

# Chapter 14: Downtown Plan

Introduction

Analysis of Existing Conditions

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Downtown Development Concept

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*Photo Credit: Aspire Photography*

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# Section 1: Introduction

## Purpose

The Downtown Plan is intended to inform wise public policy and private investment decision-making in a manner which builds upon the physical, natural, cultural, and social assets of the City. The overall purpose is to align the resources and talents of the City, Appleton Downtown, Inc. (ADI), private businesses, non-profits and the broader community around a shared vision for the future of downtown and portions of the riverfront.

The specific **objectives** of this Plan included:

- Assess the status of current initiatives
- Perform a literature review of pertinent downtown related documents including the Appleton Economic Development Strategic Plan (2015)
- Conduct a real estate market analysis for downtown
- Analyze and make recommendations for downtown’s built environment including redevelopment opportunities
- Analyze downtown’s aesthetics and walkability and make recommendations to improve streetscapes, incorporate public art, and create/improve gathering spaces
- Identify applicable incentive programs and provide recommendations for applying them in the downtown to support downtown’s growth and vibrancy
- Conduct a competitive analysis and make recommendations to improve Appleton’s competitive advantage for business attraction
- Conduct a comprehensive public engagement program
- Prepare an Executive Summary which provides a clear vision for the future of downtown
- Prepare an updated Chapter 14 Downtown Plan including implementation strategies

## History<sup>1</sup>

**The decisions of the past shape every moment of every day.** As the City of Appleton considers a new comprehensive plan, it’s important to reflect on key decisions that have determined the status of the central business district (CBD). The 1922 City Planning Survey with Proposals was Appleton’s first major attempt to create a standard plan and envision bold new projects to move forward. As this newest document is reviewed and considered, we must recognize how the following themes re-emerge and continue to influence our decision-making for downtown’s growth.

**Three historic communities shaped our downtown.** By 1849, the villages of Lawesburg, Appleton, and Grand Chute were established north of the river. Each of the communities had separate commercial districts of hotels and dry goods stores, as well as key features that still define today’s downtown. Lawesburg contained the Lawrence University campus, Appleton grew as the CBD, and Grand Chute was the county government seat. The three communities were incorporated into Appleton in 1853, but their distinct traits of education, commerce, and government continue to shape the spatial boundaries of downtown.

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<sup>1</sup> **Where Have We Been, Where Are We Going?** By: The History Museum at the Castle

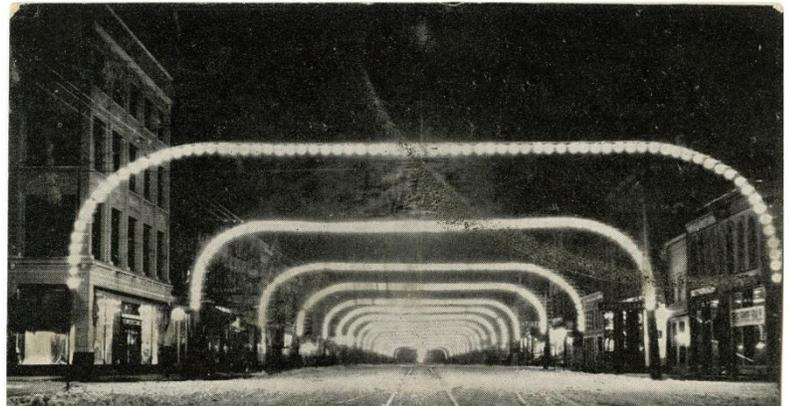
**The river's relationship with downtown has changed over time.** Before railroad transportation, early resident John Lawe described the city as facing the river to serve as the main entry point to travelers who mostly arrived by boat. The success of industry driven by waterpower and the coming of the railway refocused downtown away from the river. The Chicago-Northwestern Railway and depot was placed north of downtown in 1861 and became the city's gateway. Flour mills, a barrel and stave factory, a tannery, a foundry, chair factories, paper mills, and many other enterprises, were established along the Fox River. As the location of heavy industry and commercial railroads, the waterfront's beauty was lost to a dirty, but practical and important early use of space. The commercial and residential zones were re-orientated away from the Fox River.



*Figure 1 Streetcar replica at Pullman's restaurant, Appleton, WI*

**Diversity Helped Downtown's Growth.** Around 1900, Appleton's CBD was home to a diverse community of business owners and residents. The arrival of African Americans, Greeks, Italians, Chinese, Irish, and Germans led to new dry good stores, butcher shops, restaurants, barber shops, and laundries. However, the growth of a diverse community waned by 1915 as people of color were excluded from settling in Appleton. Not until about 1970 did people of color return to Appleton with Black, Hmong, and Hispanic persons settling in Appleton. Diversity continued to expand.

**Evolving transportation access shaped downtown.** As a small and compact city, Appleton was like many 19th century urban spaces where most people lived within a few blocks of their place of employment and walked for day-to-day activities. As the city grew, people were able to live further from their work as the city became a leader in new kinds of transportation. Launched on August 16, 1886, the Appleton Electric Street Railway Company was the first commercially successful electric street railway in the United States. The route traveled east and west of downtown to connect the commercial center to residential neighborhoods, parks, and even Riverside Cemetery. Additional interurban routes connected downtown Appleton to Fond du Lac and Green Bay. In 1895, the Appleton Cycling Club installed the first bicycle path in Wisconsin to connect the downtown to residential neighborhoods and the County Fair and Driving Park located west of the city.



*Figure 2 Dramatic overhead lighting over College Ave. in downtown Appleton (Source: <http://wisconsinproject.blogspot.com/>)*

By 1926, Appleton was connected by highways to Green Bay and Chicago with College Avenue being designated as part US-41. The introduction of the automobile significantly changed the downtown as more people commuted greater distances to work and gradually led to suburban sprawl. As automobile use increased, US-41 relocated north to Wisconsin Avenue, then to Northland Avenue, and finally to its present location, creating commercial districts with each move.

Completed in 1993, the 441 Tri-County Expressway created a beltline that encircled and re-defined the center city.

**Peaks and valleys of downtown art.** Appleton's first public art movement occurred after 1900. Erected in 1911, Soldiers Square was dedicated to local Civil War veterans, and four years later expanded into a boulevard with cannons and a monument to Spanish American War veterans. The latter two pieces were relocated to Pierce Park to make way for a parking lot. During the 1980s, a renaissance of public art included the significant sculpture installations of the Fox River Oracle by Dimitri Hadzi and Metamorphosis by Richard C. Wolter, which was since displaced into storage. Other periods of vibrant, visual aesthetics include enormous painted wall advertising (1870-1950), The Great White Way street lights (1908-1911), and the neon sign boom of the 1930s.

**City planning was inconsistently implemented.** The City Planning Survey with Proposals from 1922 was Appleton's first attempt to standardize infrastructure and create a bold new vision for downtown. The key feature included the creation of a civic centre on the bluff site by integrating an existing vocational school, library, and church buildings with an expanded monument boulevard (Soldiers Square), city hall, woman's club building, and city museum. The document also called for the filling of the ravine running from the riverfront to Atlantic Street to create Jones and Arbutus Parks. In 1959, the city considered an even bolder change by converting part of College Avenue into a pedestrian mall, but they determined the loss of parking was too detrimental to downtown businesses. These false starts and the inability to fully execute a vision led to an absence of monumental public architecture and the absence of a built environment that fulfills our community's aspirations.

**Downtown remains vibrant despite peripheral challenges.** The CBD faced its biggest challenge in 1984 when the Fox River Mall opened in the Town of Grand Chute. Merchants and residents alike worried the new commercial area would adversely affect downtown. To counter the suburban growth, the city erected The Avenue mall under the leadership of Mayor Dorothy Johnson. The eventual loss of key chain store tenants led to the primary re-use of the building for office space. Downtown survived and is an exceptionally vibrant commercial district for a mid-sized city, with its buildings operating at near full capacity.

**Continued conversations from our past.** Past generations reflected on history to consider the best way they felt to move forward. As the city is growing again into a great place for public art, music, cultural venues, shopping, work, and nightlife, it's important to remember



*Figure 3 Nick Hoffman, Chief Curator at the History Museum at the Castle, conducts a walking history tour*

the debates, visions, and shortcomings of the past that brought us to this point. With this growth, the city must also continue momentum to make downtown a safe and inclusive place that embraces diversity. As with previous plans, each objective will be weighed for importance, project affordability, and then democratically scrutinized by residents to ensure the best projects will rise to the top. Let us not forget, the next generation will inevitably review our plans and decisions as they too contemplate how they will shape the future of Appleton.

## Past Planning Efforts

The 2016 Downtown Plan builds upon many previous studies and plans for downtown and the riverfront, several of which are briefly described below. See the Appendices for longer summaries of each document.

- **1995 Downtown Plan** - This plan established a vision and objectives for the downtown, as well as a decision framework of initiatives and goals, and a set of strategies it proposed to attain those goals.
- **1998 Greenprint for Downtown Appleton** - A streetscape enhancement plan for College Avenue between Badger Avenue and Drew Street, including major gateways to the downtown business district.
- **1999 Target Niche Analysis, Business Identification, and Implementation Plan for Downtown Appleton** - This study identified specific retail market niches and tenant types, and strategies for general economic vitality in the downtown.
- **2001 Focus Fox River: A Master Plan** - Amended in 2003, this plan focused on redevelopment and reinvestment along the Fox River in the City of Appleton.
- **2002 Multi-Modal Transportation and Parking Study for Appleton's Riverfront** - The purpose of this study was to determine if the types of development and redevelopment proposed in Focus Fox River: A Master Plan could be accommodated.
- **2004 Riverfront Trail Connection Study** - The purpose of this study was to review previously adopted plans and define riverfront connections for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- **2010 Downtown Plan** - This 2007 update to the City of Appleton's Downtown Plan was incorporated into the City's 2010 Comprehensive Plan. The update recommended mixed-use and residential districts north of the core downtown, with some pockets of redevelopment south of the core.
- **2010 Richmond Street Corridor Plan** - The Study proposed redevelopment sites, including between the railroad, W. Packard Street, and N. Richmond Street.
- **2015 Economic Development Strategic Plan** - A plan was developed to serve as the basis for the City's overall economic development strategy.
- **2015 Downtown Parking Study** - A comprehensive downtown parking analysis was conducted in anticipation of new development and changes to the City's public parking program.
- **2016 Downtown Appleton Mobility Plan** - The purpose of the study was to determine and evaluate strategies to improve multi-modal mobility and traffic circulation in downtown Appleton in an area bounded by Atlantic Street, Lawe Street, Richmond Street, and the Fox River.
- **2016 Appleton Trails Master Plan** - A comprehensive Trails Master Plan was developed for the entire City, including the downtown area.



## Key Accomplishments and On-Going Priorities

The Downtown Plan was created in 2007, and then added to the 2010 City Comprehensive Plan. This section of the report describes key accomplishments, some of which date back to 2007. The summaries below each initiative represent key highlights. Due to the size of the document an extensive summary isn't included. Additional information may be obtained from the City's Community and Economic Development Department.

### Urban Design Initiative – policies and projects to create an identity and improve the appearance of downtown

1. Continue development of entry features on major routes into the downtown
2. Establish design guidelines for redevelopment and renovation projects in the downtown
3. Create a public use campus south of Lawrence Street between Walnut Street and Jones Park
4. Implement streetscaping projects to create downtown "identity streets"
5. Install sculpture, murals, and other art in public locations throughout the downtown
6. Expand and enhance the system of urban parks, plazas, and trails in the downtown

Appleton has succeeded in terms of installing some entry features into downtown, including a monument sign at the northeast corner of Badger Avenue and College Avenue. Regional wayfinding signage has also helped define major entry routes into downtown. Building off the success of multiple public art installations downtown, the City has an opportunity to use public art as a key element in further defining key gateways into downtown.

Since the prior plan was adopted, the City expanded its police station in 2008 within the same parcel footprint. The public use campus concept is being advanced under the County's campus plan, with a focus on future development within their existing footprint. In terms of creating "identity streets" downtown a few projects have occurred organically, however attention to side streets is still seen as a priority. The 2016 Mobility Study identified two high priority street reconfigurations – Appleton Street and Lawrence Street, both of which will present opportunities to incorporate additional streetscaping.

Finally, the City has had partial success expanding and enhancing the system of urban parks, plazas, and trails downtown. Houdini Plaza was reconstructed in 2013, becoming Appleton's premier multi-use urban plaza. The 2016 Mobility Study and the 2016 Trails Master Plan identify a number of future bike lanes and trail enhancements within the study area.

### Tourism/Arts/Entertainment Initiative – policies and projects to develop cultural attractions and promote travel to the downtown

1. Maintain the vitality of the arts and entertainment district
2. Pursue opportunities to attract more artists and arts-related businesses to the downtown
3. Create new venues for arts activities in the downtown
4. Advance efforts to establish a convention/Fox Cities Exhibition Center in the downtown

As was noted in the prior Plan, Appleton has succeeded in establishing an arts and entertainment district which has become the cultural center of the region. The Children's Museum has expanded and the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center (PAC) was constructed. The PAC continues to thrive and attract national and international talent to the City. These projects, in turn, have helped to attract a number of exceptional restaurants to the west end of downtown. Meanwhile, the



CopperLeaf Boutique Hotel has added additional lodging in the downtown and a new Courtyard by Marriott hotel is being constructed along the Fox River as part of the RiverHeath development.

More recently, the Fox Cities Building for the Arts was established and is home to the Trout Museum of Art and The Trout Collection, featuring an impressive mix of over 150 museum-quality works of art. In addition to the Trout Museum of Art, The Building for the Arts also supports a variety of other creative programs and activities, such as the Fox Valley Symphony, Appleton Boy Choir, Markaroff Youth Ballet, NEW Voices, and Wisconsin Public TV/Radio. The Draw, an artist studio and performance space, was added to the Fox River adjacent to the downtown. Finally, the Mile of Music and other highly successful events continue to make downtown a vital destination.

Pop up galleries, including Lawrence University's Rabbit gallery, Pulse's Artery project, Young Space, the Articulture Community Supported Art (CSA), and the Appleton Public Library's Artist in Residence Program are other indicators of success. Despite all of these successes, a comprehensive approach for fostering and promoting public art and other diverse forms of cultural expression downtown and citywide is now seen as a priority.

In 2013 Houdini Plaza was renovated and now serves as the central outdoor programming space in downtown Appleton. Developing and implementing a long term vision for the creation of new venues for arts activities in the downtown is still seen as a priority.

Finally, the Fox Cities Exhibition Center is entering the final design and construction phase, with ten municipalities, eight primary stakeholders, and multiple partnerships collaborating to ensure a viable project which truly benefits not only downtown but the entire Fox Cities region.

#### **Neighborhood and Residential Development Initiative – policies and projects to foster new residential development and create healthy neighborhoods surrounding the downtown**

1. Encourage mixed-use and mid-density residential redevelopment on under-utilized or marginal sites on the edge of downtown
2. Preserve and enhance historic neighborhoods adjacent to downtown
3. Continue both public and private redevelopment along the Fox River Corridor
4. Promote development of a neighborhood commercial district on Richmond Street to meet the basic shopping and service needs of downtown and nearby residents
5. Amend the Zoning Code to facilitate redevelopment in the Mixed-Use District and in the Richmond Street neighborhood commercial area

The RiverHeath development on the Fox River as well as Eagle Flats are both successful examples of new mixed use and mid density residential development on the perimeter of downtown. Encouraging additional housing development in the core of downtown, especially market rate, is still seen as a priority.

The City has also successfully established a Neighborhood Program which provides training and support to established neighborhood groups. Continuing to support strong neighborhoods in and adjacent to downtown is critical to a healthy, vibrant downtown.

The City has been proactive to garner funds to address environmental conditions across numerous redevelopment sites and will continue to prioritize investments to make these sites viable in addition to the implementation of the Quite Zone Study.

Efforts to stimulate revitalization along the Richmond Street corridor through downtown have also yielded mixed results. Richmond Terrace's first floor retail and office space has filled up and a new Kwik Trip was constructed at the NE corner of N. Richmond Street and W. Franklin Street.

Finally, amending the City's Zoning Code to facilitate redevelopment in mixed use transition areas has not yet occurred. Adjusting the code to facilitate mixed use development in transitional areas between the CBD and nearby neighborhoods that support urban standards for development without having to go through a PD Planned Development process is seen as a priority. This will position the City to be better prepared for investment in responding to the timing of the market without additional regulatory processes to allow for mixed used.

### **Business and Office Development Initiative – policies and projects to support existing businesses in the downtown and to attract desirable new ones**

1. Monitor retail trends and look for emerging market niches for downtown
2. Sustain the retail niche clusters which have formed downtown
3. Protect the existing retail blocks on College Avenue
4. Add depth to retail nodes by encouraging new businesses on side streets and on Soldier's Square
5. Encourage entrepreneurial business development in the downtown
6. Create opportunities for smaller offices and business services to locate in a mixed-use district north of the core downtown
7. Maintain an environment favorable to large businesses in the downtown

Several business niches have formed in the downtown, including home furnishings, gifts, arts related businesses, and breweries/wine tasting. These businesses are almost entirely located on College Avenue. Retail locations have not deepened to include secondary streets or even most side streets. Fostering these niches and stimulating development off of College Avenue is still seen as a priority. ADI does provide customized business assistance for specific types of downtown businesses.

In terms of protecting retail blocks the City is fortunate to have the CBD zoning district, which prevents surface parking on lots fronting College Avenue. On the other hand, some blocks in the downtown area lack ground floor retail, which contributes to a monotonous environment which in turn undermines the area's walkability. Adding depth to existing retail nodes means expanding retail both north and south of College Avenue in order to create a deeper retail market and vibrancy for shopping downtown.

ADI, the City's Community & Economic Development Department, and the Fox Cities Regional Partnership regularly meet with large downtown employers. Continuing to proactively support such employers while also attracting and retaining smaller professional businesses is still seen as a priority. ADI also offers business attraction and retention incentives.

Overall, the City, ADI and its partners continue to see business and office initiative strategies as critically important to the success of downtown.

### **Transportation and Parking Initiative – policies and projects to maintain convenient access to the downtown**

1. Review and establish a parking analysis process that addresses plan elements
2. Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections to and through the downtown
3. Endorse a system of public transportation centered on downtown



Significant progress was made toward the execution of transportation and parking related strategies since the 2007 Downtown Plan was adopted. For example, a downtown parking study was completed in 2015 and an on-street bike plan was completed in 2011. In 2016 the Downtown Mobility Study and Trails Master Plan were completed. These plans and policies have identified many significant and impactful projects which, if implemented, will improve pedestrian and bicycle connections in and around downtown, while also promoting public transportation. One large barrier to expansion of public transportation is the inability to form a regional transit authority with taxing powers. The State has preempted local municipalities' ability to do so. On the positive side, Valley Transit has added the Link, a bus route providing a connection between downtown Appleton, the industrial flats, and the neighborhood just south of the Fox River.

**Downtown Management Initiative – policies and programs to ensure that resources are available to continue to advance the vitality of downtown**

1. Update the Downtown Plan as initiatives are completed or new opportunities arise
2. Uphold support for ADI and the Business Improvement District (BID)
3. Coordinate the activities of downtown support groups
4. Ensure the cleanliness and safety of the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods

The ADI Board annually reviews progress toward initiatives at its annual retreat, however the City and ADI would benefit from conducting a regular annual review together. This review would be a work session between the City and ADI leadership that extends beyond the presentation of the BID Plan to Plan Commission. The City also continues to support ADI and the downtown BID including cooperation with events programming. Looking ahead, ADI would benefit from an easier, more cost effective process to program public spaces.

