the following regarding downtown De Pere:

- De Pere supports an estimated 935,000 sq. ft. of office space, of which an estimated 213,000 sq. ft. is in downtown. The inventory analysis found that downtown office space is roughly divided between office tenants in existing store fronts, and space in recently built office buildings, two of which have relevant vacancy issues (18% estimated).
- In the context of available vacant space, additional office development in downtown De Pere through 2010 is not likely. However, beyond 2010, modest opportunities could emerge, tied to the economics of specific sites. Opportunities will relate to:
 - The provision of new space which offers green/sustainable elements not currently available in the market.
 - City policy decisions regarding the provision of structured parking as an incentive to encourage further development.
- In general, office space is a desired supporting use for downtowns, helping to drive lunch and dinner business.

I. TRADE AREA DEMOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE

The following section summarizes demographic and economic trends for De Pere, which also influences demand for retail, office, and residential uses and broader opportunities for downtown revitalization. AECOM has examined trends at the city level, benchmarking against the city of Green Bay, Brown County, and the state of Wisconsin. Key bullet points are noted, with detailed tables that follow. AECOM notes that the Green Bay Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes the same geography at Brown County; therefore including both would be repetitive.

Regarding population, De Pere's population grew between 1990 and 2008 at an annualized rate of 1.7%, which is higher than growth rates for Green Bay, Brown County, and Wisconsin. Population forecasts developed by ESRI suggest that De Pere will continue to grow, but at a slower rate of 1.3%.

Overall, forecasts indicate that De Pere and Brown County will grow at a faster rate than Green Bay and Wisconsin as a whole. For comparative purposes, the city's 2009 comprehensive plan update forecasts a slightly higher immediate growth rate of 2%, resulting in an estimated 24,279 residents by 2010. As a third perspective, State of Wisconsin forecasts for De Pere also point to a lower annual growth rate over the near term, closer to 1.3%.

Other noted demographic factors include:

- De Pere accounts for 9% of Brown County's population; Green Bay accounts for 42%.
- Household size has decreased since 1990 from 2.64 to 2.38. This indicates a likely trend of fewer households with children.
- The US Census reported that between 1990 and 2000, the percentage of non-family households in De Pere grew by 2% (more than in Brown County and Green Bay) and the percent of family households decreased by 1%. While generally consistent with national trends, the rate of change for De Pere is faster. Area income translates to expanded resident buying power for retail as well as housing. The following trends are noted:
 - Average, median, and per capita household incomes in De Pere are higher than those in Green Bay, Brown County, Wisconsin, and the country. Brown County household incomes are most closely aligned with De Pere, but Brown County's per capita and average household income is 11% lower than De Pere's.
- De Pere households with an income between \$50,000 and \$74,999 and between \$75,000 and \$99,999 represent the two largest income cohorts each containing 22% of total households. Over half of De Pere's households (64%) earn over \$50,000. The US median household income is \$54,749. A key difference between De Pere, Brown County, Green Bay, and Wisconsin is De Pere's larger percentage of households in high-income cohorts than other geographies. Likewise, Brown County, Green Bay, and Wisconsin all have higher percentages of low-income cohorts, specifically those making less than \$35,000.
- In De Pere, with the exception of one, all income brackets above \$50,000 are forecast to increase in their per-



Table 1.1: Population Trends for De Pere and Market Geographies, 1990-2013

Geography	1990	2000	2008	Estimated 2013	CAGR 1990-2008	CAGR 2008-2013	Avg Annual Increase
De Pere	16,682	20,286	22,645	24,152	1.7%	1.3%	325
Green Bay	96,948	103,641	103,950	107,767	0.4%	0.7%	470
Brown County	196,313	226,658	245,168	260,575	1.2%	1.2%	2,794
Wisconsin	4,895,542	5,363,715	5,675,156	5,896,771	0.8%	0.8%	43,532

Source: US Census; ESRI Business Analyst; Wisconsin Department of Administration; ERA | AECOM, 2009

Table 1.2: Share of Regional Population

Geography	Share of County	Share of State	Share of County	Share of State
De Pere	9.2%	0.4%	9.3%	0.4%
Green Bay	42.4%	1.8%	41.4%	1.8%
Brown County	n/a	4.3%		4.4%

Source: US Census; ESRI Business Analyst; Wisconsin Department of Administration; ERA | AECOM, 2009

Table 1.3: Household Population and Trends for De Pere, 1990-2013

Geography	1990	2000	2008	Estimated 2013	CAGR 1990-2008	CAGR 2008-2013	Avg Annual Increase
De Pere	5,797	7,724	8,936	9,550	2.4%	1.3%	163
Green Bay	38,182	41,591	43,812	45,281	0.8%	0.7%	309
Brown County	72,280	87,295	98,601	104,425	1.7%	1.2%	1,398
Wisconsin	1,822,118	2,084,544	2,280,012	2,379,670	1.3%	0.9%	24,241

Source: US Census; ESRI Business Analyst; Wisconsin Department of Administration; ERA | AECOM, 2009

Table 1.4: Median Household Income, 1990-2013

Geography	1990	2000	2008	Estimated 2013	CAGR 1990-2008	CAGR 2008-2013
De Pere	41,822	62,126	79,954	96,328	3.7	3.8
Green Bay	31,983	46,499	59,835	70,787	3.5	3.4
Brown County	36,923	55,574	71,740	85,225	3.7	3.5
Wisconsin	35,180	53,863	69,193	81,884	3.7	3.4

Source: US Census; ESRI Business Analyst; Wisconsin Department of Administration; ERA | AECOM, 2009

Table 1.5: St. Norbert College Figures, 2009

	Undergraduate	Graduate	Total	Faculty
Students	2,084	53	2,137	132

Source: St. Norbert College, 2009

Table 1.6: Percent of Households by Income Bracket, 2008

Geography	De Pere	Green Bay	Brown County	State
<\$15,000	6%	11%	7%	9%
\$15,000-\$24,999	7%	12%	9%	10%
\$25,000-\$34,999	8%	11%	9%	10%
\$35,000-\$49,999	15%	17%	15%	16%
\$50,000-\$74,999	22%	22%	22%	23%
\$75,000-\$99,999	22%	17%	21%	17%
\$100,000-\$149,999	13%	7%	11%	11%
\$150,000-\$199,000	3%	2%	3%	3%
\$200,000+	4%	2%	3%	3%

Source: US Census; ESRI Business Analyst; AECOM, 2009

Table 1.7: Households Income Growth by Cohort Bracket, 2000-2013

Geography	De Pere	Green Bay	Brown County	State
<\$15,000	9%	6%	5%	-3%
\$15,000-\$24,999	12%	7%	5%	-8%
\$25,000-\$34,999	11%	8%	7%	-2%
\$35,000-\$49,999	18%	15%	9%	-9%
\$50,000-\$74,999	24%	22%	23%	1%
\$75,000-\$99,999	15%	22%	19%	-3%
\$100,000-\$149,999	7%	13%	20%	9%
\$150,000-\$199,000	3%	3%	6%	14%
\$200,000+	2%	4%	6%	7%

Source: US Census; ESRI Business Analyst; AECOM, 2009



centage of total households and all income brackets below \$50,000 are forecast to decrease. Over the next five years, households earning \$150,000 to \$199,999 are currently projected to represent the largest growth cohort in De Pere.

- In 2008, 32% of De Pere's population had a bachelor or advanced degree (increased 2% annually since 1980) and 11% had an associate degree (increased 1% annually since 1980). The proportion of those with higher educational attainments is growing faster in the region and state markets than in De Pere, but De Pere still has more educational attainment among its households.
- A much greater share of De Pere residents has an associate or advance degree compared to Brown County, Green Bay, Wisconsin, and the country. De Pere has maintained a highly educated population since the 1990s, which may be due to the presence of St. Norbert College and its faculty and employees.
- High education attainment is a great marketing tool to attract retail and businesses. Retailers often evaluate education levels when considering a specific locale; they typically associate more education with more disposable income and spending power.

II. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

As part of the initial stakeholder involvement process, a series of interviews were conducted with public officials, city staff, property owners, commercial tenants, developers, and related groups. The interviews provided relevant insight into the current competitive position of downtown De Pere, broader linkages with the Green Bay region, as well as near-term market realities and opportunities. A more detailed report is available in the Appendix: Downtown Plan Market Analysis.

III. RESIDENTIAL MARKET OVERVIEW

The residential market overview considers the overall the overall health of local and regional residential markets, and explores more specific opportunities for downtown residential development. The approach includes analysis of building permit data for De Pere and Brown County, as well as information on home values, and analysis of downtown housing opportunities.

BUILDING PERMIT DATA

Tables on the following page summarize building permit data reported by the US Department of Housing

and Urban Development (HUD). Analysis indicates that between 2003 and 2008; Brown County issued permits for an average of 723 single family units and 552 multi-family units annually. Within these averages, key findings included:

- Across the county, housing unit deliveries have decreased significantly, dropping to about 460 units in 2008, well below levels recorded in 1998.
- Data from HUD also indicates that the City of De Pere issued permits for, on average, 129 single family units and 167 multi-family units annually.
- Building permit trends indicate a slowing residential market starting in 2006. Residential permits in De Pere peaked for single-family homes in 2004 and for multi-family complexes in 2002.
- Although housing permits issued in De Pere for 2008 were the lowest since 1998, with only 55 single-family permits issued, De Pere's share of total county housing permits increased, growing to 33%, which is the highest level sustained since 1998.
- The modest peak in multi-family construction in De Pere includes the recent construction of 333 West Main, a more upscale condominium property in the downtown core west of the Fox River.

Table 1.8: De Pere Building Permits by Units, 1998-2008

Unit Type	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Avg 1998-2008	Avg 2003-2008
All Single-family	108	137	129	132	117	125	188	179	130	94	55	127	129
All Multi-family	62	96	99	93	278	256	175	170	163	135	100	148	167
2 units	26	40	36	32	32	34	4	0	0	0	n/a	148	167
3-4 units	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a	-	-
5+ units	36	0	63	61	0	222	171	170	163	135	n/a	102	172
Total	170	233	228	225	395	381	363	349	293	229	155	275	295

Source: Department of Housing and Urban Development, AECOM, 2009

REGIONAL HOME VALUE COMPARISONS

According to information collected by the Federal Housing Finance Agency, home values across Brown County have shifted in line with those of the Appleton Metropolitan Area.

In both areas, values peaked in the 3rd quarter of 2004 and decreased dramatically through the 3rd quarter of 2006. Values have continued to decrease through the 2nd quarter of 2009, albeit at a much lower rate. For comparative purposes, values in the Madison Metropolitan Area peaked at a higher level (See Figure 2 below). For De Pere, interviews with local brokers indicate that residential values began to stabilize and increase during the summer of 2009.

HOUSEHOLD MIGRATION

AECOM analyzed IRS data between 2002 and 2007 to better understand recent patterns of migration into Brown County as a demand generator for area housing, retail and area employment. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) collects data from two consecutive household tax returns.

Households that file a return from one county one year, and another county the following year are classified as “migrants” while households that file in the same county are classified as “non-migrants” or residents. The analysis indicates that Brown County experienced a net migration of negative 325 households since 2002, with a total of 33,471 migrants moving in and a total of 33,796 migrants moving out over the course of five years.

Brown County attracts a significant share of Wisconsin oriented migrants. Of the top 20 counties for in-migration to Brown County 17 are Wisconsin counties; the other counties are in Illinois and Michigan. The top two counties (by approximately 200 households) for in-migration are consistently neighboring Outagamie and

Oconto Counties in Wisconsin. In general terms, the lack of significant in-migration from cities outside of Wisconsin is noted as a relevant detail.

WALKABLE / URBAN HOUSING MARKET PERSPECTIVE

Downtown De Pere includes a significant amount of walkable urban housing options, including apartments and condominiums. There are 229 units on the west side of the river, with the majority concentrated in one senior housing project called Nicolet Highlands. The east side of the river includes a broader array of smaller projects, with a similar total inventory (204 units). The east side residential anchor is the 70-unit Lawton Foundry Apartments. These totals include more upscale urban housing, with Arbor Landing on the east side and 555 Main on the west side of the river. Both projects offer condominium / townhouse units with pricing between \$160,000 and about \$300,000. In addition to higher density residential, there are a significant amount of walkable housing options on both sides of the river adjacent to downtown, covering both modest homes, as well as older historic structures.

There are three current urban housing projects in Green Bay, including Riverside Place, Watermark, and the Riverfront Lofts, with a total of about 100 units. Pricing varies, with some lofts advertised in the \$139,000 to \$160,000 range with unit sizes that range from 860 to 1,850 sq ft, and finished units in the \$89,000 to \$191,000 range, with unit sizes in the 787 sq. ft. to 1,375 sq. ft. range. There are several upscale units with larger floor plates (up to 3,300 sq ft.) pricing in the \$700,000 range. There are two additional projects, called River Tower, River Center and Astor Place, which could add a minimum of 230 additional downtown housing units, if and when they are completed. The total potential inventory of walkable housing is considered very modest, representing about 2% of total countywide unit deliveries since 1998.



Table 1.9: Net Household Migration to Brown County, WI 2002-2007

	'02-'03	'03-'04	'04-'05	'05-'06	'06-'07	Total
Inflow	4,596	4,790	4,748	4,864	4,825	33,471
Outflow	4,793	4,632	4,848	5,147	4,805	33,796
Net Migration	(197)	158	(100)	(283)	20	(325)

Source: US Census; IRS Statistics of Income, AECOM, 2009

Downtown Housing Inventory & Analysis

AECOM worked with RDG and the City of De Pere to define two distinct submarkets that serve the downtown area. The two submarkets include separate ¼ mile and ½ mile rings from either side of the De Pere River Bridge approach. The two market areas were defined based on realistic walkability levels. At the national level, a ¼-mile distance is seen as walkable; in AECOM experience, this can be extended to a ½ mile distance for those who seek out walkability. Data revealed the following trends:

- There are approximately 1,200 housing units within a ½ mile (on both sides) of the bridge; 58% are single-family homes and the remainder are multi-family, du-



plex, or condo style units. The downtown core includes about 430 multi-family units, the majority of which are in single projects. There are a small number of upper floor units as well.

- St. Norbert residence halls house about 1,500 students on the west side of the river. The College is planning to add additional dorm capacity in the future, with the expressed goal of housing the majority of students on campus
- Nicolet Highlands, an age restricted senior housing project, constitutes a significant cluster of homes on the west side; average unit sizes range between 700 and 1,400 sq. ft. The primary west side condominium project is called 555 Main, and offers units priced between \$160,000 and over \$300,000.
- The east side of the river includes a broader array of smaller projects, including the 70-unit Lawton Foundry Apartments, with quoted rents in the \$0.90 per sq. ft. range. Each side of the river is home to upscale urban condominiums / townhouse units with pricing between \$160,000 and \$300,000.
- The housing type changes significantly beyond a quarter mile from the bridge. For instance, 78% of the units within a quarter mile are multi-family units; whereas

24% of the units in the outer area between the quarter mile and ½ mile bounds are multi-family units.

URBAN HOUSING BENCHMARKS

To place these urban housing market share factors in perspective, AECOM evaluated urban housing trends in similar upper Midwestern cities, including Sun Prairie, WI, and Traverse City, MI. The analysis highlighted key comparative factors:

- Sun Prairie is a suburb of northeast of Madison with a current population of about 24,000 residents and a per capita income of about \$31,000. Downtown housing efforts in Sun Prairie were driven by city decisions to redevelop several old brownfield sites adjacent to the traditional historic core of downtown. Through this redevelopment effort, a total of about 300 housing units were added in the downtown core (about 3% of city inventory), covering apartments, condominiums, and townhomes, with several projects supporting mixed use activity, with a total housing inventory of 400 units. Units were priced at a modest discount to overall downtown averages. The city played a key role in facilitating the process, with financial support to remediate and assemble properties.
- Traverse City, Michigan is smaller city that serves as the hub for a significant portion of northwestern lower Michigan. The beginning in the late 1990's, developers in Traverse City began to experiment with urban housing, which led to the development of about 280 units in the downtown core over a 10 year period. Notably, several developers ran into challenges with pricing their condominiums, which were priced at a premium to local averages; several projects went through bankruptcy proceedings as a result. The Traverse City market is complex, with a mix of significant affluence concentrated outside the city, along with residents of typical means in the city itself; tourist markets are equally complex, with a summer season of families with children, and a fall market that is more upscale.

Overall downtown housing markets in these and other Midwestern cities remain modest, with inventories of recently built housing that represent about 2% to 3% of overall citywide inventories, well below the 25% to 35% of households that typically have an interest in downtown housing. Larger Midwestern markets, such as Madison or Des Moines, have seen more significant downtown housing market growth, with market shares that represent up to 5% of total area housing inventory. In all cases however, as cities transition from one or two unique (and more expensive) projects to larger scale urban housing, related pricing tends to shift toward area-wide averages.

For De Pere, with a core downtown housing inventory of about 400 units and a city wide housing unit count estimated at about 8,900 units, downtown would be supporting about 4.6% of citywide housing unit inventory (excluding dorms). This factor is at the high end when compared to similar Midwestern Cities. There are several explanations:

- Several developers took risks, such as with 555 West Main, which was priced at a premium to the local market, and has seen slower absorption.
- Developers built projects that take advantage of existing buildings, such as the Lawton Foundry project, which was converted into unique apartments which appear to be well regarded by the market.
- At least one developer took advantage of waterfront views (Arbor Landing). For the near-term, abilities to leverage waterfront views and urban amenities will support market response.

DOWNTOWN HOUSING VALUES

Understanding markets for urban housing is complex. In most Midwestern markets, initial urban projects have tended to be very upscale, and have benefited from public incentives. In many cases, these higher end projects have also run into financial challenges, because most

Midwestern downtowns are still in the process of revitalizing, and the amenities that would otherwise be supportive of higher prices are not in place yet. As well, projects built since 2004 also faced higher construction costs, which drove up related sales prices, and lowered absorption. On a broader level, urban housing is also challenged by the unique nature of urban sites, many of which are oddly shaped, have concerns with prior use (including environmental contamination), access to parking, and ongoing debate about zoning and allowable building height; two factors which drive construction cost and unit affordability.

To provide a framework for existing values and market opportunities for downtown, AECOM explored current property value trends for units in proximity to the Fox River. Broadly, within 1/2 mile of the Bridge, the average home value ranges between \$123,000 and \$129,000 depending on whether the home is on the east or west side of the river or within a quarter or 1/2 mile of downtown. Average home sizes range from about 1,500 to 1,900 sq. ft.

Across the city, homes built in the past five years currently have the highest value per square foot and comparable total values to homes built in the past ten years. Generally, home values decrease as the age of the home increases. Interestingly the ten year increment between 1986 and 1996 exhibits the largest average home size of all years. As well, compared to city-wide data, residences within a 1/2 mile of downtown have lower total assessed values and lower values per square foot. These findings are relevant, but complicated by the presence of newer condominiums as well as older historic homes within a 1/2 mile distance. For the smaller 1/4 mile market, which includes multi-family units, the analysis yielded more relevant findings:

- Units built since 2000 in downtown were priced at a significant premium (up to \$120 per sq ft.) to existing downtown levels (\$80 per sq. ft.) This premium was reflective of pricing at 555 West Main, which has had reported difficulty in gaining market acceptance.
- The analysis suggests a significant opportunity to build urban housing, albeit at prices that are below this \$120 per sq ft threshold, targeted to a market that is relative to overall citywide values.

From experience, the likely near term product could focus on multi-family buildings that are less than five stories in height, with affordable wood frame construction. Although greater building heights could be achievable, cost factors associated with steel and concrete structures would drive up unit sales prices and reduce near-term market opportunities. Rental units should also be considered, building from a market base established by the Foundry Apartments, where reported rents are in the \$0.90 range per sq. ft.

HOUSEHOLDS WITH URBAN PREFERENCES

AECOM evaluated ESRI Tapestry information in the context of households' likelihood to live in an urban area and households' preferences on housing type. AECOM also evaluated the percentage of total market share households that are living in downtown. AECOM found the following conclusions.

- Of all households in De Pere, about 4,050 (45%) have a potential to live in an urban area, but not exclusively. This count includes households that may exhibit tendencies and preferences associated with both urban and suburban areas. Brown County has a similar proportion.
- Of all the households in De Pere 2,159 (24%) prefer multifamily (urban) types of housing, some in addition to single family homes. Brown County's percentage of households is 32%. Green Bay, again, exhibits a higher



Table 1.10: Summary of Housing Based on Side of River

Geography	Average Value Per SF	Average Size	Average Home Value
East			
1/4 mile	73	1630	\$116,361
1/2 mile	81	1568	\$123,442
Total East	\$80	1576	\$122,505
West			
1/4 mile	64	1935	\$124,580
1/2 mile	86	1503	\$129,177
Total West	85	1515	\$129,051
Citywide	94	1770	\$169,601
Values by Year Built			
2003-2008 (5 yr)	111	1873	\$207,199
1997-2002 (5 yr)	107	1979	\$207,757
1986-1996 (10 yr)	100	2029	\$199,139
1975-1985 (10 yr)	98	1728	\$165,459
Before 1975	88	1586	\$137,501

Source: City of De Pere, 2009



preference for urban living with 46%.

- These figures do not convey the number of potential buyers, but merely of the households that, if moving within the area, may consider an urban product in a downtown setting, such as Downtown De Pere.
- The market share of actual households living downtown is very narrow in De Pere and even smaller in Green Bay, compared to the market opportunity. Experience in other markets would suggest that efforts to link downtown with the waterfront would expand market opportunities.

RESIDENTIAL MARKET SUMMARY

The residential analysis suggests the following:

- Although the “walkable core” within a ½ mile distance of downtown De Pere supports significant housing, (over 1,200 units), the share of more contemporary rental and owner occupied housing is smaller (about 400 units). This factor is generally consistent with other Midwestern cities.
- Of all households in De Pere, an estimated 24% of households prefer multifamily (urban) types of housing, some in addition to single family homes. These figures do not convey the number of potential buyers,

but reflect on the share of households that, if moving within the area, could consider an urban product in a downtown setting, such as Downtown De Pere.

Future market opportunities for urban housing need to be consistent with broader trends for how De Pere is expected to grow in the near and mid term. Current forecasts for the community point to a return to historic housing growth rates, i.e. below recent trends, offset by the likelihood of further decreases in the average housing size. Using State forecasts as a baseline, De Pere is positioned to add about 4,700 residents by 2025, which could break down to demand for about 2,300 new housing units over the same period. If the core (1/4 mile) downtown just maintains its current “fair share” of potential new inventory over the forecast period (4%), that would point to an overly conservative urban housing construction factor of 100 more urban units through 2025. Given the acceleration in changes in the structure of households (fewer families with kids), as well as the practical reality of delayed Baby Boom generation downsizing, we expect that overall demand for urban housing will increase above this threshold, with a target for 250 to 450 units in the downtown core by 2025. In practical terms, the ability of the market to deliver on these estimates would be influenced by the following:

- The limited number of sites in the downtown core that are realistically developable at current market prices, along with the impact of unique site features (brownfields, etc.), and related factors which impact construction costs, and corresponding unit prices.
- City policy regarding the encouragement of urban housing in addition to, or as opposed to suburban housing, covering entitlements, zoning, and related planning factors.
- City investments to improve connections between downtown and the Fox River, and the extent to which available building sites are positioned to benefit from this public investment.

IV. DOWNTOWN RETAIL MARKET ANALYSIS

The goal of the retail market analysis is to understand the current strategic position of De Pere in the region, and the competitive position of downtown De Pere as a retail destination. The approach includes assessment of regional and city-level retail inventory and vacancy trends, a detailed inventory of downtown retail space, a review of recent survey data regarding downtown merchants in De Pere, and consideration of local implications driven by national retail trends. The approach is built around Co-Star market and submarket data, ESRI Business Analyst and US Census data, and Wisconsin Department of Revenue sales tax data.

DOWNTOWN CONTEXT

Downtown De Pere is divided into east and west sides by the Fox River, connected by a bridge that is about a ½ mile in length; beyond practical walking distance. The downtown retail market is almost entirely made up of locally owned stores, with very few national chains present (i.e. Pizza Hut, Big Apple Bagel, & Edward Jones Investments). Businesses on the east side of the river are modestly more entertainment oriented, supported by restaurants such as the Vault, which offer evening entertainment. Other tenants include Café Indulge, Life’s a Stitch, and Butterfly Books. East side retail anchors include ShopKo and Seroogy’s Chocolates, the latter of which is a De Pere institution and a relevant demand generator. Traditionally, businesses on the west side of the river were more tailored to demand generated by St. Norbert and the paper mill, with greater emphasis on bars rather than restaurants. Tenants include Café Luna, Do or Dye Salon, the Abbey, the Sports Corner, Erbert & Gerbert’s, and Jameson Pub. Although site assessments confirmed that downtown vacancies remain below national levels (below 8%), across the city and region, vacancy levels have increased. Considerations include:

- Within De Pere, there is considerable vacancy at the interchange of US-41 and Scheuring Road, with a closed Sportsman's Warehouse as well as a number of strip center vacancies, which add to about 60,000 sq. ft.
- To the east in Bellevue, development around the intersection of Route GV and Route 172 has also seen slow absorption, with greater emphasis on office, medical office, and service tenants, rather than retailers, with relevant vacancy issues. Projects include Lakeview Plaza and Millennium Park.

KEY DEMAND DRIVERS

Interviews suggest that the presence of several anchor projects shape demand potentials for downtown, including:

- **St. Norbert College** has an enrollment of 2,100 students, and about 400 faculty and staff. The campus includes several demand drivers including meeting and performing arts space, a new library, and the Kress Inn, all of which are open to local residents. A summer theater group also uses the grounds for outdoor summer events. The school is actively planning for additional projects, including a science building renovation, and completion of new athletic fields. Most students are expected to live on campus.
- **The Nicolet Paper Mill** is a key downtown employer with about 210 employees running multiple shifts. While the company is no longer locally owned, its current base of clients appears solid, with significant business reportedly driven by 3M. The mill complex, operated by Thilmany Papers, is significant in scale, covering 27 buildings along the waterfront. The operation may need to respond to changes in proposed state emissions regulations, which could require the plant to make capital investments to reduce emissions. The plant generates about 25 truck visits per day, as well as consistent rail deliveries of pulp.

- **The downtown office market** is a relevant driver of downtown demand. On the west side of the river, office buildings such as Nicolet Commons support office employment by Humana, a key downtown tenant. The adjacent Marquette Centre, also recently built, supports tenants in legal and insurance areas.
- **Boating traffic** along the Fox River uses a lock to bypass the existing dam in De Pere. Boat traffic that uses the lock ranges from a low of around 200 boats in May, up to around 800 boats in prime summer months; total passengers can exceed 3,500 people. The key variable with boat traffic is the extent to which boats have temporary places to tie up in De Pere.
- **Hotels** in downtown De Pere include Union Hotel, the James Street Inn, and the Kress Inn, as well as a small B&B.
- **The Fox River** supports a robust fishing tournament industry, focused in part below the dam in De Pere. During the spring, up to 500 fishing boats will be on the water, driving modest demand for area hotels and restaurants. The river is relatively shallow, aside from a dredged center channel. Most boaters enter the river further north from Fox Point Boat Landing. There appear to be few temporary boat slips that can service the downtown area directly.

NATIONAL RETAIL MARKET PERSPECTIVE

Understanding trends applicable to downtown De Pere requires a summary of broader national retail industry trends. AECOM examined national retail spending trends from 1992 through 2008. First, retail sales by retail category are evaluated, along with changes in spending patterns of consumers not only on what is being purchased, but where those purchases are being made. The U.S. Census Bureau provides national estimates of retail sales annually by category in the Annual Revision of Monthly Retail and Food Services. Retail sales include establish-



ments that sell merchandise to the general public without changing the product. Sales can occur in department stores, warehouses or specialized stores or through catalogs, infomercials and the Internet. In 2008, retail sales declined slightly for the first time since 1992. In 2007, retail sales were \$4.43 trillion, which fell to \$4.41 trillion in 2008. Annualized estimates for 2009 point to significant further declines in total sales.

Although the amount being spent on general retail has grown substantially since 1992, how retail dollars are being spent has changed considerably. The following chart shows the distribution of retail dollars by segment. The biggest decline occurred at food and beverage (grocery) stores, falling from 25.7% of general retail dollars in 1992 to 18.7% in 2008.

Part of this decline may be explained by the decline in the price of food that took place between 1992 and 2006. However, a large part is likely due to the increasing number of stores offering groceries including warehouse clubs and superstores like Wal-Mart Supercenters and Wal-Mart Neighborhood Markets. Department stores have also seen a smaller share of retail dollars. This can also be explained by the expansion of sales at warehouse clubs and superstores. In 1992, 2.8% of general retail dol-



lars were spent at stores such as Costco, Sam's Club, Wal-Mart and Target. By 2008, this share had increased to 11.2%. Another notable change is the share of retail dollars being spent on retail purchases made through informals, catalogs and the Internet (non-store retailers). In 1992, 5.5% of general retail dollars were spent this way. This increased to 9.5% by 2008.

The following chart provides further evidence that Americans are moving away from traditional department stores and making more of their retail purchases in big box stores and online. From 1992 to 2008, retail sales captured by warehouse clubs such as Wal-Mart, Costco and Target grew at an average annual rate of 14.5%. Online purchases increased 11.6% per year over this same time frame. Sales at traditional department stores have actually fallen at an average annual rate of 0.8%.

The following segment specific trends are also noted:

- The Internet continues to absorb market share from traditional retail formats. Between 1992 and 2008, Internet retailing increased from 2.4% to 6.5% of general related retail sales, representing growth from about \$35 billion in 1992 to more than \$204 billion in 2008. On a per household basis, this reflects an increase from

\$368 on the internet per year to \$1,749 per year. While the re-allocation of retail sales to the Internet is of little concern to retail chains, the same cannot be said for communities that derive sales taxes from retail space in the community and see sales dollars and taxes captured by internet formats.

- Growth of health and personal care stores reflects the increasing scale of products and services that drug stores and pharmacies now offer. Walgreens and CVS have been very aggressive in expanding across the Midwest.
- While larger format building material stores (Lowes, Menards and Home Depot) have dramatically altered the market for home improvement supplies, sales growth appears to have peaked in 2006 at \$306 billion. Sales decreased by 4% between 2006 and 2007 and 6.5% the following year. Market share has also decreased since 2006 and, assuming that current trends hold, will decrease again in 2009. These declines reflect both the impact of downturn in the housing market / recession, as well as a likely level of market saturation in this segment.
- While Department stores have only continued to struggle, grocery stores have responded, with formats either growing in size (80,000 sq. ft. and up) or getting smaller (Trader Joes at 15,000 sq. ft.). Between 1992 and 2006 spending on food and beverage stores grew at an average annual rate of 2.6%. However, spending on this category grew nearly 5% each year between 2006 and 2008. This may indicate a possible turnaround as grocery stores become more competitive with warehouse clubs and superstores. However, this increase may also reflect recent increases in the price of food, which began in 2006.

There are also several broader economic factors that are influencing retail spending patterns. The economy slid into a recession in December 2007 which worsened through 2008 and 2009. As unemployment increases,

consumers are being more careful with their retail dollars and stores with perceived value are doing better. Wal-Mart, dollar stores and other discount retail stores are capturing market share from more upscale competitors. Auto repair stores are thriving as people invest in their cars rather than buy new ones. Full-service restaurants are experiencing a decline, but fast food and limited-service restaurants have seen a slight increase in sales. Also, grocery store sales are up as more people eat at home rather than at restaurants. The lingering impact of the economic downturn may be an increase in the personal savings rate, at least in the near-term, which will have an effect on retail sales beyond the recession. Other considerations include:

- In addition to declining sales, the tight credit markets have led to a wave of bankruptcies among American retailers. Midsize chains such as Levitz and Sharper Image have filed for bankruptcy protection and larger chains such as Circuit City and Linen 'n Things have closed leaving thousands of storefronts empty. Others companies such as Office Depot, Lowe's, J.C. Penny, Ann Taylor and the jeweler Zales, have all announced that they are downsizing their operations. CoStar Group Inc. estimated a net loss of 1,300 retail stores during 2008 and 2009.
- Auto dealerships across the country are also being affected. Auto sales dropped by nearly 15% in 2008, the largest drop in more than 25 years. Declining sales have led two automakers to close nearly 1,900 dealerships combined. By June 2009, Chrysler will close one-quarter of its 3,200 stores which account for 14% of annual sales. GM is expected to close 2,600 total dealerships. About 1,100 dealers will not have their franchise agreements renewed with GM when they expire in October 2010. The remaining stores to be closed through attrition are brands the company will no longer be manufacturing such as Saturn and Hummer. The unprecedented closings reflect the precarious financial state of the firms, both of which have received substantial loans from the federal government.

- Due largely to the rising price of gasoline, the share of retail dollars spent on fuel has increased significantly in recent years. Between 1992 and 2003 sales at gasoline stations were fairly steady at approximately 11% of general retail sales. It has been increasing each year since reaching 15.2% in 2008. Assuming that current trends hold, it is likely that fuel costs will begin to eat into other retail sales.
- Retailers in general are also reacting to changing spending patterns driven by new technologies (broadband access and cell phones), which have in the past several years captured a significant share of disposable income, in the range of \$50 to \$150 per month. The emergence of services including TiVo, XM Satellite Radio, iTunes and Netflix are examples. The impact of broadband access is expected to have a significant impact on the profitability of traditional video rental stores, a standard anchor of many neighborhood retail centers.

The rollout of Macy's in recent years as a national brand also highlights the disappearance of more than 10 regional department store brands, including Marshall Fields, Filene's, Foley's, Hecht's, Famous-Barr, Kaufmann's, Robinsons-May and L.S. Ayres, impacting shopping centers. Furthermore, other changes like the Sears/Kmart merger in 2005 has led to modifications for those retail formats. Chicago-based General Growth Properties' Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection announcement in early 2009 was a result of the company not being able to refinance its maturing debt. This announcement from the second largest mall owner in the United States is one major example of the inability to refinance debt in the current credit market crunch, which may impact other real estate companies as well.

- Big box formats are increasingly engaging in battles for market share (Wal-Mart versus Target, Kohl's versus JC Penney and Lowes versus Home Depot and Me-nards and Walgreens versus CVS). In all cases, the companies involved will choose to locate stores in close

proximity to each other to pull sales from a competitor, even at the expense of cannibalizing existing store sales. This level of competition has boosted retail inventories, lowered store sales per square foot and created greater competitive pressures for independent store owners.

- Because larger format retailers are finding their traditional suburban markets increasingly saturated with retail space, national chains are increasingly looking at inner city markets for new growth in sales. Firms such as General Growth, Target and Wal-Mart are actively looking at urban sites and trying to deal with difficult questions of site assembly, brownfields remediation and entitlement.

For De Pere, and Green Bay, the current recession will likely mark the end of the national expansion of big box retail. Locally, and across the Midwest, the period from 2004 to 2007 saw a significant surge in new retail inventory, driven by corporate expansion plans, battles for market share, and access to lower cost financing. While more boxes will be built, the larger format stores have essentially saturated most markets. For Green Bay, the period of retail expansion extended between 2000 and 2007, during which space was built at a rate of about 190,000 sq. ft. per year, nearly twice the long term average. The surge in inventory, combined with the impact of higher unemployment and reduced discretionary income, will continue to impact the pace at which local recovery occurs. Locally, these recessionary impacts are visible at places such as Scheuring Road and US 41, where there is a closed Sportsman's Warehouse as well as a number of strip center vacancies, which add to about 60,000 sq. ft. Since 2007, retail vacancy rates across Brown County have increased from about 7% to above 10% as of the second quarter 2009.

DOWNTOWN MERCHANT SURVEY

To begin to place downtown De Pere into the broader regional context, we worked with the cooperation of the



De Pere Chamber of Commerce and staff from the City of De Pere to implement a survey of downtown merchants. The survey, sent to about 150 businesses, generated 80 responses, which is a response rate above 50%. Although the response level is technically insufficient for statistical significance, the analysis provides a good perspective on trends and expectations for the downtown area. A summary of key findings is as follows:

- A total of 49 businesses responded from the east side of the river and 27 responded from the west side of the river.
- Average store sales are about \$390,000, or about \$172 per square foot. Sales performance for the west side of De Pere appears modestly stronger, at slightly over \$400,000 in annual sales. These trends should be evaluated carefully, as not all respondents filled out their square footage and store sales factors. The respondents support about 500 full-time and part-time jobs, which is a relevant concentration of employment
- While a majority of respondents (73%) are using computer databases to track customers, a majority (78%) are not using the internet for advertising.
- Store performance was split, with 40% reporting an increase in sales, 46% reporting a decrease in sales, and about 13% reporting no change in sales. Store perfor-



mance appears modestly better on the west side of the river, where 58% of respondents indicated that sales were either stable or increased.

- The survey respondents noted an array of comments, of which the most consistent orbited around the theme of increased marketing support for downtown, which could include signage, event promotion, advertising, and related efforts to draw more people downtown.

One key finding from the survey is that with reported rents in the \$8 to \$12 dollar per sq. ft. range, and sales in the \$170 per sq. ft. range, it would appear that rents fall within reasonable thresholds, i.e. about 10% of sales. General experience in similar markets would suggest that when rents exceed 14% of sales, it is an indication that either rents are too high or store sales are insufficient.

DOWNTOWN INVENTORY ANALYSIS

ERA worked extensively with City staff, with the support of the Chamber, to develop a detailed inventory of downtown retail and office space. The inventory approach was built from property tax records, field surveys of individual stores, and meetings with local real estate brokers. Given that historical downtowns are true mixed use environments, the inventory approach needed to discriminate

between the following categories of space:

- Street level space in retail, office, entertainment, restaurant, service, or institutional use
- Upper story space, which could be residential, office, retail, or used for storage or vacant. In this case, the analysis identified several upper floors whose occupancy status could not be verified.
- Stand alone office buildings

Occupied retail space is also broken down by store type for cluster analysis. The inventory effort, effective as of September 2010, documented a total inventory of about 773,000 sq. ft. of space in Downtown De Pere, which includes storefront space, as well as office space in stand-alone buildings.

The analysis highlighted an array of key findings:

- There is approximately 142,000 sq. ft. of space in retail use (including food and beverage, restaurant, and consumer services) on the west side of the Fox River and approximately 253,000 sq. ft. on the east side of the Fox River. About 90% of the retail space is on the ground floor.
- In addition to street level retail, the analysis identified a total of 110,000 sq. ft. of street level office space, and 102,300 sq. ft. of space in single use office buildings, with a modest majority concentrated on the west side of the river (138,000 sq. ft. to 126,000 sq. ft.).
- Street level vacancies have significant impact on a downtown retail environment compared to upper level vacancies. In downtown west of the river, 9.7% of street level space is vacant; east of the river only 6.1% of space is vacant. In an average economy, downtowns typically have a 10% vacancy rate; the overall downtown vacancy rate is estimated at 7.4%, which is lower than the current county wide vacancy level, which is above 10%. Upper floor vacancy is higher, estimated at 36% on the west side and 44% on east side.

As the occupancy status of upper floors can be questionable at times, these estimates should be evaluated with care.

- On both sides of the river, Restaurants and Bars constitute the largest cluster of space, covering about 130,000 sq. ft. Restaurant clusters are effective traffic generators for emerging or revitalization retail/restaurant districts. Generally, people will travel farther and into new areas for restaurant options as opposed to retail products. A majority of restaurant and bar options are concentrated on the west side of the river.
- Personal services, including financial, gas stations, auto repair, beauty salons, and dry cleaning are important uses in downtown De Pere that serve day-to-day needs of residents in surrounding neighborhoods.
- Other retail categories that are very limited in square footage or completely absent include, sporting goods, shoes, health and personal care, jewelry, and electronics and appliances. It is common to find that these categories are underserved in smaller downtown and 'main street' environments.
- The downtown retail market is almost entirely made up of locally owned stores, with very few national chains present. Interviews suggested that at one point, Starbucks was interested in a downtown location, but instead selected a site closer to US 41.

RETAIL SALES ANALYSIS

Retail sales trends for Brown County were reviewed to evaluate growth in sales and the competitive capture position of the county as a regional destination. Key factors include:

- Between 2001 and 2006, retail sales grew moderately in Brown County at a pace of 2% annually. Specific categories such as clothing and accessories and restaurants and bars grew faster at 4% and 3% respectively, which bodes well for downtown De Pere, as these cat-

egories work well in downtown and “main street” environments, especially restaurants.

- Brown County retail sales are growing at a faster pace than households and population, but at a slower pace than average, median, and per capita household income.
- Pull factor analysis indicates that in 2006, Brown County generated 29% more sales than the County population should logically support. This indicates that people from outside the county are traveling into the county to spend money. The Brown County 2006 pull factor (1.29) is a modest decrease over its pull factor in 2003 (1.34).

DOWNTOWN RETAIL MARKET IMPLICATIONS

Downtown De Pere supports a total inventory of about 773,000 sq. ft. of space, which is currently being occupied by an array of retail, service, office, government, and institutional tenants. Within this total inventory level, downtown retail trends include the following:

- Across Brown County since 1982 there has been an average of about 100,000 sq. ft. of new retail space delivered annually. In 2005, approximately 400,000 sq. ft. was delivered, making this year the peak year since 1982. This significant increment of space will take a couple of years for the local economy to work through, albeit in larger format store segments.
- Downtown street level vacancies are below regional levels. In downtown west of the river, 9.7% of street level space is vacant; east of the river only 6.1% of space is vacant. The overall downtown vacancy rate is estimated at 7.4%. Countywide retail vacancy is now over 10%.
- Based on survey information, it would appear that downtown rents are in alignment with store sales. Moving forward, efforts to grow sales for downtown merchants will be a key focus of strategic recommen-



dations, as growth in rents will support reinvestment in downtown. Quoted rents appear to fall in the \$8 to \$12 per sq. ft. range.

- There is approximately 142,000 sq. ft. of space in retail use on the west side of the Fox River and approximately 253,000 sq. ft. on the east side of the Fox River. While the overall inventory amount is regionally significant, it is divided by the Fox River, which raises core planning questions for how the two halves of downtown can be better connected, in physical and market terms.
- On both sides of the river, Restaurants and Bars constitute the largest cluster of space, covering about 130,000 sq. ft. Restaurant clusters are effective traffic generators for emerging or revitalization retail / restaurant districts. People, generally, will travel farther and into new areas for restaurant options as opposed to retail products.
- Aside from restaurants, hotels, office, and residential, other typical downtown retail store clusters remain under developed. Segments such as jewelry, shoes, and books would benefit from further growth, particularly on the East side of downtown De Pere.
- Ashwaubenon is the primary regional retail hub, where the majority of national chain stores have located. While it is unlikely that many of these stores would



consider a second store in De Pere, it is likely that individual stores will consider moving into a downtown environment. For example, chains such as Ann Taylor and Talbots have moved into similar downtown markets. The arrival of these stores tends to generate the interest in other chains to consider a downtown location.

Quantifying market opportunities for downtown De Pere for the next several years is complicated by several factors. In the short-term, there are a very small number of national retailers who are in expansion mode, driven by opportunities to lease lower cost space in attractive market locations. In principal, these opportunities are tending to focus in several areas:

- Value oriented apparel: TJ Max, Dollar Tree, Staples, Goodwill Industries
- Non-traditional stores: health clubs, family fun centers.
- Smaller grocery stores: Trader Joes, Aldi

Although the overall market across Brown County is likely oversupplied with retail space at present, the downtown core of De Pere is well positioned to move out of the recession in reasonable shape, with vacancy levels that are



well below regional trends. Short-term development of new retail space in the downtown core is unlikely because financial markets remain unsettled, and bank lending requirements have come back to earth, with logical emphasis on tenant quality dictating lending terms. In this context, the premium rents that would be required to support construction of new space will be difficult to support in the short-term.

In the context of average downtown store sizes smaller than 5,000 sq. ft. and rents in the \$8 to \$12 range, existing space in downtown De Pere will be well positioned as an affordable option in the regional market. Importantly, opportunities to rent existing space will be driven initially by decisions made by the City of De Pere and the Chamber regarding the future structure and funding support for the Main Street Program. Specific elements, to be discussed in separate strategic recommendations, will focus on the potential role of the Main Street program in tenant retention and recruitment, event promotion, and engagement with building owners. As well, city officials will need to consider broader planning frameworks for downtown, to include efforts to develop structured parking in the downtown core.



V. OFFICE MARKET OVERVIEW

The office market assessment evaluates the key economic drivers of demand for office space, and looks at current trends with regard to changes in office space inventory, both in the downtown area, and across De Pere and Brown County. The office market discussion focuses initially on changes in employment in office related sectors, before moving into discussion of real estate indices.

EMPLOYMENT PERSPECTIVE

Analysis of employment data yielded the following information:

- Between 1990 and 2000, Brown County employment grew twice as fast as employment in Wisconsin, 3.2% in Brown County compared to 1.7% in the state. The annual growth rate is forecast to slow from 3.2% between 1990 and 2000 to 1.3% between 2000 and 2010. Over the past five years from 2003 to 2008 employment grew by 1.7% annually to a total of 191,000 employees in Brown County.
- Over the past five years the two fastest growing employment sectors were Services and Finance, Insurance, Real Estate (FIRE). This is a positive trend for



downtown De Pere and indicates office using employment demand increased.

- Employment in office using sectors reached approximately 21,500 in Brown County in 2007 and is projected to reach 22,000 in 2008. The Information sector is not growing, but other sectors are: Management of Companies/Enterprises (3.8%), Professional Services (2.4%), and Finance and Insurance and Real Estate (2.4%).
- Assuming an average rate of growth of office employment of 400 positions annually and an industry standard of 175 to 200 sq. ft. of office space per employee, this translates into 70,000 to 80,000 sq. ft. of additional office capacity required on an annual basis at the county level.
- Brown County currently has 595,000 sq. ft. of vacant office space (10% vacancy). However, as the downtown revitalizes, office space in the core may become more desirable than older suburban office space. This could take the form of new or renovated second level space or small professional office on side streets.
- In April 2009 Brown County ranked with the 58th lowest employment rate out of approximately 70 counties.

LOCATION QUOTIENT ANALYSIS

AECOM utilized a location quotient to ascertain employment trends. A location quotient (LQ) is a measure of business concentration. For example, the motion picture industry is concentrated in California. That is, there are many more employees in this industry in California than California's proportional share of employees nationwide. Think of the location quotient as testing the hypothesis, "Business activity in a small area is proportional to the location's share of activity in a larger area." A location quotient of 1.0 means the statement is true: activity (concentration in a specific industry) is consistent with your location's proportional size. For example, if a city has 1% of employment in the state and it also has 1% of restaurant employees, the city's location quotient for the restaurant industry would be 1.0.

- LQ of 1.0 means that the industry is concentrated evenly with the location's concentration of employment.
- LQ over 1.0 means the given industry is more concentrated than the employment as a whole.
- LQ under 1.0 means that a given industry is less concentrated than the employment as a whole.

The location quotient analysis for Brown County revealed existing concentrations in Transportation, Utilities, Communication; Finance, Insurance, Real Estate; and Wholesale Trade which are office using. However, also according to the location quotient analysis, service oriented employment is an underrepresented segment, and may be an area of growth for the county.

OFFICE INVENTORY PERSPECTIVE

Site investigations, data analysis, and local interviews confirmed that De Pere has approximately 988,000 sq. ft. of office space, of which about 265,000 sq. ft. is in downtown. The downtown inventory includes space in single

use office buildings, as well as store fronts in office use.

Downtown office vacancy is concentrated in two stand alone office buildings, with an overall vacancy level of about 18%. It is understood that developers are targeting one site on the east side of the Fox River on the traffic circle for office development. We understand that the developer is actively trying to pre-lease additional space, which would be required to support construction financing. In the context of the current recession, the project will likely find continued short-term difficulty in getting traction from potential tenants. Of more realistic concern is current pressure on rents resulting from the current recession, which will place pressure on the developer's business plan. Other findings include:

- Green Bay is the primary employment center for the region. De Pere supports about 15% of county office space. Green Bay is home to 4.8 million sq. ft., which is about 80% of county office space.
- The average office building size in De Pere is 12,500 sq. ft. compared to 17,000 sq. ft. in Green Bay and 16,000 sq. ft. in the county.
- On average, office space in De Pere leases for a premium of about \$1.50 per square foot above rates in Green Bay and Brown County.

OFFICE MARKET IMPLICATIONS

The market analysis suggests the following regarding downtown De Pere:

- De Pere supports an estimated 935,000 sq. ft. of office space, of which an estimated 213,000 sq. ft. is in downtown. The inventory analysis found that downtown office space is roughly divided between office tenants in existing store fronts, and space in recently built office buildings, two of which have relevant vacancy issues (18% estimated).

Table 1.11: Downtown De Pere Space Distribution

	Total RBA	Vacancy	Percent Vacant
Downtown Office Buildings	102,282	18,414	18%
Downtown Storefront in Office Use	110,898	-	
Remainder in City	723,472	95,672	13%
Total	936,652	114,086	12%

Source: CoStar Group, Inc., AECOM, 2009

Table 1.12: Office Lease Rates by Class by square foot

Market	Class A	Class B	Class C	Total
De Pere	\$13.48	\$13.96	\$13.25	\$13.78
Green Bay	\$17.30	\$11.37	\$11.77	\$12.16
Brown County	\$16.43	\$11.60	\$11.74	\$12.24

Source: CoStar Group, Inc., AECOM, 2009

- In the context of available vacant space, we do not view further office development in downtown De Pere through 2010 as likely. However, looking beyond 2010, modest opportunities could develop, albeit only as a function of the economics of specific sites. Opportunities will relate to:
 - The provision of new space which offers green/sustainable elements not currently available in the market
 - City policy decisions regarding the provision of structured parking as an incentive to encourage further development.
- In general, office space is a desired supporting use for downtowns, helping to drive lunch and dinner business. Core planning questions for downtown will be discussed in the strategic recommendation section.

Chapter 2

23

Downtown De Pere Today



If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do, and how to do it.

- Abraham Lincoln

INTRODUCTION

De Pere, with its traditional central district, owes its development to a strategic location at a falls along the Fox River, just five miles from its mouth into Green Bay. Jean Nicolet, the region's first European explorer, camped here in 1637 during an expedition to find a trade route to China. While these rapids stymied this quest, they also created an ideal location for a trading post between Native American Tribes and French fur traders. Here, Father Jean-Claude Allouez founded the St. Francis Xavier Mission in 1671, which became a military, spiritual, and economic outpost, and caused the area to be known as Les Rapides des Pères (The Rapids of the Fathers). Sixteen years later, the mission burned, temporarily ending settlement in the immediate region.

By 1830 the construction of two Military Roads along the Fox River between Fort Howard at Green Bay and Fort Crawford on the Mississippi River again focused attention on the Fox River rapids. They provided a source of energy to power mills and marked the point of transition between ocean-going vessels and smaller steamers and paddle wheelers that could traverse a system of inland canals. In 1836, the De Pere Hydraulic Company built a dam at the rapids, and by 1850, the growing settlement boasted several mills and a shipyard along the river. In 1857, the Village of De Pere was incorporated on the east bank, with its primary business district paralleling the river. Yet, the construction of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad on the west bank already threatened the primacy of inland water transportation and eventually led to the development of the Village of West De Pere, incorporated in 1870, and its distinct business district along Main Avenue. In 1890, the need to build a bridge across the river encouraged the unification of the two towns, which celebrate 120 years as a consolidated city in 2010.



De Pere Historical Society / White Pillars Museum

The unified De Pere is a vital and economically strong community with a solid employment base, a growing population, and such educational and cultural resources as St. Norbert College, connected by the striking Claude Allouez Bridge, the third span over the Fox River at "Les Rapides des Pères." The river, together with its rapids, remains the city's defining feature and greatest natural resource, and continues to present tremendous opportunities. But it also creates a physical division that separates Downtown De Pere into two distinct districts, each with individual qualities, strengths, and challenges. This chapter investigates the structure and physical characteristics of De Pere's dual downtown, providing the basis for a strategic program to create a unique, united central district for De Pere and the entire Green Bay Metropolitan Area.



De Pere Historical Society / White Pillars Museum

THE SUBAREAS

Downtown De Pere's two riverbanks have individual characteristics and areas of specialization and are also made up of connected subareas. The subareas, illustrated in Map 2.1, provide a tool that helps describe the character of each riverbank.