ADI, the City and its partners have made progress in terms of ensuring a clean and safe downtown environment. For example, the Washington Square neighborhood group cooperatively supports a security guard. A recent partnership with Riverview Gardens, C.A.R.E., is an example of a successful partnership to address the cleanliness of downtown. As more people utilize the downtown, maintaining an image of cleanliness and safety will become even more important. Future cooperative funding for a more comprehensive maintenance program will be critical to the success of tourism efforts and efforts to recruit more people to live downtown.

## Section 2: Analysis of Existing Conditions

### Introduction

The City of Appleton traces its origins to the Fox River, which because of its rapids and topography served as an early trading post for explorers, early settlers, and Native Americans. Lawrence University was founded at the same time as the City was settled, and along with the river has played a key role shaping the City's economic and cultural landscape.

The paper industry played a particularly strong role in Appleton's and the Fox Cities development, helping establish and grow other related industries including converting, mechanical engineering, and paper product development. A strong industrial base supported the growth of a large middle class and gave rise to a thriving City including College Avenue in downtown Appleton.

However, like many cities of its size Appleton went through a period of transition from the mid 1960's to 1990's as retail and commercial activity migrated out from the CBD to the fringes. Unlike many similar sized cities, however, Appleton took steps to reinvent its downtown including establishment of an indoor mall, maintenance of downtown office space, investment in public infrastructure including a central library, and support for a new hotel.

More recently new parks, downtown residential development, and a mix of entertainment venues have helped continue the upward trend. Appleton today serves as the Fox Cities economic and cultural hub. Key private sector employers include Thrivent Financial, Appvion, Miller Electric, and ThedaCare among others. The Appleton Area School District and Outagamie County are among the largest public sector employers in the downtown area, the latter employing approximately 700 employees. Other major downtown employers include West Corporation, the YMCA, the City, the Post-Crescent, Schenck, Skyline Technologies, Lawrence University and Neenah Papers.

The City and in particular Downtown Appleton has emerged as a regional cultural and tourist destination with attractions such as the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, Trout Museum of Art, History Museum at the Castle and Building for Kids Children's Museum and The Hearthstone Historic House Museum provide year-round exhibits and programming. complementing a diverse mix of shopping and restaurant destinations. Through the efforts of organizations such as ADI and many partners, the downtown also benefits from a rich mix of programming and events throughout the year.

Through on-going investments and attention the current downtown has grown into an arts and entertainment district, as evidenced by the establishment and growth of complimentary niche components including:

- Museums
- Art galleries
- Community centers
- Restaurants and drinking places
- Public markets
- Performing arts center
- Concert halls

Looking ahead the City has several key opportunities to further enhance community livability and the vibrancy of downtown, including a potential new/or re-modeled library, additional housing including along the Fox River, parking and mobility enhancements, additional neighborhood serving retail and services, and several redevelopment and infill opportunities along the river and along key commercial corridors including Wisconsin Avenue, Richmond Street, and Oneida Street

Against this backdrop the City's opportunity as stated in the 2015 Economic Development Strategic Plan is to leverage its physical, social, economic, and natural assets to capture additional investment and mesh it thoughtfully into the downtown, retaining and attracting residents and business activity within an increasingly urban fabric. A vibrant downtown is critically important to the City in terms of attracting and retaining a talented workforce, expanding its tax base, strengthening its economic assets, and creating and marketing a positive image.

In order to provide context for the Downtown Development Plan this section of the report provides an overview of existing conditions related to the following downtown topics and issues:

- Local and Regional Context
- Downtown Market Analysis
- Mobility, including Access and Connectivity to the River
- Land Use and Block Conditions
- The Public Realm
- Downtown Arts and Creative Culture

**APPLETON'S KEY ASSETS INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:**

- A thriving business community
- A large daytime workforce, including downtown workers
- Lawrence University and an excellent school system
- The Fox River and an extensive parks and recreation system
- Strong, healthy neighborhoods, faith based organizations, and non-profits dedicated to making Appleton thrive
- Historic buildings and good urban design elements, especially downtown
- High traffic volumes downtown and along nearby commercial corridors
- Successful events and programs such as Mile of Music, Octoberfest, and Farmer's Markets

## Context

### The City of Appleton

The City of Appleton is located in the East-Central part of the State of Wisconsin, approximately 35 miles south of Green Bay via Interstate 41 and just over 100 miles north of Milwaukee and northeast of Madison. The city is also served by the Appleton International Airport which offers flights to such metro areas as Chicago, Minneapolis, Atlanta and Denver.

While still supporting a strong paper industry, the past several decades have seen the City of Appleton diversify its economy significantly. A look at the city's largest employers provides evidence of this transition. According to the Fox Cities Regional Partnership, of the six largest private employers, only one, Appvion, is in the paper industry. Further, only Appvion and Miller Electric are in the manufacturing sector, with the remaining four companies being service based, including the city's largest private employer, ThedaCare, as detailed below.

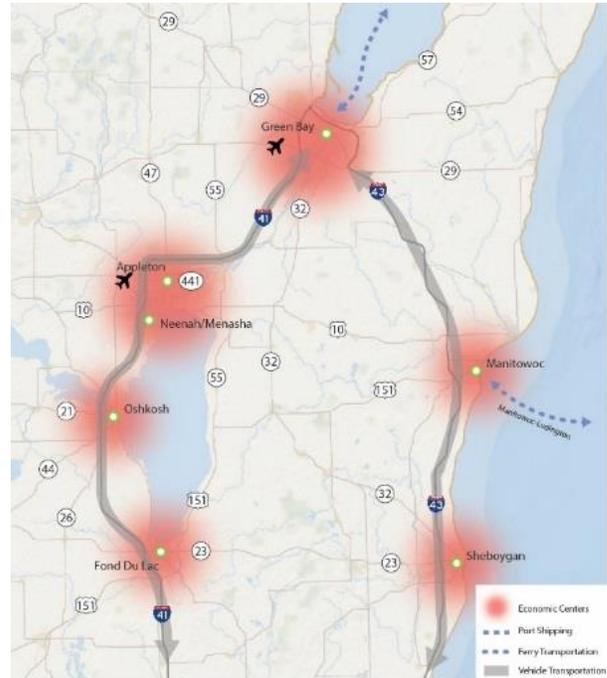


Figure 4 Economic centers of Northeast Wisconsin

Table 1 Largest Private Employers

Company	Industry	Current Employees
ThedaCare	Hospital Administration	6,800
Thrivent	Life Insurance	2,000
Miller Electric	Welding Equipment	1,500
Appvion	Specialty Paper Products	1,000
West Corporation	Telemarketing	1,000
Guardian Life Insurance	Life Insurance	650

Source: Fox Cities Regional Partnership

Other major employers in the region include Ascension Wisconsin, and Kimberly-Clark in Neenah/Menasha, Presto Products in Grand Chute as well as Plexus Corp., and Bemis Company in Neenah.

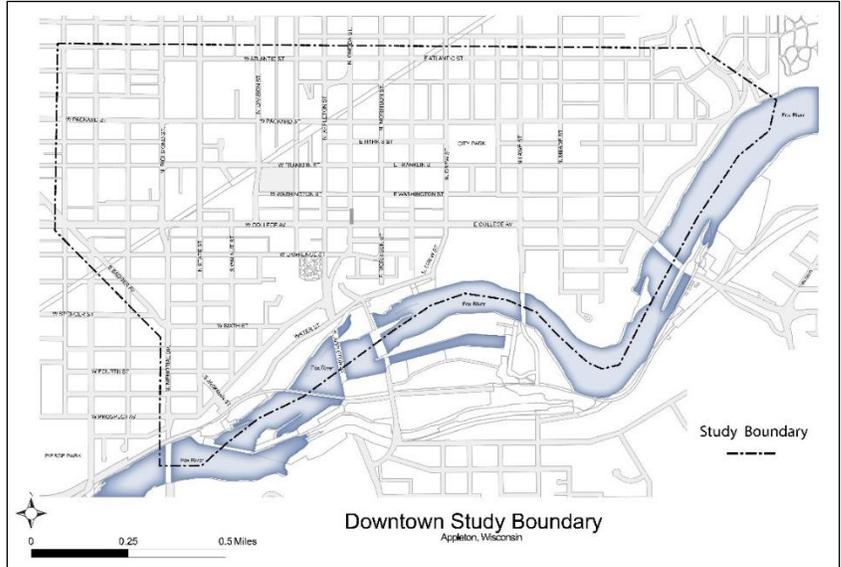
The City of Appleton offers a very high quality of life for its residents, evidenced by a strong school system, a wealth of recreational amenities, a thriving retail environment and a low crime rate. In fact, Appleton was recently ranked as the fifth safest metro area out of 344 such areas surveyed nationwide. Further, Appleton was rated by Forbes Magazine as one of the two best cities for business in the State of Wisconsin, as the 24<sup>th</sup> best place to live in America by Money Magazine in

2016, the 10<sup>th</sup> best city for well-being by U.S. News in 2012 and the 12<sup>th</sup> smartest city in America by Venture Beat in 2013.

The City is served by two major hospitals including the ThedaCare Regional Medical Center-Appleton and St. Elizabeth's Hospital, as well as two colleges; Lawrence University with a 1,650 student enrollment and Fox Valley Technical College which serves 5,700 students. The Appleton Area School District includes twenty-three elementary schools, five middle schools, and ten high schools with a combined enrollment of 16,300 for the 2015-2016 school year.

### The Downtown Core

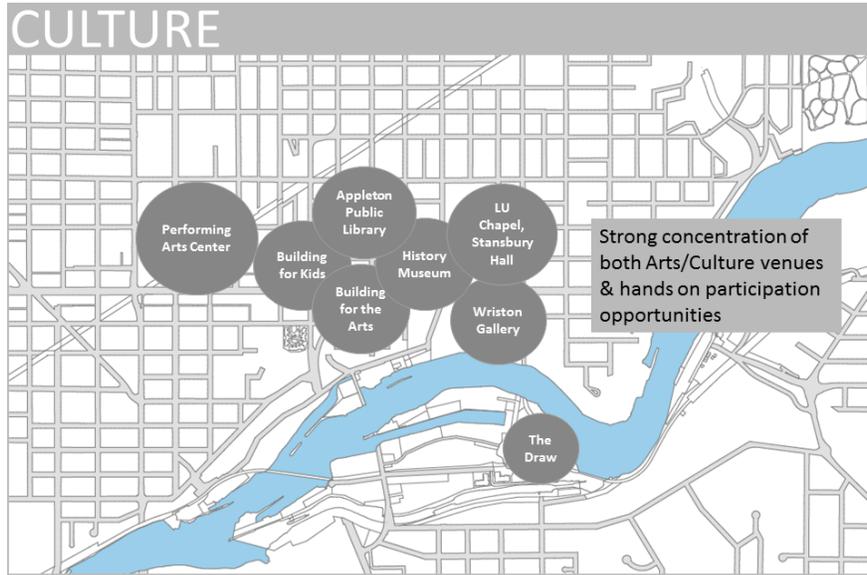
The subject of this analysis is an approximately 1.15 square mile area, bounded by the Fox River on the south, Atlantic Street on the north, S. Badger Avenue/S. Memorial Drive on the west and Peabody Park on the east.



The downtown area is commercially vibrant. According to ADI it contains more than

- 65 restaurants, coffee shops, pubs and clubs;
- 70 retail establishments; and
- Two upscale hotels (Radisson Paper Valley Hotel and CopperLeaf Boutique Hotel)

The downtown hosts a thriving arts and entertainment community, including the Building for the Arts, the 2,000-seat Fox Cities Performing Arts Center and the Building for Kids Children’s Museum. Other local attractions include the Trout Museum of Art, and the Wriston Art Center on the Lawrence University campus and the History Museum at the Castle. Businesses including The Fire and Pinot’s Palette provide hands on opportunities for visitors to participate in the creative process as well.



*Figure 5 A variety of cultural destinations and activities help make downtown Appleton a sociable place year-round.*

The City of Appleton also recently announced plans for the construction of a 65,000 sq. ft. Fox Cities Exhibition Center. The location, design, and projected attendance for the Fox Cities Exhibition Center are expected to play a strong role in helping further revitalize and enhance downtown Appleton.

The downtown hosts over 100 community events including a year-round farm market, the Heid Music Summer Concert Series, Art on the Town, parades on Memorial Day, Flag Day and a Christmas parade in November. Other events include the Mile of Music in August, an outdoor movie series during the summer months and a free trolley system that runs Thursday through Friday in June through September. Overall, these events draw over 500,000 visitors to the downtown area each year.

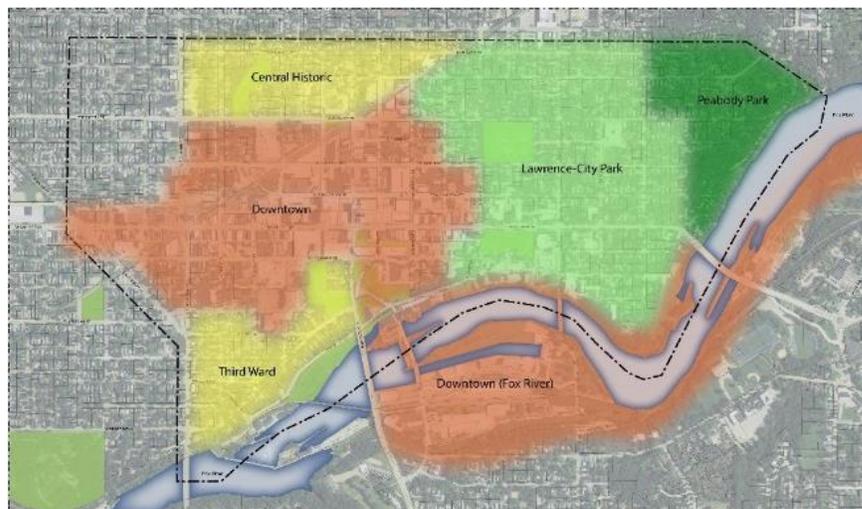
The downtown offers a broad mix of housing options including those above College Avenue storefronts, Lawrence Court, and along the river. However, the single family sector represents the bulk of existing housing inventory. By and large, the highest valued single family homes are found overlooking the Fox River, with primary concentrations found north of College Avenue along Green Bay Road, and along Prospect Avenue, west of Oneida Street.



*Figure 6 Evening Yoga in City Park attracts hundreds of participants. Successful downtowns provide opportunities for people to spend time with their friends and loved ones, with the chance to meet and interact with new acquaintances.*

As it relates to the single family sector, the downtown core can be broadly segmented into four somewhat distinct areas. The first includes the area located east and north of Lawrence University and includes portions of both the Peabody Park and Lawrence-City Park registered neighborhoods. This area is characterized by an abundance of larger, older homes catering to middle to upper income earners. Almost all homes in this area have been well maintained and many have been recently remodeled or completely renovated.

The area located north of downtown, bounded roughly by N. State Street, Atlantic Street, Drew Street and Franklin Street, defined as the Historic Central neighborhood, offers generally smaller homes originally constructed for working class families. A good number of homes in this area are well maintained and/or recently renovated; however, there are also many homes that are in some level of disrepair. Just southwest of downtown is the Old Third Ward neighborhood. This area offers a mix of middle class homes, and larger, older homes, primarily overlooking the Fox River. Almost all homes in this neighborhood appear to be well maintained, with many having been recently remodeled or renovated. Within the remaining Downtown neighborhood area, most higher-density multifamily units are found aligning the Fox River, with a mix of newer construction, and adaptive re-use of older, historic buildings.



*Figure 7 Downtown Registered Neighborhoods*

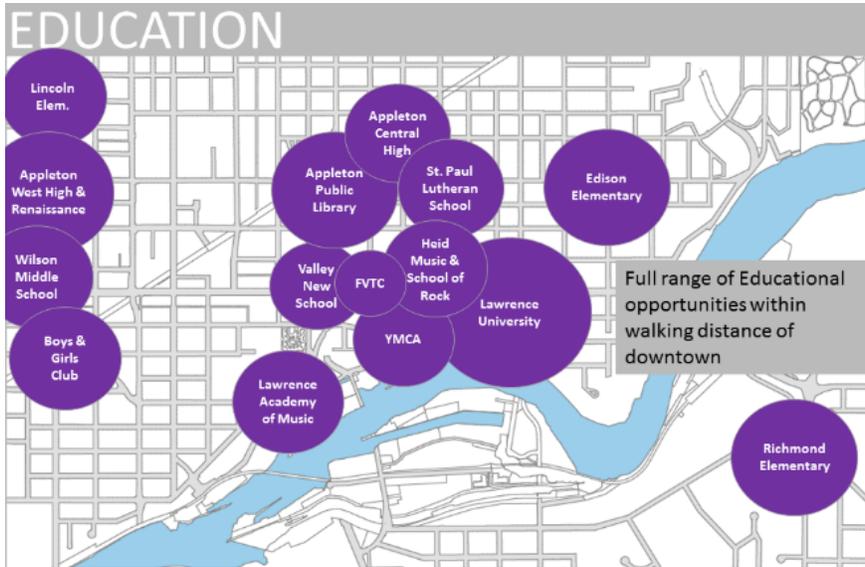


Figure 8 The downtown area includes many educational institutions, ranging from early learning centers to Lawrence University, with all types of schools and learning opportunities in between.

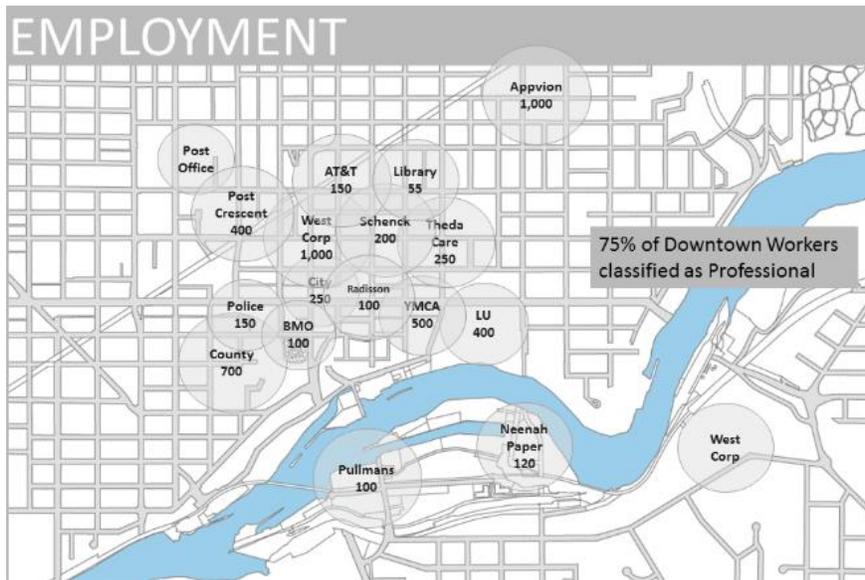


Figure 9 Over 75% of downtown employees are classified as professional, according to ESRI. Approximately 9,000 downtown employees in a 1.5 mile radius contribute to a vibrant district, while providing a strong base upon which to support additional downtown residential development.

## The Region

Regional challenges today are much different from four years ago, just following the great recession. Today's challenges include finding the right employees to fill the open positions market-wide. Employers are creating jobs, work is plentiful but employees with the appropriate skill sets, experience and soft skills are in short supply. The Fox Cities Chamber reports in their 2016 Economic Outlook (surveying 202 participants), that 88% of employers consider their employment compared to the previous year to be ahead or the same, with approximately 8% behind last year and 4% responding "not applicable".

Businesses in the Fox Cities believe the economic vitality of the area is excellent or good. Only 42% of respondents believed the national economy to be strong, where 62% of respondents rated the local economic vitality as excellent or good. Some respondents expressed concern over uncertainty regarding the national election affecting their business. Many small businesses in the service and trade sectors are concerned over affects an increase in the minimum wage may have on their ability to hold prices and offer salary increases to other employees.

Although, nearly 70% of respondents report sales ahead of last year, some were concerned about maintaining that level of growth. Some local retailers are concerned over losing sales to internet shopping. When asked what their biggest challenge is doing business in the Fox Cities, businesses responded:

*Table 2 Biggest Challenges Facing Local Businesses*

Availability of necessary talent/workforce	54%
Cost of doing business	14%
Proximity to markets	14%
Other	10%
Proximity to suppliers	4%
Worker productivity	4%

For the Appleton-Oshkosh Combined Statistical Area (CSA), 2015 figures show a population of 400,692 persons among 161,565 households. For the City of Appleton, there are a total of 74,246 persons among 29,960 households, representing 18.5% of the overall CSA household count. Estimates provided by the U.S. Census bureau show that the Appleton-Oshkosh CSA will add an average of 985 households yearly between 2015 and 2020.

The median annual income for an Appleton-Oshkosh CSA household stood at \$56,568 in 2015, a figure that is 2.8% higher than the median noted for the City of Appleton (\$54,976). Correspondingly, 36.8% of all CSA households earn in excess of \$75,000 yearly, compared to 35.7% in Appleton proper.

As noted in the City's 2015 Economic Development Strategic Plan, incomes are generally higher in the suburban and less dense areas of Appleton, although there are a few pockets of above-average income in the center of the City as well.



Table 3 Regional Demographics

	Appleton-Oshkosh CSA	Appleton City	City as % of CSA
Population	400,692	74,246	18.5%
Households	161,565	29,960	18.5%
Median Annual Income	56,568	54,976	97.2%
HH Earnings in Excess of \$75,000/yr	36.80%	35.70%	- - - -

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and ESRI

For both the Appleton-Oshkosh CSA and the City of Appleton, the employed population by industry is quite similar with both areas supporting high concentrations of workers in the Services sector, and to a lesser degree, the Manufacturing sector.

After feeling the effects of the 2008-2009 recession during which 6,700 jobs were lost, employment gains have materialized in the Appleton-Oshkosh CSA, with 12,100 jobs having been added over the past four years. Of that total, 4,900 (40.5%) of those job additions occurred in 2015 alone. The unemployment rate for the CSA has dropped significantly to a current (2015) level of 3.7%, indicating a very healthy employment environment.

In terms of housing tenure, the CSA is currently undergoing a significant shift. Specifically, we are witnessing a trend that shows the bulk of recent construction increases are found among multifamily (both for-sale and for-rent) units. Over the past seven years, single family authorizations have remained largely consistent, while multifamily permits have increased consistently from 234 units in 2009 to 842 units in 2015.

## Comparable Communities Related to Downtown

Comparing Appleton’s downtown with like communities’ downtowns is an interesting and insightful exercise because it lends a perspective gained when the focus isn’t so tight on the immediate market, but how Appleton stacks up against peers elsewhere in Wisconsin.

Eau Claire is a very comparable community when comparing features. Both communities are college towns, both are located on a river and have downtowns which access the river, both have regional shopping malls and big box centers not in the downtown, both are located on major highways/Interstates and they compare demographically.

Oshkosh also ranks in the mix when reviewing population, college town, and natural water feature in the community, on a major interstate and comparative demographically.

Green Bay is similar in that it too has a college, a large body of water, interstates, and a major commerce center for the larger area surrounding it.

When examining comparable communities, Appleton has the highest population, number of households, median disposable income and per capita income within a 10-minute drive time from the respective downtowns.

The data tool used to analyze retail leakage/surplus is Esri. Leakage/surplus measures the balance between the volume of supply (retail sales) generated by retail industry and the demand



(spending by households [i.e., retail potential] within the same industry. Leakage in an area represents a condition where a market's supply is less than the demand. That is, retailers outside the market area are fulfilling the demand for the retail products; therefore, demand is leaking out of the trade area. Surplus in an area represents a condition where supply exceeds the area's demand. Retailers are attracting shoppers that reside outside the trade area so the surplus is in the market supply.

Appleton has the highest demand and supply of sales across retail and food and drink categories, indicating a robust market. Interestingly, Green Bay shows a significantly higher surplus of retail sales from outside the market, which can be explained by what we will call the "Green Bay Packer Effect". Aside from that, Appleton shows the most strength in drawing sales in from outside the community and show significant strength from a competitive market standpoint.

Table 4 Regional Downtown Comparison

Eau Claire, Oshkosh, Green Bay and Appleton Downtown Comparison				
Within a 10 minute drive time from the center of Downtown				
	Eau Claire	Appleton	Oshkosh	Green Bay
Population	62,551	91,134	61,209	79,330
Households	25,754	38,252	25,067	34,207
Median Disposable Income	\$ 34,104	\$ 40,222	\$ 35,566	\$ 29,878
Per Capita Income	\$ 23,115	\$ 26,902	\$ 22,829	\$ 19,844
<b>Industry Summary</b>				
<b>Total Retail Trade and Food &amp; Drink</b>				
Demand	\$ 771,859,304	\$ 1,328,810,723	\$ 743,767,621	\$ 864,369,281
Supply	\$ 1,011,343,305	\$ 1,794,569,002	\$ 940,711,096	\$ 1,431,330,566
Retail Gap	\$ (239,484,001)	\$ (465,758,279)	\$ (196,943,475)	\$ (566,961,285)
Leakage/Surplus Factor	-13.4	-14.9	-11.7	-24.7
Number of businesses	612	902	508	832
Ratio of residents to businesses	102	101	120	95
<b>Total Retail Trade</b>				
Demand	\$ 669,064,852	\$ 1,204,546,844	\$ 674,972,847	\$ 784,109,013
Supply	\$ 915,663,039	\$ 1,633,625,817	\$ 847,822,304	\$ 1,272,088,841
Retail Gap	\$ (216,581,870)	\$ (429,078,973)	\$ (172,849,457)	\$ (487,979,828)
Leakage/Surplus Factor	-13.4	-15.1	-11.4	-23.7
Number of businesses	425	612	325	555
Ratio of residents to businesses	147	148	188	143
<b>Total Food &amp; Drink</b>				
Demand	\$ 72,794,453	\$ 124,263,879	\$ 68,794,774	\$ 80,260,268
Supply	\$ 95,680,266	\$ 160,943,185	\$ 92,888,792	\$ 159,241,725
Retail Gap	\$ (22,885,813)	\$ (36,679,306)	\$ (24,094,018)	\$ (78,981,457)
Leakage/Surplus Factor	-13.6	-12.9	-14.9	-33
Number of businesses	187	289	183	277
Ratio of residents to businesses	481	315	334	286

Source: Information taken from ESRI Retail Marketplace Profile



## Trends Impacting the Downtown

Several trends in retailing, housing, how people experience downtown and even how office space is used will impact downtown Appleton.

### Economic Development and Quality of Life

Shifting consumer preferences for downtown living, working and playing are attracting new residents and office workers to downtowns across the country. To capitalize on this trend cities must provide quality of life amenities that support residential development and foster a lively, dynamic environment which is attractive to office workers and visitors. Restaurants, diverse arts and cultural programming, recreational and educational opportunities are all seen as important ingredients for today's successful downtowns. Providing these assets is critically important for attracting and retaining two large demographic groups: millennials and older adults.

### Walkability

Residents are increasingly making walkability a key decision making factor when it comes time to choose a place to live<sup>2</sup>. A study by the Urban Land Institute shows that 52% of Americans would like to live in a place where they do not need to use a car very often. Less reliance on cars appeals especially to millennials, almost two-thirds of whom (63%) would prefer to live in a car optional environment.<sup>3</sup>

Walkability measures, such as walkscore.com, are commonplace and a growing body of research suggests that walkability correlates highly with property values. Despite the trend, many cities struggle to provide walkable communities, especially in newer developments built after the Second World War. Parking and use separation requirements are among the many hurdles cities face in creating walkable environments.

### Retail

With the increase in e-commerce, retailers are feeling the effects. Bricks and mortar retailers who have been successful adopting an on-line strategy to supplement in-store sales are able to sustain some of the more drastic negative effects of competition from internet competitors.

However, shoppers want the experience at their fingertips, and they want it to be seamless, so mobile shopping is becoming a major channel requiring the attention of retailers. Shopping is social; i.e., more people are talking about products and services on social media now and can share a positive experience product review as quickly as a negative one. Merchants must learn to manage this and can take a proactive role in shaping their image, promoting their products, and meeting their customers' needs in an instant. Consumer opinions found on a company web site influence customers' purchase decisions more than any other recommendation, including family and friends. Millennials are driving this wave of changes.

Retailers who can blend the four primary channels of the multi-channel realm into one seamless experience are coming out ahead. Many consumers are beginning to adopt the tactic of "showrooming" where they enter the physical store to try a product out but leave the store and buy it online. Retailers must not only provide all the multi-channel experiences: robust physical presence, e-commerce site, social channels and mobile apps, but they must blend them into one seamless shopping experience for their customers. Leveraging the massive amounts of data

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/f-kaid-benfield/we-want-more-walkable-neighborhoods\\_b\\_8678134.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/f-kaid-benfield/we-want-more-walkable-neighborhoods_b_8678134.html)

<sup>3</sup> American in 2015, A Urban Land Institute Survey of Views on Housing, Transportation, and Community



consumers are leaving through their use of social media and mobile apps will help retailers market in very targeted and granular ways.

### Consumers

Consumers are spending less today than at 2006 levels. Per capita spending adjusted for inflation is down roughly 5% from where it was a decade ago. People are also shopping less often and visiting fewer stores per shopping trip. Data suggests shopping has become more deliberate, or purpose driven due to the number of trips to a store and the duration of time spent in the store.

Consumers are spending less on apparel and more on home improvements. Casual offices, older workers leaving the workforce, and cash-strapped Millennials are the reasons behind the decline in apparel purchases. Home improvement and home furnishing spending is up post-recession, as people catch up from delayed projects and tend to modest redecorating. Shoppers are relying on their mobile devices more and more for research, product referrals/reviews and buying.

### Residential Growth

Metropolitan areas are gaining residents, and although a significant increase went to communities with populations between 50,000 and 250,000 before 2010, now an even larger share of population increase is happening in communities larger than 250,000. Cities have figured out how to attract residents to the core of the community as residents are now preferring to live downtown in ever increasing numbers. Between 2000 and 2010, suburban areas were growing more rapidly in selected (studied) major metropolitan areas, but from 2010 to 2014, core cities grew more rapidly than the outlying regions, indicating downtown residential growth seems to be accelerating.

Public sector leadership influences where and how development happens in cities where progressive leadership realizes the need to take action first. In cities such as Oklahoma City, Chattanooga, Tennessee, Bay City, Michigan, and in Wisconsin: Wausau and Eau Claire to name a few, the public sector has aggressively set the stage for redevelopment. Private sector developments then take over and uphold the statistic that the private sector is responsible for roughly 90% of the built space in US cities. (Source: Top 10 Trends Impacting Downtown Revitalization, John Karras, "Ideas for Vibrant Cities" Blog, March 30, 2016).



Figure 10 Urban rowhouses, Minneapolis, Minnesota

### Downtown Demographics

According to ESRI data, the downtown study area supports an estimated 2015 population of 8,948 persons, up only slightly from the 2010 population of 8,860. By 2020, the population is forecast to increase modestly to 9,097 persons. Further, the downtown core is a 1.15 mile radius and currently includes 3,433 households, representing a slight increase from the 2010 tally of 3,348. Over the next five years, it is expected that the household total will increase to 3,520 units. With a projected increase in households of 172 for the downtown area over the next five years, and with another data source projecting an increase in residents of 149, data supports there will be a demand for multi-family or condominium housing options over the next five years.

Table 5 Study Area Demographics (Source: ESRI Community Profile)

Demographics	2015 (study area)		2020
Residents		8948	9097
Median HH income	\$	36,189	\$ 41,307
Owner occupied housing		1,536	1,580
Renter occupied		1,897	1,940
Median home value	\$	120,667	\$ 140,185
Average home value	\$	134,951	\$ 183,191

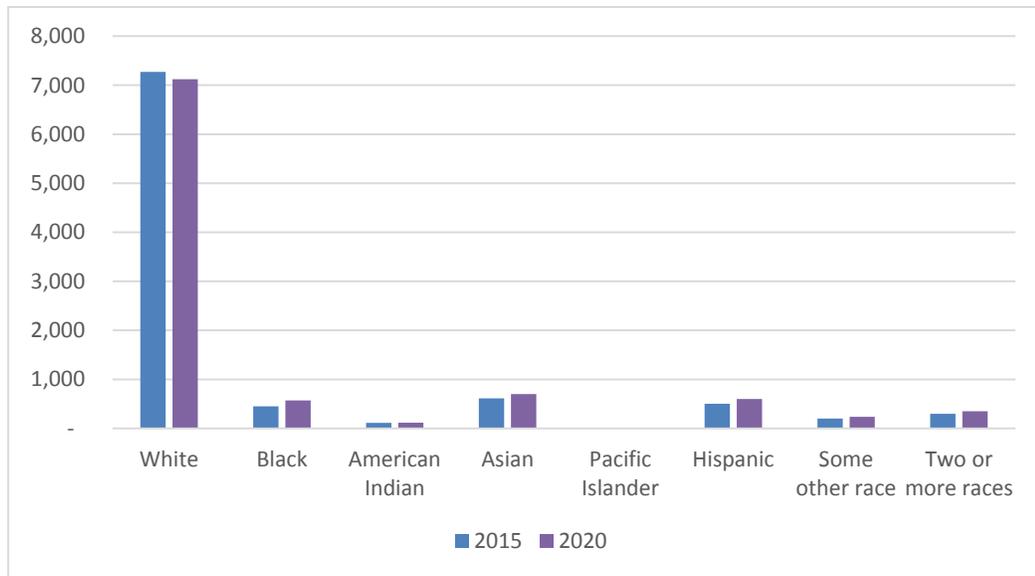
In 2015, the downtown core supported a median annual household income of \$36,189, a median home value of \$120,667, a median monthly rent of \$454, and a median age of 29.3 years, with all four of these indicators registering well below those for the overall City of Appleton and the Appleton-Oshkosh MSA.

However, given the generally older housing stock and typical demographics associated with downtown areas, the above is not surprising, and should not impact the downtown area’s ability to draw higher income residents to the area provided properly conceived and marketed new residential product is developed.

The downtown has a fairly diverse population, compared to the rest of the City of Appleton. The downtown population is comprised of 81.2% whites and 18.8% non-whites, where the City as a whole has an 85.5% white and 14.2% non-white population. By 2020, the non-white population in downtown is expected to grow to 21.7%, whereas in the City as a whole, it’s projected to be 16.4% non-white.

Categories expected to increase in percentage of population include Black, Asian, Hispanic and “some other race”. Interestingly in both the City and specifically the downtown, the percentage of Caucasian is expected to decrease.





Source: ESRI

Figure 11 Racial Mix in Downtown Appleton - 2015-2020

When examining the age data for Downtown Appleton, of note is the decline of the composition of each age category except ages 60 and over, which are forecast to increase from 9.5% of the population to 11.5% of the population between 2015 and 2020. The younger age categories are not being replenished at the rate that the population is aging out. This is a situation many employers nationwide are facing and will challenge businesses on ways to be more creative with fewer employees. Anecdotally, a large number of the individuals who have expressed an interest in living downtown in the future are age 60 and over.

	2015	%	2020	%
0-9	501	8.2%	502	8.0%
10 to 19	1,041	17.1%	1,046	16.7%
20-29	1,710	28.0%	1,736	27.7%
30-39	692	11.3%	688	11.0%
40-49	614	10.1%	608	9.7%
50-59	718	11.8%	688	11.0%
60-69	246	4.0%	275	4.4%
65+	581	9.5%	717	11.5%

Source: ESRI Community Profile

Figure 12 Age Data for Downtown Appleton

# Market Analysis

## Introduction

The following sections provide a summary of the market analysis with an estimate of projections for retail, office, residential and hospitality market segments (See Appendices for full report).

This market analysis was also informed by many sources of secondary data, and developed for downtown Appleton referencing the robust information compiled for and contained within the 2015 Appleton Economic Development Strategic Plan. Market analysis conducted for the entire City of Appleton in the Economic Development Strategic Plan mirrors what was found studying the downtown in isolation. Strengths identified in the Economic Development Strategic Plan include:

- Downtown
- Workforce/Work Ethic/People
- Quality of Life
- Higher Education

All of the identified strengths of Appleton are strengths that can be leveraged for the benefit of downtown. Weaknesses identified in the Economic Development Strategic Plan and are relevant to this market analysis for the Downtown chapter of the Comprehensive Plan include:

- Difficulty in employers finding and retaining talent
- Land costs in downtown
- Availability of Class A office space
- Lack of funding to support economic development
- Lack of awareness on the part of elected officials as to the effects of various facets of economic development on a community

There are opportunities identified in the Economic Development Strategic Plan which have bearing and are also identified in this downtown market analysis, including:

- Riverfront development
- Strengthening the connection with Lawrence University
- Improve and diversify downtown Appleton's housing choices

All of the target categories identified in the "Office" segment of the Economic Development Strategic Plan would be welcome and relevant in downtown Appleton. Retail categories identified in the Economic Development Strategic Plan were those seen as having some revenue opportunity on the Retail Marketplace Profile from ESRI. This downtown market analysis utilized the same data but isolated it for the downtown study area. Results of that analysis are included in the Appendix, and were used as a basis for some of the recommendations herein. While some categories may appear to be opportunities for new businesses, a deeper dive must be done on the local circumstances surrounding the data. This work was done in the downtown market analysis.

Goals noted within the Economic Development Strategic Plan are incorporated within this Downtown Chapter's recommendations as appropriate. Furthermore, since the 2015 adoption of the Economic Development Strategic Plan the City has significantly increased funding for the Appleton Redevelopment Authority (ARA) to invest in priority redevelopment projects as well as memorializing the relationship between the ARA and City in a Cooperation Agreement.



## Retail

Recruiting retail to an area is often difficult, especially with national chain retailers who have their own formula for location selection and largely prefer to be near the highest traffic areas, other big box retailers and regional shopping malls. When retailers make their location decisions, they are based on traffic counts, hub areas, and traffic generators, such as high employment areas. Downtown has a solid employment base and a significant amount of residential population within a five and ten-minute drive time. However, national chain retailers are going to prefer the Fox River Mall area due to the density of other retailers, the proximity to the interstate (and high traffic counts), and the plentiful opportunities for surface parking.