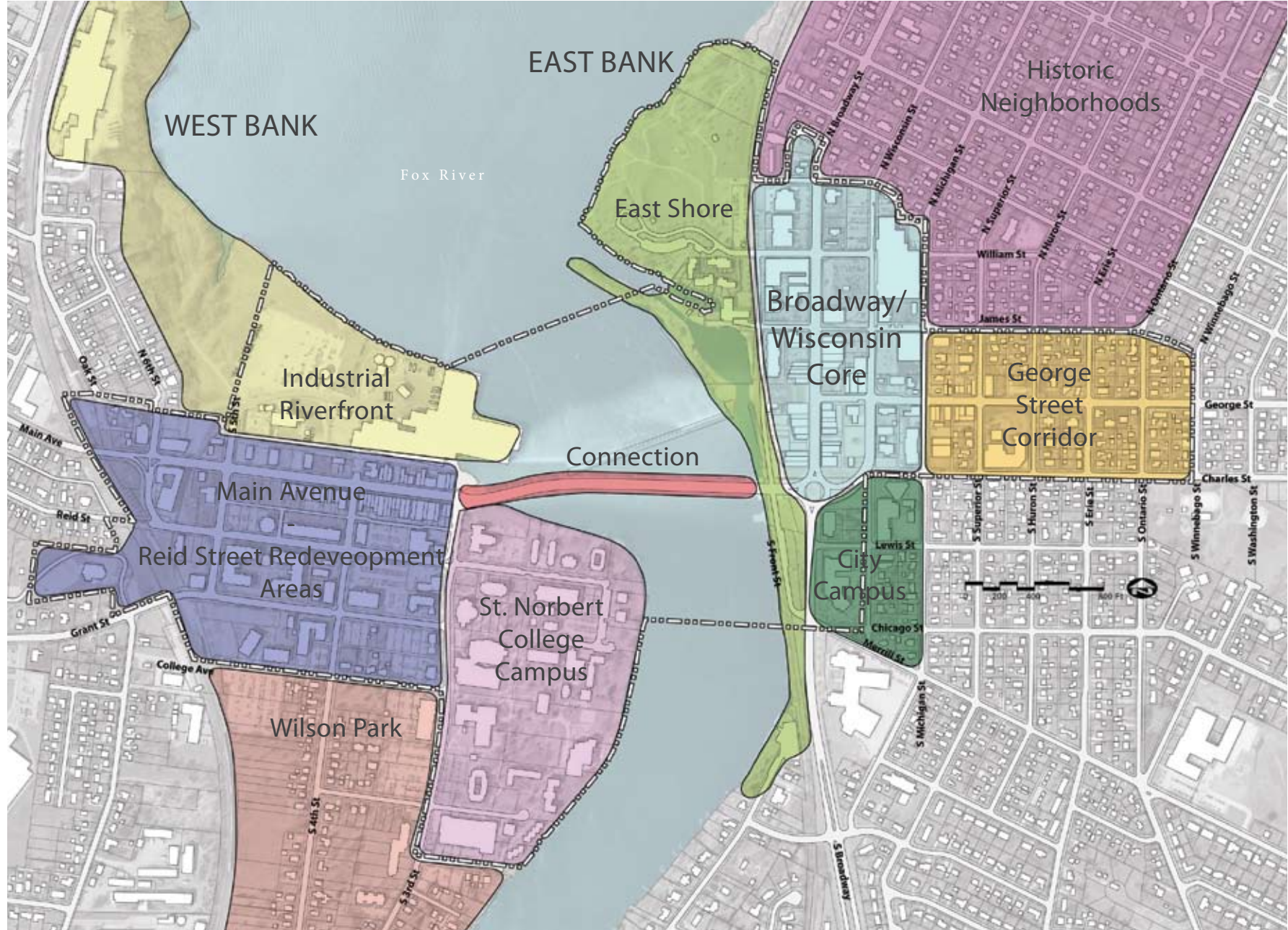
EAST BANK

- Broadway/Wisconsin Core District
- George Street Corridor
- East Shore
- City Campus
- Historic Neighborhoods

WEST BANK

- Main Avenue
- Reid Street Redevelopment Areas
- St. Norbert Campus
- Wilson Park
- Industrial Riverfront

Map 2.1 Development Character



THE EAST BANK

Distinguishing features of Downtown De Pere's East Bank include:

- Substantial mainstream retail uses, some of which are destination retailers in the Green Bay metropolitan area.
- ShopKo, Downtown's only mass retailer.
- A substantial core of sit-down restaurants, including fine-dining establishments.
- Substantial housing development in both contemporary and adaptive reuse settings.
- The city government center.
- The Fox River Trail, a 20-mile regional trail that connects Downtown Green Bay, De Pere, and Greenleaf.
- A major public riverfront, enhanced by two major parks, Voyageur and Wells, and the historic canal district, a conduit for boats around the rapids and dam. The planned RiverWalk will greatly expand public access and use of the riverfront and canal area.
- Limited private offices, largely in storefront settings.
- A multi-lane roundabout at the east bridge landing, distributing traffic to major north-south corridors.

Its constituent subareas include:

- Broadway/Wisconsin Core District
- George Street Corridor
- East Shore
- City Campus
- Historic Neighborhoods



BROADWAY/WISCONSIN CORE

Defining Characteristics

- Traditional commercial core of the east shore, oriented to Broadway and Wisconsin Street from Cass Street (north) to Charles Street (south).
- Early commercial development focused at Broadway and George Street intersection, at the eastern end of the previous Claude Allouez Bridge. With opening of the new bridge in 2007, the former bridge landing is an open grass area at the Broadway grade, with surface parking at the lower Front Street level. Reuse of this strategic site is a high community priority.
- Broadway and George Street are traditional business district streets, lined by one and two-story buildings built to the property line. First floors typically house retail, service, hospitality, and office uses, with commercial and residential uses on upper levels.
- Automobile-oriented site configuration along Wisconsin Street, with single-level commercial buildings set back from the street by surface parking.
- Large-format retailing with ShopKo and associated shops north of James Street. Wisconsin Street continues on alignment as the drive in front of the ShopKo building. Outlot development on the property along Broadway includes a bank and gas station.

- Commercial blocks between Broadway and Wisconsin from the roundabout to James Street include interior parking and a number of rear business entrances. Between George and James, this has the character of an internal business center, with supporting street furnishings.
- Broadway configured as a four-lane arterial with parallel parking. Recent street improvements include thematic lighting, street reconstruction, new sidewalks, and street furniture.
- East-west cross streets include both diagonal and parallel parking. George and James Street are a one-way local pair between Wisconsin Street and Broadway, coordinated with new traffic patterns caused by the bridge and roundabout construction.

Issues

- Utilization of the former George Street bridge landing.
- Linkage between the riverfront and Fox River Trail and the East Bank commercial core.
- Perception of excessive traffic speed on Broadway. Difficulty of pedestrian access across Broadway and through the roundabout.
- Efficiency and quantity of parking supply serving the commercial core, and wayfinding to parking lots.



- Function and driveway connections of the interior of the Broadway/Wisconsin block south of George to the Wisconsin Street roundabout leg, and utilization of land on the south end of that block.
- Bicycle connections from the Claude Allouez Bridge bike lanes and paths to the Broadway corridor.
- Engagement of large retailers sited behind large parking lots to their fronting streets and the rest of the core district.

GEORGE STREET CORRIDOR

Defining Characteristics

- Diminished regional traffic role with the relocation of the Claude Allouez Bridge.
- Secondary mixed use commercial corridor between Broadway and Huron Street, with a combination of “main street” and free-standing building types. Buildings take on a smaller, residential scale east of Michigan Street.
- Recent public realm improvements include street reconstruction, new sidewalks, lighting, and defined crosswalks.



Issues

- Managing the transition between commercial and adjacent residential uses along the corridor to prevent encroachment of parking and non-residential uses into neighborhoods.
- Enhancing the scale and character of George Street with improved parking lot landscaping.

EAST SHORE

Defining Characteristics

- Fox River shore with about one mile of primarily public riverfront, including Voyageur Park.
- Primary transportation access provided by Front Street and the parallel Fox River Trail. The 20-mile multi-use trail is a major regional feature connecting Washington Street in Downtown Green Bay with Greenleaf, and is paved through De Pere.
- Major riverside public features include Voyageur Park, the De Pere lock and canal; James Street walkway, Wells Park, and the Bomier Street boat ramp.
 - Voyageur Park's 21 acres, developed on a former landfill site, include picnic areas and shelters, restrooms, public fishing, extensive green space, in-



terpretive features, parking, and pathways with trail access.

- The lock and canal, providing boat passage around the dam and rapids, includes the historic lock tender's house and will be incorporated into the De Pere RiverWalk, beginning at Voyageur Park, continuing through the historic canal area, and continuing to a new pier extending about 300 feet into the Fox River.
- The James Street walkway follows the bank of the boat canal south from the James Street Inn to the Fox River Trail, and included overlooks and seating areas.
- Wells Park is about a one-acre linear open space south of the Claude Allouez Bridge, bounded by Broadway and Front Street. The parksite slopes from Broadway to the river, and provides parking off Front Street.
- Bomier Boat Ramp, accessible from Broadway by way of Bomier Street with frontage along the Fox River Trail.
- Private land uses in the East Shore subarea include a condominium development with boat access south of Voyageur Park, the historic James Street Inn, and adaptive residential reuse of the historic Lawton Foundry.

Issues

- Improved linkage of the riverfront and Fox River Trail to the Broadway business core. Critical to this is the re-utilization of the former bridge landing site at George Street in common with the Broadway core, the nucleus of this necessary connectedness.
- Using the RiverWalk to enhance the East Bank business environment.
- Greater public use of and neighborhood access to Voyageur Park.
- Increasing development intensity along the riverfront, consistent with market potential. The Downtown market analysis suggests a continued strong demand in Downtown De Pere for medium-rise housing with river views.
- Promoting productive public use of Wells Park. This park is a sloped lawn between Broadway and Front Street, but offers little public accommodation other than parking.

CITY CAMPUS

Defining Characteristics

- City Hall complex including facilities for administration and public safety services on block between Broadway, Wisconsin, Lewis, and Merrill /Chicago Street. Recent construction has rebuilt city hall parking and improved Chicago Street access to Broadway.
- Redevelopment site, proposed for new dental offices, on south side of the Claude Allouez Bridge roundabout.
- Notre Dame Middle School on east side of Wisconsin Street.
- Major traffic pattern changes created when bridge and roundabout relocation tied the Claude Allouez bridge directly to Wisconsin Street.



Issues

- Completing office redevelopment on south side of roundabout.
- Improving comfortable pedestrian access through the roundabout.

THE WEST BANK

Distinguishing features of Downtown De Pere's West Bank include:

- Small-scale retail and restaurant/bar/entertainment uses, with some orientation to the campus community.
- Major mixed use redevelopment, including substantial office, senior and condominium residential, hotel, and first floor commercial uses.
- Contiguous St. Norbert College campus includes the entire area east of 3rd Street, with campus expansion occurring to the west.

- Major industrial riverfront dominated physically by the Thilmany paper plant.
- East-west one-way pair of major streets that moves traffic rapidly through the district.
- No public park or property on the west shore of the river within the Downtown area proper. Public access is permitted through the St. Norbert campus.

Its constituent subareas include:

- Main Avenue
- Reid Street Redevelopment Areas
- St. Norbert Campus
- Wilson Park
- Industrial Riverfront



MAIN AVENUE

Defining Characteristics

- Traditional “main street” district with one- and two-story commercial buildings built to the property line.
- “Main street” character is strongest on both sides of the street between 3rd and 4th Streets, and on south side between 4th and 5th Streets. Most buildings here date from late 19th and early 20th century, built in commercial vernacular styles.
- Despite significant retailing along the street, eating and drinking places are dominant storefront occupants.
- Many south side storefronts also have back entrances, opening out to off-street parking lots. Parallel alley on the south side has some characteristics of a public street.
- Main Avenue section provides two west-bound through lanes, a west-bound bike lane, and parallel parking on both sides. Traffic tends to accelerate off the Claude Allouez Bridge, and moves through the district relatively quickly.
- Streetscape shows some signs of age.



Issues

- Traffic speeds along Main Avenue, making the district difficult for motorists to “read” as they move along the street and degrade the pedestrian environment.
- Improved local circulation and pedestrian access across the street.
- Upgrading and revitalization of the downtown streetscape.
- Improved public connection between Main Avenue entrances and parking areas behind buildings.
- Façade and building reinvestment and more readable business signage.
- Improved utilization over time of properties on the north side of Main between 4th and 5th Streets.

REID STREET REDEVELOPMENT AREAS

Defining Characteristics

Major contemporary redevelopment projects have largely rebuilt the south part of the West Bank district. Uses incorporate street-level retailing, office, hotel, and residential uses. Specific project areas include:



- Nicolet Square (north side of Reid Street from 3rd to 4th). Least intensive of the Reid Street projects, consisting of a large surface parking lot and a free-standing commercial building on the east side of the site with two restaurants spaces. Some Main Avenue businesses maintain a second entrance oriented to the adjacent alley and Nicolet Square parking lot.
- Reid Street Crossing (north side of Reid Street west of 4th Street). Street-oriented, two-story mixed use project defining the Reid Street frontage. First floor is designed for retail and service uses, with office occupancy on the upper floor. Architecture reflects traditional business district forms, using brick facades and historic details. Reid Street businesses and some Main Avenue businesses have second entrances from an interior parking lot.
- Marquette Centre (north side of Reid Street east of 5th Street). Contemporary three-story office building with traditional architectural elements, including brick facades and details with historic references. Surface parking is located on the balance of the site, extending to Main Avenue. Site was designed to accommodate a second office structure.
- Nicolet Professional Arts block (Reid to Grant Street from 3rd to 4th). Redevelopment site includes three-story contemporary office building housing Humana



Dental; three-story Kress Inn Hotel, owned by St. Norbert College; and a restaurant. Office building is set back to the southwest part of the block, separated from Reid Street by a large surface lot. Hotel shares a St. Norbert parking lot across Grant Street. Building design is consistent with other architecture in West Bank redevelopment areas, with brick facades and traditional details. Large surface lot south of College Avenue immediately east of the railroad tracks provides overflow parking for Humana.

- Residential Redevelopment Blocks (4th Street to Thilmany spur, Reid to College Streets). Projects include Nicolet Highlands, a three-story, senior apartment project over parking in a street-oriented quadrangle configuration between Reid and Grant Streets; and Joliet Square Apartments between Grant and College Streets with two buildings, planned for five structures at full build-out. Site immediately west of Nicolet Highlands across 5th Street includes two free-standing restaurants. Fourth Street frontage of the Joliet Apartment block includes Wisconsin International School and Crosspoint Church.



Issues

- Enhancing the Main/Reid Alley as a local business street complementing the more heavily trafficked Main and Reid corridors.
- Improved local circulation and access across Reid Street.
- Completing planned build-out of existing projects, including Marquette Centre and Joliet Apartments.
- Maintaining necessary parking supply while reducing the visual exposure of surface parking along Reid Street.
- Continuing the precedent of street-oriented contemporary development along Reid, established by the Reid Street Crossing and Nicolet Highlands developments.
- Accommodating the International School at its current location. The school's site is relatively small, parking is inadequate, and students use adjacent Wilson Park for recreation, requiring them to cross 4th Street.



ST. NORBERT COLLEGE CAMPUS

Defining Characteristics

- Primary campus of St. Norbert College, a leading Catholic liberal arts college founded in 1898, occupies a contiguous site between 3rd Street and the Fox River north of Stewart Street.
- Campus sphere of influence, reinforced by substantial property ownership, now extends west to 4th Street, emerging as the campus boundary. Substantial new campus construction is occurring along the west side of 3rd Street.
- Campus commands a substantial amount of the west shore of the Fox River and has developed some features to increase public access to the riverfront.

Issues

- With campus expansion, defining the future traffic role of 3rd Street in the city's transportation system.
- Expanded campus and public access to the west shore of the Fox River.



- Improved physical connections and expanded interaction, including business development, between the campus and Downtown De Pere.
- Campus parking as adjacent parking lots are developed with college facilities.
- Implementation of projects envisioned by campus master plan.
- Policy changes at St. Norbert College, requiring students to live on campus, affecting the area's rental market.
- Determining the location and character of the boundary between the neighborhood and the campus.
- Possible traffic changes through the neighborhood if 3rd Street is increasingly internal to the college.

WILSON PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

Defining Characteristics

- Residential neighborhood south of the commercial district with single-family houses and tree-lined streets, with both owner- and renter-occupied units. Student rentals affected the neighborhood's residential character.
- Wilson Park, a small but well-used neighborhood park at 4th and College.

Issues

- Neighborhood stabilization, with some community residents perceiving neglect of rental houses by property owners.

INDUSTRIAL RIVERFRONT

Defining Characteristics

- Thilmany paper plant dominates the view of the west bank of the Fox from the Claude Allouez Bridge, and is De Pere's primary waterfront industry. US Paper Mills also located along the river on Ft. Howard Avenue, north of the downtown area.
- Thilmany complex is located behind Main Avenue buildings from the river to 4th Street, and includes several additions, with historic wings overhanging the river. Access is from 4th and 5th Streets.
- Much of the riverfront behind industries and houses along North 6th Street is open space with significant tree cover. However, these areas lack public access.



- City ice rink, boat launch, and Brown County Fairgrounds are located about 0.4 miles north of the US Paper plant along the river, separated by a residential area with private river access.

Issues

- Possible public riverfront access and utilization of open land between 5th Street and beginning of private residential river access, with linkages north to the Fairgrounds and Ashwaubonay Park.
- Long-term future of the Thilmany plant. Plant appears economically stable for the foreseeable future.

LAND AND BUILDING USE

Table 2.1 presents building use information for the Downtown study area, compiled individually for the East and West Banks. These calculations exclude St. Norbert College and concentrate on buildings in commercial use. Gross floor area in Downtown is about 773,000 square feet, with about 519,000 square feet at street level. Key findings include:

- **A preponderance of retail space east of the Fox River.** The East Bank has about twice the retail space as the West Bank (about 240,000 square feet and 128,000 square feet respectively). ShopKo contributes substantially to the relative retail dominance of the east side of the river.
- **A relatively even distribution of office space on both sides of the river.** Contemporary redevelopment projects have given the west side slightly more office space than the east side (140,000 square feet against 125,000 square feet).
- **Primary use of street level storefronts for retail goods and services.** About 70% of all street level space in the entire study area is in retail use. About 21% of street level space is used for offices.
- **Vacancy rates are relatively manageable through the study area.** Street level vacancy averages 7.4%, with higher vacancy on the west side. On the other hand, vacancy in contemporary office buildings on the West Bank is very low, less than 3%.

Map 2.2 identify street-level building use, while GIS database includes upper story uses..

Table 2.1: Distribution of Space by Location then Category, Downtown De Pere

Table 2.1: Distribution of Space by Location then Category, Downtown De Pere

Location/ Category	West Downtown		East Downtown		Total	
	Square Feet	Percent of Category by Level	Square Feet	Percent of Category by Level	Square Feet	Percent of Category by Level
Street Level Space						
Retail	128,818	67.2%	240,447	73.6%	369,265	71.2%
Office	44,333	23.1%	66,565	20.4%	110,898	21.4%
Vacant	18,674	9.7%	19,875	6.1%	38,549	7.4%
Subtotal	191,824	100.0%	326,887	100.0%	518,711	100.0%
Upper Level Space						
Retail	14,111	24.5%	12,713	16.6%	26,824	20.0%
Office	22,328	38.8%	29,467	38.6%	51,795	38.7%
Vacant	21,075	36.6%	34,194	44.8%	55,269	41.3%
Subtotal	57,514	100.0%	76,374	100.0%	133,887	100.0%
Office Buildings						
Occupied	72,282	97.4%	30,000	64.5%	102,282	84.7%
Vacant	1,914	2.6%	16,500	35.5%	18,414	15.3%
Subtotal	74,196	100.0%	46,500	100.0%	120,696	100.0%
Total	323,534		449,761		773,294	

Source: City of De Pere; AECOM, 2009

Map 2.2 Building Use, Street Level, 2009 (subsequent levels in GIS)



HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

De Pere's rich community history is reflected by a significant number of historically significant commercial and residential buildings and districts. Many of downtown's commercial buildings are excellent examples of late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial vernacular architecture, many of which appear eligible individually for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. While some structures have undergone major alterations, continued investment, guided by the city's Main Street Program, has produced a visually appealing and pleasant district.

NATIONAL REGISTER LISTINGS AND ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES

The following inventory of Register and Register-eligible properties summarizes relevant material from the Intensive Survey Report prepared in 2001 by consultant Tim Haggland for De Pere.

National Register Listings

- Union House Hotel, 200 N. Broadway
- Lawton Foundry Apartments, 233 N. Broadway
- Old De Pere Public Library by Foeller, Schober, and Berners, 380 Main Avenue
- Main Hall by W.C. Reynolds (St. Norbert College campus), 3rd and College

National Register Eligible Buildings

- J. Steckart & J. Falck Double Block, 112-116 N. Broadway
- State Bank of De Pere Building by Henry Foeller, 127 N. Broadway

- Julius Krause Store Building, 106 S. Broadway
- J. Baeten Building, 620 George Street
- Hotel Roffers by Alfred Fleck, 500 Grant Street
- Shattuck & Babcock Co. Paper Mill by D.H. & A.B. Tower, 200 Main Avenue

HISTORIC ASSESSMENT

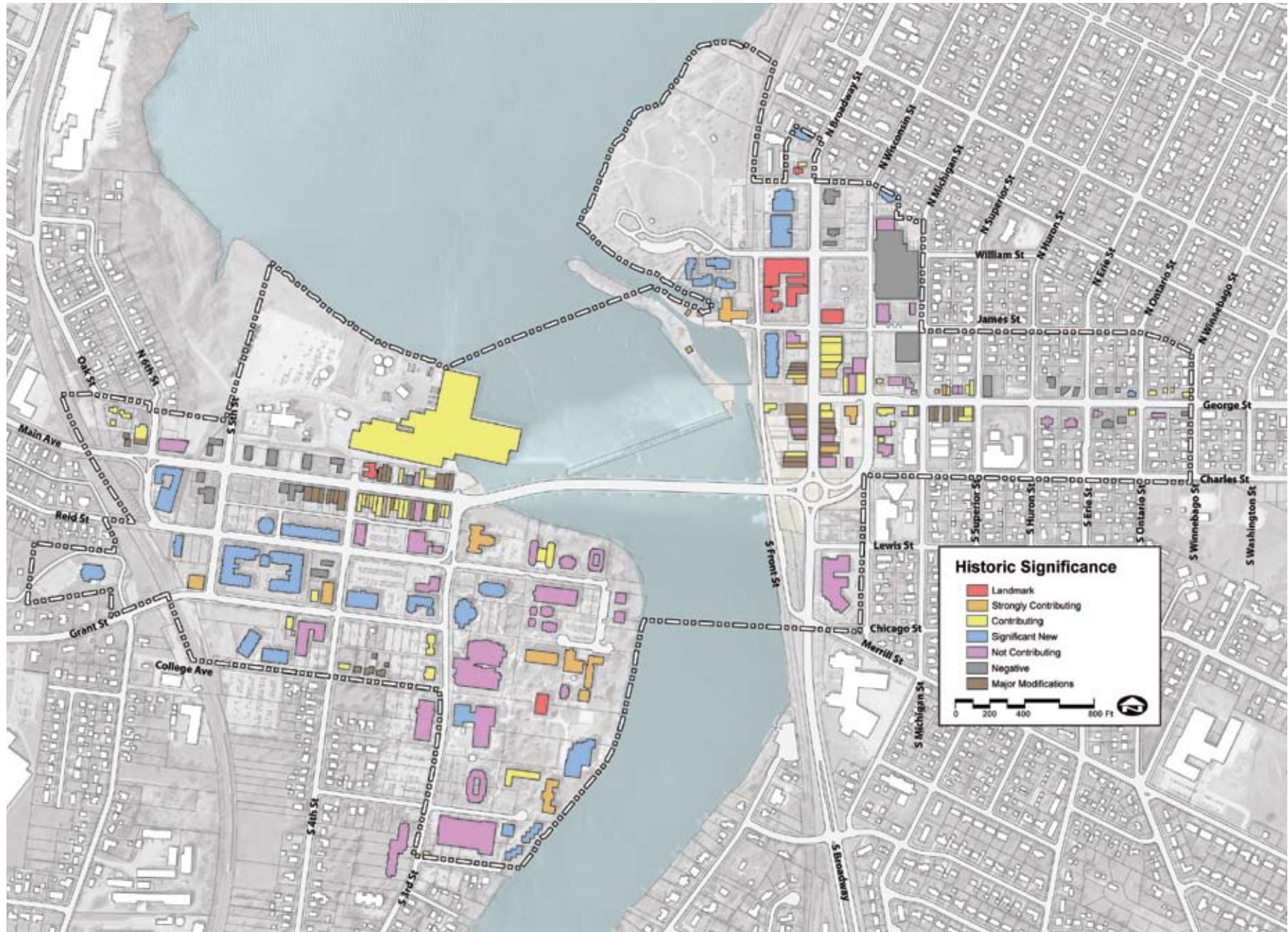
Map 2.3, the Historic Assessment Map classifies downtown buildings in the following categories.

- **Landmarks.** These are buildings judged to be of essential historic significance and are either listed on or eligible for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Examples include the Hotel Roffers Building, Union House Hotel and State Bank of De Pere Building.
- **Strongly Contributing Buildings.** These individual structures contribute to the character or fabric of the National Register district. Some may also be eligible for individual listing. Examples include 106 South Broadway and 371 Main Avenue.
- **Background Contributing Buildings.** These buildings were typically built before World War II and represent examples of vernacular commercial architecture. While probably not individually eligible for Register listing, they generally contribute to the character of their overall context through having similar construction materials and setbacks.
- **Significant New Buildings.** These are relatively contemporary buildings that represent substantial capital investments. Examples include Reid Street Crossing and the Nicolet Professional Arts Building.
- **Not Contributing.** These are structures that do not contribute to the structure or fabric of a significant historic or design district.



- **Negative.** These are typically structures that detract from the fabric of a district because of deteriorating condition or appearance. However, these structures could be adaptive reuse candidates.
- **Major Modification.** These represent structures that have undergone major modifications and do not contribute to the integrity of the district in their current form. Some of these buildings have been modified with a screen or façade treatment that may be reversed.

Map 2.3 Historic Assessment, 2009



HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Downtown De Pere and immediately surrounding areas include six historic districts, including:

- **Fox River Lock and Dam (East Bank).** These structures are an important link to the city's heritage and connection to the Fox River. Many local industries used hydropower, and were built directly over the dam. The lock was an important connection in the shipment of goods between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River via the Fox/Wisconsin canal system. While no longer used for the production or shipment of goods, the canal continues to accommodate small boats. The proposed RiverWalk will incorporate this unique district the riverfront park and recreational system.
- **Main Avenue District (south side of the 300 block of Main Avenue, West Bank).** When railroad service came to the region, West De Pere quickly developed along Main Avenue as the primary route of access between the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad and De Pere. This eighteen building district contains the most intact concentration of nineteenth and twentieth century commercial buildings on the west side of the river. These buildings range from one to two stories in height, and all but one is faced with brick. Among its commercial vernacular styles, the district also includes the neoclassical Bank of West De Pere building at 371 Main Avenue.
- **South Broadway District (east side of the 100 block of Broadway, East Bank).** This district consists of six, one- and two-story brick buildings on the east side of South Broadway's 100 block, built rapidly after a devastating fire in 1882. Because of their virtually simultaneous construction with the same material, these building facades blend seamlessly with the one adjacent to it.
- **North Broadway District (East Bank).** The district has long been home to some of De Pere's most af-

fluent families. Architectural styles within the district vary, but many buildings are attributed to the late Victorian style.