Looking for opportunities to cluster local retailers downtown is a solid strategy for growth, and for filling in sporadic vacancies. The space has to make sense for the tenant, and the tenant has to make sense for the space.

Comparing the five- and ten-minute drive time Retail Marketplace Profile reports generated in ESRI, it appears there is quite a demand for more retail in a variety of categories within the five-minute drive time. However, within a ten-minute drive time that demand and supply almost reverses itself. All of the needs (demand) are met within a ten-minute drive time. It's typical in these reports to see the Grocery category with leakage. The leakage within a five-minute drive time of downtown Appleton is over \$33 million, but the surplus of sales within a ten-minute drive time is \$36.5 million.

With more density of residential in the immediate downtown area, the chances are greater a boutique grocery or smaller regional grocer will locate in the core of the downtown.

Other opportunities to cluster retail or specialty retail on College Avenue should be pursued. Each vacant space should have its own mini plan for its future. Some spaces will be better suited for an organic grocer than others. Some may be better suited for yarn and knitting classes than an organic grocer, for example. The stores, office space and residential density surrounding the vacant space are key determinants of the success of the retailer which eventually resides within.

Downtown's proximity to large retail centers, particularly along the I-41 corridor which provide a wide variety of national chain retailers, results in a fairly balance (gapless) mix of businesses with a ten-minute drive time. From a market drive perspective, the traffic counts generated along the Interstate vs. traffic counts in downtown, drive the bulk of the retail to the Fox River Mall area. What exists and will continue to be successful in downtown in the retail category needs to be unique, niche, or specialized, and most likely locally owned and operated.

In the Retail Marketplace Profile included on the following page, a majority of categories show a surplus in sales, where the amount of dollars of goods sold by category exceeds the demand, which is the amount of sales generated by the residents within the designated area. In other words, retail sales are coming from outside the area to the stores in the categories listed in the table. Very few categories show leakage, or dollars leaving the 10-minute radius where the demand cannot be met from within the area.

The gasoline station category indicates that within this area, there are not enough gas stations to meet the demand of the residents. Although this is not a much sought-after category in a downtown, the City may wish to consider a suitable location for a gas station should one desire to locate within this radius.



It should also be noted that grocery is not a category that shows leakage within a 10-minute radius. This is because there are sufficient grocery stores within 10 minutes of downtown, including several options for purchasing groceries within the study area including the Green Gecko, Jacobs Meat Market, and Kwik Trip.

However, convenience matters when talking with residents of downtown, as well as employees seeking fresh options for lunch. As part of this analysis, market research was conducted on the population density and household income surrounding Trader Joes in other markets. Here's what was discovered:

Table 6 Trader Joe's Market Comparison

Trader Joes - Wisconsin	Population within 10-minute drive time	Number of Households	Average Household Income
1810 Monroe St., Madison	97,669	39,915	\$ 58,666
5600 N. Port Washington, Milwaukee	154,795	59,915	\$ 56,958
12665 W. Bluemound Road, Brookfield	148,624	66,017	\$ 69,179
Appleton (10 min. downtown)	91,134	38,252	\$ 63,920

The Project Team has a level of knowledge based on existing relationships that stated the Monroe Street store in Madison is not a strongly performing store, so the requirements for a market to entice Trader Joes would exceed that which Appleton could supply.

Table 7 Retail Marketplace Profile – 10 Minute Radius from 225 N. Oneida Street, Appleton, WI

Summary Demographics				
2015 Population				91,134
2015 Households				38,252
2015 Median Disposable Income				\$40,222
2015 Per Capita Income				\$26,902
Industry Summary	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Number of Businesses
Total Retail Food & Drink	\$1,328,810,723	\$1,794,569,002	\$(465,758,279)	902
Total Retail Trade	\$1,204,546,844	\$1,633,625,817	\$(429,078,973)	612
Total Food & Drink	\$124,263,879	\$160,943,185	\$(36,679,306)	289
Industry Group	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Number of Businesses
Motor Vehicle Parts/Dealers	\$279,935,362	\$316,270,362	\$(36,335,000)	77
Furniture/Home Furnishings	\$34,086,837	\$62,584,345	\$(28,497,508)	44
Electronics/Appliance Stores	\$69,559,855	\$80,923,782	\$(11,363,927)	41
Bldg Materials/Garden/Supply	\$57,241,249	\$113,595,099	\$(56,353,850)	48
Food /Beverage Stores	\$203,296,483	\$261,932,406	\$(58,635,923)	42
Health/Personal Care Stores	\$86,694,469	\$84,774,233	\$1,920,236	49
Gasoline Stations	\$95,369,884	\$65,215,475	\$30,154,409	33
Industry Group	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap	Number of Businesses
Clothing / Accessories	\$52,004,738	\$71,310,189	\$(19,305,451)	63
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Books/Music	\$30,925,714	\$60,262,599	\$(29,336,885)	60
General Merchandise Stores	\$224,620,285	\$358,936,709	\$(134,316,424)	29
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$44,031,212	\$124,402,186	\$(80,370,974)	111
Food Service/Drinking Places	\$124,263,879	\$160,943,185	\$(36,679,306)	289



## Retail Recommendations

In a market such as Appleton, knowing there is a strong retail presence at the I-41 corridor, the downtown is best to position itself as a local, niche, specialty, downtown where visitors can engage in a variety of unique experiences. The downtown also has the entertainment (food and beverage) and cultural experience which provide many reasons for people to come downtown. The vacant retail space should be approached from a targeted perspective, with a strategy for each space in relation to its surroundings and the customer base from which it will draw. **Retail recommendations include:**

1. Identify target retail stores from surrounding areas and create an opportunity for them to “try on” a commercial space for a period of three months by negotiating with the landlord to facilitate this possibility, assuming it was cost-effective for both parties.
2. Visit with retailers in space surrounding the vacant space asking those retailers for ideas for complementary or natural fit-type neighbors.
3. Target the following specialty categories including below. (Although they may not be retail uses, they may occupy retail space):
  - a. Art related businesses: music, painting, sculpture, ceramics, dance, photography, and others where customers can get involved in the process of creating, art-related incubator (stained glass, printmaking, candles, sculpture, etc.)
  - b. Crafts and craft supplies (quilting store, knitting/yarn store).
  - c. Organic grocery, small scale specialty food.
  - d. Discount store such as Five Below: millennials are shopping at dollar stores more than ever before, especially millennials who earn more than \$30,000 per year.
  - e. Other specialty retail including women’s boutique clothing stores to create more clustering.
4. We are not recommending development of any additional retail space, until such a time as there is an opportunity for mixed use development with either office or other residential. At that time, the developer will have to scan the market and determine the demand for additional retail and/or service space.
5. Although the market may not be strong enough to support a typical Trader Joes grocery store, data suggests a specialty store, such as a meat market with expanded grocery options would also do well in downtown Appleton, especially if it could effectively meet the needs of downtown workers by providing convenient prepared carry out items.

## Office

Downtown Appleton should be the most highly attractive place to build a new office building in the Appleton Metro Area and local corporate headquarters should continue to be a primary recruitment target. Using Appleton Redevelopment Authority to land bank properties as they become available will help to assemble the needed sites to react quickly to development opportunities.

Understanding the TIF dynamics with the distressed circumstances under which TID #3 is operating presently, other ways to support development which either are currently being considered or could be in the future include:

- Including a contribution from CDBG for blight elimination or acquisition as an incentive for redevelopment;
- Land swaps with property owners who have land in other areas where TIF may be utilized as an incentive for acquisition;



- Creative public private partnerships with contributions from community-minded private sector stakeholders;
- Partnership with ARA for investments;
- Investments/grants from Federal, State, and local programs.

Increasing the density of daytime workers downtown will work to support the residential component (and vice versa) as well as support retail and service aspects of the downtown. Corporate headquarters are great for infusing many full time employees into downtown, but small existing and currently vacant office spaces should be targeted for specialty medical, commercial arts and other concepts taking up smaller spaces.

Currently home to a large back-office/call center operation, it is not recommended to pursue more of this type of office user. Any growing business in the industrial or business parks in the region would be targets for expansion office space downtown.

As indicated in the table below, a majority of the employees working downtown are in professional categories. **The Finance & Insurance; Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; Health Care; and Public Administration categories employ over 70 percent of the employees** who are associated with downtown.

### Office Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered to support the current and future office market in Downtown Appleton:

1. City and ADI staff should continue to maintain regular ongoing communication (semi-annually or annually) with downtown office space users as a retention effort, and to determine future needs for additional office space.
2. In any other retention visits with corporate tenants elsewhere in the City, continue to be cognizant of the opportunity to ask if an office expansion is pending, and if they would be interested in locating downtown.
3. Pursue additional new users in the following categories:
  - a. **Small medical device or medical service labs/clinics:** attracting a high-tech work force who appreciates the downtown setting such as dental labs, prosthetic labs, eye care/vision centers, to support the health care cluster existing in the Fox Valley and foster entrepreneurship. This could take place in smaller office nodes, or the main floor of a proposed mixed use development with residential above.
  - b. **Training related specialty schools:** cosmetology school, cooking school, beer/wine/spirits school, dance schools, foreign language services, financial training centers, other medical related schools or branch campuses for extended learning programs.
  - c. **Commercial Arts related businesses:** recording studios, photography studios (commercial and consumer), graphic artists, design studios, architects, video production, advertising agencies, high tech gaming/app production.
  - d. **Innovative technology-based businesses.**



Table 8 Downtown Appleton Employment by Businesses Category and Employees (Source: ESRI Business Summary)

	Businesses	Percent	Employees	Percent
Construction	24	3.1%	88	0.5%
Manufacturing	17	2.2%	156	0.9%
Wholesale Trade	13	1.7%	47	0.3%
Retail Trade	91	11.9%	579	3.2%
Transportation & Warehousing	7	0.9%	199	1.1%
	14	1.8%	419	2.3%
Finance & Insurance	91	11.9%	7,328	40.7%
Real Estate, Leasing	27	3.5%	196	1.1%
Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	85	11.1%	1,021	5.7%
Administrative & Support & Waste Mgt & Remediation	24	3.1%	241	1.3%
Educational Services	22	2.9%	662	3.7%
Health Care and Social Assistance	54	7.1%	2,421	13.4%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	28	3.7%	239	1.3%
Accommodation & Food Services	81	10.6%	1,571	8.7%
Other Services	74	9.7%	748	4.2%
Public Administration	94	12.3%	2,047	11.4%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>97.5%</b>	<b>17,962</b>	<b>99.8%</b>

## Hospitality

Hospitality as defined in this report for the City of Appleton includes hotel, banquet, restaurant, bar, and other food or beverage related businesses. There is a strong presence of food and beverage related businesses now in the downtown, creating a cluster or district, for entertainment/food/beverage. The rest of the City has less of a concentration in food and beverage with entertainment than Downtown. This is a draw for a variety of visitors and customers and should be fostered and encouraged.

Downtown Appleton offers a significant variety of restaurants, night life, meeting venues, activities and hotel rooms to visitors and serves multiple market segments. There are few if any deficiencies. Appleton is known for the abundant choices visitors and locals hAvenue Downtown is walkable.

There is ample parking to support the hotels and venues. The city is upgrading its parking payment systems which will eliminate congestion when entering the parking lots.

It appears that there is outstanding cooperation between the City of Appleton, nine additional municipalities, Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Fox Cities hoteliers and many other stakeholders which voted or supported to increase the hotel room tax to support and pay for the construction of the Fox Cities Exhibition Center in Downtown Appleton, as well as develop additional youth and amateur sports tourism facilities.

Organizations and businesses in this sector are very much looking forward to the development of the Fox Cities Exhibition Center and a potential Indoor Sports Complex. These are the key “heart of the community” projects that will make the Fox Cities competitive and generate additional revenues for downtown Appleton and the greater Fox Cities businesses. The Fox Cities Exhibition Center will attract new and returning business to downtown Appleton and the entire Fox Cities, which will generate room nights for the greater Fox Cities hotels.

The past year, 2015, was the best year for Fox Cities Hotels and tourism. Hotel room Tax increased 10% and occupancy increased 4.8% over 2014 which was also a strong year. Visitor spending increased 5.65% and generated \$558M in total business sales, sustaining approx. 6,000 jobs in the tourism industry and \$93.6M in income. The Fox Cities has more than 2,800+ guestrooms, of that 463 hotel guest rooms in 2 hotels and 3 B&B's are located in Downtown Appleton.

Through the CVB, successful Sports Marketing has added group rooms to the market during the past 3 years. Over 160 events were held in 2015. Notable events include US Youth Region II Soccer championships (9491 room nights) and NCAA Division III Baseball Championships, Soccer tournaments and the State Legion Baseball Championships.

*Table 9 Competitive Market Data on Density of Food and Drink*

	Eau Claire	Appleton	Oshkosh	Green Bay
Population	62,551	91,134	61,209	79,330
Households	25,754	38,252	25,067	34,207
Median Disposable Income	\$ 34,104	\$ 40,222	\$ 35,566	\$ 29,878
Per Capita Income	\$ 23,115	\$ 26,902	\$ 22,829	\$ 19,844
Total Food & Drink				
Retail Gap	\$ (22,885,813)	\$ (36,679,306)	\$ (24,094,018)	\$ (78,981,457)
Number of businesses	187	289	183	277
Ratio of residents to businesses	481	315	334	286

Source: ESRI Retail Marketplace Profile Reports

The above table demonstrates the strength of the entertainment (food and drink) segment for downtown Appleton compared to communities of similar size and composition across Wisconsin. The “retail gap” highlighted in red above shows the amount of surplus sales dollars coming into the business within a five-minute radius of the respective downtowns. Green Bay experiences the “Green Bay Packer” affect and thus has an exaggerated surplus in sales in this category. Examining the number of businesses in this category within five minutes of downtown for each city, Appleton has a higher density of eating and drinking establishments by over 1.5 times that of Eau Claire and Oshkosh. This makes Appleton rich in food and drinking establishments compared to the cities across the state which are most like Appleton. A strong hospitality segment exists in downtown Appleton.



## Hospitality Recommendations

1. Continue open and frequent communications between and among all stakeholders related to the Fox Cities Exhibition Center, CVB and associated hotels.
2. Since public gathering space and private meeting space fall into the hospitality category, keep public gathering space needs in mind when new development proposals come to fruition such as the Appleton Public Library.
3. Continue to support a communications feedback loop between the hotels, CVB and City on issues related to parking, conference attendee feedback and ideas to make the downtown experience as robust as possible for conference attendees. The Appleton Redevelopment Authority Exhibition Center Advisory Committee's purpose is to represent, inform, engage and make recommendations on behalf of the stakeholders in the greater Fox Valley about the Exhibition Center Project as well as operations and management of the Exhibition Center. The Committee shall strictly serve in an advisory capacity to the Appleton Redevelopment Authority.
4. Set up cross promotional brainstorming meetings with ADI members and Fox Cities Exhibition Center staff in an effort to facilitate getting meeting and conference attendees to venture out of the Fox Cities Exhibition Center to experience all of Downtown Appleton.
5. Work with businesses, ADI, CARE, and the BID to expand upon the current partnership and develop a more comprehensive maintenance/cleaning strategy in order to enhance the image of downtown.
6. Support development of additional family friendly restaurants in the downtown.

## Residential

In order to evaluate the potential future demand for residential units in downtown Appleton, Wisconsin, the geographic area from which the majority of all buyers/renters will emanate was determined. As the City of Appleton's municipal boundaries extend into Outagamie, Winnebago and Calumet Counties, it was determined that the primary market area includes both the Appleton MSA (Outagamie and Calumet Counties) and the Oshkosh-Neenah MSA (Winnebago County), and is hereinafter defined as the Appleton-Oshkosh Combined Statistical Area or CSA. This geographic area shares commonalities relative to household composition, population demographics and dependencies upon similar sources of employment. By population the Appleton-Oshkosh CSA is the third largest such area in Wisconsin, trailing only Milwaukee and Madison.

This section of the analysis concludes with estimates of housing demand for the downtown core based upon data provided in the pages which follow.

## Employment and Building Permit Trends

Traditionally, residential construction activity, as measured through building permits, was almost exclusively dependent upon corresponding employment trends. While moderating to some degree over the past decade, employment growth is still the primary driver of the need for new housing.

After losing a total of 6,700 jobs during recession impacted 2008 and 2009, the Appleton-Oshkosh CSA has recovered nicely, having added 12,100 jobs over the past four years. Most recent figures available show that between December of 2014 and December of 2015, the CSA added an impressive 4,900 jobs. It should also be noted that since 2009, the Appleton-Oshkosh CSA has witnessed its unemployment rate decline from 7.9% to a current level of only 3.7%.



In 2015, a total of 1,454 residential units were permitted in the Appleton-Oshkosh CSA. This reflects the highest permit total recorded since 2006 when 1,781 units were authorized. Further, since 2009, the CSA has seen annual permit issuances increase yearly. Focusing specifically upon multifamily authorizations (both rental apartment and for-sale alternatives) shows that permits were issued for 842 units in 2015 reflecting an increase of 26.6% from 2014's total of 665. More importantly, 2015's total reflects the highest level of multifamily construction recorded over the past ten years.

With regard to single family alternatives, we note a total of 612 units authorized in 2015, a decline of 21.1% from the 2014 total of 776. More importantly, the 2015 figure represents a drop of 44.2% from the average of 1,097 recorded during the 2006-2008 period.

As it relates to housing tenure, the Appleton-Oshkosh CSA is currently in the midst of a significant transformation. Specifically, during the 2006 to 2010 timeframe, single family authorizations accounted for 73.3% of area-wide permit totals. However, since 2011, the single family sector has seen its share of permits decline to an average of 53.3%, with a 42.1% representation rate in 2015. Conversely, multifamily permits have seen a comparable increase, with such authorizations accounting for an average of 46.7% of CSA totals over the 2011-2015 period. The table below provides detail regarding building permit activity for the Appleton-Oshkosh CSA over the 2006-2015 timeframe.

*Table 10 Appleton-Oshkosh, Wisconsin CSA Annual Building Permit Statistics 2006-2015*

Year	Total	Multi-Family	Single Family	Multi-Family Percent	Single Family Percent
2015	1,454	842	612	57.9%	42.1%
2014	1,441	665	776	46.1%	53.9%
2013	1,216	395	821	32.5%	67.5%
2012	1,106	500	606	45.2%	54.8%
2011	1,033	535	498	51.8%	48.2%
2010	946	276	670	29.2%	70.8%
2009	918	234	684	25.5%	74.5%
2008	1,332	430	902	32.3%	67.7%
2007	1,359	245	1,114	18.0%	82.0%
2006	1,781	505	1,276	28.4%	71.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,586</b>	<b>4,627</b>	<b>7,959</b>		
<b>Average</b>	<b>1,259</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>36.8%</b>	<b>63.2%</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, C40 Reports

Focusing upon the City of Appleton, a total of 308 housing units were authorized in 2015 reflecting the highest level of construction activity recorded over the past ten years. By housing sector, only 18.8% or 58 units were found in the single family sector with 250 units representing 81.2% of citywide totals found among multifamily alternatives.

As was the case for the Appleton-Oshkosh CSA, the City of Appleton has seen residential construction trends favoring multifamily versus single family options, only to a more pronounced degree. Specifically, as detailed below, since 2011, the multifamily sector has accounted for an average of 75.4% of all activity, versus an average of only 24.6% for the single family sector.



Between 2006 and 2010, the multifamily and single family averages were virtually reversed with 24.4% and 75.6%, respectively.

Although usually not eventuated to this degree, it is not unusual for a mature city like Appleton to undergo this transition as larger tracts of developable land and associated higher land costs favor construction of higher density product.

Also associated with the shift to multifamily options is the City of Appleton's share of region-wide construction activity. Again, as provided below, over the 2006-2011 time frame the City of Appleton accounted for an average of only 8.6% of Appleton-Oshkosh CSA totals, increasing to an average of 18.8% over the past five years.

*Table 11 City of Appleton, Wisconsin Annual Building Permit Statistics 2006-2015*

Year	Total	Multi-Family	Single Family	Percent of CSA	Multi-Family Percent	Single Family Percent
2015	308	250	58	21.18%	81.2%	18.8%
2014	198	140	58	13.74%	70.7%	29.3%
2013	206	129	77	16.94%	62.6%	37.4%
2012	281	236	45	25.41%	84.0%	16.0%
2011	171	134	37	16.55%	78.4%	21.6%
2010	78	14	64	8.25%	17.9%	82.1%
2009	82	8	74	8.93%	9.8%	90.2%
2008	136	82	54	10.21%	60.3%	39.7%
2007	91	6	85	6.70%	6.6%	93.4%
2006	159	44	115	8.93%	27.7%	72.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, C40 Reports

It is interesting to note that Appleton is seeing this multi-family growth now, while it did not see this growth in the last wave of multi-family building 15-20 years ago. Those multi-family units went to Kimberly and Grand Chute.

As discussed earlier, there is a direct correlation between employment growth and residential building permit activity. By comparing employment additions to building permit totals we can gain valuable insight into whether or not a market area is being "under-built" or "over-built" in any given year.

As shown in the table below, the Appleton-Oshkosh CSA added 4,900 jobs in 2015, and during that same year, authorized 1,454 residential units. This equates to an employment/permit ratio of 3.37. More importantly, since emerging from recession in 2011, this ratio has increased somewhat consistently year over year. As a "typical" ratio is about 1.5, we can see that in 2013 and 2011, the market was slightly "overbuilt" as the number of units permitted was high relative to employment growth. Conversely, 2014 and 2015 have experienced a slightly "underbuilt" market. As these trends often even out over time, it is apparent that the Appleton-Oshkosh CSA is largely in balance as it relates to residential construction activity.



Table 12 Appleton-Oshkosh, Wisconsin CSA Employment/Permit Ratios 2006-2015

Year	Annual Employment Change	Total Residential Units (from bldg. permits)	Employment Permit Ratio
2015	4,900	1,454	3.37
2014	3,200	1,441	2.22
2013	300	1,216	0.25
2012	3,700	1,106	3.35
2011	-800	1,033	-0.77
2010	3,300	946	3.49
2009	-5,600	918	-6.10
2008	-1,100	1,332	-0.83
2007	1,900	1,359	1.40
2006	2,700	1,781	1.52

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

### Demographic Factors

In the full Downtown Market Analysis demographic factors are examined which will impact future potentials in downtown Appleton. Specifically, population and household formation trends, income and age statistics, and employment/industry sector factors for both the Appleton-Oshkosh CSA and the City of Appleton are analyzed in depth.

### Projected Demand for Housing

Based upon a synthesis of the economic and demographic factors presented in this section, along with other factors found throughout this analysis, we expect that housing demand in the Appleton-Oshkosh CSA, as evidenced through residential building permits, will total 1,500 units in 2016, of which 675 are expected in the single family sector, and the remaining 825 units found among multifamily (both for-sale and for-rent) alternatives. In 2017, a strengthening economy will foster demand for 1,600 units segmented between 760 units in the single family sector and 840 units in the multifamily sector. Over the following three years (2018-2021) the CSA will witness demand averaging 1,750 units yearly, with an average of 900 units in the single family sector and 840 units annually in the multifamily category.

Further, based upon current tenure statistics as well as recent trends, we expect the multifamily sector demand to allocate between for-sale and rental alternatives as provided in the table which follows.

Table 13 Appleton-Oshkosh, Wisconsin CSA Demand for Multi-Family Housing

Year	Total Demand	Single Family	Multifamily	
			For-Sale	For-Rent
2016	1,500	675	400	425
2017	1,600	760	390	450
2018-2021	5,250	2,700	1,035	1,485
Total	8,350	4,135	1,825	2,360

Source: The Windward Group, Inc.

Focusing upon the City of Appleton, we anticipate the addition of 300 residential units in 2016, increasing to 320 units in 2017. Over the following three years, we expect housing demand to



average 350 units per year. Among single family alternatives we forecast 80 units in 2016, 90 units in 2017, and 100 units yearly over the 2018-2021 time period. Among multifamily options, we expect 160 units in 2016, 170 in 2017 and 160 on average over the following three years.

Refer to the table below for details, as well as an allocation between multifamily alternatives for sale and units for rent. The reader will note a discrepancy between the numbers of multi-family units for sale in Appleton vs. the CSA, which speaks to the high demand for multifamily in the City. Multifamily developments are good investments in markets with circumstances that exist today.

*Table 14 City of Appleton, Wisconsin Demand for Housing 2016-2021*

Year	Total Demand	Single Family	Multifamily	
			For-Sale	For-Rent
2016	300	80	20	140
2017	320	90	20	150
2018-2021	1,050	300	60	480
Total	1,670	470	100	770

Source: The Windward Group, Inc.

### Qualitative Distribution of Demand-Appleton, Wisconsin

In this section, we turn to an analysis of housing demand in the City of Appleton by monthly rent or sales price for all housing sectors. Please note that all dollar figures are based upon current dollar amounts, and do not reflect expected inflationary increases.

Focusing first upon rental apartment alternatives, over the five year 2016-2021 we forecast that the City of Appleton can absorb a total of 770 new units, or an average of 154 per year. As detailed in the table which follows, we expect that 43.0% of this demand (330 units) will be concentrated among units renting for between \$700 and \$799 monthly.

In the higher rent levels, we expect that over the next five years, Appleton can absorb 185 units at rents exceeding \$1,000 per month.

*Table 15 Appleton, Wisconsin Rental Apartment Distribution of Demand 2016-2021*

Monthly Rent	Percent	Units
\$700-\$799	43.0%	330
\$800-\$899	18.0%	140
\$900-\$999	15.0%	115
\$1,000-\$1,100	12.0%	92
\$1,100 & Above	12.0%	93
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>770</b>

Source: The Windward Group, Inc.

In the for-sale multifamily sector, we note only modest demand with a total of 100 units (20 units per year) expected over the 2016-2021 period. By price, demand will be concentrated in the \$175,000 to \$249,999 range, with 56.0% of all activity (56 units) concentrated there.



Among higher priced alternatives, we expect modest demand support with 28.0% of all sales forecast to occur at prices in excess of \$250,000 as indicated on the following table.

*Table 16 Appleton, Wisconsin Townhome/Condominium Distribution of Demand 2016-2021*

Price Range	Percent	Unit Sales
\$150,000-\$174,999	16.0%	16
\$175,000-\$199,999	20.0%	20
\$200,000-\$224,999	24.0%	24
\$225,000-\$249,999	12.0%	12
\$250,000-\$274,999	8.0%	8
\$275,000-\$299,000	4.0%	4
\$300,000 & Over	16.0%	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: The Windward Group, Inc.

Among single family alternatives, we anticipate that a total of 670 units will be added during the 2016-2021 time frame. Over this five-year period, it is expected that 56.0% (375 units) of all sales will occur at prices below \$250,000 while only 6% (40 units) of single family sales will occur at prices over \$500,000. Please refer to the table below for details regarding single family demand by price.

*Table 17 Appleton, Wisconsin Single Family Distribution of Demand 2016-2021*

Price Range	Percent	Unit Sales
\$175,000-\$199,999	24.0%	115
\$200,000-\$249,999	32.0%	150
\$250,000-\$299,999	17.0%	80
\$300,000-\$399,999	14.0%	65
\$400,000-\$499,999	7.0%	30
\$500,000-\$749,999	3.0%	15
\$750,000-\$999,999	2.0%	10
\$1,000,000 & Over	1.0%	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>470</b>

Source: The Windward Group, Inc.

Given its small geographic area (relative to the City of Appleton), it is difficult to reach conclusions regarding housing demand with a high degree of specificity for the downtown core. However, using historical benchmarks and trends we can attempt to estimate demand.

**Within the rental apartment sector, we estimate that the downtown core can absorb up to 50.0% of city wide demand. Over the next five years, this equates to 385 units, or 77 new units annually.** By rent, we would expect that downtown offerings will be positioned slightly higher than the city as a whole due largely to higher land costs, and higher construction costs associated with higher-density development. More specifically, we would anticipate that virtually all future market-rate rental units would carry rents exceeding \$800 monthly. However, as has been the case with several other recent rental apartments, developments using Section 42 Housing Tax Credits can provide quality housing stock at more modest rent levels.



*Figure 13 Stacked flats, St. Louis Park, Minnesota*

**Like the apartment sector, we expect that the townhome/condominium sector in the downtown core can support up to 50.0% of citywide demand.** However, given the limited depth of this segment, this equates to a maximum of only 50 total units over the next five years. It should be noted that stringent regulatory requirements specific to condo mortgage insurance were introduced in the wake of the housing finance crisis<sup>4</sup>, which have made it more difficult to secure condo financing. These barriers are being addressed by congress, which may help stimulate demand for more condos in the future. By price, it is expected that future offerings would be highly concentrated at prices between \$250,000 and \$350,000.

With a total demand of 470 units forecast for the single family sector over the 2016-2021 period, the City of Appleton offers solid opportunity for development. However, given land supply and land price constraints, it is unlikely that the downtown core could support any concentrated development of single family homes. There may, however, be modest opportunity for individual “spec homes” on scattered lots throughout the area.

### **The Competitive Environment - Residential**

In order to evaluate the potential for new residential development within the downtown area of the City of Appleton, it is necessary to examine those existing rental communities and currently active townhome/condo and single family programs that will compete with possible future offerings.

#### **Direct Competition**

Given developable land constraints, the downtown area has been somewhat restricted in terms of recent residential development. However, there are a handful of currently active and recently completed residential projects that provide solid insight into the current status of the downtown core. The full Downtown Market Analysis discusses each of these developments in greater detail.

- RiverHeath is a TIF-supported, mixed-use, active residential development located just east of the downtown core, bordering the south side of the Fox River. Evergreen, with 31 units, was opened in 2013 and was fully leased in nine months. The Prairie, a second building, opened in 2016 and includes tenants such as Tempest Coffee and Menlo Park, a

<sup>4</sup> <http://urbanland.uli.org/development-business/u-s-congress-approves-less-restrictive-fha-condo-financing-program/>

co-working space. The site is carbon neutral, as geothermal heating and cooling is used. In addition to a new Courtyard by Marriott hotel, future plans for RiverHeath include an undetermined number of additional rental apartment units, coupled with further retail and commercial development.

- The Fox River Mills, located on the north side of the Fox River, two blocks south of College Avenue consists of an aggregation of three buildings originally constructed between 1883 and 1915.
- Union Square is a 53-unit, Section 42 (income restricted) apartment development located approximately six blocks north of the downtown core on Winnebago Street. This property consists of two components, including 20, two-story townhome style units and 33 units in a single three story structure. The site is fully leased.
- Eagle Flats is a mixed-use development situated on South Island in the Fox River, just several blocks south of the downtown core. To date, two rental apartment properties have been developed, including River Walk Place and The Landings at Eagle Flats. River Walk Place has 70 units and all units receive Section 8 assistance meaning 100% of renters pay no more than 30% of their adjusted income for rent. The Landings has 54 units and is a low-income housing project created by Appleton Housing Authority. Both of these projects were supported with Wisconsin Housing & Economic Development Authority low income Housing Tax Credits (Section 42 Housing Tax Credits).
- Richmond Terrace was originally constructed in 2004, and includes 147 units as well as eleven commercial spaces in a four-story, elevator serviced building. All units at this development were sold by mid-2008, reflecting an absorption of 2.5 units per month. All commercial space is fully leased.

### **Future Residential Development**

Also having a pronounced impact on the potential for new residential development in Appleton's downtown core will be those projects which have not yet broken ground, but are expected to do so over the next 12 to 24 months. The following paragraphs provide information relative to these developments.

The Foremost Dairy site is an eight-acre parcel located along the west side of the Fox River, just south of the College Avenue Bridge. Preliminary plans call for the development of 100 units of senior-oriented assisted living housing. In addition to the senior housing, the development of single family homes or condos are being considered.

Located along Old Oneida Street on South Island in the Fox River, the Woolen Mills project will include an adaptive re-use of an existing building. This development is expected to include 60 rental units using both Section 42 Housing Tax Credits and Historic Tax Credits. It is expected that the units at Woolen Mills will be segmented among 36 income-restricted housing, 15 units reserved for military veterans, and nine market-rate apartment homes. Construction began in the summer of 2016.

At Eagle Flats, the bulk of future development is likely to be heavily tilted toward retail and commercial uses. However, preliminary plans call for the construction of another 68 rental apartment units in a four-story structure with underground parking. Complimenting this development, the Fox River Navigational Authority has proposed an interpretive center, the Fox River Locks Visitor Center, at this location.



## Residential Recommendations

Considering the importance of increasing residential development opportunities downtown, it should be the continued focus of efforts for the City and ADI into the future. In addition to the market study results, the comprehensive plan public survey indicated strong support for downtown housing. Over half (53%) of respondents indicated they would consider living downtown.

Increasing the residential base in Downtown Appleton will provide an increased and potentially entirely new customer base which retailers, restaurants and service related businesses will be able to tap. Downtown employers will also see it as a benefit to have more people living downtown as it will be easier to draw employees from a very local base. Interest in living downtown was also expressed at the May 2016 Design Workshop event by multiple people currently not living downtown. Based on the housing study conducted as a part of this market analysis, the following recommendations have been established. These recommendations also appear in the initiatives section of the report.

1. Work to facilitate the development of additional multifamily rental units, in and around downtown Appleton. Results of the market study and data from Project RUSH suggest there is a shortage of rental units available for both lower income and higher income households. Increasing the supply of both affordable and market rate multifamily units should be a priority. See the Redevelopment Framework for suggested sites in the downtown.
2. Work to facilitate the development of townhome and condominium residential units as noted in the analysis above, approximately 50 units over the next five years. Sites have been identified in the vision plan for the future of downtown, primarily north of College Avenue. Understanding the complex and difficult lending environment for condominium purchases is important for future development.
3. Work to facilitate development of a pocket neighborhood to bring close to downtown a popular new style of single family homes, featuring small lots with small yards and larger common areas. The Habitat for Humanity development north of W Spencer Street between S Story Street and S Pierce Avenue is following this model.
4. Incent existing landlords who own property above first floor retail spaces on College Avenue to improve the quality and increase the value (and subsequently the rents) of these units. Some incentive may be necessary due to high cost of bringing second floor units up to code, which makes investment cost prohibitive.
5. The City should continue to pursue TIF options in downtown working around TIF No. 3 designation as a distressed TIF district. Tax Increment District financing could be used as a financial incentive for owners of existing buildings in a newly created Tax Increment District to renovate underutilized upper floors into market rate residential rental housing, creating additional housing supply downtown, increased property values, and additional consumers close by to support local businesses. This has been done in Quincy, Illinois.



## Mobility

Surveys, research, and observation all suggest a growing interest and demand for more walkable cities. As Appleton seeks to strengthen its downtown by making it more vibrant and attractive to new residents as well as visitors, improving walkability should be a core strategy.

This section of the report summarizes the results of several analyses used to better understand how people move around downtown. The focus of the Downtown Plan analysis was on walkability, access, and connectivity to the river. Other related study findings are summarized below.

### Access Appleton

In 2015 ADI launched a new program called “Access Appleton” in order to make access improvements affordable for properties within the downtown Business Improvement District. Designing for accessibility is an increasingly important aspect of mobility. Well-designed streets and public spaces enable people of all ages and abilities to travel safely and conveniently throughout the community.



*Figure 14 Joe Martin leads a group of community leaders on a tour of downtown Appleton in order to better understand accessibility issues.*

### 2016 Mobility Plan

The purpose of the study was to determine and evaluate strategies to improve multi-modal mobility and traffic circulation in downtown Appleton. The results of the study identified several pedestrian and traffic circulation challenges and opportunities in the downtown including:

- Confusing northbound routing through the downtown
- Confusing intersections, especially along the City’s one-way northbound route
- An abundance of on-street parking
- Unwarranted traffic signals, including at the intersections of Franklin Street and Superior Street and Franklin Street and Oneida Street
- Low levels of traffic congestion
- Limited river access for both pedestrians as well as vehicles
- Opportunities to improve crosswalks at some downtown intersections
- Difficult bicycle access to key destinations downtown
- Lack of bicycle parking

The study identified alternatives to address the issues listed above. Several key traffic related recommendations which are most relevant to the core downtown area are listed below and summarized in the figure below:

1. Converting Appleton Street to two-way traffic flow
2. Reconstructing Lawrence Street to accommodate two-way traffic
3. Converting several other one-way streets to two-way traffic flow
4. Reconstructing the northbound lane of the Oneida Street bridge between Prospect Street and Lawrence Street, which would create a large parcel of land for potential future development
5. Reconstructing the Appleton Street/Oneida Street/Pacific Street intersection.