- **North Michigan Street/ North Superior Street District (East Bank).** This historic residential district is located to the north of downtown East De Pere, and is comprised of small to medium-size homes. Examples of nearly every architectural style and vernacular form are present within the district, and were generally built between 1860 and 1950.
- **Randall Avenue District (East Bank).** Development patterns within the district were some of the first to be shaped by the introduction of the car as a part of American culture. The majority of homes within the district date from the inter-war years of 1920 to 1940 and the district include examples of Colonial, Georgian, and Tudor Revival styles.

In addition, other multi-building districts that could produce additional National Register listings include:

- The balance of the Broadway commercial district, from the Bridge roundabout to James Street.
- The balance of the Main Avenue commercial district, from 3rd to 5th Street, excluding the north side of the 400 block.
- The St. Norbert College campus.

Importance of Historic Designation

The Lawton Foundry Apartments and James Street Inn demonstrate the importance of historic preservation as part of a downtown development strategy. Listing on the National and State Registers of Historic Places make substantial investment tax credits available to developers and owners. Federal tax credits are typically directed to income producing properties, while state credits are also available to individual owners, including owner-occupants.

BUILDING CONDITIONS

Map 2.4 identifies the condition of structures throughout the downtown district, tabulated in a survey conducted during the summer of 2009. Structures were placed into one of five categories, including:

- **Excellent.** New or rehabilitated structure with no discernible deficiencies.
- **Good.** Well-maintained structure with three or fewer minor non-structural deficiencies.
- **Fair.** Structurally sound building with minor repair or rehabilitation needs.
- **Poor.** Structure with one major deficiency and minor non-structural needs. Typically these buildings are deteriorating and show evidence of significant rehabilitation needs.
- **Dilapidated.** A structure that appears to be too deteriorated for feasible rehabilitation.

The evaluation considers the condition of the foundation, exterior walls, fascia and eaves, windows, and doors. In general, the building stock within the traditional downtown is in good to moderate condition, although some buildings require rehabilitation. The survey is intended only to suggest patterns for rehabilitation needs. Major findings include:

- **West Bank.** Structures ranked lower for the Main Avenue corridor than other parts of the study area. Generally, Main Avenue structures ranked in the middle of the condition scale, with some variances. As discussed earlier, much of the West Bank has experienced significant redevelopment during the last 20 years, producing a large number of structures in excellent condition.
- **East Bank.** Rehabilitation of the Lee Building, Lawton Foundry and James Street Inn are major achievements for east side restoration. As a rule, older buildings on the East Bank appear to be in better condition than

Map 2.4 Building Conditions, 2009



their counterparts across the river. Buildings immediately north of the roundabout had lower condition ratings than buildings farther north. Some of these structures are pending grant approval for façade improvements.

MOVING AROUND DOWNTOWN

This section summarizes key patterns for motor vehicles, transit, and pedestrian and bicycle transportation in and around downtown De Pere. Map 2.5 illustrates these patterns and identifies key areas for improvements.

THE STREET NETWORK: KEY ELEMENTS

Regional Circulation

The regional road network links De Pere to communities in northern and southeastern Wisconsin.

- **Interstate 43, US Highway 41, and Wisconsin 172.** These routes provide regional access to De Pere and connect the city to Green Bay, Milwaukee, Appleton and the Fox Cities.
- **Wisconsin Highway 57 (Broadway) is the main thoroughfare north/south for traffic traveling to communities between Green Bay and Milwaukee east of the Fox River.** Highway 57, as Broadway through the East Bank of Downtown De Pere, is one of the district's main shopping streets and passes through the roundabout on the east end of the new Claude Allouez Bridge. Broadway is a four-lane facility with parallel parking through the business district north of the roundabout, with four lanes without parking south of the bridge.
- **Wisconsin Highway 32 (Main Avenue/Reid Street) connects the two banks of Downtown De Pere to each other over the Claude Allouez Bridge, and continues west to an interchange with US 41.** This highway forms an important regional connection between northern Wisconsin, Ashwaubenon, and Sheboygan along Lake Michigan.

East Bank

- **The East Bank is served by a modified grid of streets.** Its principal north-south streets are Broadway and Wisconsin, which now converge at the multi-lane roundabout at the east end of the Claude Allouez Bridge. George Street was the traditional east-west corridor through this part of the district, but its role has changed with new traffic patterns created by the relocated bridge. Recent modifications to the grid include:
 - **A direct connection between Wisconsin Street and the bridge through the roundabout.** This also links the two major north-south corridors, but breaks Wisconsin Street continuity south to Chicago and Merrill Streets.
 - **Conversion of George and James Street to a single-lane one-way pair between Wisconsin and Broadway.** Both streets provide diagonal parking on one side and are generally not used by through traffic.
 - **Traffic signals on Broadway at William Street, serving the ShopKo development and Merrill/Chicago Street, serving the City Hall area.** Front Street, the local service street along the riverfront, also intersects Broadway at this intersection.
 - **Continuation of Wisconsin Street north of James Street as a service drive within the ShopKo development.**

West Bank

The West Bank of Downtown De Pere is oriented to the Main/Reid one-way pair between 6th Street and the west approach of the Claude Allouez Bridge. Both streets provide two one-way moving lanes with parallel parking (Main Avenue westbound, Reid Street eastbound). In addition, Main Avenue's wider right-of-way also accommodates a westbound bike lane. Third and Fourth Streets provide principal north-south access through the West Bank area. To the south, 3rd and 4th converge south of



Lande Street, and 3rd continues as Lost Dauphin Road along the east shore to Wrightstown. Both streets are two-way collectors providing a single lane in each direction. Other features and issues presented by the West Bank street network include:

- **Grant Street.** Grant is a two-way collector serving the south side of the district, and continues west with a grade crossing at the railroad, connecting Downtown to the community center. Grant Street also includes painted bike lanes from 3rd Street to the community center.
- **Main Avenue and 6th Street/Fort Howard.** This intersection combines a free-flow movement at the Main/Reid divergence and an intersection with Fort Howard Avenue, a regional minor arterial that serves the Fairgrounds and continues north as Broadway to major destinations in Ashwaubenon and Green Bay. This creates potential conflicts between movements that present challenges for all modes.
- **Third and Reid Streets.** This signalized intersection provides a double left-turn that directs eastbound travelers to the Fox River Bridge, and permits a return onto westbound Main Avenue. While relatively efficient, the design creates some difficulties for pedestrians traveling between the St. Norbert campus and the Main/Reid districts.

Existing Circulation

- Major Corridor
- Community Streets
- Alley Drives
- Significant Intersection
- Major Intersection

0 200 400 800 Ft

- **Main/Reid Alley.** The alley serves as a two-way local circulator route to access businesses and parking. The alley has some of the characteristics of a local street, including storefront entrances and some pedestrian access, and is used for counterflow movements by motorists. For example, westbound customers bound for stores on the south side of Main Avenue may pass their destination on the one-way westbound street, returning via the eastbound alley.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Safe, pleasant, and seamless pedestrian access is vital in human-scaled business districts like Downtown De Pere. Downtown offers significant features to pedestrians, including:

- A complete sidewalk system in generally good condition.
- The new Claude Allouez Bridge, providing generously scaled pedestrian and bicycle paths on both sides.
- The Fox River Trail along the east bank of the river.
- Parking and secondary pathways internal to key commercial blocks, including the Main to Reid blocks from 3rd to 5th Streets on the West Bank (Nicolet Square and Reid Street Crossing); and the Broadway to Wisconsin blocks between the bridge approach to James Street on the East Bank (Mission Square).

However, the combination of a wide river separating two banks of the central district and traffic flow characteristics also create significant issues and potential obstacles to smooth and comfortable pedestrian access. The distance between the two banks of Downtown De Pere, approaching a half-mile between business areas, is a significant factor that has been addressed as well as possible for pedestrians through a thoughtfully designed and commodious bridge. However, it does discourage casual travel between the two sides of the district. Other significant issues include:

- **Pedestrian access at the bridge approaches.** The west approach provides a pedestrian crossing near a chicane designed to calm traffic as it comes off the bridge into the Main Avenue business environment. The crossing is marked by a blinking pedestrian sign and dedicated crosswalk. However, traffic tends to accelerate both entering and exiting the bridge, and motorists do not expect pedestrians to cross Main Avenue at this transition point so near the bridge throat. Traffic is distributed at the east approach by a multi-lane roundabout, and this provides a smooth pedestrian path from the north bridge pathway to northbound Broadway and the south pathway to southbound Broadway. Other pedestrian movements are much more complex. The south pathway provides a switch-back loop to the Front Street/Fox River Trail level, continuing north under the bridge. Other movements require pedestrians to negotiate the roundabout at surface level.
- **Crossing Main Avenue.** On the West Bank, the most intensive two-sided business development occurs on the long 300 block. The 4th Street intersection is signalized, but the existing crossing at the bridge throat is uncomfortable for many users for the reasons mentioned above. In addition, traffic flow tends to be relatively continuous with few gaps because of the efficiency of the roundabout at the east approach. As a result, many pedestrians attempt to hurry across Main at midblock between the defined crosswalks, creating a potentially hazardous situation.
- **Access to Main Avenue businesses from parking lots.** While Main Avenue provides parallel parking, much of the parking supply serving these businesses is located behind commercial buildings, either in the alley between Thilmany and Main Avenue commercial businesses on the north side or in the Nicolet Square and Reid Street Crossing blocks on the south side. Pedestrians use gaps in the building line to create informal paths between parking areas and Main Avenue storefronts.
- **Crossing Broadway.** Broadway is unsignalized along the two-sided commercial blocks between the roundabout and William Street. As a result, pedestrians have difficulty crossing the four-lane arterial. The George and James Street intersections provide well-defined crosswalks and have experimented with an orange flag system that pedestrians are encouraged to use to increase their visibility to motorists. While state law requires motorists to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk, relying on this law and the visibility provided by the flags requires a leap of faith that most pedestrians avoid.
- **Negotiating the Roundabout.** The multi-lane Broadway/Wisconsin roundabout includes defined crosswalks at its approaches. However, pedestrians crossing at these points must contend with motorists who are concentrating on shooting gaps in a continuous traffic flow and finding the lane that gets them to their destination. This uncomfortable condition causes all but fairly fearless and very able-bodied pedestrians to avoid this crossing.

BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION

De Pere has developed a network of bicycle facilities through the Downtown district that make bicycle transportation a viable option. These facilities include:

- **The Fox River Trail, paralleling Broadway and providing business access through east-west cross connections.** Redevelopment of the George Street Landing and surrounding areas should include bicycle access between the trail and Broadway levels of the East Bank. The Fox River Trail continues north to Green Bay's Washington Street district north of the Mason Street Bridge.
- **The Claude Allouez Bridge, providing both wide multi-purpose sidepaths on both sides of the bridge and on-road bike lanes.** The eastbound bike lane provides a good transition to a southbound bike



lane on Broadway and a switchback ramp to the Fox River Trail. The westbound bike lane continues along Main Avenue to Fort Howard Avenue.

- **Main Avenue/Fort Howard/Broadway (Green Bay) bike lanes and route.** As mentioned above, the westbound bike lane of the Claude Allouez Bridge continues along Main Avenue to Fort Howard Avenue (6th Street). This leads to a west shore bike route, using marked bike lanes along Fort Howard Avenue (or for a short distance, a designated northbound bike route on 6th Street) to Broadway in Ashwaubenon and Green Bay. This route connects Downtown De Pere with the De Pere Recreation Center, boat launch, Brown County Fairgrounds, Ashwaubanay Park, National Railroad Museum, and other attractions; and continues north to the Main Street bridge in Green Bay, with access into Downtown Green Bay. The southbound route terminates at Main and Fort Howard, leaving the southbound cyclist with the challenge of negotiating the Main to Reid Street divergence without a defined path.
- **Grant Street Bike Lanes.** Grant Street features painted bike lanes between the De Pere Community Center and 3rd Street. The lane continues north on 3rd Street and merges into the eastbound path and bike lane on the Claude Allouez Bridge.



Potential improvements to be considered in enhancing this already very useful system include:

- Safely connecting the southbound Fort Howard Avenue bike route into the Downtown De Pere system and the Claude Allouez Bridge lanes and pathways.
- Improved connections between the Fox River Trail and the Broadway/Wisconsin core business districts on the East Bank.
- Improved eastbound bicycle access along Reid Street.
- Bicycle connections between St. Norbert College and the rest of the Downtown district.
- Expanded and more convenient bicycle parking.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Bus Transit. Green Bay Metro's Route 17 currently serves Downtown De Pere. This line is a service route that links four local service loops together. The route provides bi-directional service over the Claude Allouez Bridge, with loops on the East Bank that operate along George Street and Broadway and on the West Bank along 3rd Street and westbound Main Avenue. Route 17 operates



on one-hour headways. Its primary purpose is to connect residential neighborhoods with schools, commercial centers, and some employment concentrations in De Pere. It interchanges along Broadview between Libal and Webster with routes serving Downtown Green Bay. While the route provides useful local services, it does not provide an effective shuttle service between the two banks of the river and other related features. Such a service, called "De Bus" was attempted in the past, but did not experience sufficient use to continue operation.

Rail Transit. Downtown De Pere is served by a freight-only Union Pacific (ex Chicago and Northwestern) rail line on its western edge. The possibility of expanded passenger service in Wisconsin, specifically in the Fox Cities corridor between Milwaukee and Green Bay, could open the prospect of rail passenger service on this line.

PARKING DOWNTOWN

The supply, and quality of parking is an important issue for Downtown De Pere, as well as comparable districts. Parking must be available, visible, and convenient without dominating the district and compromising its scale and pedestrian quality. Map 2.6 illustrates the study area's existing parking, and Table 2.2 summarizes the total parking supply for the East and West Banks. The area has about 3,700 stalls and unusually, about 86% of these are in off-street facilities. Parking is relatively evenly distributed between East and West Banks, a potential issue for the East Bank because of its larger retail base. The majority of off-street parking within De Pere is provided by private owners.

Parking Demand. Map 2.6 illustrates the parking demand by block and identifies blocks with deficiencies and surpluses. Calculations are based on demand generated by each 1,000 square feet of use. For example every 1,000 square feet of retail space generates an estimated demand for 3 stalls. Table 2.3 summarizes the parking ratios used for calculating total parking demand by block.

Based on this methodology, the study area demands slightly more than 4,000 spaces, with an East Bank demand for about 2,400 spaces and a West Bank requirement for 1,600 spaces. Map 2.7 compiles this information by block and indicates areas with surpluses and deficits between supply and demand.

PARKING ISSUES

Specific parking issues for Downtown De Pere include:

West Bank

- The 300 Block of Main Avenue has a relative balance between supply and demand. Main Avenue uses generate the majority of this demand. On-street parking along Main is limited and somewhat hard to read because of the geometry of the bridge exit. As a result, a significant amount of parking is provided on the Nicolet Square block.
- The Nicolet Professional Arts (Humana Dental) block generates a large demand for parking. The high employment density in this building generates a minimum demand of 4 stalls for every 1,000 square feet, resulting in a deficit of 81 spaces. This is offset by a remote surface lot adjacent to the railroad south of College between 4th and 5th Streets. Humana Dental currently directs staff to use this remote parking.
- Conventional calculations suggest a deficit of about 80 stalls on the Nicolet Highlands Senior Apartments block, calculating on-street, off-street surface lot, and underground parking. However, senior housing requires less parking per unit and field inspections do not suggest any overflowing into surrounding blocks.
- Future development at Joliet Square Apartments should provide adequate on-site parking to meet current and projected needs.
- Surface parking dominates the streetscape along Reid Street, and these lots provide opportunities for new development. Opening sites for new growth while maintaining required parking supply will require the use of structured parking.

Table 2.2: Overall Parking Supply & Demand

	East	West	Total
On-Street	242	221	463
Off-Street	1789	1484	3273
Total Supply	2031	1705	3736
Demand	2436	1626	4062

Source: RDG Planning & Design

Table 2.3: Parking Demand Ratios by Building Use

Building Use	Demand Per 1,000 Square Feet
Automotive	3.00
Civic Uses	2.50
School	2.50
Office	3.00-4.00
Public Facilities	2.00
Multi-Family	1.50
Hospitality	3.00
Restaurant/ Entertainment	3.00
Retail	3.00
Services	2.50
Industrial	1.00

Source: RDG Planning & Design

[illegible]

East Bank

- Some parking lots, such as those located along the west side of Broadway, do not appear to meet the total demand generated by area business. The lot at the old George Street Bridge Landing is rarely at full capacity as customers and employees tend to park in more convenient locations in the district and then walk from store to store. Nevertheless, appropriate signage and a parking structure would help relieve some of deficiency.
- More efficient design of public parking in the “Mission Square” blocks can add some additional parking in strategic demand areas.

Overall District

- Concentrations of private and public offices in the overall plan area creates high parking demands in specific areas, including City Hall, St. Norbert College, and the Nicolet Professional Arts Building.
- Directional information and public access to parking facilities is frequently unclear. While parking lots are evenly located throughout the district, it is not clear whether they are available to the general public or are restricted to specific users. A parking wayfinding system could direct visitors to publicly available spaces and help to utilize existing lots more efficiently.
- Lots located to the rear of businesses and on the periphery that visitors consider inconvenient become more acceptable if the routes between parking stalls and destinations feel pleasant, comfortable, and full of activity.
- Additional parking structures in areas of high den-

sity and demand could relieve parking deficiencies, particularly for the 300 Block of Reid Street and the area near Broadway and George Street.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES

Map 2.7 identifies key development opportunities, which are explored in more detail in Chapter Four:

1. The northeast corner of Main and Fort Howard.

This site, across Fort Howard Avenue from a neighborhood-scaled commercial group and across Main from the 555 West Main Condominiums, now has a commercial building adapted to church uses. Topography of the site and its strategic location suggests an excellent opportunity for mixed-use development, including a significant residential component with river views.

2. Marquette Centre Parking Lot.

Developing a portion of the surface lot with new construction would increase density in the urban environment.

3. The north side of Main Avenue from 4th to 5th Streets.

Land now in relatively low-intensity use should be upgraded, providing greater yield and consistency with the more intensive commercial character of the south side of the street.

4. Reid Street from 3rd Street to 4th Street.

This section of Reid Street is dominated by surface parking serving Main Avenue businesses and the Nicolet Professional Arts Building. Street-oriented mixed use development with adequate parking for existing and new uses would continue the land use precedent established by the Reid Street Crossing project.

5. The Joliet Square project

located on the south side of the 5th and Grant Streets intersection. Initial site plans for this site included the development of a three building apartment complex with underground parking and two retail structures. Completing this development also fills a gap between Downtown and the

De Pere Community Center. An adjacent site, owned by St. Norbert College and used for surface parking, may also be part of a larger development project.

6. Humana Block.

The Humana building is setback from the street and surrounded by surface parking. Improvements for this block should consider development opportunities that strengthen Reid Street's urban feel and address the overall parking deficiency for the area.

7. The former George Street Bridge Landing

at the intersection of Broadway and George Street and Front Street from George Street to the Claude Allouez Bridge. This critical and highly public site is an opportunity for substantial civic and adjacent private development, and is a focus for attention on the East Bank. Development of this site should also incorporate the adjacent public parking ramp that takes up the grade between Front Street and Broadway, and must provide adequate parking to accommodate existing and proposed uses.

8. North corner of the Roundabout,

at the junction of Wisconsin Street and Broadway. This site, with premium exposure to motorists traveling to the east side of De Pere, provides a highly visible and strategic development opportunity. The site is currently used for parking, and may include assembly with some adjacent buildings. A project here would complement the Mac Dental proposal and define the roundabout with high quality private investment.

9. Wells Park.

The open space slopes from Broadway to Front Street, providing public parking for the trail along Front Street. The land is conveniently located in the City and presents excellent access to the Fox River, trail and the downtown core.

10. Mac Dental Project.

This office project, planned for the south side of the Roundabout between Broadway and Wisconsin, is designed as a multi-tenant LEED-certified facility. An office project of substantial scale is a highly desirable use at this important site.

Map 2.7: Opportunity Sites, 2009



Chapter 3

47

Strategic Planning



People who work together will win, whether it be against complex football defenses, or the problems of modern society.

-Vince Lombardi

A REVIEW OF THE GOAL-SETTING PROCESS

This plan's concepts flow from the opinions and perceptions of those who know it best – its residents and people who work or invest in the Downtown. While participation in a downtown planning process typically focuses on business and property owners, every resident of De Pere has a compelling interest in the heart of their city and had the opportunity to participate at some level.

Components of the public participation process included:

- **Public Questionnaire.** The planning process began with an opinion survey, which could be completed either on-line or in hard copy. The survey identified potential issues and goals, which stakeholder group meetings addressed more completely.
- **Kick-off Presentation.** An initial community kick-off event took place May 28, 2009. This event included a public presentation that discussed the planning process and presented strategies that comparable communities have pursued to improve and market their downtown.
- **Focus Group Discussions & Individual Interviews.** Focus groups provided seven days of discussions about the state of downtown and the overall downtown area, and explored issues and directions for the district. Also, several individual interviews provided in-depth understanding of the community's emerging issues.
- **Community Roundtable.** The public participated in round-table discussions with their peers to identify goals, issues, and aspirations for downtown and the community.
- **Design Workshops.** Two on-site design workshops took place on August 4th and September 14-16, 2009 to engage citizens, residents, business owners, and other stakeholders directly in conceptual planning for downtown. Participants shared their ideas, issues and concerns informally with the design team, and helped define and test concepts for the future of the planning area.
- **Downtown Steering Committee.** The Downtown Steering Committee met at key points during the planning process to review the progress of the plan and make revisions to the draft concepts.
- **Open House.** A public Open House occurred on May 12th, 2010 at the Bemis Center at St. Norbert College. The open house provided the public an opportunity to review and comment on the development plan before further development and adoption.

PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE

The process began with an opinion survey, designed to gather opinions and perceptions about Downtown De Pere. Over a seven-week period, 510 people completed the survey on-line or on paper. This section summarizes key results.

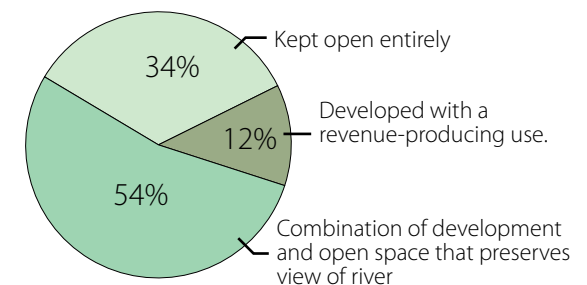
Downtown Features

A community questionnaire asked respondents to rank various features of downtown on 5 (excellent) to 1 (poor) scale. Results are tabulated and reported by the frequency of responses. Categories with the highest scores (most for 5's and 4's) include Streetscape and Public Environment, Quality of New Roundabout, Surround Neighborhood, Overall Appearance of the District, and Adequacy of Parking. Of these categories, about 20% of the respondents ranked the Quality of the Roundabout as excellent.

Categories receiving the lowest scores (most 1's and 2's) include Tourism, Cultural Facilities and Attractions, Amount of Business Attracted from Outside of De Pere, Public Perception of Westside, Music and Entertainment Scene, and Traffic Circulation. Of these categories, about 20% of the total respondents ranked Traffic Circulation as the poorest. Figure 3.1 presents the results of the rankings.



Figure 3.2: Old George Street Bridge Landing



In a follow-up question, the survey asked respondents to consider ideas and actions for improving downtown, again ranking them on a “5” (very important) to “1” (very unimportant) scale. Top-rated actions included:

- Attraction of New Retail Businesses (3.92)
- Preservation of Surrounding Historic Districts (3.86)
- Restoration of Historic Business Facades (3.84)
- Increased use of Voyageur Park (3.69)
- Improved Pedestrian Safety Crossings (3.64)
- Improved Trail Connections (3.62)
- More Restaurants and Entertainment (3.61)
- Special Events and Activities (3.60)
- Street and Traffic Flow Improvements (3.54)
- Better Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities (3.51)
- Design Guidelines for New Development (3.50)
- More Riverfront Development (3.50)

Quality of Corridors

Survey participants rated the health and quality of streets or sub-areas in downtown, again on a “5” to “1” scale. This helps to identify priorities by measuring satisfaction with parts of the district. The highest ranked area is North Broadway Street with 199 combined (4 & 5’s) responses. The lowest ranked area is the Westside Riverfront with 219 combined (1 & 2’s) responses. Table 3.1 presents the complete results.

Old George Street Bridge Landing

The question of what to do with Old George Street Bridge Landing is significant to De Pere. Participants were asked to select among three options to best describe the future of the site. About 54% said that the site should be a combination of development and open space that preserves views of the river. While 34% said that the site should be kept entirely open and 12% said that the site should be developed with a revenue-producing use.