6. Realignment of Allen Street with new extension of Oneida Street
7. Sidewalk additions to address sidewalk connectivity gaps

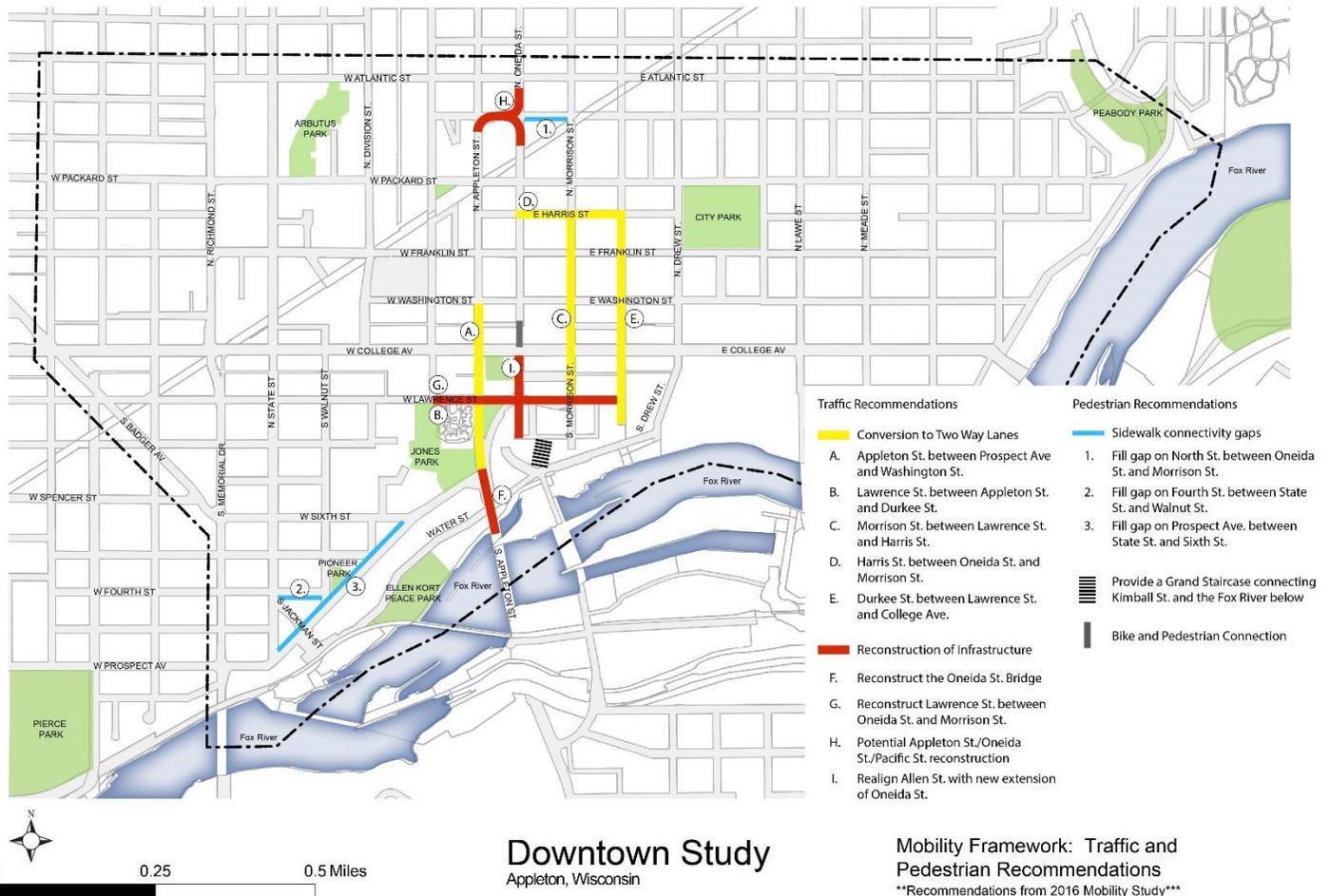


Figure 15 Downtown Mobility Framework: Traffic and Pedestrian Enhancements

Source: Appleton Downtown Mobility Plan

Key pedestrian and bicycle recommendations which are most relevant to the core downtown area are shown in the figure below and include:

1. Adding sidewalks where they currently do not exist
2. Ensuring adequate lighting
3. Continuing to enhance crosswalks and curb ramps
4. Providing a grand staircase or walkway from the corner of Olde Oneida Street and Water Street up the bluff to the site of the current Fox Banquets property
5. Development of new bike facilities throughout the downtown study area. (See Proposed Bicycle Facilities – Ultimate Build Out map)



## 2015 Downtown Parking Study

As was noted earlier a comprehensive downtown parking analysis was conducted in anticipation of new development and changes to the City's public parking program in 2015. Of particular relevance to downtown mobility the study's findings suggest that:

- Downtown Appleton has an excess of parking available currently. Excess surface parking presents an opportunity to add additional bike accommodations throughout downtown with minimal impact on the overall system.
- The city-owned Blue Ramp (401 spaces) and YMCA-owned Soldier Square Ramp (450 spaces) are nearing the end of their useful lives. The Blue Ramp is scheduled for demolition by 2020.
- Many communities are rethinking how to address their parking challenges, by focusing more closely on managing demand versus simply adding more supply. The new approach to parking recognizes:
  - There are many types of parking problems (management, pricing, enforcement, etc..)
  - Too much supply is as harmful as too little. Resources should be targeted where they can make the greatest difference
  - Users should pay for parking instead of parking being provided for free

The study's findings support several concepts included in this plan including redevelopment on the Blue Ramp and Soldier Square Ramp sites, recommendations calling for additional bicycle facilities downtown, and achieving a balance between parking system needs and the needs of residents and downtown visitors.



*Figure 17 Mixed Use Parking Garage With Commercial Liner Spaces*

## Downtown Walkability

The SEH team also conducted a walkability analysis for downtown, using Jeff Speck's framework for walkable communities. Mr. Speck is author of Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America One Step at a Time. The framework suggests that walkable communities must meet four system conditions:

1. The walk must be useful
2. The walk must be safe
3. The walk must be comfortable
4. The walk must be interesting

The results of the analysis are summarized in the strengths and weaknesses observations below. Many of the observations were consistent with community and stakeholder input received relative to the downtown, including two citizen walking tours conducted on the morning of May 17<sup>th</sup> 2016 as part of the Design Workshop.

### 1. The Walk Must Be Useful

#### a. Strengths

- A variety of uses that support people's daily needs: banking, apparel, hotels, eating/drinking, florist, jeweler, coffee shops, professional offices, government services, entertainment, library, education, religious, musical instruments, etc.
- Good mix of on street, off street parking and multi-story parking ramps

#### b. Weaknesses

- Motor vehicles dominate the public realm
- Limited transit service (no Sunday service, for example)
- Limited amount of transit amenities (such as shelters)
- Limited supply and options for housing
- Limited public open space



### 2. The Walk Must Be Safe

#### a. Strengths

- Adequate lighting on College Avenue
- Well marked cross walks on College Avenue
- Mix of night uses on College Avenue activates public realm
- Plentiful 1<sup>st</sup> floor building windows allowing eyes on the street
- On street parking protects sidewalk users

#### b. Weaknesses

- Inconsistent lighting of other streets
- Inconsistent lighting of building back sides
- Inadequate cycling infrastructure has bikes using the sidewalk
- Rail lines and rail crossings north of Franklin Street



### 3. The walk must be comfortable

#### a. Strengths

- Wide sidewalks on College Avenue
- Attractive streetscape on College Avenue
- Numerous benches along College Avenue
- Numerous shade trees along College Avenue
- Seating, plantings, fountain in Houdini Plaza

#### b. Weaknesses

- Lack of streetscape furnishings beyond College Avenue
- Numerous narrow sidewalks on other streets
- Numerous driveway curb cuts along other streets
- Lack of shade trees along other streets



### 4. The walk must be interesting

#### a. Strengths

- Numerous buildings with unique/attractive facades
- Growing number of murals and public art installations
- Unique business signs along College Avenue
- Houdini Plaza
- College Avenue pocket park
- Lawrence University Campus

#### b. Weaknesses

- Lack of flexible, public green space
- Overemphasis on College Avenue – other streets are bleak
- Numerous blank walls along other streets
- Lack of visual and physical connections to the river



The results of the SWOT analysis are consistent with other data. Downtown Appleton currently has a Walk Score of 83<sup>5</sup>, which is a “very walkable” place where “most errands can be accomplished on foot,” according to [walkscore.com](http://walkscore.com).

<sup>5</sup> [www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com) 100 W College Ave, Appleton, WI 9/8/2016

## Fox Wisconsin Heritage Trail and Fox River Locks Visitor Center

A segment of the Fox Wisconsin Heritage Trail runs just south of the study area down the Fox River. There are four locks to allow for safe navigation through downtown Appleton with portages also available for when the locks are closed. The proposed Fox River Locks Visitor Center will help foster greater access and connectivity to the river by showcasing the heritage of the Fox River Locks System. The center will be located beside Appleton Lock 3 within the Eagle Flats neighborhood development. The facility will provide interpretation as well as bathroom facilities for boaters, cyclists, and walkers using the trails system and canals. It will serve as an amenity for tourists and create a year round destination on the river. Because this will be a popular destination, a trailhead including visitor parking should be considered in the general area.



## 2016 Appleton Trails Master Plan

Concurrent with development of the Downtown Plan a separate study was commissioned by the City to identify opportunities to enhance and expand off street multi-modal facilities, for both recreation and transportation purposes citywide. The study identifies new connections and improvements to existing trails which will help create a network that provides connections to key destinations and recreational opportunities.

Of particular relevance to the downtown, the Trails Master Plan identifies new connections in the proposed network map along the Fox River corridor. It should be noted that many of these trail segments have been proposed in prior plans for the area.

The new trail segments located in close proximity to downtown scored high in an overall prioritization exercise which evaluated potential new trail connections citywide. The proposed trail segments along the river provide access to more residents than other segments and also connect a larger number of destinations. Proposed trail segments in and adjacent to downtown include new trestle trail segments, a new trail segment through Riverview Gardens connecting to Old Oneida Street, trail connections west from Vulcan Heritage Park to Lutz Park, and a new trail segment from Lawrence University east along the river to Peabody Park.

The mobility framework in Section 4 of this report synthesizes the bicycle recommendations from both the 2016 Appleton Mobility Plan and the 2016 Appleton Trails Master Plan into one cohesive framework for the downtown study area.

## Fox Trot Trail

The Fox Trot Trail is a recently completed 2.2-mile marked walk through downtown Appleton and along the Fox River. It starts in Houdini Plaza and heads down College Avenue toward Lawrence University, where the trail turns south toward the Fox River before heading along the Newberry trail and back up through the flats and Jones Park back to Houdini Plaza. It features 16 historical points of interest with information about the history of Appleton. Blue fox paw prints dot the trail and blue foxes mark the designated points of interest.



Figure 18 Map of Fox Trot Trail

## Access and Connectivity to the River

An important aspect of downtown mobility is improving access and connectivity to the river, which has been a priority in several past plans and was clearly identified as a priority during the current plan development process. A strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis was conducted to help identify priority recommendations which appear in section four of this report as part of the Access and Connectivity framework.

### Strengths

- There are several pedestrian staircases connecting the bluff to the river
- Natural gateways provide exceptional views of river from bridges
- There are a growing number of destination along the river

### Weaknesses

- There are few roads connecting downtown to the river
- Lack of coordinated streetscape and physical infrastructure linking downtown to river
- There is almost no pedestrian oriented wayfinding
- Access to the river is confusing
- Elevation differential
- Water Street is narrow, making it challenging to add bike and pedestrian accommodations

### Opportunities

- Use proposed park enhancements at Ellen Kort Peace Park and Jones Park to extend river environment and greenery into downtown Appleton
- Focus efforts on linking highest activity areas to river
- Adding additional pedestrian stairs and ramps where informal trails currently exist
- Grand staircase connecting Olde Oneida to bluff
- Proposed trail segments including trestle trails
- Fox River Locks Visitor Center
- Trailhead development in vicinity of Eagle Flats
- Boat access
- Exploring the “folly” concept such as a zip line, funicular, or slide which serves as both a river connector as well as a destination in itself
- Incorporation of public art into wayfinding



## Block Structure

The figure ground map below illustrates building footprints within the study area. It shows a concentration of solid continuous blocks within the downtown core, which supports walkability by concentrating destinations close by one another. However off of College Avenue, and in particular to the north, the block structure breaks down. Large expanses of surface parking are partially to blame, and make this area of downtown less desirable for walking and less attractive as a business location. They create a physical gap between the historic neighborhoods to the north of College Avenue and downtown, contributing to a sense of isolation and insecurity within the area.

The block structure along Memorial Drive, just south of College Avenue, extending north along Richmond Street, is also problematic. The four block stretch from W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street north to W. Franklin Street straddles College Avenue and is a highly visible gateway into downtown. For many visitors it is their first impression of downtown. Specific concerns include:

- Poor visual cues traveling north on Memorial Drive or south on Richmond Street so visitors driving by may be unsure where downtown is despite the presence of wayfinding signage. This is compounded by the visual clutter surrounding the area, the complex configuration of the intersection of Richmond Street and College Avenue, and the suburban style site design which characterizes three of the four large parcels located near the area.
- The lack of successful development on both sides of S. Memorial Drive directly north of W. Lawrence Street leaves the impression that downtown Appleton is struggling. This is downtown's key corner yet the scale and location of the two primary buildings at this intersection are more typical of a suburban, auto-oriented development.
- As visitors approach the core downtown area, they encounter large areas of surface parking, many without vegetative buffering or screening. Often times the parking areas are nearly empty, undermining the image of downtown Appleton as a vibrant, livable neighborhood and visitor destination.

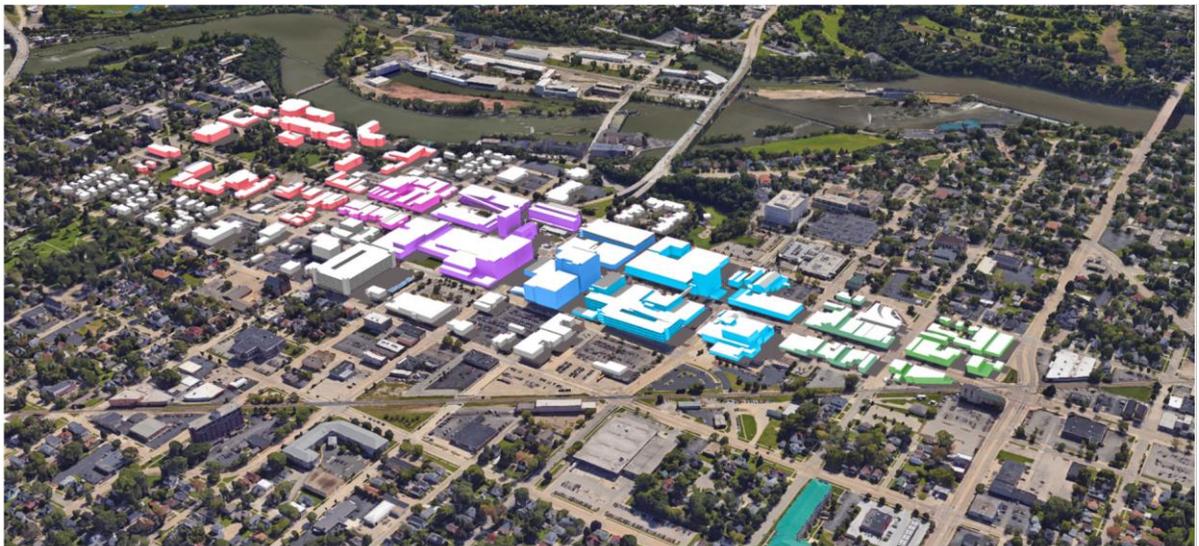


## Building Massing

A 3D model was constructed to better understand building massing in the core of downtown from Richmond Street to Drew Street. The different colors represent blocks and campus areas along College Avenue from the intersection of Richmond Street east to the intersection of Lawe Street.

Compared with other similar sized cities across Wisconsin, one of Appleton's strengths is its variety of building types and sizes, ranging from traditional 1-2 story main street buildings to multi-story buildings such as the 222 building and the Zuelke building. Future redevelopment efforts downtown should pay attention to existing building massing, however underutilized parcels provide an opportunity to infill between the denser, taller development along College Avenue and the neighborhoods to the north. These areas may be especially suited for a mix of residential housing types and densities.

Building massing is of particular importance in terms of developing infill between the core downtown area and the surrounding neighborhoods. General strategies for stepping back development intensities are provided in the redevelopment framework section of the report. Changes to the Zoning Code may help stimulate development within the transition zone by allowing mixed uses by right and establishing appropriate standards which are compatible with existing land uses and adjacent neighborhoods.

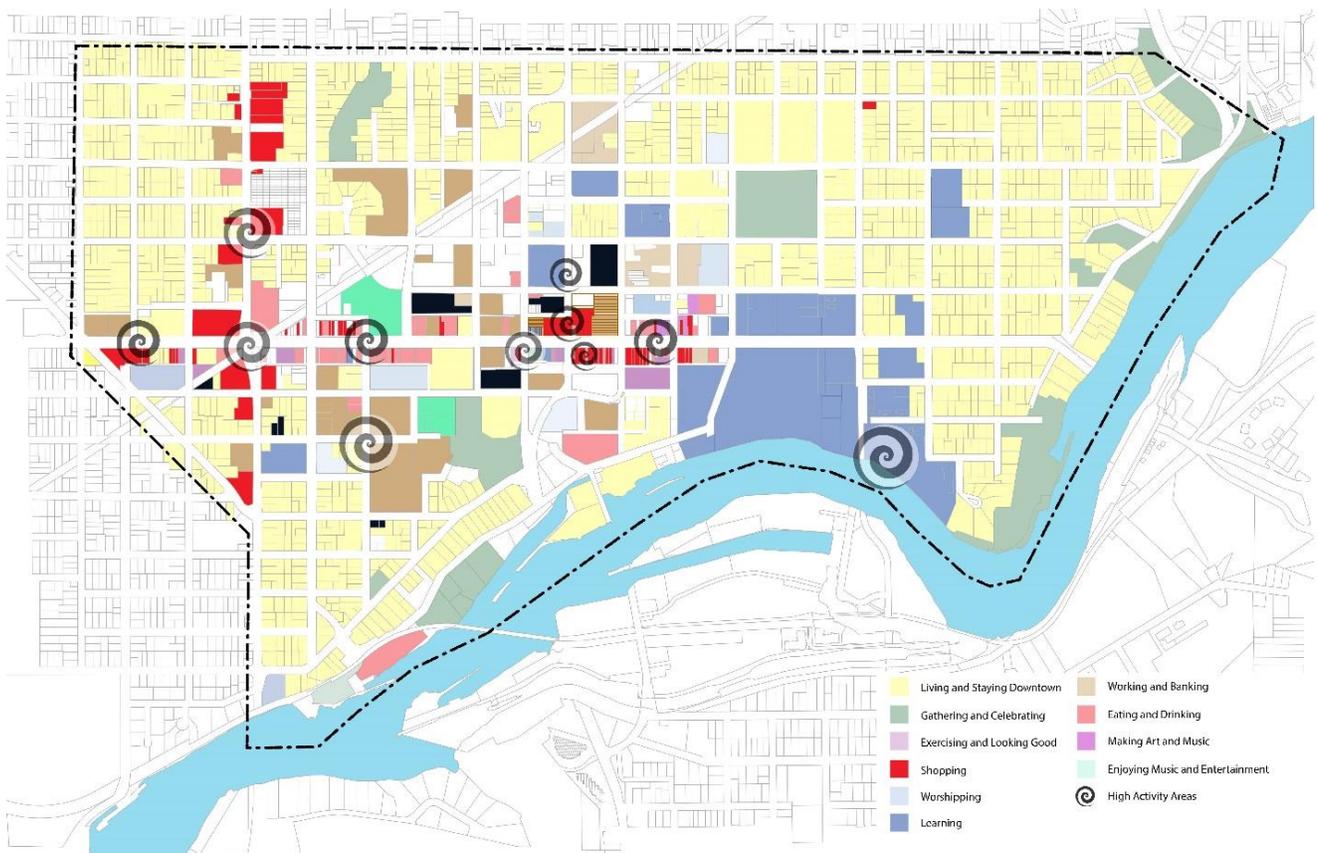


Downtown Building Massing

## Land Use Activities

The land use activity map below illustrates the diversity of uses which currently exist downtown. Spirals indicate high activity areas, several of which are associated with downtown's successful niches. Businesses within a niche specialize in a narrow range of offerings, providing a large selection of options for consumers to choose from. Businesses within a given niche often cluster in close proximity and benefit from a larger trade area as consumers are drawn from more distant parts of the community and beyond.

The niches which have taken hold in downtown Appleton include restaurants/entertainment in the 400 and 500 blocks of W. College Avenue, retail/gifts (100 and 200 blocks of E. College Avenue), and an emerging experiential arts/education niche from the intersection of E. College Avenue and Morrison Street west to Drew Street. Finally, office uses have also clustered in and around City Center Plaza.



Scale: N/A

Chapter 14 Downtown Plan

Downtown Land Use Activities

Looking ahead, the City has an opportunity to stimulate investment, including residential development, both along the river and north of College Avenue. The Fox Cities Exhibition Center and Appleton Public Library are critically important anchors for the downtown. Bringing more people into downtown will help create additional high activity areas off of College Avenue, and will create a demand for more goods and services which serve the daily needs of residents.

## Historic Districts

Historic preservation connects both residents and visitors to a specific place. By fostering greater understanding of local history and culture, preservation helps build stronger communities. Historic preservation can also be an important tool for downtown revitalization, through programs such as the Historic Preservation Tax Credits, which provides tax incentives for both homeowners and building owners who invest in their properties. Appleton's Historic Preservation Commission is charged with recommending designation of historic structures, sites, and districts within the City.

Within the downtown study area there are six locally designated historic districts, including:

1. 315-340 W. Prospect Avenue
2. Fox River Paper Company
3. College Avenue
4. City Park
5. Appleton Lock 4
6. Appleton Locks 1-3

This Plan recognizes the importance of maintaining important historical resources within the community. The proposed redevelopment projects identified within the redevelopment framework focus primarily on infill where surface parking or structured parking currently exists.

## Block by Block Analysis

A block by block analysis of College Avenue from Richmond Street to Drew Street was conducted. Key findings include:

1. The most successful retail blocks are those where the buildings are narrow, embrace the street, and have highly transparent facades which engage passerby, encourage walking, and discovery. The 200 E. Block is where the most successful retailers are clustering.
2. Longer blocks with uninterrupted and non-transparent facades undermine downtown Appleton's walkability and vibrancy.
3. The image of downtown varies widely, with a mix of very strong retail blocks further east and deteriorating and blighted properties as one approaches Richmond Street.
4. There is a strong restaurant/entertainment niche along W. College Avenue near the PAC, however maintenance and cleanliness continue to be a challenge undermining the image of the area.
5. There is a growing cluster of businesses offering experiential art/music activities and classes, including around the 300 block of east College Avenue
6. Despite a strong retail and arts/entertainment environment downtown is not currently functioning as a shopping destination that meets all the daily needs of its residents
7. Too few people are living in and near downtown to support the types of businesses many people want (grocery, theater, more family oriented restaurants)



# The Public Realm

An analysis of downtown Appleton's public realm was conducted, including social gathering spaces, streetscapes, and public art.

## Social Gathering Places

For decades, the terms 'Central Business District', or CBD, and 'downtown' were used almost interchangeably because, functionally, downtowns were dominated by retail stores, office based businesses, professionals and government agencies, along with some hotels and maybe entertainment venues.

Today, in downtowns large and small, the CBD functions are being rivaled or even surpassed by their Central Social District (CSD) functions. That includes housing, restaurants, pubs, clubs, and vibrant entertainment niches that include not only venues for formal entertainment such as cinemas, theaters, museums and concert halls, but also lively parks, plazas, public libraries and other gathering areas.

Underlying all of these CSD functions is the ability to spend quality time with loved ones and significant others. Downtown housing has been especially important. Those in households without children, especially the young professionals and "empty nesters," have been most interested in living in or near downtowns.

To support the continued development of downtown Appleton as the region's CSD, it is important to develop a streetscape and other public spaces which deliberately facilitate social interaction and helps attract and retain visitors, workers, and most importantly new residents. A SWOT analysis was conducted to summarize key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats pertaining to downtown's social gathering spaces.

### Strengths

- The Appleton Public Library
- Multiple parks in and adjacent to downtown including Jones, Ellen Kort Peace, Peabody, Arbutus, Telulah, Pierce, Vulcan Heritage, and City Parks, as well as Houdini Plaza
- The Downtown public realm including Houdini Plaza is well programmed
- The Downtown Farmer's Market

### Weaknesses

- Appleton Public Library is somewhat invisible to visitors
- Jones Park is underused and is perceived as unsafe by some
- There is no destination gathering space on the river
- Parks and trails are not well marked or connected
- Downtown lacks a large, central, functional gathering space which could serve as the City's 'Central Park' and help induce additional private investment

### Opportunities

- Strengthen connection between Appleton Public Library and College Avenue
- Outdoor amphitheater
- Ellen Kort Peace Park
- Repurpose a portion of YMCA Ramp site as a Civic Plaza
- A cohesive Riverwalk along the Fox River



- Trail connections
- Interactive playground
- Dog park

#### Threats

- Invasive species
- Funding
- Topography and geographic challenges

The Downtown Development Concept which this plan proposes contains several recommendations related to social gathering spaces. These recommendations can be found embedded in the framework plans presented Section 4.

## Streetscape

Great streets don't just help people move around. They bring people together and build community. They encourage socialization. Across the U.S. many public spaces, including streets, are being transformed into magnets for social activity, bringing people out into the public realm to eat, drink, work, play, and celebrate together. In the process of doing so, they are helping make downtowns more desirable locations for people to work and live. Well-designed streetscapes, such as College Avenue, can also help address local priorities, including making downtown more walkable, stimulating economic development north of College Avenue, and increasing access and connectivity to the river.

In downtown Appleton, and especially north of College Avenue, one of the primary elements for consideration is the addition of urban street trees. They are of particular importance within the study area as they perform a number of important functions including<sup>6</sup>:

1. Creating a sense of enclosure, helping to define the street corridor and creating a more comfortable walking and driving environment.
2. Defining the pedestrian space between buildings and adjacent vehicular travel ways. They also help establish a more human scale and provide a more interesting environment.
3. Calming vehicular traffic and protecting pedestrians, helping establish a safer, more comfortable environment.
4. Providing shade and filtering sunlight, cooling air temperatures and reducing the urban heat island effect.
5. Bring order to the street by developing physical patterns. This is achieved by how trees are spaced, aligned to the curb, and consistent in size, species, form, and character.
6. Providing ecological services such as providing oxygen, filtering and utilizing rainwater and providing habitat.
7. Bringing beauty and nature into the City, helping humans connect with their environment through seasonal changes in color, fragrance, texture and the attraction of animals and birds.

A SWOT analysis was conducted to better understand the opportunities and challenges related to Appleton's downtown streetscapes and their contribution to the public realm.

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<sup>6</sup> Adapted from **Street Design: The Secret to Great Cities and Towns** by Victor Dover and John Massengale

### **Strengths**

- College Avenue is a well-defined, well-furnished street with quality public realm including nicely composed lighting, evenly spaced trees, benches, planters, clocks, stamped concrete

### **Weaknesses**

- College Avenue streetscape provides few opportunities for people to sit down and talk face to face because benches face one way
- Lack of bicycle infrastructure
- The public realm rarely “turns the corner” to extend north or south off of College Ave
- Other than College Avenue, the balance of streets in the core downtown lack definition and structure including few street trees
- Many streets are suburban in nature with adjacent land use patterns characteristic of strip mall development typically not found in the core downtown area of a city

### **Opportunities**

- Develop a unique set of streetscape standards which define street typologies downtown while reinforcing other plan objectives such as increased connectivity to the river
- Implement a comprehensive system of pedestrian scaled wayfinding throughout the downtown in conjunction with streetscape enhancements
- For new development, define streetscapes using a set of standards which require buildings to front directly onto public sidewalks and right-of-way

### **Threats**

- Inadequate municipal funding to support well designed streetscapes

## **Creative Culture and Public Art**

Downtown Appleton is home to an emerging arts and culture scene anchored by several prestigious venues such as the Trout Museum of Art, Stansbury Theater, Lawrence Memorial Chapel and the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center. These are reinforced by several commercial enterprises such as The Fire pottery studio, Coventry Glassworks and Gallery and The Draw, a collection of working artist studios and gallery. There is also thriving local music scene supported by numerous downtown restaurants and bars which culminates with the annual Mile of Music Festival. The economic and social impact of these assets and events on Appleton’s downtown can be seen in the growing demand for downtown housing and the steady increase in creative economy professionals investing in downtown businesses and participating in ADI events.

Based on national and regional trends, arts and culture are poised to play an increasing role in contributing to downtown Appleton's economic and social vitality. For this to occur several factors need to either be maintained or strengthened. These include such things as:

- Development of a city-wide arts and culture plan
- Identification of revenue streams (public and private) for cultural and arts oriented events and projects
- Encouraging preservation and upkeep of older, existing buildings with modestly priced rents so entrepreneurs and creatives can afford physical space to operate
- Continued routine programming, promotion and cultural and arts activities, events and projects
- Promoting growth of medium to higher paying wage jobs so people have money to spend on the arts
- Encouraging political and bureaucratic support and processes for informal, spontaneous arts and culture activities
- Continued cultivation and curation of a creative culture where artistic expression is encouraged and appreciated
- Continued discussions for formal establishment of a city-wide arts council or commission to administer, promote a public art program and maintain public art collections



In addition to its historic memorials, monuments and locally painted murals, downtown Appleton is fortunate to include several substantial pieces of sculpture such as Dimitri Hadzi's "Fox River Oracle" located near the north end of the Oneida Street Bridge and Rolf Westphal's "Aerial Landscape" on the Lawrence University campus. An additional piece of public sculpture by Richard Wolter titled "Metamorphosis" was removed from area now known as Houdini Plaza. While currently in storage, it would be good to find new location for the piece in the near future as long-term storage was never the intention of this artist. This art work is monumental in scale and with its design being inspired by Appleton hero, Harry Houdini it seems fitting that it would be sited somewhere in downtown. In total, these works constitute a strong foundation for the community's downtown public art collection.

Appleton's interest in public art continues to grow and is well timed as it coincides with the updated comprehensive planning process including the rewriting of this chapter. As such, arts group representatives and numerous individuals have shared their ideas and opinions of Appleton's arts and culture scene with project planners, designers, and City staff. This community input continues to identify opportunities and support arts and culture themes that emerged from the 2013 ADI visioning process:

- Market Downtown as "The Arts District" of Northeast Wisconsin
- Public Art -where people gather and can experience it
- Incorporate art in everything we do!
- Develop an Arts Team to identify opportunities
- Help City incorporate art in urban infrastructure

These same goals are shared by many cities where creative city making policies and activities include the practice and use of public art as a tool for connecting artists of local, regional and national repute with community members to strengthen civic discourse and enhance the public realm.

One of the most pressing aspects of administering a successful public art program is conservation or in layman's terms, maintenance. The 1911 bronze and granite memorial depicting three Civil War Union Soldiers located on Oneida Street designed by Italian sculptor Chevalier Gaerano Trentavone and Richard Wolter's "Metamorphosis" an abstract homage to Harry Houdini, currently in storage are just two of the pieces identified as needing care attention.

The most successful public art planning processes utilize a variety of tactical urbanism activities and events to engage artists and community members in creating temporary events and testing out concepts as a part of ground truthing and building support. There a number of public art master plans, active public art programs and technical resources to consult and examine should Appleton decide to move forward in growing its interest in public art into a formal program. A few of these include:

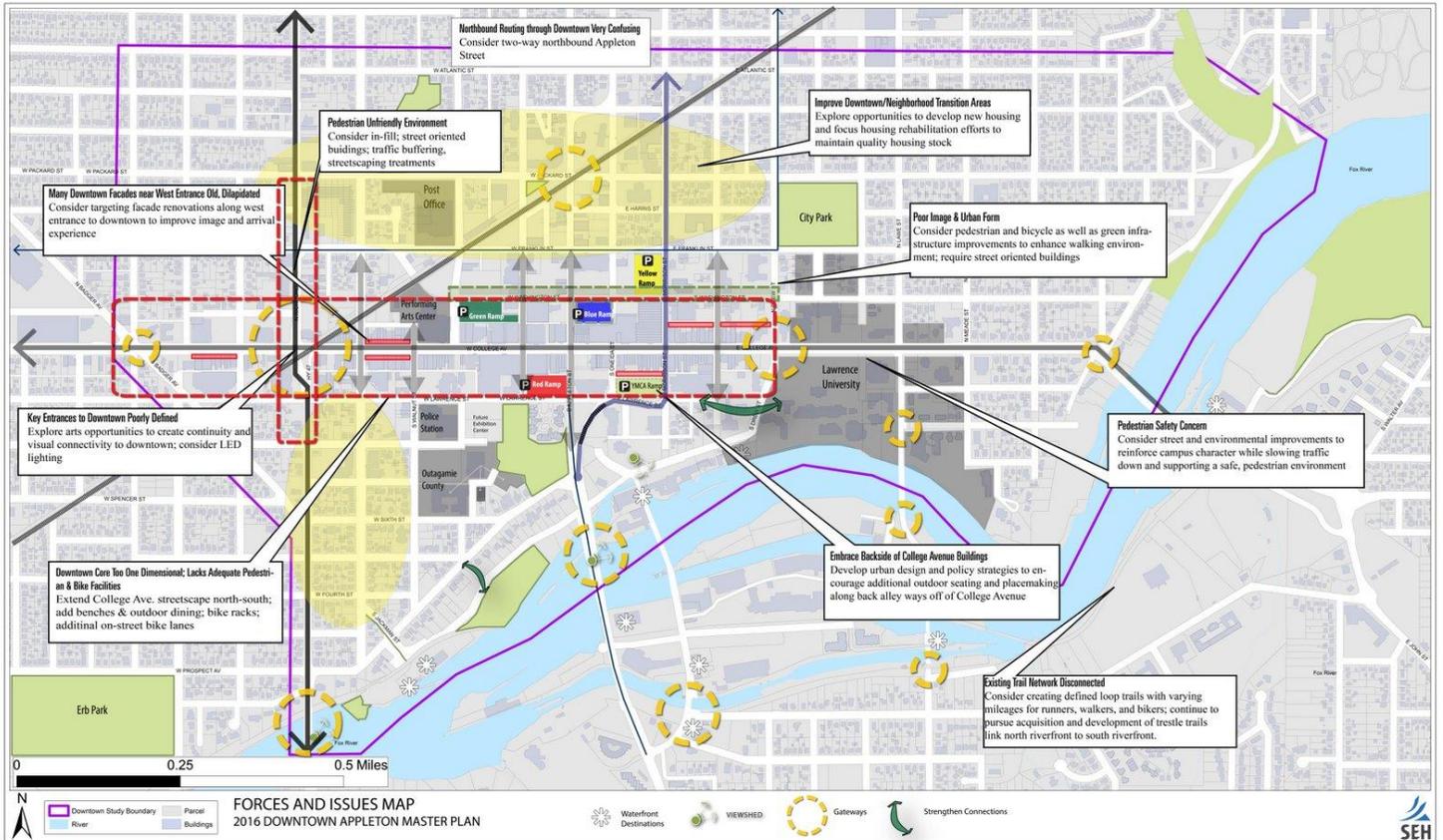
1. The City of Minneapolis's Public Art Policies and Procedures:  
<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-087293.pdf>
2. The City of Madison, WI Public Art Program: <http://www.cityofmadison.com/dpced/planning/public-art/1593>
3. Public Art St. Paul: <http://publicartstpaul.org/about/>
4. Forecast Public Art: <http://forecastpublicart.org/>
5. Grand Forks, ND Arts and Culture Master Plan:  
<http://www.grandforksgov.cm/home/showdocument?id=9834>
6. Louisville, KY Public Art Master Plan:  
<http://creativetime.org/programs/archive/2010/louisville/louisvillemasterplan.pdf>

Recommendations pertaining to downtown creative culture and public art are presented in Section 6 of this report under the Tourism/Arts/Entertainment Initiative. The recommendations presented go beyond a strict focus on physical public art which was the focus of this analysis. A key strategy identified is development of a citywide Arts and Culture Plan.



# Downtown Forces and Issues Diagram

As part of the existing conditions analysis a summary forces and issues diagram illustrating key opportunities and constraints pertaining to downtown was prepared. The diagram was used to provide direction for the May 16-18 design workshop.



## Section 3: Community and Stakeholder Engagement

This section of the report summarizes key issues identified by the general public as well as a variety of individuals and groups which participated in the planning process. Based on the public input received, as well as an analysis of existing conditions and discussion with the Downtown Sub-Committee, a vision statement and guiding principles were developed to guide plan development and implementation. A longer Summary of Community and Stakeholder Engagement results is provided in the Appendices.

### Participation Methods

The foundation for developing the Comprehensive Plan, including Chapter 14, is grounded in the insights provided by the City's residents, as well as those who work and make investments in the community. Understanding how people perceive the City, as well as their hopes and concerns for the future, guide the development of an overall vision for the area. A robust public participation and stakeholder engagement process which generated over 2,000 unique comments and directly engaged over 1,500 people was used to inform the plan. Key issues and priorities were identified based on the results of the following activities:

- **Issues and Opportunities Community Workshops (March 14<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>)**

Two community workshops were held to formally introduce the project and provide participants an opportunity to share views in greater detail. Small groups of participants engaged in discussions concerning issues, opportunities and their vision for the City of Appleton.

- **Appleton Downtown, Incorporated Annual Banquet**

The consultant team prepared a hands on mapping activity which was on display at the March 15<sup>th</sup> 2016 ADI annual banquet. Participants had the opportunity to chat informally with several members of the project team. Ideas were shared verbally, on sticky notes, and using formatted land use game pieces depicting different types of downtown development.

- **Downtown Design Charrette (May 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>)**

A three day design workshop was conducted as a means of engaging key stakeholders and the broader public in focused design-based discussions and exercises to develop consensus around key land use, circulation, place-making, and redevelopment opportunities in the downtown study area and adjacent areas including the Fox River. The workshop included both a walking tour and bicycle tour of downtown and the Fox River.

- **Community Survey**

The purpose of the survey was to obtain a broad level of citizen input regarding community-wide and downtown issues and opportunities.



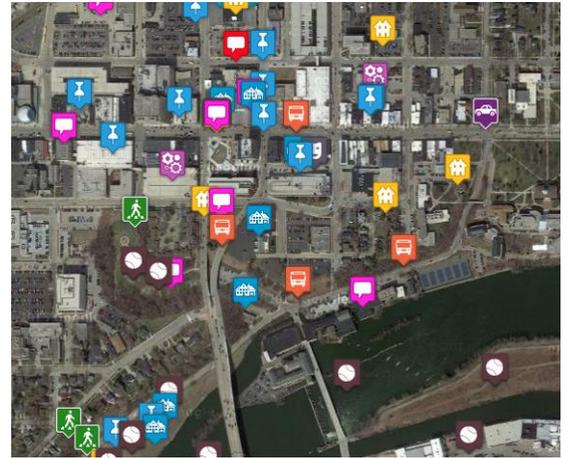
*Figure 20 Participants share ideas at May 16th Downtown Design Charrette*

- **Interactive Website**

Using an interactive website, the project team provided opportunities for 24-7 public input. The website was also used to communicate project status, post draft work products, and solicit input on alternatives.

- **Focus Groups and Key Stakeholder Interviews**

The project team met with key downtown stakeholders and city officials to discuss the current state of the downtown and issues and opportunities looking ahead. These sessions were conducted as small focus groups and individual interviews. Key property and business owners including representatives of the development “delivery system” such as public officials, financiers, developers, property owners, brokers, institutional leaders and others in a round table (focus group) format. The purpose of these discussions was for the team to understand opportunities and constraints to investment in the downtown from the unique perspectives of these individuals and organizations.