Figure 3.1: Downtown Feature Rankings (ranked by frequency of 5-Excellent and 4-Good)

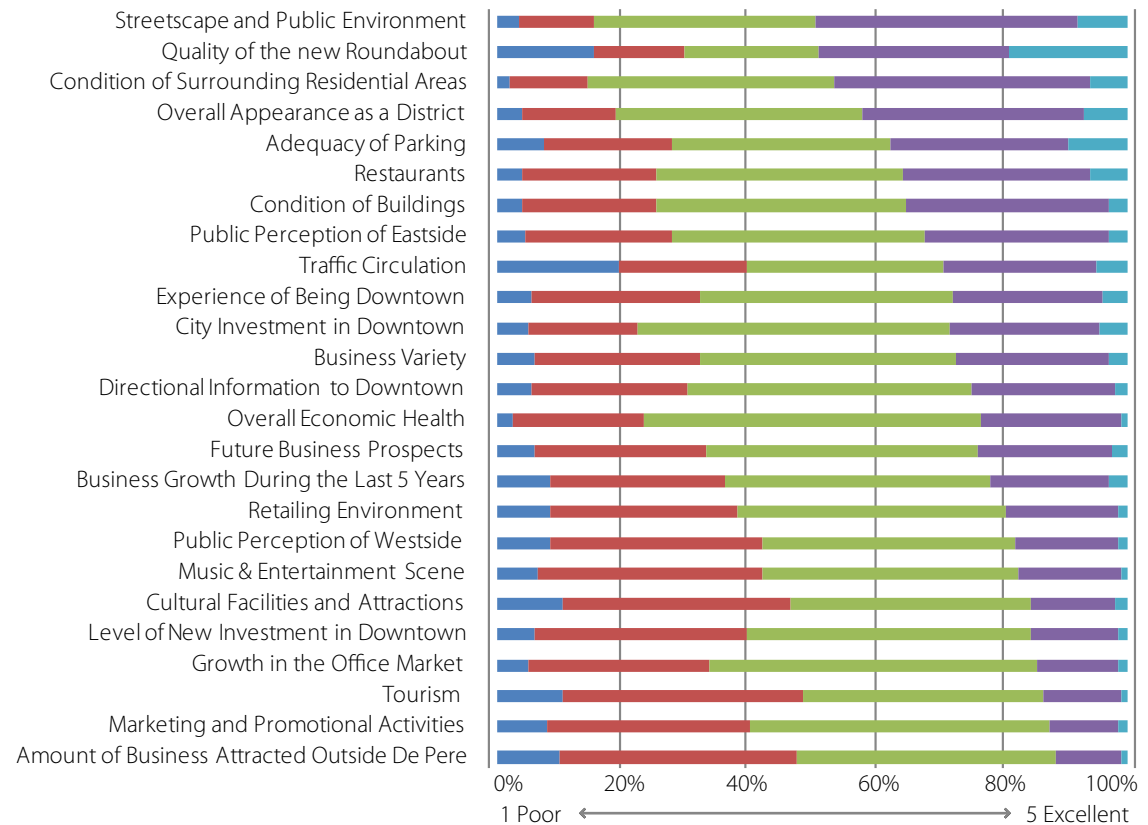


Table 3.1: Quality of Corridor

	1 (Low)	2	3	4	5 (High)
Westside: Main Ave. to River	36	125	208	64	11
Westside: Reid St. to River	19	84	211	113	16
Westside Riverfront	81	138	140	73	7
Eastside Riverfront	21	76	174	151	20
Eastside: N. Broadway St.	19	61	163	166	33
Eastside: N. Wisconsin St.	19	100	213	95	13
Eastside: George Street, from River to Winnebago St.	17	89	215	108	13

Desired Downtown Businesses

The survey included several open-ended questions, the first asking survey participants to list three businesses that they would like to see in downtown De Pere. Of 855 total responses, the most frequently mentioned business category types were retail (420), restaurants (240), entertainment (114), and services (39). The most frequent response was restaurants (137). Responses by category of use follow.

420 RETAIL

- 71 Grocery (regular or deli)
- 65 General retailing
- 57 Specialty shops
- 55 Clothing, particularly women's apparel
- 21 Book store
- 17 Department store (Target, Wal-Mart, Kmart)
- 15 Art Gallery/Crafts
- 13 Sporting/outdoor goods
- 12 Grocery (health/organic)
- 11 Gift and tourism
- 9 Bakery
- 9 Hardware
- 8 Farmer's market
- 7 Drugstore/pharmacy
- 6 Anchor business
- 6 Antique stores
- 6 Family-oriented
- 5 Convenience store
- 5 Music store
- 5 Pet Shop
- 4 Computer store
- 4 Office supplies
- 2 Discount store
- 2 Florist and gardening
- 2 House decorating
- 1 Donut shop
- 1 Gas station
- 1 Auto parts

240 RESTAURANTS

- 137 Restaurants (general)
- 23 Up-scale dining
- 21 Cafes for breakfast/lunch
- 19 Fast food/chain
- 15 Coffee shop



- 8 Ice Cream Shop
- 7 Ethnic dining
- 6 Wine/cheese
- 3 Bars
- 1 Non-smoking restaurants

114 ENTERTAINMENT

- 34 Waterfront and recreation oriented
- 25 Entertainment
- 19 Cultural/tourism attractions
- 10 Movie Theater
- 9 Concert stage/ Performing arts center
- 6 Museum
- 3 College oriented
- 2 Dance Club
- 2 Conference/ Convention center
- 1 Miniature golf
- 1 Aquarium
- 1 Billiards hall
- 1 Casino

39 SERVICES

- 10 Recreation facility (YMCA)
- 10 Clinic/physicians/medical/dental
- 5 Spas and hair salons
- 4 Rental center (bicycle, skating, kayaking)
- 3 Bank
- 2 Laundromat
- 2 Hotel
- 1 Post office
- 1 Credit Union
- 1 Dry Cleaner

52 OTHER

- 25 Office
- 8 Child-oriented
- 8 Business
- 4 Housing (condos, apartments)
- 2 Parking Facility
- 2 Business Incubator
- 1 Business (green)
- 1 Manufacturing
- 1 Open in evenings

Downtown Assets and Liabilities

Another open-ended question asked respondents to list downtown's three greatest assets and liabilities.

Assets. Of 1,152 short answer responses, the most frequently mentioned assets included the historic character and appearance (279), Fox River and Riverfront (90), Parks and Green Space (85), St. Norbert College, and Fox River Trail (66). Responses by category of feature follow.

351 Recreation & Natural Environment

- 90 Fox River & Riverfront
- 85 Parks & Green Space
- 66 Fox River Trail
- 5 Bikeable
- 3 VFW pool
- 2 Environment



314 PHYSICAL CONDITION

- 279 Historic - character, appearance, buildings
- 13 Safe
- 5 Redevelopment and renovation projects
- 4 Downtown Housing
- 2 Butterfly/Frog/Turtle displays
- 2 Schools
- 2 Lee Building
- 2 Locks
- 3 Old bridge landing
- 1 Churches
- 1 Non-smoking sites

312 BUSINESSES & DEVELOPMENT

- 67 St. Norbert College
- 58 Restaurants
- 40 Businesses
- 40 Retail
- 29 Variety of businesses
- 19 East side
- 10 ShopKo
- 8 Union Hotel
- 8 Potential for growth
- 7 Bars
- 6 Entertainment
- 5 Seroogy's Chocolates
- 5 West side
- 4 Business that care about the community
- 3 Office space
- 1 Movie Theater
- 1 Continued improvement in variety of businesses by river
- 1 Tourism potential

133 TRANSPORTATION

- 36 Bridge
- 25 Accessible, location
- 18 Streetscape
- 15 Parking
- 12 Traffic flow
- 11 Proximity to the river, park and trails
- 10 Roundabout
- 5 Pedestrian-friendly
- 1 Orange flags for pedestrian

42 CONNECTIONS

- 20 Community pride, people
- 8 Local government (city hall, police, fire)
- 4 Events and celebrations
- 4 Public library
- 3 Surrounding neighborhood
- 1 Fairgrounds
- 1 Farmers Market
- 1 Separation from the industrial areas

Liabilities. Of 1095 short answer responses, the most frequently mentioned downtown liabilities were the roundabout (119), traffic circulation (112), riverfront (98), parking (61), lack of retail (53), empty buildings (46), and building conditions (40). Responses by category of issue follow.

448 MOBILITY AND TRANSPORTATION

- 119 Roundabout (navigate, appearance and crossing)
- 112 Traffic circulation
- 61 Parking (availability and time)
- 32 Pedestrian safety & mobility (especially children)
- 31 Speeding Traffic
- 14 Bicycling, pedestrian infrastructure (including racks)
- 11 Need a second bridge
- 10 One-way streets
- 9 Access to riverfront and trails
- 8 Accessibility
- 8 Maintenance of streets/projects
- 6 Bridge
- 6 Train (and traffic back-ups)
- 6 Lack of bumpouts and wide streets
- 4 Access to westside of river
- 3 Heavy truck traffic
- 3 Too much parking
- 2 Approach from west
- 2 Lack of foot traffic
- 2 Streetscape
- 2 Taxi service
- 2 Westside chicane (curve)
- 1 Bus service
- 2 Connection to Dickinson Road/Chicago Street
- 1 Corner of 3rd and Main
- 1 Directional signage
- 1 Lighting in parking lots
- 1 Poor snow removal

292 PHYSICAL CONDITION

- 98 Riverfront
- 46 Vacant buildings/storefronts
- 40 Building conditions (commercial and residential)
- 9 Inconsistent building appearance
- 9 Westside look
- 8 No grocery store
- 8 Lack of housing
- 8 Lack of public gathering space
- 6 Old bridge landing
- 8 Development (design)
- 4 Industrial look of the West side of the river
- 3 Demolition of historic buildings
- 3 Garbage cans in alley
- 3 St. Norbert College connection
- 2 Becoming like other cities
- 2 Layout
- 2 Encroaching on neighborhoods
- 2 Front Street Development
- 2 Lack of green space

- 2 Lack of public art and art galleries
- 2 Ledgeview
- 2 Pool
- 1 Fairgrounds
- 1 Gazebo
- 1 Lock House
- 1 Retention/detention ponds
- 1 Poor redevelopment sites

227 BUSINESS CLIMATE

- 53 Lack of retail (variety)
- 44 East vs. West mentality
- 21 Bars (associated conduct)
- 23 Restaurants
- 15 No signature attraction
- 12 Business struggles/turnover
- 10 Eastside restaurants/retail
- 5 Poor operating hours
- 5 Paper mill appearance
- 4 Lack of anchor store
- 4 Lack of district brand/identity
- 4 Limited space for business
- 4 Visibility of businesses
- 3 Few upscale restaurants
- 2 Expensive stores
- 2 Few upscale bars
- 2 Lack of business coordination
- 2 Westside business development
- 2 Presence of auto repair and dealerships
- 2 Highway commercial competition
- 2 No hardware store
- 1 Few clothing stores
- 1 Few neighborhood services
- 1 Inventory at ShopKo
- 1 No coffee shop
- 1 Smoking permitted in restaurants
- 1 Only one Bed & Breakfast
- 1 No YMCA
- 1 Open air seating for restaurants
- 1 Outdated shopping environment
- 1 Too many specialty stores
- 1 Too few national retail stores in the mix

101 PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

- 34 Marketing/tourism
- 31 Lack of events/entertainment
- 12 No plan/vision



- 10 Lack of family activities
- 4 High taxes
- 4 Recruiting business (incentives, compete with cities)
- 1 Funding
- 1 Losing historic structures
- 1 To many safety codes
- 1 Public support for local businesses
- 1 Strict signage ordinance
- 1 Charging admission to festivals

27 OVERALL DOWNTOWN

- 6 Elected and appointed officials
- 3 Apathy
- 2 Concerns about police
- 2 Too many churches
- 1 De Pere Journal
- 1 Gangs
- 1 Interest in history
- 1 Lack of holiday atmosphere during Christmas
- 1 Lack of international travel connections
- 1 Lack of softball and soccer fields
- 1 Perception
- 1 Pollution
- 1 Removal of home services
- 1 Rental properties
- 1 Too many opposing interests
- 1 Too much green space
- 1 Voyageur Park use
- 1 Westside College perception



Actions and Projects

Another open-ended question asked participants to list types of actions that they desired for the district. Of 858 short-answer responses, the most often cited recommendations addressed the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists followed the circulation of traffic. Recommendations generally fall under 5 categories, including Transportation and Mobility, Policy, Business Development, Development Projects, and Recreation. Responses grouped by category follow.

286 TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

- 77 Create safer walking and biking
- 34 Improve circulation at roundabout
- 29 Improve traffic flow
- 25 Build south bridge to reduce traffic flow
- 18 Provide more parking
- 16 Calm traffic flow
- 13 Improve streetscape
- 10 Improve traffic circulation on west side
- 9 Repair street
- 6 Connect to other developments/sports facilities
- 6 Improve mass transit
- 5 Improve gateways
- 4 Enforce traffic violations at roundabout and bridge
- 4 Reduce street reconstruction
- 4 Redirect heavy truck traffic
- 2 Define bicycle lanes
- 2 Improve George Street
- 2 Improve bridge lighting & accents



- 2 Provide more flags at pedestrian crossings
- 2 Install bicycle racks
- 2 Install wayfinding and parking signage
- 2 Move Hwy G traffic via Broadway to Chicago St.
- 1 Install 4-way stop at Grant and 4th St
- 1 Provide angle parking along Main Street
- 1 Improve Chicago Street
- 1 Close traffic north of roundabout
- 1 Improve traffic flow on Main & Ashland corner.
- 1 Coordinate traffic signals
- 1 Improve appearance of parking lots
- 1 Making international transportation connections
- 1 Maintain and upgrade to city-owned lots
- 1 Provide more lanes under railroad bridge
- 1 Require new construction to appear historic
- 1 Provide more library parking

185 POLICY

- 64 Preserve and maintain buildings
- 22 Host more community events (free)
- 14 Update Downtown plan
- 11 Encourage business development
- 8 Improve safety (prevent gangs, transients and graffiti)
- 6 Increase tourism
- 6 Merge school districts
- 6 Lower taxes
- 6 Unify east/west
- 5 Improve architecture (be progressive)
- 4 Creating a unique brand
- 4 Enforce noise and code violations
- 4 Adopt design guidelines
- 3 Educate drivers on roundabout
- 3 Integrate St. Norbert College
- 3 Encourage entrepreneurs



- 2 Require energy saving strategies
- 2 Limit train whistles
- 2 Discourage the use of plastic bags throughout city
- 2 Educate, build on present strengths
- 2 Improve surrounding housing
- 2 Retain small community feeling
- 1 Improve mid-income housing
- 1 Strengthen relationship between City and businesses
- 1 Limit offices
- 1 Grow the Farmers Market

157 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- 26 Rehabilitate storefronts
- 20 Market Downtown De Pere as a destination
- 18 Attract more business
- 17 Business development/rehab on West Side
- 16 Fill unused office/retail space
- 7 Attract anchor business/non-specialty retail
- 7 Provide incentives to small businesses
- 6 Add more family venues/businesses
- 5 Attract restaurants
- 4 Reduce number of bars on the west side
- 3 Develop nightlife
- 3 make it a boutique area
- 3 Build a grocery store on east side
- 2 Broadway business development
- 2 Establish Business Improvement District
- 2 Attract business to relocate
- 2 Improve Shopko area
- 2 Establish space for vendors along Broadway and at Voyageur Park
- 2 Build new theater
- 1 Attract a salon
- 1 Attract Trader Joe's

- 1 Build a casino
- 1 Business development around roundabout
- 1 Attract Hardware Store
- 1 Attract business to Front Street
- 1 Extend operating hours
- 1 Prevent large retailers
- 1 First floor reserved for commercial
- 1 Attract rental store for kayaks and canoes

103 DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

- 23 Old Bridge Landing - Remain as open space
- 20 Redevelop riverfront
- 16 Old Bridge Landing - Finalize Development decision
- 14 Old Bridge Landing - Build on site
- 6 Build MAC Dental Building
- 4 Old bridge landing - Part building, part open
- 4 Old Bridge Landing - Improve appearance
- 3 Build high-end residential condos
- 3 Renovate lock tenders house
- 2 Build hotel/conference Center
- 1 improve Broadway, south of George street
- 1 Demo Journal building for parking
- 1 Old Bridge Landing-tourist attraction
- 1 Relocate Crevier Commons and redevelop site
- 1 Old Bridge Landing Carousel
- 1 Old Bridge Landing - Create boardwalk
- 1 Old Bridge Landing - Retain access for public
- 1 Build more senior housing

92 RECREATION

- 21 Safe Youth hangout
- 10 Create riverwalk on both sides of the river
- 10 Install pier using the foundation of the Old Bridge
- 8 Preserve green space
- 5 Use riverfront for farmers market, concert, and art shows
- 4 Repaint eastside mural
- 4 Improve Voyageur Park and encourage use
- 4 Establish open spaces for summer entertainment
- 3 Build a marina
- 2 Build pedestrian bridge
- 2 Create a dog park
- 2 Improve riverfront access, trail and amenities
- 2 Keep VFW pool
- 1 Old Bridge Landing - Live entertainment
- 1 Construct pool
- 1 Develop fairgrounds
- 1 Emphasize the changing of fowl, fishing on the river
- 1 Extensive trail connectivity with use for skiing
- 1 Old Bridge Landing - Connect to pier and riverwalk
- 1 YMCA
- 1 Upgrade Nicolet Square

- 1 Build second ice rink at the fairgrounds
- 1 Build public indoor pool and exercise facility
- 1 Build multi-purpose stadium
- 1 Relocate Farmer's market to Old Bridge Landing
- 1 Lower admission fee to swimming pool
- 1 Location for outdoor performances
- 1 Connect trail to businesses

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS & INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Focus group meetings and individual interviews that took place over seven days, May 27, 28, 29; June 29, 30; July 1; and October 27 and 28, 2009, resulting in over 35 hours of discussion. Groups such as business and property owners, financial institutions, public officials, non-profit and arts organizations, development professionals, realtors, students and others participated in roundtable discussions to share their opinion of the district and its future opportunities. The following summarizes the proceedings, ranked generally in order of attention.

ISSUE 1: Traffic Circulation, Parking, and Wayfinding

- Transportation services could be developed to improve access to downtown for visitors and permanent residents. A trolley or small bus could circulate creating loops for users. The design of the system should be simple and cycle frequently.
- Slow down the traffic. Motorists drive past storefronts without knowing what is in them.
- Bicycling is a growing form of transportation and recreation. Riders can choose to ride in the street or side-walk path. Participants perceive that these paths are not safe enough to allow young children to visit the district.
- Wayfinding or directional signs should be posted to direct both motorists and pedestrians to destinations in the city. Tourist sites, regional destinations and parking



should be identified. The public is aware that wayfinding existing, but can not read or interpret the signs.

- Crossing Main Avenue or N Broadway can be dangerous. Traffic accelerating along the Claude Allooer Bridge arrives to the either side of the Fox River to a traffic control device, a traffic circle on the east and a chicane on the west. Both slow the motorists; however pedestrians feel threatened by the vehicle despite having the right-of-way.
- Midblock crossings and intersection nodes shorten the distance for people to cross streets.
- Participants perceive that the district does not have enough parking. A new parking garage should be considered to relieve parking demand. Parking spaces should remain free. Parking should not take up space where businesses could be constructed. Two-hour parking is inadequate and may discourage users from eating and shopping. Receiving a ticket then discourages them from returning.
- A pedestrian underpass under North Broadway, south of the traffic circle, could provide trail users to connect from the Fox River trail to adjacent neighborhoods.
- Reduce the visual clutter along the street. Bury poles throughout the district.

- Establish a transit system to circulate in downtown and to western De Pere. The system could be a short bus or trolley that runs during peak times of the day and weekends. The system should consider students at St. Norbert College.

ISSUE 2: Fox River

- Downtown is divided by the Fox River. Both sides of the downtown have unique attributes.
- Riverwalk planned for the east-side of the Fox River may attract up to 200,000 visitors per year, according to some participants. The current design shows the walk extending 300 feet, allowing people to watch wildlife and the locks opening and closing.
- Development along river should be pedestrian-oriented. Restaurants could overlook the river and provide a unique setting for dining.
- The river should develop as a source for recreation and leisure. Fishing, skiing, boating, kayaking and swimming are among some of the activities that could take place on the Fox River. The river has a long-standing perception of being unclean and undesirable for recreational activities. However, recent efforts for removing some of the river's contaminants make it possible for more recreation and leisure activities.



- Create or reserve future opportunities for boaters to dock or launch their boat along both shore fronts and access the downtown area.
- St Norbert College is planning a boardwalk for pedestrians so that students and the public have direct access to the river. The development concept for downtown should consider trail linkages to the boardwalk.

ISSUE 3: Roundabout

- Not all motorists know how to navigate the roundabout, causing the roundabout to not function properly.
- Construction along Highway 172 detours traffic through De Pere, increasing the traffic congestion and stacking at the roundabout. Participants are concerned about the long-term implications of people not wanting to drive through De Pere because of the immediate delays experienced. Participants perceive that a new south bridge may decrease traffic counts at the roundabout.
- Pedestrians feel unsafe crossing near the roundabout, particularly near the Claude Allooeez Bridge.
- Major (life threatening) accidents have declined remarkably. No more T-bone collisions.

ISSUE 4: Business Development

- Downtown has come back from the brink. In the early 1990's the district had a significant amount of vacant buildings/properties but now the district is nearly all occupied. De Pere has accomplished a lot in the past two decades and should celebrate its achievement.
- Participants are satisfied that functions of the east and west halves are different, yet want the character between the areas to have a more unifying theme.
- New development should be pedestrian in scale and consistent with the character of the older buildings in downtown. Buildings along Reid Street exhibit roof details, setback, and material that are similar to each other. The first floor of buildings should have an active use.
- Downtown has a strong environment for restaurant and specialty retailing. Participants are satisfied with the number of restaurants, although indicate a desire to have more upscale dining and fast-food dining. Employees breaking for lunch tend to take 30 minutes.
- De Pere has a good mix of specialty retailing and neighborhood services are an important component for the downtown core. Restaurants and bars are essential for creating activity. Offices and housing provide the area with an ongoing cycle of patrons, however should not

be on the first floor in the district. Downtown should have more outdoor dining.

- Buildings that are being neglected should be preserved. The City should intercede with the property owner before the structure is beyond repair.
- Rehabilitating building space for business development is expensive. Financial mechanisms should be adopted to allow businesses to remodel or expand instead of relocating to areas outside of downtown. Businesses that generate foot-traffic should receive priority.
- Development along Front Street could significantly influence the personality of the river's edge.
- Benches and bicycle racks should be located throughout the district.
- Participants perceive that the proposed Mac Dental near the east landing will raise the standard for future development in De Pere.
- The district should consider becoming a Business Improvement District (BID). By becoming a self taxing district, it will create funds for ongoing maintenance, particularly sweeping and shoveling of sidewalks. Funds could also be used for doing improvement projects.

ISSUE 5: Art and Culture

- Sculptures and public art should be displayed throughout the district, particularly at gathering places and major intersections.
- Interpretative displays could be installed in the downtown area and along the Claude Allooeez Bridge. Installations could communicate De Pere's history, geography, and the story of Fox River's lock system.



ISSUE 6: Residential Uses In and Surrounding Downtown

- Downtown uses along the edge of the historic neighborhoods should not adversely influence a person's enjoyment of their property. These edges should be thoughtfully planned.
- St. Norbert College is building more on-campus housing and requiring students to remain on campus. Participants are concerned that the off-campus properties being vacated will continue to deteriorate and be neglected.
- Downtown should be accessible to surrounding neighborhoods. Sidewalks should link into downtown, connecting parts of the city to each other. The Fox River trail should be more easily accessible to neighborhoods without having people to cross Broadway.
- The development concept should consider more downtown housing opportunities.

ISSUE 7: Old George Street Bridge Landing

- Several concepts for redevelopment have been prepared for the site by architects, landscape architects and private citizens. Concepts follow one of three paths,



- Remain as public space,
 - New construction,
 - Public space with some development.
- Participants supporting open space suggest that the community should preserve the connection to the water and trail, and use the property for public gathering space. Participants supporting development suggest that adding productive, viable uses in downtown is necessary and despite the view of the river, the Thilmany plant is unappealing.
 - Focus group participants generally prefer that the Old George Street Landing remain as premier outdoor public space that connects downtown to the river, trail and Voyageur Park. Participants also favored allowing some private development.
 - If the site were left open, many participants desire to see outdoor performances (music or theater). However, the focus group on Arts and Culture generally agreed that the ambient traffic noise from North Broadway makes the site an undesirable site for outdoor performances.
 - If the site were developed, some participants suggested that the view of the river be preserved from upper stories.



- Participants discussed the possibility of Crevier Commons redeveloping for private use, allowing the balance of open space to be transferred to the George Street Bridge Landing. Allowing this site to develop will contribute to the city's tax base and provide for more development opportunity.

ISSUE 8: Development and Redevelopment Opportunities

- Rear facades with significant exposure could be significantly improved, particularly along the east shore and the alleyway. The alleyway between Main Avenue and Reid Street should be enhanced and become a safe place for pedestrians to walk. Currently they are cluttered with trash receptacles. The backside facades could be enhanced to appear as front entrances. The design of the alleyway could be overhauled and branded.
- Downtown should have a set of Architectural Design Guidelines. New construction or redevelopment of property or buildings should be completed with quality craftsmanship and be consistent with the existing architectural patterns of downtown. Use of some materials should be restricted, such as vinyl windows and siding on downtown buildings. Guidelines should encourage design, not tell the owner how to design the



building. Reid Street Crossing reflects the shape and form of the City's architecture.

- Some participants suggested that De Pere needs a major redevelopment project to be a catalyst for additional development.
- Religious institutions occupy prime space in downtown that could otherwise be developed for commercial uses. Preferably, religious institutions would develop on the fringe and not in the inner ring of downtown.
- Reid Street Crossing is considered a quality commercial redevelopment project.
- Downtown has a good base of apartments and condominiums. Additional units should be considered for the development concept.
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) financing is a good mechanism for encouraging development. The City may need provide additional assistance as many banks lending practices have changed.
- De Pere is fortunate to have several sites for redevelopment opportunities. The following were areas discussed.
 - Area near the roundabout.
 - Crevier Commons could become a new develop-



ment site and may be eligible for TIF.

- Old George Street Bridge Landing
- North of Main Avenue
- West and East shorelines
- The Fairgrounds
- 400 Block of Main Avenue
- Lazy Gecko Site

ISSUE 9: Downtown as a Destination

- Planning should focus on developing an experience for families, couples, singles and teenagers that could include an assortment of restaurants, entertainment, theaters, bars, events, attractions, and lodging.
- International students attending St Norbert College contribute to the reputation of De Pere, Wisconsin, and United States.
- Businesses should collaboratively market downtown. Participants perceive that downtown was destination of the past and needs to be marketed to attract patrons. The Main Street program should continue leading these efforts.
- Farmer's Market at Seroogy's parking lot is a popular destination.



ISSUE 10: St Norbert College

- St Norbert College, the business community and the City of De Pere share an excellent partnership.
- Enrollment is anticipated to remain steady around 2,100 students, if not slightly increase. Most of the students will live on campus
- The development concept should consider integrating the downtown, college and surrounding neighborhoods.
- A new boardwalk along the Fox River will potentially allow the trail system to extend through the college, connecting surrounding neighborhoods, to downtown and the river.
- Participants are hopeful that the college will build up rather than spread out into the downtown market. Participants perceive that students, faculty and visitors take up a substantial amount of peripheral parking causing a shortage of parking supply to businesses.
- Traffic along 3rd Street interferes with the safe movement of pedestrians across campus.
- Students need better transportation to and from campus to shopping and activity centers.
- Athletic facilities are developing towards the north, opening up the fields located south of campus and

west of Lost Dauphin Road.

- Campus is adopting green, sustainable initiatives.

ISSUE 11: Marketing, Tourism & Image

- Downtown could be marketed more as a regional destination. Some business, including Saroogy's, does an excellent job of reaching outside of the community to attract business.
- Theming or branding De Pere, downtown help the community's marketability. Several participants cited Cedarburg as a community that left a strong image in their mind and a place that they would return to.
- Downtown should develop memories for growing children, visiting tourists, and residents.
- Residents and tourists should all be able to enjoy downtown. Community events should be held in downtown, possibly at the bridge landing and Voyageur park tied by Front Street and the trail.
- Wayfinding or directional signs should be posted to direct both motorists and pedestrians to destinations in De Pere, particularly from the trail. Existing signs are difficult to follow. Wayfinding should reinforce the appeal of downtown with graphics and color.
- The Green Bay Packers help fill up hotels and lodging during football weekends, but don't significantly contribute to retail sales especially when most close for the game. The nine weekends throughout the year do not sustain the lodging business year around.
- Downtown to host celebrations including Taste of De Pere, Wine and Beer Tasting and Artist Galleries.
- Many businesses do not stay open past 5pm, making it difficult to have a thriving evening atmosphere.
- Participants perceive De Pere as a very clean, pretty city. De Pere should not aspire to be like another place in Wisconsin since that would not be original.
- Entrances into De Pere are reasonably attractive. These



could be further improved along with appearance of the street corridors leading to downtown. People should know when they are in De Pere.

- Recruiting staff to large companies is challenging in the Green Bay area. Popular destinations include areas near Lambeau Field, Casino and De Pere. International visitors prefer De Pere's atmosphere.

ISSUE 12: Recreation Lifestyle

- The trail is a significant regional attraction, as well as, being a recreational resource. Connections to downtown and the water should be developed. The bridge should be perceived as an extension of the trail system to the westside of the river. Wayfinding signs should be posted along the route to inform trail users of amenities available in the City.

- The proposed Riverwak will be an attractive feature for trail users and influence the use of Voyageur Park.
- Voyageur Park could be redesigned for large outdoor events and assembly.
- Open space with opportunities for large crowd assemblies should be identified for community activities, including community festivals, concerts, parades, and other statewide events. The open space should be flexible to provide recreational opportunities for playing children and working professionals, while creating formal space for performances.
- The river should develop as a source for recreation and leisure. Fishing, skiing, boating, kayaking and swimming are among some of the activities that could take place on the Fox River. Creating a water trail for kayaking and canoeing could be another possibility.



- De Pere is well-known for their baseball program. Perhaps this is something to build on.

ISSUE 13: Community Participation and Culture

- City is fortunate to have people committed to making the community a better place.
- Community and economic development services serve the community well – the city, chamber and St. Norbert College share a good relationship.
- People living in De Pere are proud to claim De Pere as their home.
- De Pere was one of the earliest Main Street Programs in the United States, beginning in the 1980's. The program is currently operated under the auspice of the Chamber of Commerce. Finding the right balance for

the Main Street Program's involvement in the community is important.

- Some participants shared that a long-standing stigma exists between the east and west sides of De Pere. This is perpetuated with the physical split by the Fox River, two community school districts and business centers.

ISSUE 14: Sustainable Development and Practices

- Sustainable principles described in The Natural Step for Communities are becoming the philosophy for the management, maintenance and improvement of the city. The City has formerly adopted this approach to communities activities.
- New development (or redevelopment) should be constructed of quality materials and energy efficient.

- On-going maintenance costs should be kept to a minimum. Energy-saving practices should be pursued by the city and encouraged for private building owners.
- Best Management Practices (BMP's) should be used for controlling stormwater runoff.
- De Pere needs more landscape design. Creating native arboretums may help residents understand plant species appropriate to the climate and contribute to the aesthetics of the city.
- Promote the urban forest and continue to be a Tree City U.S.A community.
- District heating may be a possibility between Thilmany and St. Norbert College.

ISSUE 15: Youth Activities and Discussion

- Generally, students do not perceive there is an issue between east and west sides of De Pere, unless competing in a sport.
- Students and adults perceive that the streets are busy and difficult to cross for children.
- Few places cater to high school students to hang out and lounge. Also, most businesses close too early, and need to extend their business hours.
- De Pere needs to consider sustainable approaches to the environment and economy. Actions and policies must consider future generations. One action could be placing recycling bins throughout downtown.
- Connect the trail, park and downtown. The distance of the Claude Allouez Bridge discourages cyclists and walkers from visiting the opposite side. Voyageur Park needs to be activated with programs. De Pere needs additional indoor and outdoor space for children to visit. A carousel, Ferris wheel, or signature attraction needs to be in downtown.
- Public art should be placed throughout the city.

COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE

On August 3rd, 2009, about 50 people attended the community roundtable discussion. Participants organized themselves into three small groups to share thoughts about the future direction of downtown with their peers. Afterwards, all of the groups gathered together to discuss the results from each small group. The following summarizes the discussion.

- Make the riverfront De Pere's signature
- Preserve the Old George Street Bridge Landing for open space
- Strengthening the relationship between west and east.
- Strengthen connection between downtown and trail.
- Improve pedestrian safety
- Integrate St. Norbert College
- Improve north side of Main Avenue
- Improve traffic circulation and control speeds
- Retain and attract retail businesses
- Improve alleyways
- Create stronger downtown gathering space
- Improve parking access and availability





DESIGN WORKSHOP

Multi-day public design workshops took place in De Pere during September and October. The plan presented in Chapter Four reflects and refines the work done in these sessions. During the workshops, public discussion defined the following themes and principles:

- **Sustainability and Protection of Valued Environments.** Concepts for redevelopment should incorporate “sustainable” practices, including environmental and economic sustainability.
- **Accessibility and Linkages.** The Downtown Plan should promote linkage and accessibility among its constituent parts, including the riverfront, St. Norbert College, and east and west business areas. The development concept should use continuous paths for pedestrians and cyclists to strengthen the relationships between uses.
- **One-way Streets.** The concept explores converting Main Avenue and Reid Street to two-way circulation. Two-way traffic is typically a preferred arrangement for business in the central district.
- **Alleyways.** Two alleyways were considered, including the alleyway between Main and Reid from 3rd to 5th Street, and the alleyway between Broadway and Wisconsin from Charles to William Street.



- **Fox River, Voyageur Park, Fox River Trail.** Downtown to the riverfront, Fox River Trail and Voyageur Park should be permeable, allowing easy and transparent access between amenities.
- **Parking Adequacy and Aesthetics.** An adequate parking supply for patrons, business operators, students and faculty, and residents is necessary. Parking access should be convenient and clear without inhibiting pedestrian movement. Several sites provide locations for new parking structures.
- **Redevelopment Sites.** Significant redevelopment opportunities on the westside consider the 300 block of Reid Street and 400 block of Main Avenue are candidates for redevelopment. Sites on the eastside consider land along the riverfront, south of the bridge.
- **Old George Street Bridge Landing.** Various scenarios were considered for the future of this site.
- **Streetscape Design.** De Pere’s downtown streetscape is well-designed and compliments the surrounding development. Creating safe pedestrian and bicycle movements is critical and should be incorporated.
- **Community Identity.** Reinforcing the character of De Pere through public and private improvements, while using public art as a unifying concept.

DOWNTOWN STEERING COMMITTEE

The steering committee met monthly throughout the planning project to provide input, review the progress of the plan, suggest mid-course corrections, and contribute to development concepts. Participants in the committee are acknowledged at the front of this document and were instrumental in the preparation of the plan.

OPEN HOUSE

Taking place at the Bemis Center at St. Norbert College on May 12, 2010, the open house provided the public an opportunity to review and comment on the development plan before formal approval by the City Council. The Open House included a 40-minute presentation and then a break-out to various stations focusing on development areas.

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

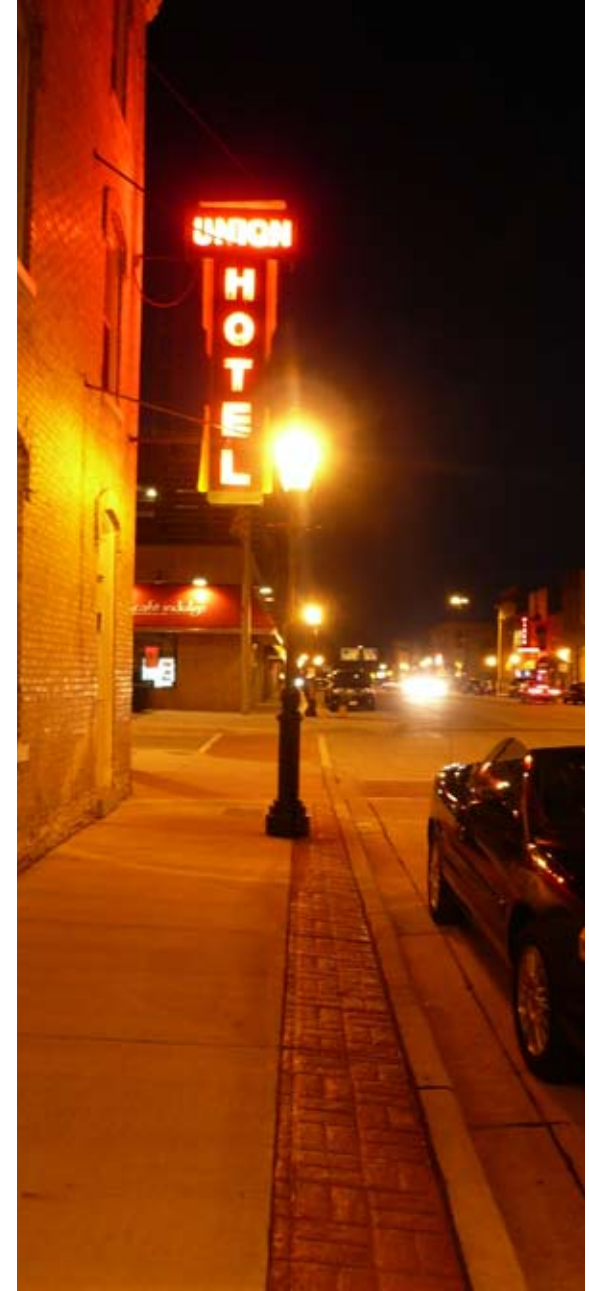
Map 4.2, Development Districts, identifies individual projects within the study area. The concept includes 10 major project areas, including:

EAST BANK

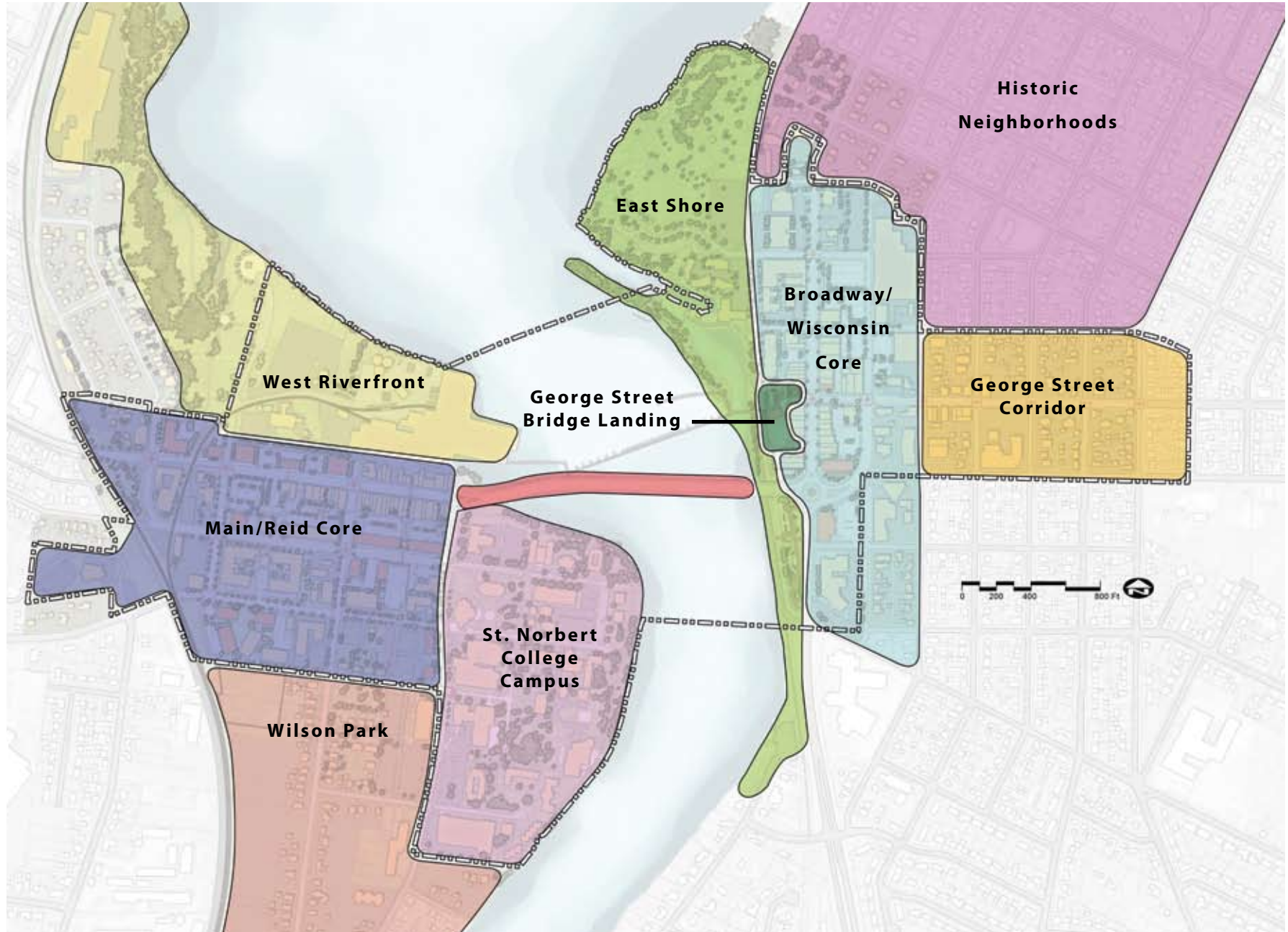
- Broadway/Wisconsin Core
- George Street Bridge Landing
- East Shore
- George Street Corridor
- Historic Neighborhoods

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

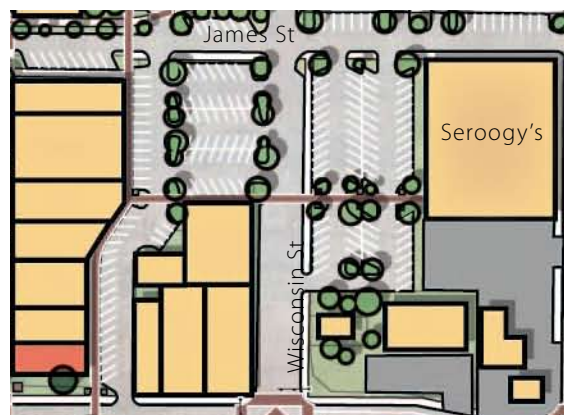
Broadway's recently completed streetscape is both attractive and consistent with De Pere's historic character. However, its four-lane section, relatively wide-open character, and lack of signalization between the roundabout and William Street, encourage excessive traffic speed and make pedestrian crossings 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.

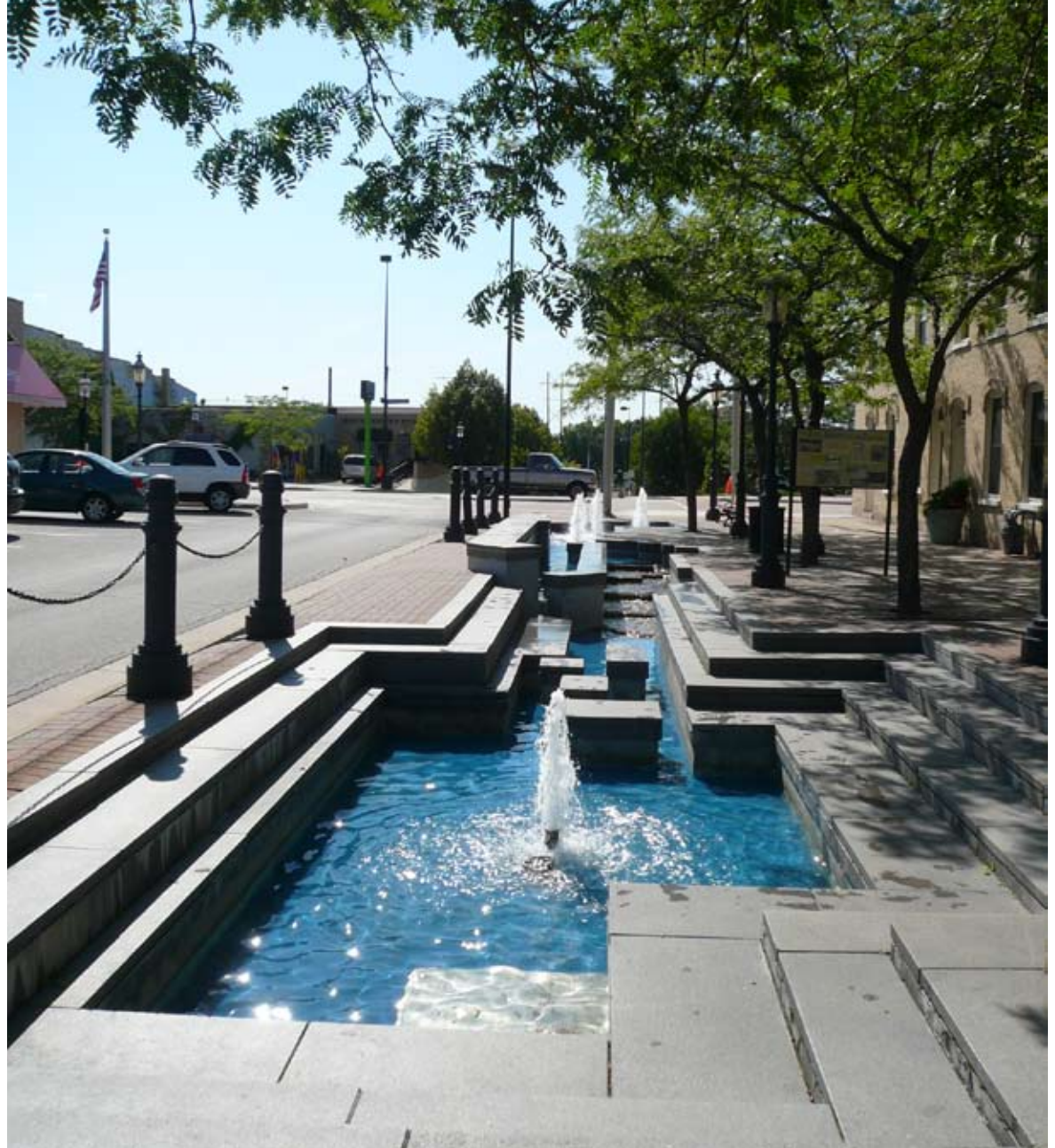
Figure 4.1: Seroogy's Chocolates Connection



- 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 & 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:

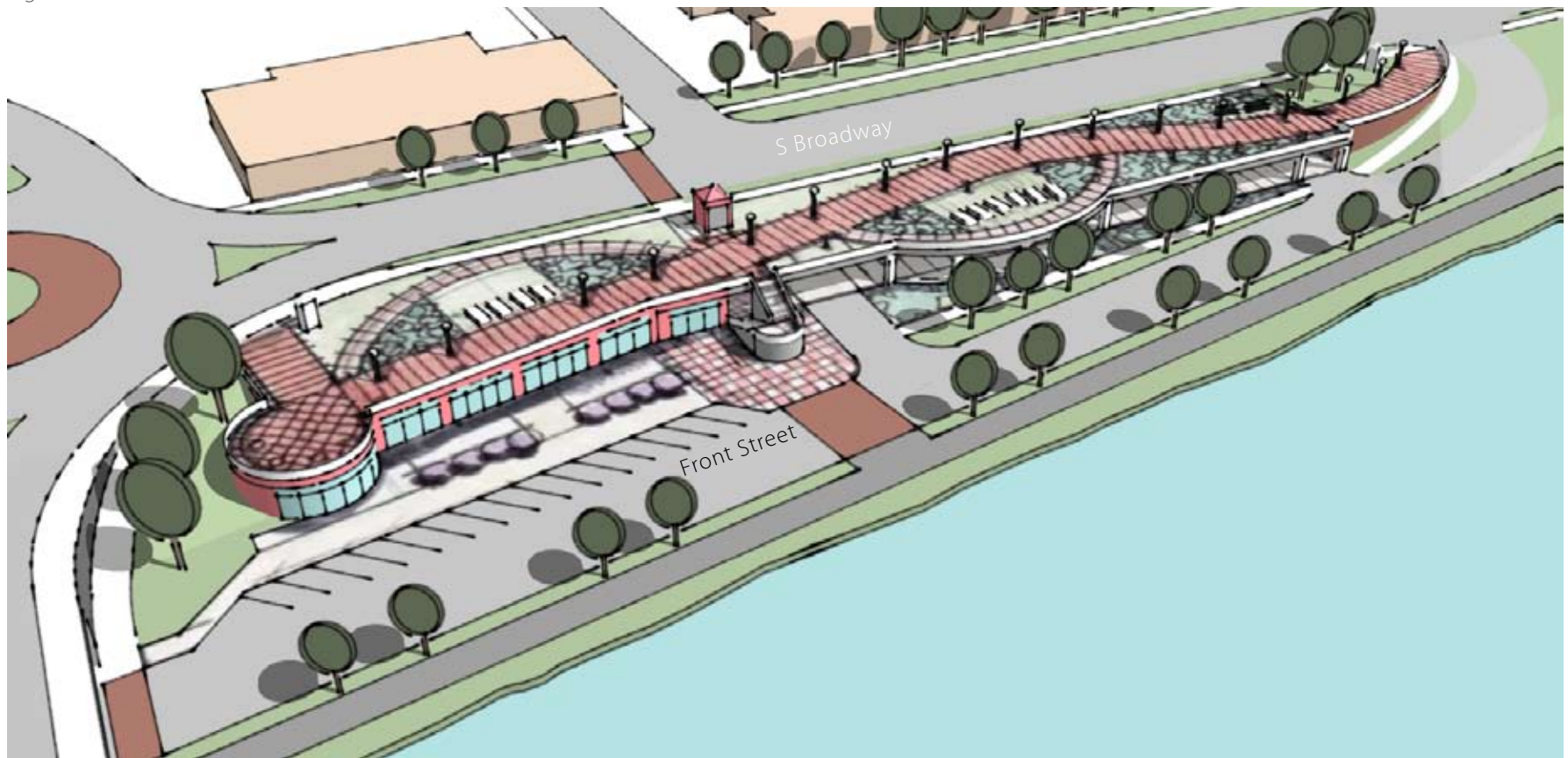
- A two-level development, with an urban promenade at the upper, or Broadway levels highlighting views of the river; and a lower, or Front Street, level cut into the slope and providing parking and walk-out retail or restaurant space.
- On the main upper level, a wide, specially lighted pedestrian processional 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.

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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.



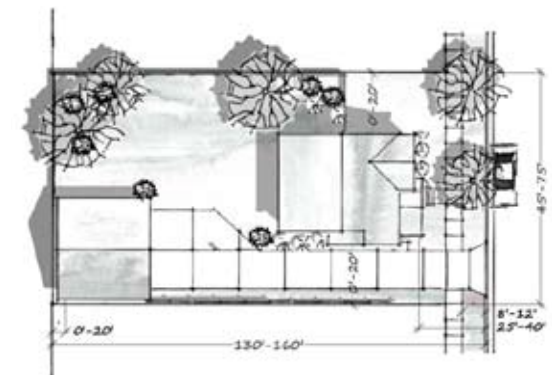
- **Garages along Streets**, requiring new garages to be set back a minimum of ten feet behind the building line of the primary façade.

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.

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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:

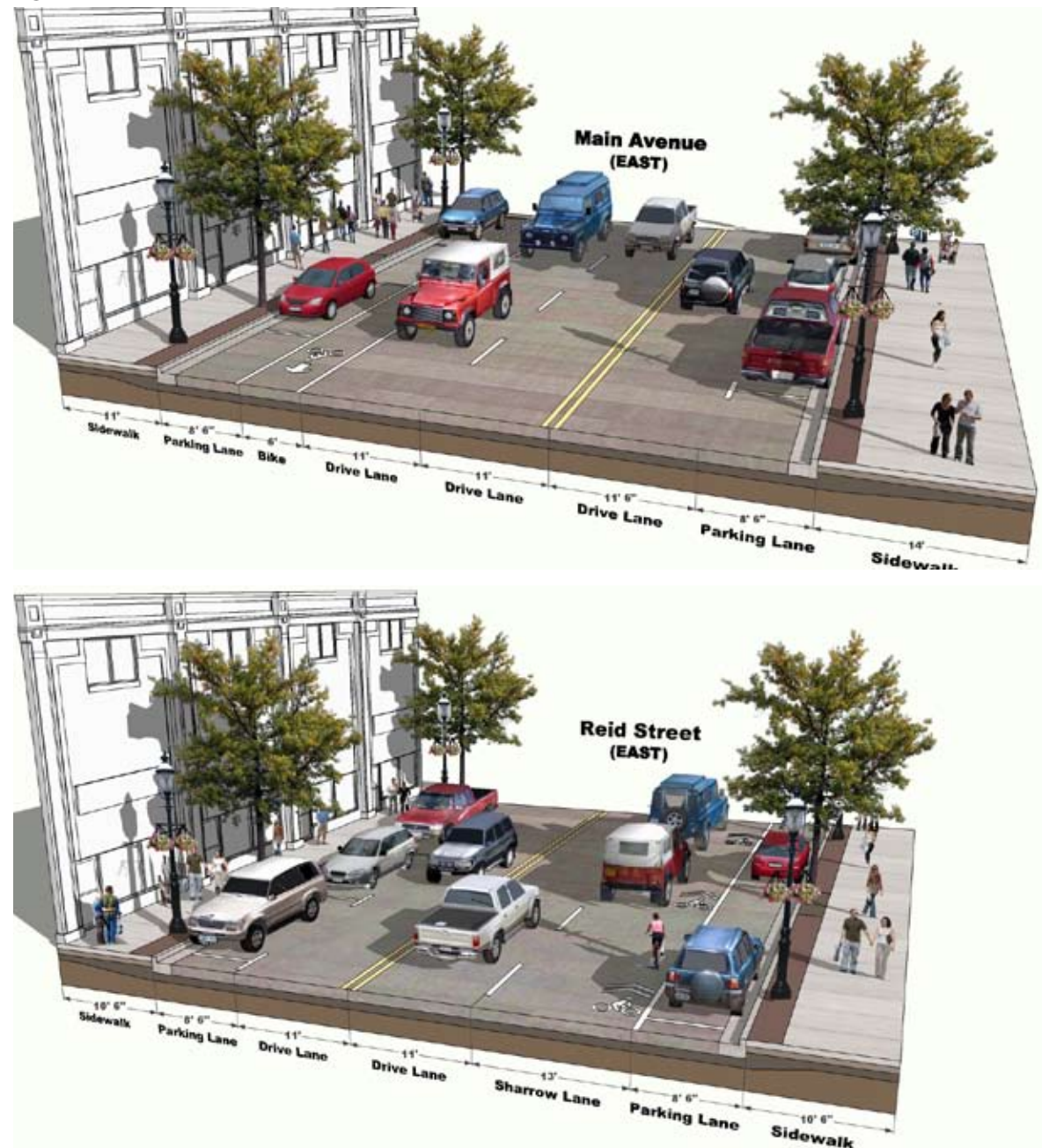
- THE STREET ENVIRONMENT
- THE ALLEY WITH PASSAGEWAYS
- MAJOR DEVELOPMENT SITES

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



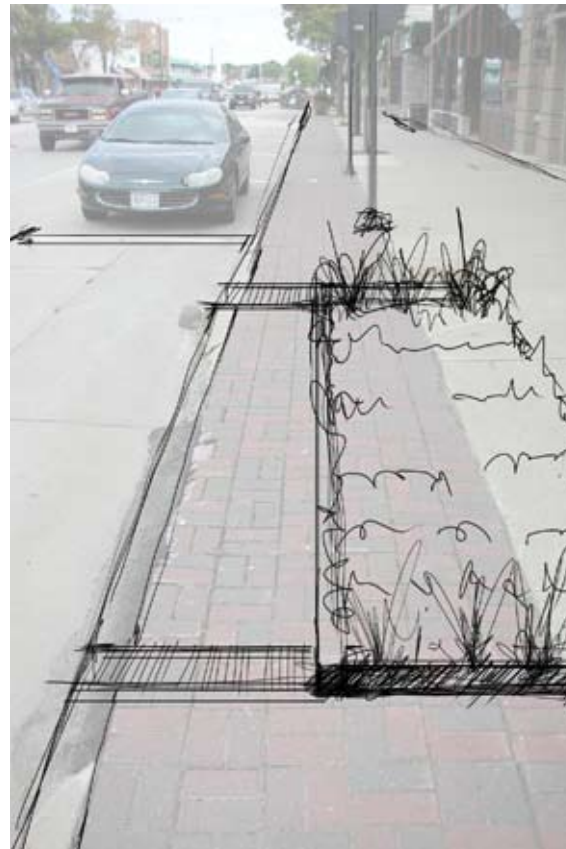
THE ALLEY AND PASSAGEWAYS

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.

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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.**

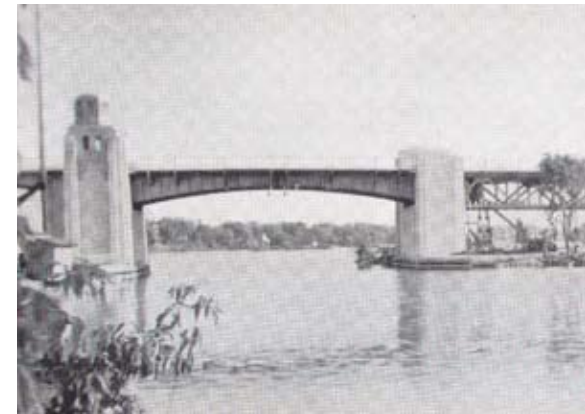
CONNECTIONS

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.

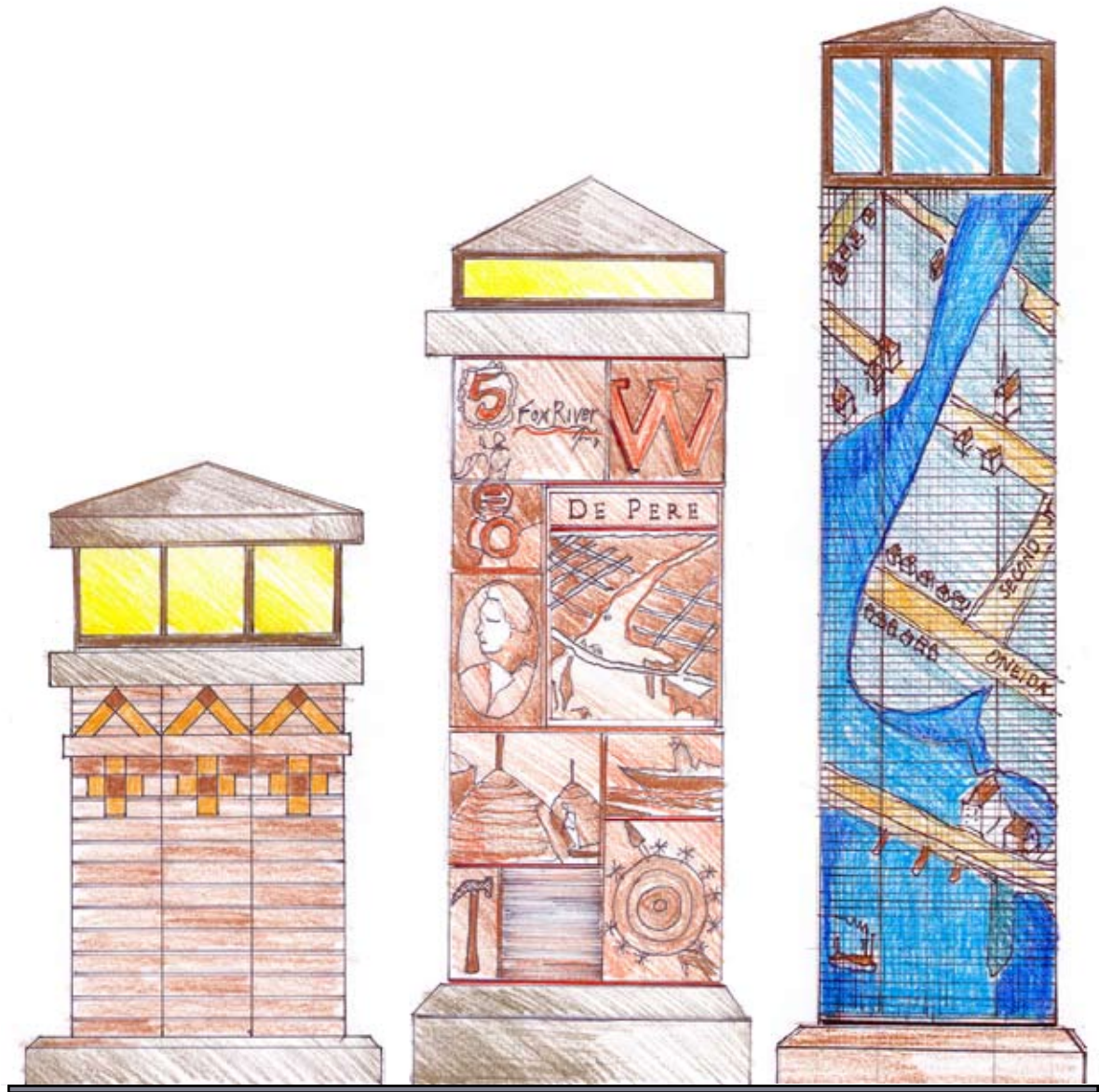


Figure 4.18: Streetscape Markers

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

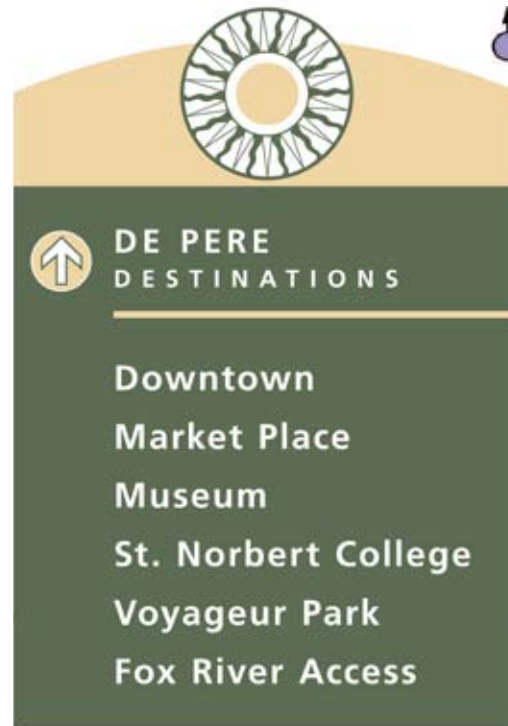
Gateway features at key community entrances welcome the traveler to the city. All gateway features into De Pere should have a consistent theme that strengthens the city's overall identity. Elements of the design should consider construction materials, fonts, color, and graphics. The use of brick is prevalent 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.

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- 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.

Arts Program

- Destination Objects
- Art in Landscape
- Design Integration
- Vehicle Corridor Opportunity
- Pedestrian Corridor Opportunity

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Chapter 5

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Implementation



The Downtown Master Plan presents an ambitious and varied program for improving the heart of the community. This chapter considers several factors necessary for plan implementation, including

- Organizational Structure
- Priority Criteria
- Opinion of Probable Costs & Schedule
- Funding Techniques

The Plan and its scheduling will inevitably change over time. Some projects may advance as opportunities or demands open, while others appear less important over time. However, the overall concept, begun by the city's vision to convert blighted and unproductive property into a pulsing central district, is compelling and will change the face of the city. This section provides tools to help the city and stakeholders move ahead toward accomplishing this vision.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

This section considers organizational aspects of the business district and offers recommendations that can strengthen the support structure for Downtown. Successful development efforts require successful organizations and public/private partnerships. The plan proposes having three organizations associating with each other to improve the district.

- **City of De Pere.** The City of De Pere has been the catalyst for major redevelopment efforts. The Downtown redevelopment program should continue to operate under the City of De Pere and its Community Development Department. The director of the department, serving under the City Manager and mayor and council, should continue to be responsible for overall project administration and coordination. However, this ambitious redevelopment program has many moving parts – managing public improvement projects, marketing and administering redevelopment sites, coordinating trail and transportation improvements, doing development deals, and seeking financing, to name a few. The City's association with other organizations will make the redevelopment program more of a success. Principle responsibilities include:
 - Managing Downtown improvements.
 - Preparing requests for proposals and administering the developer selection process for redevelopment sites.
 - Writing grants for downtown projects, including transportation projects, and performing other necessary jobs as required by the Community Development Director.
 - Overseeing the proposed Main Street Director.

- **Main Street Program.** The massive task of implementing the plan may require a dedicated full- or part-time staff position, a Main Street Director. The initial responsibility of the Director is to retain and attract businesses to the downtown district. Principal responsibilities of the Main Street Director include:

- Retaining and recruiting business and retail, in concert with the Chamber of Commerce.
- Exchanging dialogue with business and property owners.
- Developing marketing material directed to attracting patrons to downtown.
- Coordinating efforts of the Chamber, City, and other agencies that play a role in downtown development.
- Developing joint marketing materials and expanding the program of events. Downtown should offer regular programming during the course of the year to maintain district activity.
- Assisting the Community Development Director in writing grants for downtown projects.
- Advocating for projects and raising funds for downtown projects.
- Overseeing the Main Street

- **De Pere Area Chamber of Commerce.** The Chamber of Commerce should continue recruiting businesses to the City and organizing events that showcase the community, including downtown. The plan recommends establishing a Main Street Director that is overseen by the City of De Pere and sharing office space with the Chamber of Commerce. This allows the Chamber to focus on community-wide recruitment efforts, while allowing the BID to have some autonomy to the Main Street Director.

- **Business Improvement District (BID).** The BID technique, used successfully in cities and business districts around the country, establishes a special assessment district to finance public improvements, district management, and promotions. A BID is a special assessment district that permits businesses to finance public capital improvement projects and district management, promotion, and maintenance. Also, establishing a BID will allow the district to share costs for maintenance services beyond the standard level provided by the City and help finance the Main Street Director's position. A BID could assist with financing for small projects, including improved pedestrian access and trail enhancement that will increase commercial activity, as well as promotional activities.

Downtown De Pere has attempted to establish themselves as a BID in the 1990s, but to no avail. Establishing a Main Street Director position to focus solely on the downtown businesses is contingent on local businesses electing to participate in a BID.

PRIORITY CRITERIA

The Downtown Plan establishes nine major project areas, including four districts on the west shore and five districts on the east shore. The plan provides a master plan of many projects. However, real implementation is an incremental process that requires setting priorities, completing initial steps, and evaluating new conditions along the way.

The City with coordinating agencies, such as the Main Street Director, Chamber, and BID if formed, and other principals in the development process should maintain a five year Downtown capital program. Table 5.1 identifies individual projects and provides a conceptual schedule for implementation. However, market demands and opportunities will inevitably affect this schedule. Annually, the Downtown capital development group should update the schedule, based on priority criteria. These evalu-

ative criteria may involve applying the following questions to specific projects at the time of consideration:

- Does the project respond to specific or high-profile community issues or needs?
- Does the project generate maximum private market response?
- What is the project's potential to transform the image of the area and community?
- Does the project attract both local residents and visitors, increasing business traffic and creating new reasons for people to be downtown?
- Does the project support the growth of existing businesses?
- Does the project capitalize on established, but unmet, market needs?
- Can the project be realistically implemented within a reasonable time frame with potentially available resources?
- Does the project generate substantial community support or consensus?
- Does the project incorporate and leverage outside funding sources, such as state grants or charitable contributions?

The Downtown De Pere Plan proposes a long-term program for investment in this important and active business district. This program is built of many individual projects and recommendations that, over time, create an economically strong city center that offers customers, residents, and visitors a diverse and attractive environment. However, not everything can be done at once, and the downtown development is a process that moves forward in increments. The plan proposes several basic principles:

- Public investments in early phases of the process should create a "chain reaction" - a strong and desirable

private market response that leads to self-sustaining investment. Thus, the ability of initial projects to generate positive momentum is very important.

- Projects proposed by this revitalization plan fall into three categories: catalytic, enhancement, and sustaining projects.
- Catalytic projects, substantial efforts that are large and strategic enough to change an important part of the downtown economy or environment. These projects create conditions that encourage other people to make significant, if smaller, investments. Catalytic projects often combine an underused existing asset with a demonstrated need or market opportunity.
- Enhancement projects, usually investments that improve the appearance, image, or function of the public environment.
- Sustaining programs that encourage private businesses, developers, and property owners to respond to the improved environment that "catalytic" and "enhancement" projects create.
- Different projects mature at different times during the downtown development process. Table 5.1, the Implementation Schedule, is based on this principle. The largest proposed project, the Nicolet Square Redevelopment, have the potential to change the image of downtown and create highly visible places for new business. However, the current market is not mature enough to support the project, and an effort to develop it prematurely is likely to fail. Other, equally important if more modest projects come first to create conditions that allow the project to develop naturally.

An early project should ideally include one of each type of project: a catalytic project that uses an existing demand to transform an underused asset; an enhancement project that makes a highly visible improvement in the district's image or function; and a sustaining program that encourage private businesses to take advantage of new opportunities.

OPINION OF PROBABLE COSTS & IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Financing of elements of downtown projects will require both public and private participation. This section describes available funding sources and techniques. Project staging is also likely to manage capital requirements. Opinions exclude property acquisition and relocation, as well as, utility extensions and upgrades. Figures are based on 2010 dollars. Additional study is required before project development.

An initial schedule is presented here to guide the public and private agencies in the process of making this plan a reality. The schedule establishes five time frames: Ongoing, Within 5 Years, 5-10 Years, and Over 10 Years. Priorities and opportunities will inevitably shift the schedule for some projects.

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PRELIMINARY FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This plan evaluates preliminary financial implications for identified priority projects located in the downtown area. The analysis builds from realities regarding pricing for condominiums and apartments in the downtown area. The project report identified high end pricing for condominiums at up to \$120 per square foot, with average unit sizes of about 1,600 square feet. Apartment rentals peak at \$0.90 per square foot per month. Retail rents range from \$8 to \$12 per square foot, with rent levels for new space at or above these levels.

The intent of the analysis is to frame mid-term feasibility expectations for potential development in the downtown area. Importantly, the analysis is only intended to provide an order of magnitude indication of project feasibility, particularly since cost estimates are not based on detailed plans. As well, the regional and national econ-

omy has only begun to recover from a 2-3 year period of dramatic financial distress; full recovery is not expected for at least 12-24 months, with timing dependent on the pace at which distressed real estate in the region is "worked out", and job growth returns. The extent of real estate challenges cannot be understated, as FDIC works through an existing \$40 billion in commercial real estate loans from failed banks, and as the recovering banking system deals with \$1.4 trillion in commercial real estate loans that will come due by 2014; the extent of these problems is expected to delay the pace at which rents can grow, directly influencing timing for new construction.

At a policy level, our national experience highlights the practical challenges of encouraging infill redevelopment in downtown areas. Challenges are driven by the increasing difficulty of getting financing for projects, perceptions of increased risk, as well as delays created by extended entitlement and development review policies, the latter of which are a key reason why infill projects are seen as more "risky". Reflective of the real challenges of effecting change in these areas, a number of successful policy responses have emerged:

- Building public consensus and involvement upfront
- Identifying important sites and securing preliminary entitlements for their redevelopment
- Improve the appeal of infill sites with targeted infrastructure and access improvements
- Marketing infill sites aggressively

The underlying theme in these four points is a more aggressive public sector role in redevelopment, with the end goal of reducing the front end time required to effect infill site redevelopment. Many cities view efforts to streamline predevelopment planning and entitlement



processes as a specific development incentive, because they reduce the developer's carrying costs and interest expenses. This approach has been used by several cities to encourage downtown residential development.

With the above in mind, the following preliminary gaps analyses should be viewed with the following caveats:

- Not all developers are created equal; each has a different cost of capital and risk tolerance.
- The Identified condominium approach assumes that the developer builds the project and sells condominiums, either residential or commercial.
- The identified rental approach assumes that a developer builds and operates the project for a set holding period, and then sells it at the end of the holding period.
- The analysis builds from order-of-magnitude assumptions regarding construction costs, which are intended only to provide a rough framework for cost implications.

SITE 1 – NORTH SIDE OF MAIN

One project concept, on the west side of Downtown De Pere, calls for a 2-story, 60,000-gross-square-foot building. The approach begins with a conversion from gross floor area (60,000 square feet) to net (@10%): 54,000 net square feet, with condominium revenue production at \$120 per square foot, resulting in total revenue potential to the developer of \$6,480,000. This revenue potential compares to identified project costs of \$9.7 million, which do assume a 15% contingency. Not allowing for financing costs, the project gap is approximately \$3.28 million. A rental approach yields a similar result, building from rents of \$1 per sf per month, and operating expenses at about 35% of revenue. In both cases, the key challenge is that the proposed building is relatively expensive (\$140 per sf all in) compared to its height (2 stories). Given that unit construction costs should not vary dramatically much between 2 and 3 stories in height, there is a clear financial incentive in this case to push for a taller structure. For most cities, at around 4 stories, building codes mandate a transition from wood frame to steel or concrete.

Table 5.1: Opinion of Probable Costs, Main Street Development Proforma

Project	Cost
Site Preparation	\$289,400
Hardscape	\$125,160
Softscape	\$75,024
Development - Commercial	\$7,200,000
Subtotal	\$7,689,584
Contingency - 15%	\$1,153,438
Design and Testing - \$12%	\$922,750
TOTAL	\$9,765,772

SITE 2 – NICOLET SQUARE

This proposed project is similar to Site 1 in scale, with a proposed 2-story building covering 50,760 gross square feet, developed for mixed use. Assuming a rental approach (street level retail with apartments above), and applying core assumptions (retail rents at \$14 per sf and apartment rents at \$1 per sf per month), a discounted cash flow analysis indicates that the project gap would be in the area of \$2 million, meaning that a developer would require about \$2 million in financial support to complete the project. In this case, design and building height come into play. In general, for mixed use buildings, three stories is better than two, if only because a mixed use building needs two sets of infrastructure to handle distinct retail and residential or retail and office functions. In the near-term market, while it is plausible that upper story office space could support higher rents than residential, any project would require the presence of an anchor tenant to pre-lease a portion of the office component. In principal, apartments should be less difficult to finance.

Table 5.2: Opinion of Probable Costs, Nicolet Square Development Proforma

Project	Cost
Site Preparation	\$264,200
Hardscape	\$459,190
Softscape	\$64,076
Development - Commercial	\$6,768,000
Development - Art Installations	\$35,000
Subtotal	\$7,590,466
Contingency - 15%	\$1,138,570
Design and Testing - \$12%	\$910,856
TOTAL	\$9,639,892

SITE 3 – WELLS PARK

The Wells Park concept includes about 12,000 gross square feet of commercial space, to be developed as a pavilion within the park. The scale is not dissimilar to what was developed a Millennium Park in Chicago, where there is a restaurant, bathrooms, and storage space adjacent to an outdoor area which is used as a skating rink in the winter and a beer garden in the summer. This highly successful development was constructed and “built out” by the public sector, and leased to a restaurant operator. While at the time it was seen as risky, the project has proven to be quite successful.

Development of this program space in Wells Park will need to contend with key realities, beginning with the point that, at 12,000 square feet, this pavilion is large enough for a significant banquet (800 people at 15 square feet per person). For comparison, the average restaurant is 3,000 to 5,000 square feet in size. While the concept has merit, providing a logical connection down to the waterfront, key considerations include:

- For a restaurant to be successful at this site, it will need to support a distinctive menu, and draw from a larger market. The operator would expect to pay a rent at or below market rates, and would be unwilling to absorb a significant share of the build out cost for the space, given that the location is relatively isolated from the downtown core. The city would need to identify an area restaurateur to partner with.
- The city recreation department and / or St. Norbert could consider using a portion of the pavilion for events, meetings, and special activities / programs (kayak rentals, dancing lessons, etc.)
- Its use for banquets and events is a consideration. In this case, the city could set up a preferred list of caterers, and rent the space out to users for a daily fee, plausibly in the \$500 to \$1000 per day range. In this

framework, event volume is essential, as the per event charges are very modest. If a restaurant was built in a portion of the space, this operation could provide the food and beverage to the adjacent meeting space.

- With the trail system located next to the site, an argument for a bike repair / sales operation could be considered, with the ability to rent cross country skis in the winter.
- Full retail development is not seen as likely in the near-term, given the relatively detached location from downtown, and limited visibility from the roundabout. With plans to eventually redevelop others sites that front on the roundabout, this parcel would eventually become more attractive, assuming that connectivity with adjacent uses can be achieved.

Table 5.3: Opinion of Probable Costs, Wells Park Development Proforma

Project	Cost
Site Preparation	\$450,000
Hardscape	\$1,922,167
Softscape	\$300,881
Development - Commercial	\$1,469,400
Development - Parking	\$964,000
Subtotal	\$5,106,448
Contingency - 15%	\$765,967
Design and Testing - \$12%	\$612,774
TOTAL	\$6,485,189

SITE 4 - GEORGE STREET LANDING COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

RDG Planning and Design identified two commercial concepts for this area, showing a mixed use project with either hotel or residential development above structured parking on a site that is set back from Broadway, but still connected to the riverfront. While this project is notable from a design standpoint, creating an effective connection to the waterfront, the provision of structured parking below residential or hotel (or even office) use will require concrete or steel construction, which could increase development costs. This reality is reflected in the construction cost assumptions (\$150 per square foot compared to \$120 per square foot noted before). Higher construction costs would be a challenge given not-



Table 5.4: Opinion of Probable Costs, George Street Bridge Landing Development Proforma

Project	Cost
Site Preparation	\$569,612
Hardscape	\$1,228,763
Softscape	\$59,661
Dev't - Market & Park	\$2,288,260
Dev't - Parking Structure	\$2,484,000
Dev't - Condo/Hotel	\$6,804,450
Dev't Expansion - Parking	\$810,000
Dev't Expansion - Condo/Hotel	\$6,236,100
Dev't Expansion - Broadway Commercial	\$690,000
Subtotal	\$21,170,846
Contingency - 15%	\$3,175,627
Design and Testing - \$12%	\$2,540,501
TOTAL	\$26,886,974

ed performance levels from the aforementioned sites above. For this site, close to the waterfront, higher priced condominiums or a boutique hotel would be needed to drive feasibility. Consideration should also be given to increasing the height of the building above 5 stories (2 stories of parking + 3 stories of residential / hotel). Again, with concrete or steel construction, the building "wants" to be taller to offset a likely cost premium.

Likely incentives that could be considered to jumpstart this project include a public contribution / investment to build a share of the foundation / parking levels, thus offsetting the cost incurred by the developer. Incentives could also relate to the city providing an annual payment to the building owner to provide a certain number of public parking spaces in the project. Overall, while this project would be particularly speculative in the short-term market, it could become a relevant project within five years, assuming that residential values recover in the local market.

Table 5.5a: Opinion of Probable Costs, East Bank

Project	Project Type		Schedule			
	Public	Private	Ongoing	Within 5 yrs	5-10 Years	10- Years
Broadway/Wisconsin Core						
Broadway/George Ped Crossing Improvements	\$100,000			x		
Public Art	x			x		
Seroogy's Chocolates Connection	\$125,000	shared		x	x	
Alley Plaza	\$240,000				x	
ShopKo Connection		\$125,000			x	
Rear Façade Improvements	grant assistance	\$20,000 /each	x			
Mission Square Redevelopment	\$3,950,000	\$1,610,000		x		x
Front Buidling Facades	grant assistance	\$20,000 /each	x			
TOTAL	\$4,415,000	\$1,735,000				
George Street Landing						
George Street Landing, see Proforma, Table 5.4. (excludes Lock Island Connection)	~\$6,543,086	~\$20,343,889		x	x	
East Shore						
Voyageur Park (detailed master plan)	\$40,000			x		
Katherine Harper Riverwalk and Viewing Pier	-			x		
Wells Park Promenade, see Proforma, Table 5.3.	\$4,620,000	\$1,870,000			x	
Fox River Trail Enhancements	\$150,000			x		
TOTAL	\$11,353,086	\$22,213,889				
Historic Neighborhoods						
Ridgeway Boulevard Landscaping Plan	\$15,000 -\$25,000			x		
Ridgeway Boulevard Landscaping Installation	\$100,000- \$125,000	shared		x		
Ridgeway Boulevard Nodes	\$60,000			x		
Grant Assistance - Revolving Loan Fund	\$100,000	x	x	x		
TOTAL	\$310,000					

Table 5.5b: Opinion of Probable Costs, West Bank

Project	Project Type		Schedule			
	Public	Private	Ongoing	Within 5 yrs	5-10 Years	10- Years
Main/Reid Core						
Transportation Study (west side 2-way circulation)	add'l study			x		
Building Gap Passageways (each)	\$236,000	shared			x	
Nicolet Square Redevelopment (see Table 5.2)	\$1,050,000	\$8,600,000				x
<i>Commercial</i>		\$8,600,000				
<i>Site Prep & Enhancements</i>	\$1,050,000					
West Dev't and Alleyway	alley shared	\$5,550,000				
East Dev't and Alleyway	alley shared	\$4,170,000				
Humana Block Parking and Commercial Development	shared	\$7,670,000			x	
<i>Parking Garage (282 stalls)</i>	shared	\$5,740,000				
<i>Commercial</i>		\$1,930,000				
<i>Site Prep & Enhancements</i>	\$845,000					
Marquette Centre II Development		\$3,764,000				x
Marquette Centre II Parking Improvements		\$360,000				x
Main Avenue North Redevelopment (see Table 5.1)	\$645,000	\$9,144,000			x	
<i>Main Avenue West</i>		\$3,660,000				
<i>Main Avenue Central</i>		\$1,830,000				
<i>Main Avenue East</i>		\$3,660,000				
<i>Site Prep & Enhancements</i>	\$645,000					
Main (NW corner of Main and 5th)		\$751,000				x
Fort Howard and Main Redevelopment		\$11,760,000				x
Joliet Square Expansion		\$13,970,000				x
Transit-Oriented Development	shared	x				x
Main Avenue (behind curb, by block)	\$175-375,000					
TOTAL	\$3,476,000	\$65,739,000				

Table 5.5b: Opinion of Probable Costs, West Bank (...continued)

Project	Project Type		Schedule			
	Public	Private	Ongoing	Within 5 yrs	5-10 Years	10- Years
Main/Reid Core						
St. Norbert College and Wilson Park Neighborhood		x				
Traffic Redirection	add'l study				x	
Pedestrian Median (in coordination with traffic study)	add'l study					x
Wilson Park Upgrades	\$250,000			x		
Gateways (each)	\$35,000			x		
Riverfront Path	add'l study	x		x		
West Riverfront						
Thilmany Nicolet Mill Reuse	add'l study		x			x
West Bank Trail and Shoreline Park Plan	\$40,000	SNC shared		x		
Brown County Fairgrounds Study	\$60,000			x		
TOTAL	\$385,000	-				

Table 5.5c: Opinion of Probable Costs, Connections

Project	Project Type		Schedule			
	Public	Private	Ongoing	Within 5 yrs	5-10 Years	10- Years
CONNECTIONS & POLICIES						
City Logo Design & Applications (web, stationary, merchandise)	\$1,500-\$10,000			x		
Pier Enhancements	add'l study				x	
Roundabout Public Art	\$125,000	Fundraising		x		
Streetscape Markers	\$35,000			x		
Traffic Calming Devices	\$25,000			x		
Wayfinding Design and Program Plan	\$15,000 -\$35,000			x		
Wayfinding Installation	\$1,000 /sign			x		
TOTAL						



FUNDING TECHNIQUES

Available financing tools to help realize the vision for the downtown include:

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LOCAL FUNDING TOOLS

- Building Façade Easements
- Business Improvement District
- City Funds
- Estate Taxes
- General Obligation Bonds
- Green De Pere (City of De Pere)
- Land Sale Proceeds
- Private and Foundation Philanthropy
- Revenue Bond
- Tax Increment Financing

STATE SOURCES

- DNR Urban Forestry Grants-
- Brownfields Redevelopment Assistance (State Assistance)
- State Historical Society -
- Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA) - WisDOT
- Business Employees' Program (BEST)

FEDERAL SOURCES

- Brownfields Redevelopment Assistance
- Community Development Block Grants
- Community Development Corporation Grants
- HOME Investment Partnerships Program – HUD
- National Trust Main Street Program

- Neighborhood Stabilization Program (HUD)
- Recovery Zone Bonds
- Recreational Trails Program (RTP) (FHWA)
- Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) (USDA)
- Rural Community Development Initiative Grants (USDA Rural Development)
- Small Business Administration
- Small Cities Development Grant Program
- Transportation Enhancements

LOCAL FUNDING TOOLS

BUILDING FAÇADE EASEMENTS

Buildings fronting Main Avenue and Broadway could be candidates for establishing a building façade easement. Façade easements could be dedicated to the City, protecting the façade from unsympathetic modifications and providing a tax benefit to the donor. In addition, various forms of public financing, including TIF, may be available as a result of permanent public easements. Typically easements dissolve in less than 10 years, returning responsibility back to the private owner.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

The State of Wisconsin authorizes municipalities to establish business improvement districts (BIDs) for the promotion, management, maintenance and development of the district (Wisconsin Statutes 66.1109). Districts are restricted to commercial and industrial properties, any structures that are tax-exempt or function exclusively as residences cannot be included in assessments. The State of Wisconsin does not currently specify an assessment formula for municipalities to follow. The majority of BIDs utilize a fee based on the per \$1,000 value of property. Other widely used assessment formulas include assessments based on the frontage foot, or a flat fee for each property within the BID. Establishing special assessments should be reasonable to not deter investment into and around project areas. Regional BID's include Downtown Green Bay, Downtown Appleton and Downtown Fond du Lac.

For additional information, contact University of Wisconsin-Extension <http://lgc.uwex.edu/cpd/bidpage/bid.html> or at 608-262-9960.

CITY GENERAL REVENUES

General revenues, appropriated through the city's annual budget process, can finance services, improvements, facilities and development projects. These appropriations are separate from general revenues devoted to debt service on bonds. Common uses of general revenues in downtown development programs include funding staff and organizational expenses, or projects that can be divided into smaller phases, such as streetscape improvements.

ESTATE TAXES

Estate taxes are collected by the county and may be used to help finance downtown De Pere capital improvements.

GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND ISSUES

General obligation bond issues, typically secured by general city revenues or incremental property taxes, can finance major public projects or improvements. General revenues may include property taxes or local option sales taxes. Appropriate uses for bonds include streets, infrastructure, park and public space projects, and similar improvements.

For additional information, contact Community and Economic Development Director of De Pere at 920-339-4043.

GREEN DE PERE

Property owners can request to have a tree planted in their front yard or boulevard by contacting the community forestry program at 339-8362. Residents may also donate a tree to be planted in the park as a memorial.

LAND SALE PROCEEDS

Proceeds from sale of land to development projects could be allocated back to downtown improvements and acquisition for other redevelopment activities. For example, the sale of a portion Crevier Commons for development could be returned to improvements in the downtown.

PRIVATE AND FOUNDATION PHILANTHROPY

The Plan provides a variety of opportunities for individual or foundation contributions. Private philanthropy, with appropriate recognition and commemoration, is a critical part of the downtown implementation program, and is especially appropriate for trail and riverfront projects, community attractions such as the Riverwalk, Old George Street Bridge Landing, and other public open spaces.

For additional information about sources of philanthropy and non-profits, contact Donors Forum of Wisconsin at www.dfwonline.org or 414-270-1978.

REVENUE BONDS

Revenue bonds are debt instruments that are repaid all or in part from revenues generated by the project or by other associated revenue sources. For example, part of the capital cost of a parking structure may be repaid through parking fees generated by that structure, or other parking facilities in a community. Revenue bonds typically are not secured by the credit of the community.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF)

Local Tax Increment Financing (Local TIF) permits the use of a portion of local property taxes to assist funding the redevelopment of certain designated areas within your community. Projects pay their entire established tax obligation. However, taxes produced by the added value of the property caused by redevelopment or improvements may be used to finance project-related improvements or other public improvements in the district. Table 5.2 shows a proforma of how TIF can be used to finance major development projects. TIF may be used to pay certain costs incurred with a redevelopment project. Such costs may include, but are not limited to:

- Public improvements and amenities
- Infrastructure improvements and upgrades
- Site improvements and preparation
- Rehabilitation of structure, including adaptive reuse or rehabilitation of private properties.
- Property acquisitions

For additional information on the development of TIF Districts, contact the Wisconsin Department of Revenue at 608-261-5335, or at tif@revenue.wi.gov.

STATE OF WISCONSIN SOURCES

BUSINESS EMPLOYEES' SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM (BEST)

Established by the Wisconsin Legislature to help small businesses in industries that are facing severe labor shortages upgrade the skills of their workforce, including information technology and child care. Under the BEST program, Commerce can provide applicants with a tuition reimbursement grant to help cover a portion of the costs associated with training employees.

For additional information visit www.commerce.state.wi.us/bd/BD-BESTprogram.html.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION GRANTS

The CBED Program is designed to promote local business development in economically distressed areas. The program awards grants to community-based organizations for development and business assistance projects and to municipalities for economic development planning. The program also helps community-based organizations plan, build, and create business and technology-based incubators, and can also capitalize an incubator tenant revolving-loan program.

For additional information, visit www.wisgov.state.wi.us/journal_media_detail.asp?locid=19&prid=507

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DOT), TRANSPORTATION ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (TEA)

The Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA) program provides 50% state grants to governing bodies, private businesses, and consortiums for road, rail, harbor and airport projects that help attract employers to Wisconsin, or encourage business and industry to remain and expand in the state.

Program purpose. The goal of the TEA program is to attract and retain business firms in Wisconsin and thus create or retain jobs. The businesses cannot be speculative and local communities must assure that the number of jobs anticipated from the proposed project will materialize within three years from the date of the project agreement and remain after another four years.

Program description. Grants of up to \$1 million are available for transportation improvements that are essential for an economic development project. It must begin within three years, have the local government's endorsement, and benefit the public. The program is designed to implement an improvement more quickly than normal state programming processes allow. The 50% local match can come from any combination of local, federal, or private funds or in-kind services. Applications are first come, first serve, and funded when all eligibility information is complete and satisfactory.

History. The TEA program began in September 1987. Through March 2008, 66,435 jobs have been directly and indirectly created through the \$74 million invested in grants awarded to 179 communities. Some 305 businesses have benefited from the grants.

For additional information visit www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/tea.htm.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR), BROWNFIELDS REDEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Brownfield Site Assessment Grant (WDNR) - Eligible local governmental units can be reimbursed up to 80 percent of the costs associated with assessing environmental contamination at Brownfield sites.

The applicant must be a local government unit such as a city, village, town, county, tribe, or redevelopment, community development, or housing authorities.

- The applicant cannot have caused the environmental contamination at the site.
- The party responsible for the environmental contamination must be unknown, unable to be located or financially unable to pay for grant activities.

Funding is divided between small and large grants with 70 percent of funds allocated to small grants (between \$2,000 and \$30,000) and 30 percent allocated for large grants (between \$30,001 and \$100,000). No more than 15 percent of all available funds will be awarded to a single applicant in the fiscal year. At least one application cycle will be offered per fiscal year, if funding is available. Also see Brownfield under Federal Funding Sources.

For additional information, visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/Grants/SAG.html>

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR), URBAN FORESTRY GRANTS

The DNR offers financial assistance for urban forestry projects that improve a community's capacity to manage its trees. Eligible applicants may be a city, village, town, county, tribal government or 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and joint applicants are encouraged to apply. The urban forestry grant program supports projects that advance a community's urban forestry management program. The grant program is a 50/50 cost-share program where applicants match each grant dollar. Grant awards range from \$1,000 to \$25,000.

Application forms are available on the website. Completing and returning Intent to Apply form ensures that you will receive an application.

For additional information, visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/uf/grants/index.htm>

WISCONSIN STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Wisconsin State Historical Society offers assistance in seeking funding for historic preservation projects and programs. A database is available to help identify public and private funding sources related to the documentation and preservation of Wisconsin's historic places. Assistance types include grants, low-cost loans and tax credit programs. There are funding programs administered by federal, state and local agencies, as well as by private organizations. Eligibility, application requirements and level of competition vary according to the goals of each grantmaker.

For additional information, visit www.wisconsinhistory.org/hp/funding/

FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES

BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT PILOTS/ GRANTS

Assessment grants through EPA provide funding for a grant recipient to inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct planning and community involvement related to brownfield sites. An eligible entity may apply for up to \$200,000 to assess a site contaminated by hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants (including hazardous substances co-mingled with petroleum) and up to \$200,000 to address a site contaminated by petroleum. Applicants may seek a waiver of the \$200,000 limit and request up to \$350,000 for a site contaminated by hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants and up to \$350,000 to assess a site contaminated by petroleum. Such waivers must be based on the anticipated level of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants (including hazardous substances co-mingled with petroleum) at a single site. Total grant fund requests should not exceed a total of \$400,000 unless such a waiver is requested. Due to budget limitations, no entity may apply for more than \$700,000 in assessment funding. The performance period for these grants is two years. This program may be eligible for properties in the 400 Block of Main Street.

For additional information, visit www.epa.gov/brownfields/assessment_grants.htm.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

The Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) offers grants to small communities to improve local facilities, address critical health and safety concerns, and develop a greater capacity for growth. CDBG is a “pass through” funding program from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development authorized by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-383). They offer funds for projects that can range from housing and street repairs to industrial loans and job training.

(This federal funding is intended for housing and economic development to benefit low- and moderate-income residents. Also for rehabilitation and infill projects, directed to projects that benefit low- and moderate-income households or eliminate blighted areas.)

For additional information, contact Community and Economic Development Director of De Pere at 920-339-4043.

HOME

HOME is the largest Federal block grant to State and local governments designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income households. Each year it allocates approximately \$2 billion among the States and hundreds of localities nationwide. HOME provides formula grants to States and localities that communities use—often in partnership with local nonprofit groups—to fund a wide range of activities that build, buy, and/or rehabilitate affordable housing for rent or homeownership or provide direct rental assistance to low-income people. The Joliet Square Expansion could be a candidate site for low-income housing.

For more information, visit www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/affordablehousing/programs/home/

NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION PROGRAM (NSP) (HUD)

The Neighborhood Stabilization Program provides assistance to acquire and redevelop foreclosed properties that might otherwise become sources of abandonment and blight within their communities. Neighborhood Stabilization funds can be used to purchase foreclosed or abandoned homes and to rehabilitate, resell, or redevelop these homes in order to stabilize neighborhoods and stem the decline of property values of neighboring homes.

RURAL BUSINESS ENTERPRISE GRANT (RBEG) PROGRAM:

To provide grants that facilitate and finance the development of small and emerging private business enterprises in rural areas through establishing small business revolving loan funds, acquisition of land, buildings, and infrastructure to enhance business development or by providing technical assistance, etc.

- Eligible Applicants Include: Public bodies, non-profits, and Indian tribes
- Eligible areas include unincorporated rural areas, cities and towns with populations of less than 50,000 (priority given to populations 25,000 and smaller).
- Project cannot be agriculture production; comprehensive area planning or projects not owned or controlled by at least 51 percent U.S. citizens.
- Grants will support local and regional economic development programs that will support non-farm businesses.

For additional information, visit www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne/rural_business_enterprise_grant_program.htm.

RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM (RTP)

The Recreational Trails Program offers federally-funded grants through the Federal Highway Administration that are administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Grant funds are to be used for motorized or non-motorized trail development or renovation and preservation. Each project requires a minimum match of 20 percent. Projects must be maintained for a period of 25 years and requests up to \$100,000 are eligible. Eligible applicants include cities and counties, schools, and private non-profit and for-profit businesses. The proposed trail along the West Bank could be eligible for these funds.

For additional information, contact Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources – Northeast Region at 920-662-5487.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

The Small Business Administration (SBA) has financial assistance programs which provide access to debt and equity primarily from banks or other private sources. SBA evaluates each loan application on two levels; the first is for eligibility, which varies by industry and SBA program, and second on credit merits of the application. SBA programs and services support small business owners, connecting businesses to loans, government contracting opportunities, disaster assistance and training programs to help your business succeed.

For more information, visit www.sba.gov.

Appendix

A1 MAIN STREET PROGRAM..... 00 - 00

MAIN STREET ORGANIZATION

MAIN STREET PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

AECOM and RDG were asked to review the Main Street De Pere organizational structure in the context of its position as the economic development entity responsible for business development and revitalization of downtown De Pere. Currently, Main Street De Pere functions as a program of the Chamber of Commerce. In its early years, the Main Street organization was a separate organization, but was brought under the Chamber structure to reduce administrative costs and duplicative mission objectives. There has been some recent discussion about what the appropriate structure, relationship and staffing should be for Main Street De Pere.

The Main Street Approach® to downtown revitalization is a methodology developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center. Recommended organizational structures vary depending on local needs and resources. While the "typical" Main Street organization is a freestanding, nonprofit group, many Main Street programs have chosen to use government, development authorities, special tax district organizations, or chambers of commerce to pursue downtown redevelopment and revitalization. To establish a stable funding base, many mature Main Street programs decide to pursue special assessment district funding (such as a Business Improvement District or similar funding mechanism). While there is no "right" way to organize a Main Street group, focus should be on the most effective structure for implementing a comprehensive program of work based on the four organizing points of Main Street:

- Organization
- Design
- Promotion (or Marketing)
- Economic Restructuring

MAIN STREET IN THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Many communities use a chamber of commerce to house their Main Street programs, particularly in the early stages of program initiation. A chamber of commerce offers an opportunity for sharing offices, clerical staff, and equipment and can minimize costs when starting a program. While the business-oriented nature of a chamber of commerce may seem to be the ideal placement for a Main Street program, there are issues to consider which may make a case for other program placement options.

Chambers of commerce often represent businesses throughout a city, county or region. The De Pere Chamber of Commerce represents businesses in the City of De Pere, Green Bay, Ashwaubenon, Lawrence, Ledgeview, and Wrightstown. While the broad membership of the De Pere Chamber provides some financial and organizational strength, it can dilute the importance of the De Pere Main Street effort and create a competition for resources than work to the disadvantage of the Main Street program. A broader city, county, or regional focus can hamper the operations of a program designed to concentrate exclusively on a single commercial district. Comments have been made about Main Street's use of Chamber staff resources and the financial "burden" placed upon the Chamber by Main Street. Such discussions can create potential for distractions from the Main Street program mission and divisive situations.

While the Chamber's position as a business association may make some programmatic sense, the organization's 501 (c) 6 tax status can render it ineligible for funding from certain government and philanthropic sources. Main Street De Pere's 501 (c) 3 tax status as the "Main Street De Pere" allows a broad range of funding, as well as a programmatic mission rationale that goes beyond simple business interests and positions Main Street De Pere as a community development / community improvement organization that can reach out beyond the busi-

ness community to include volunteers and support from non-profits and individuals. Recently the Main Street De Pere 501(c) 3 "charitable and educational" organization became the "De Pere Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Inc." The following concerns are noted about this approach:

- It has the potential to further dilute the role of Main Street De Pere in the Chamber structure
- The IRS can become difficult with any attempts by chambers of commerce to acquire 501 (c) 3 status by assuming existing designations.

Our perspective is that a clear commercial district focus needs to be established and maintained whether De Pere Main Street remains part of the chamber or not.

GOVERNANCE

For Main Street De Pere to be a properly-functioning Main Street program, it should have dedicated governance, which can be accomplished several ways. In an ideal world, this governance may be provided by a separate Main Street board of directors as established under the structure of the Main Street De Pere, Inc. organization. An active, engaged board is necessary to an active Main Street program. Should it be decided that Main Street will remain within the Chamber physically or organizationally, some thought should be given to an organization that is dedicated solely to downtown De Pere. Such an arrangement could include a joint operating agreement with the Chamber that defines roles, responsibilities, staffing and financial requirements of each organization to more cleanly delineate the place Main Street De Pere has and its relationship with the Chamber. If the organization becomes more connected with the City of De Pere structure, some attention will need to be paid to maintaining a balance of government and non-government functions and a means to ensure some measure of operational independence within the new structure.

Assuming that Main Street De Pere stays within the Chamber organization, we would suggest consideration of a structure with the following elements:

- Within the Chamber organization, Main Street would become one of several committees, in this case with 501 (C) 3 status.
- The Main Street program would hire a Main Street Coordinator, who would be responsible for recruitment, building owner liaison, and related services
- The Main Street Coordinator would report to the Main Street Committee
- The Chairperson of the Main Street Committee would sit on the overall Chamber Board of directors, with reporting responsibility for all Main Street activities.

The core premise behind this structure is to create a measure of autonomy between Main Street and the Chamber. At the other end, the city would have the option to directly engage and hire a Main Street coordinator. In this case, while the Main Street program could still stay within the above chamber structure, we would expect that the city may want / expect to play a greater oversight role. In this situation, the Main Street director could technically be a city employee; as well, the city could ask to have a seat on the chamber board (perhaps ex-officio).

WORK PLAN

Currently, while Main Street De Pere has the four standard committees, chamber influence has tended to give these committees a city wide perspective, rather than only a downtown focus. In addition, we understand that the Beautification Committee has tended to focus on downtown, working with the design guidelines and with businesses on an ad hoc basis. While the Chamber Business Enhancement, Marketing and Promotions Committees also work on individual projects and efforts within the downtown, their citywide focus appears to have diluted resulting impacts on downtown.

The Main Street De Pere Plan of Action tends to be design and promotion-focused rather than business recruitment and retention-oriented. A more formal organizational structure would make Main Street De Pere more effective in accomplishing program objectives. In particular, experience shows that volunteer committees have a difficult time sustaining commitments to implement aggressive recruitment and retention strategies beyond short term horizons. In practice, the volunteer committees serve an important support role for Main Street directors, who should be entrusted with what is a full time position – aggressive tenant retention and recruitment, as well as liaison with building owners and tenants.

It is not necessary to have four committees dedicated to the Main Street Four-Point Approach, but rather use the Approach as an integrated methodology for ensuring that all areas of downtown development, redevelopment and revitalization are addressed. Each of the four points – design, organization, promotion and economic restructuring – acts as an organizing structure for activities, projects, programs and strategies.

Assuming that a Coordinator is hired, we would envision a series of initial work tasks:

- Begin meetings with building owners to validate store information, to ensure that the inventory data is accurate and current, and to understand and build consensus around lease rates, preferred tenants. These interviews should be viewed as a step toward the Main Street Director having a more proactive role in helping to market vacant space and buildings.
- Meetings with city planning staff and property owners to confirm land use expectations, density and parking requirements, and entitlements for vacant downtown properties.
- Development of core marketing materials, which build from a clear understanding of store information, store clusters, and demand drivers.

- Commence retention meetings with merchants. An effective retention effort includes a structured survey approach (i.e. consistent questions to gauge changes over time) tailored specifically to the downtown market. Secondary questions can also focus on needs for potential support (i.e. business planning, merchandising ideas, coordination with building owners / city staff), and ideas for programming which would be supportive of store sales growth.

- Once the above elements have been initiated, the attraction element can then begin in earnest. We envision that a tenant attraction approach can follow several paths:

- a. Meetings with existing merchants who could be interested in new store formats or ideas.
- b. Visits to other destinations in the region (Galeana, Traverse City, etc.) to meet with merchants in these towns to evaluate interest in a second or third store. Initial visits should be tied in with basic marketing materials on the downtown which identify store clusters and demand drivers.
- c. For specific national chain stores, efforts begin with initial contact and provision of core marketing materials. In the context of current economic challenges, this avenue is likely to be modest through 2011.

During the interim period, before a coordinator is hired, we suggest that the Economic Enhancement Committee should include the completion of databases for the downtown area, as noted in the first bullet above. The effort of validating building square footage, confirming building ownership contact information, and related elements is an important first step, potentially allowing the committee to publish quarterly reports on downtown occupancy trends, and changes in lease rates. On a broader level, we would expect that the committee would serve on an on-going basis as a sounding board for the coordinator, to think through possible uses.

STAFFING

Current staffing at the Chamber shares administrative staff as well as program staff. De Pere Main Street lacks dedicated staff resources that are needed for business recruitment, retention and expansion efforts. As above, while the volunteer committees strive to fill these roles, a full time commitment is required to sustain progress. Main Street programs housed in chambers of commerce often find that staff focus can become diffused if staff resources have to be split with activities not specifically related to the downtown business district. It is recommended that De Pere Main Street hire a full-time Main Street director for its Main Street effort.

A properly-functioning Main Street program requires dedicated, trained Main Street director focused on the downtown commercial area. As the issues in downtown De Pere seems to be heavily weighted toward business development and economic restructuring, a director with skills in that area would be best suited in De Pere. Training may be available through the Wisconsin Main Street program or through the National Main Street program of the National Trust. In addition to paid staff, Main Street programs often rely on a cadre of volunteers to provide program support. Volunteer development is a critical element of the Main Street director's job. Both the Wisconsin Main Street and National Main Street offices have considerable information resources on volunteer development and management.

FUNDING

To afford a full-time Main Street director and funding for specific program expenses, Main Street De Pere needs a dedicated source of funding that can be combined with funds provided by the City. Some Chamber members have suggested that Main Street takes too much of the Chamber's budget relative to its representation in the membership. A review of changes in the Chamber and Main Street budgets over time, however, appears to show that many fund-raising events that were originally Main Street events have become funding vehicles for the

Chamber. In addition, separate fund-raising from partner businesses for Main Street does not occur in order to avoid competition with Chamber funding (such as funding from the financial institutions for specific business-related programming). As the funding from the City is in support of the Main Street effort, rolling all of Main Street and other Chamber initiatives under a new foundation structure clouds the purpose of those funds. City funds should be provided for specific responsibilities and functions of the Main Street group that are performed according to an agreed work plan.

Many mature Main Street programs use business improvement districts (BID) or similar self-assessment legislation as a source of base funding. While BID funding cannot cover all Main Street activities, it can support the business and development activities that provide direct benefits to the properties within the district. Establishing a BID in downtown De Pere has been tried in the past, without success. Unfortunately, property owners did not see the benefits of self-assessment. For such an effort to be successful, an educational process will be needed with small group meetings, "block captains" to build support and a compelling rationale for the BID. The rationale should outline why the funding is needed, how the funds are to be used, and a fully-articulated work plan with metrics and governance structures. It is unlikely that a BID campaign can be successful with the current structure and blurred governance/funding that does not differentiate Main Street from the Chamber in a meaningful manner. Focusing future program element on economic issues such as retention, recruitment and expansion assistance will highlight the relevance of Main Street to downtown businesses' day-to-day concerns.

The approaches to funding sources for Main Street programs vary. Financial resources to consider might be:

- Membership dues
- Earned income
- Service fees for activities performed for government

- Income-producing product or activities
- Individual solicitation
- Canvassing
- Direct mail
- Annual / planned giving
- Memorials
- Bequests
- Insurance
- Trusts / Annuities
- Endowment for special program fund
- Grants (government and foundation)
- Program-related investment (seed funds for loans)
- Special events

MARKETING MAIN STREET

Current downtown promotional efforts appear to focus on increasing foot traffic through special events. While such activities are important, many of the events seem to be special events – events that may draw a crowd but are not necessarily designed to generate sales on the day of the event. Main Street De Pere needs more sales promotion-oriented events that highlight clusters – restaurant week, bridal events, etc. These events are specifically intended to "ring the cash register". Outdoor activities or anything that limits time in stores are held to a minimum in such events. Businesses should fund their participation in the event, after all they are the beneficiaries.

Another type of marketing that need to be increased is business-specific marketing for recruitment. While some Business Enhancement Committee members questioned whether a Main Street recruitment effort can be very successful, many Main Street programs are successfully recruiting businesses through targeted marketing materials, direct sales calls and broker networking. The actual recruitment activities are best left to staff, but volunteers can assist with information that would be useful to businesses considering downtown De Pere such as operating costs and business cycles.