*Figure 21 Thousands of individual comments were collected on-line and through a community survey.*

- **Focus Groups and Interviews – Arts, History, Culture and Sustainability**

The project team conducted two focus group meetings with key arts and culture, sustainability and historic preservation community leaders. The purpose of these discussions was to better understand opportunities and constraints to investment in the study area from the unique perspectives of these individuals and organizations.

- **Neighborhood Meetings**

In order to solicit input from neighborhood leaders and residents in and around the downtown study area City staff conducted a meeting in the box exercise with community leaders at the 2016 neighborhood academy training in April. The consultant team also presented an overview of the comprehensive plan update project to the neighborhood academy in May 2016, followed by discussion of key issues and opportunities related to neighborhood issues.

- **Meeting in a Box**

The consultant team prepared a stand-alone public input activity called ‘Meeting in a Box’, which allowed to individual groups to brainstorm ideas for Appleton’s future.

- **Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meetings (CPSC)**

The CPSC oversaw the project and met monthly (10 times). While the CPSC’s purview included updating multiple elements of the City’s Comprehensive Plan, the committee discussed the Downtown Plan element at two of its meetings.

- **Downtown Plan Sub-Committee**

The Downtown Plan Sub-Committee met seven times during Plan development to help guide the process and review and comment on draft concepts. Final Plan recommendations from the Downtown Plan Sub-Committee were recommended for approval to the CPSC.

- **Appleton Parks and Recreation Committee**

The Parks and Recreation Committee met once to review and comment on draft concepts related to downtown and near downtown parks and recreational facilities.

- **Draft Plan House**

An open house was conducted to review and comment on the draft updated Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Plan with community members.

- **Final Plan Open House**

An open house was conducted to review and comment on the draft updated Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Plan with community members.

## Summary of Key Issues Impacting Downtown Appleton

Short summaries of the following key issues impacting downtown are provided below, based on the community engagement activities outlined above:

### Housing

- A variety of different types of housing products (both market and affordable) should be introduced downtown including row houses, pocket neighborhoods, and mid to higher density apartments.
- There is strong interest in maintaining healthy neighborhoods in and adjacent to downtown, including through home repair programs and encouraging more home ownership.
- Housing in fill should be looked at in the context of mixed use including potential public uses.
- Many of the second story units above retail on College Avenue are ripe for housing

### Transportation, Walkability

- The mobility study identified several issues:
  - Lack of pedestrian/bike accommodation on streets leading into and out of downtown
  - Stoplights which can be removed north of College Avenue to improve traffic flow.
  - Northbound routing is very confusing for drivers heading across Oneida Street into downtown.
- Increased traffic on main roadways, such as Memorial Drive and Oneida Street, are of concern to community members.
- Connecting the existing trails and bike lanes along the river and to downtown.
- The impact of the train on surrounding neighborhoods is a concern to residents.

## Parking

- Future parking structures should be mixed use.
- Related to ease of payment, parking should not be majority coin operated meters, only one attendant in one ramp, some retailers think parking perception keeps people away.
- There is not enough parking available downtown and future options should consider mixed-use facilities to maximize development opportunities.
- Parking was mentioned repeatedly as a challenge. Some retailers believe the difficulty/lack-of-convenience around parking keeps people away. They believe new signage would be helpful. They also recommend change machines, credit card payment options, and attendants in ramps who can process payments and give change.

## Grocery Store

- A grocery store should be considered for downtown to provide residents and office workers a convenient option for daily needs. Many residents also recognize there is not sufficient residential density to support a mid to larger format grocer.

## Library

- A renovated or new library should be centrally located downtown. A public library is an anchor institution whose success will enhance the overall liveability of downtown. The library is also a major traffic generator for downtown, and therefore a key economic asset. It attracts 400,000 to 500,000 visitors per year, many of whom patronize local downtown businesses in conjunction with their trip.

## Development & Business Climate

- Concern over distressed TID #3 and potential lack of possible incentives for larger scale redevelopment.
- Faster elimination of condemned/non-occupied properties and quicker repairs to declining infrastructure could assist in attracting new businesses to the City.
- RiverHeath has been a great example of potential development at the river front for multi-use facilities.
- Downtown is on the cusp of greatness. Other organizations can exist in their own world but would like to collaborate more with the City on all levels, including innovation/entrepreneurship.

## Security

- Several people feel security is an issue for shoppers, patrons, visitors as well as shop owners/operators.

## Organization and Marketing

- People are excited about the future of downtown Appleton and feel it is heading in the right direction.
- Business owners and visitors the work ADI is doing related to events, involvement of various shops and working relationship with City.
- Business operators who have been in business for a significant number of years like the way programming has drawn more people into the downtown but not necessarily during their operating hours.



- There is concern about the lack of attraction of more retail where service related businesses or office uses fill retail spaces.
- Retailers love Appleton and love downtown but say it's missing a grocery store and department store.
- The retail environment in general has changed due to the growth of online shopping.

#### Richmond and College Avenue Area

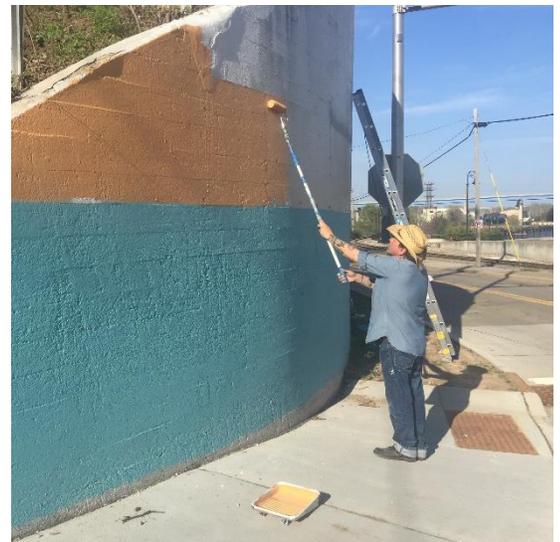
- The physical entrance to downtown and north/south connections leave a poor impression on visitors arriving from the west, north, and south.

#### West College Entertainment Area

- The existing amount of bars on College Avenue causes concern for community members because they would like to see a greater variety of specialty restaurants and coffee shops mixed into the layout of Downtown.

#### Creative Culture and Public Art

- There is strong support for continuing to support a wide variety of both informal and formal entertainment and arts/cultural programs and activities and installations downtown.
- There is an opportunity to do a better job connecting the resources and success of the PAC with the broader arts/culture/music community to make both stronger.
- There is a lack of cultural diversity represented when it comes to planning and delivering culture and arts programming downtown.
- Embrace “the weird” aspects of downtown. For example, the walking tours conducted through the History Museum are very popular. More efforts such as these help people think more creatively about what downtown is and can be in the future. Strive to create other funky, creative activities and events downtown.



*Figure 22 Chad Brady prepares wall for mural installation on Water Street*

#### River, Connectivity, Trails, Parks

- The riverfront is an underdeveloped attraction that could benefit from an improved trail system surrounding the waterways.
- The Ellen Kort Peace Park should be designed for passive recreational, wildlife watching, nature based activities. Also an opportunity to celebrate cultural diversity.
- Dogs should be allowed in parks. A dog park should be located in or near downtown.
- A Riverwalk should be extended along the Fox River.

#### Diversity

- Pro-actively embracing diversity and inclusion is critical to successful arts/culture scene.
- Diversity is becoming more and more central in terms of drawing and retaining diverse employee talent which businesses desire.

### **Senior Center**

- The loss of the Thompson Community Center has created a demand for a new Community Center for the aging baby-boomer population.

### **Small Theater**

- A small independent theater should go in downtown, for hosting films and live performances and creating alternative social gathering space.

### **North of College Avenue**

- The area a few blocks north of downtown between Oneida and State Street is full of concrete surface parking or vacant lots. Many of these blocks seem like great locations for new urban housing. They are walking distance from downtown and could spur additional economic development in an area that now feels ugly and almost abandoned.
- Large swaths of parking make the northern portion of downtown very inhospitable.
- Work to recreate urban fabric and make policies that encourage redevelopment of land while working with current land owners.

### **City Center Plaza**

- Enhancing the City Center Plaza is seen as an opportunity to support a more livable downtown. Incorporating a public market into the existing plaza or as part of the Washington Square redevelopment is seen as an opportunity to help activate the space and provide additional services to the growing number of downtown residents.

### **Fox Cities Exhibition Center & Tourism**

- Leveraging the planned Fox Cities Exhibition Center will create multiple opportunities to strengthen the downtown and the overall visitor experience.

### **Maintenance**

- As downtown continues to attract more residential, hospitality, and office uses maintenance and cleanliness will become more and more important.

## Section 4: Downtown Development Concept

College Avenue, the Fox River, and Lawrence University are surrounded by walkable, pedestrian friendly neighborhoods with interesting shops, parks, places of worship, restaurants, and entertainment venues. Vibrant programming and the emergence of a highly creative and participatory environment for artistic expression and cultural celebration further add to downtown's livability.

This section of the report presents a downtown development concept which builds upon past accomplishments, including successful efforts to maintain a viable commercial district, support a diversified business climate, and develop an arts and entertainment niche. The primary focus of this plan is improving the overall livability of downtown, making the area more desirable for residential investment, which in turn will support additional retail and other commercial uses.

The plan is based upon the priorities identified through extensive public participation efforts, however it is also grounded in realistic market potentials. It builds off of current initiatives and downtown Appleton's unique assets. The following vision statement and guiding principles were developed by the Downtown Sub Committee with input from City staff, ADI and BID board members.

### Downtown Vision Statement

The vision statement describes the desired future state of downtown. It reads:

***“Downtown Appleton is a great American urban neighborhood and employment center with world class arts and entertainment.”***

### Downtown Guiding Principles

As the City, ADI and its partners continue to plan and invest in downtown Appleton, they will embrace the following **guiding principles**:

1. Fully embrace and leverage the diverse arts, cultural, and educational assets of the community
2. Invest in the growth of downtown neighborhoods with diverse housing options and residential amenities
3. Increase connectivity, trails, and recreation opportunities between the downtown, the Fox River, and the region
4. Foster a culture of walking and biking
5. Promote quality development downtown and along the Fox River by embracing the region's industrial and natural heritage
6. Support diverse partnerships which make downtown more attractive for residents and visitors through: activities and events; public art and place making; on-going maintenance; and promotion and marketing
7. Create a safe, welcoming, inclusive and accessible downtown
8. Support downtown as an employment center for the region
9. Continue to support events and entertainment which draw visitors to Downtown Appleton



10. Create a destination Fox Cities Exhibition Center as a unique attraction and community asset
11. Support unique, independent businesses



## Development Priorities

These items are the building blocks which are intended to help achieve the overall vision for downtown Appleton. They are development priorities based on the results of community input as well as the results of the downtown market analysis. It includes a description of retail, commercial, office, and housing needs.

- **Retail/Commercial Development**

Results of the market study suggest limited near term potential for additional retail and commercial space within the downtown study area. As more residential units are added downtown, the demand for retail/commercial development will increase. In the meantime, the focus of retail/commercial development efforts should therefore be on strategically filling existing vacancies to leverage and expand upon downtown's strengths as a commercial location. A targeted list of desirable businesses was developed, as well as block level recommendations (Section 4).

- **City Center Plaza/Public Market**

A key feature of the downtown redevelopment framework is the creation of a linear pedestrian friendly corridor more prominently linking the current library site to College Avenue. Through techniques such as wayfinding, special pavement treatments, and improvements to the northern entrance to City Center Plaza, this Plan anticipates incremental improvements which help visually open up the City Center Plaza and define a special route, or link, between College Avenue and Washington Street. This Plan also envisions creation of a year round public market, either as a stand-alone project, part of a redeveloped Washington Street Square, or incorporated into the existing City Center Plaza. Further analysis is required to determine feasibility of this idea.

- **Office Development**

There is a significant amount of existing office space in downtown Appleton, 95% occupied, and it is anticipated that the demand for additional office space downtown will continue to grow. While areas closer to the river, including the bluff site south of E Lawrence Street, are likely to support a mix of uses including office, this Plan identifies several redevelopment sites suitable for office use north of College Avenue. Stimulating development north of College Avenue is an overall goal of this Plan. Office development, along with new housing development, are both seen as critical success factors for achieving that goal.

- **Residential Development**

Residential development downtown is seen as critically important to the overall success of this Plan. Building off several recent, successful residential developments along the Fox River, this redevelopment framework identifies several potential sites for housing infill north of College Avenue. A summary of the demand by product type over the next five years is provided below:

- **Rental Apartments**

- 385 units, or 77 new units annually for the downtown study area.
- Majority of all future market-rate rental units would carry rents exceeding \$800 monthly.
- Developments using Section 42 Housing Tax Credits can also provide quality housing stock at more modest rent levels. Data from the 2016 Project RUSH study concluded there is "a significant mismatch in our community in the



availability of affordable housing and the ability of individuals and families to pay for such housing.”

- **Townhome/Condominiums**
  - 50 total units over the next five years for the downtown study area.
  - Likely highly concentrated at prices between \$250,000 and \$350,000.
  
- **Single Family**
  - 470 units over the next five years for the single family sector *citywide*.
  - However, given land supply and land price constraints, it is unlikely that the downtown core can support any concentrated development of single family homes.
  - In addition to new housing development, this Plan recognizes the importance of selectively rehabilitating existing housing stock as well. Housing and neighborhood revitalization strategies are explored in more depth within Chapter 5 of the City’s Comprehensive Plan.
  
- **Hospitality Industry**

Hospitality as defined in this report for the City of Appleton includes hotel, banquet, restaurant, bar, and other food or beverage related businesses. Downtown Appleton offers a significant variety of restaurants, night life, meeting venues, activities and hotel rooms to visitors and serves multiple market segments.

## Community Priorities

These items are the quality of life and functional building blocks which are intended to help achieve the overall vision for downtown Appleton. They are priorities which are important ingredients for a successful downtown, including quality of life and functional enhancements. Underlying each of the priorities is the need to provide an environment which is inclusive and welcoming to people of all backgrounds, ages, and abilities.

- **Fox Cities Exhibition Center**

Final design for construction of a 65,000 sq. ft. exhibition center adjacent to Jones Park in downtown Appleton is underway with the goal of reaching substantial completion of the project by late 2017. This new landmark addition to the downtown will strengthen downtown’s hospitality industry by offering flexible event space, providing an outdoor plaza, and redefining Appleton’s skyline, all of which will enhance downtown’s image. By providing a destination south of College Avenue it will also play a critical role helping draw people down into Jones Park and south to the river.
  
- **Balanced Riverfront Revitalization**

Community input sessions identified a clear desire to balance future riverfront development to preserve and expand public access to the river while also supporting additional retail, restaurants, public art and residential development. The mixed use industrial flats is emerging as a unique example of successfully balancing several different types of land uses in a constrained environment. It should be noted that all riverfront development has maintained public access to the water via trails and other amenities.



- Appleton Public Library**

Results of the community survey and public engagement activities indicate strong support for a new or remodeled library downtown. This plan envisions a new or remodeled library as part of a mixed used development downtown, either at the current location or elsewhere within the core downtown area.
- Ellen Kort Peace Park**

This newly designated park is envisioned as a place which celebrates cultural diversity and various forms of public art. There is also broad support for developing the park in a manner which embraces the ecology of the river and celebrates the area's rich history. The Jones Park framework plan designed as part of the May 16-18, 2016 Design Workshop incorporates the site, however it should be noted that a separate stand-alone planning effort will be required to develop a final conceptual plan for Ellen Kort Peace Park.
- Jones Park**

The Jones Park framework plan designed as part of the May 16-18 Design Workshop incorporates the current Jones Park site, however it should be noted that a separate stand along planning effort will be required to develop a final conceptual plan for Jones Park. The proposed plan envisions an amphitheater to support a variety of outdoor performances and events, while also providing opportunities for exercise, play, and informal activities. In November of 2016, the City Council approved the 2017 budget which includes \$1.5 million for the redevelopment of Jones Park.
- A Walkable Downtown**

This plan calls for a variety of sidewalks, bike lanes, trails, and other pedestrian improvements identified in the 2016 Downtown Mobility Plan and the 2016 Trails Master Plan. This plan also identifies redevelopment opportunities and streetscape enhancements which will make downtown more walkable by providing more goods and services within walking distance of where people live.
- Strong Downtown Neighborhoods**

This plan supports the overall vision for a great urban neighborhood by identifying quality of life priorities such as more grocery options downtown, a dog park, an art house cinema, and the importance of maintaining a clean and safe environment. Residential in-fill and housing rehabilitation will contribute to downtown livability.
- Traffic Flow Improvements**

This plan supports the key findings from the 2016 Downtown Mobility Plan for converting Appleton Street and other downtown streets from 1-way to 2-way traffic to restore the street grid downtown and improve walkability.
- Improved Parking**

This plan supports the recommendations of the 2015 Downtown Appleton Parking Study. Furthermore, it identifies two redevelopment opportunities on the site of two parking ramps which are slated to come down within the next several years (Blue Ramp and YMCA Ramp).

- **Enhanced Streetscapes throughout Downtown**

This plan identifies the importance of enhancing the public realm by creating a higher quality streetscape, one which enhances downtown walkability, provides venues for social interaction, supports economic development, and creates community identity.

- **Public Art & Creative Culture**

This plan does not provide prescriptive site specific recommendations for incorporating public art in downtown Appleton. Instead it recommends a separate Arts and Culture Plan be developed and that dependable public and private funds be identified to support cultural and arts oriented events and projects citywide.

- **Lawrence University**

Lawrence University occupies a large portion of the downtown study area, and contributes to a quality urban environment downtown. The Downtown Plan identifies several project opportunities which will require continued open communication with Lawrence University in order to refine and possibly implement, including development of trails along the Fox River in and adjacent to the Lawrence University campus. As part of the stakeholder engagement process the consultant team met with representatives from Lawrence University to discuss campus-related issues.

Future trail plans for the downtown and riverfront were discussed. The University supports efforts to create an interconnected trail network along both sides of the Fox River, including a bike trail between Water Street (near the tennis courts) to the Drew Street Bridge. The trail would run along the existing alley which runs parallel to the river.

The proposed residential/mixed use redevelopment concept for the Heid Music block was discussed. The site appears favorable for a mixed residential development which could also provide ground floor office/commercial space. The university is interested in starting this type of development on the parcel facing College Avenue; however, there is a need to maintain the current parking infrastructure. Longer term, if parking concerns were adequately addressed, the University might consider supporting a development on the north half of the block facing Washington Street.

The future use of the Lawrence Academy of Music building, 100 E Water Street, was discussed. As Jones Park is redeveloped in the future, the City may have an interest in acquiring the building. Currently, the University requires the space to support the Academy's programming. However, long-term the University would consider selling the building if it made financial sense and plans were in place to house the Lawrence Academy of music in an alternative location.



*Figure 23 Lawrence Memorial Chapel is used for a variety of campus and community events and celebrations*

## Downtown Development Plan

Several framework plans were developed to address the priorities described above and to organize Plan recommendations. The frameworks are intended to incorporate many, but not all, of the physical recommendations contained in this study. The policy related recommendations in this report, as well as the key physical recommendations, are addressed in Section 5: Initiatives.

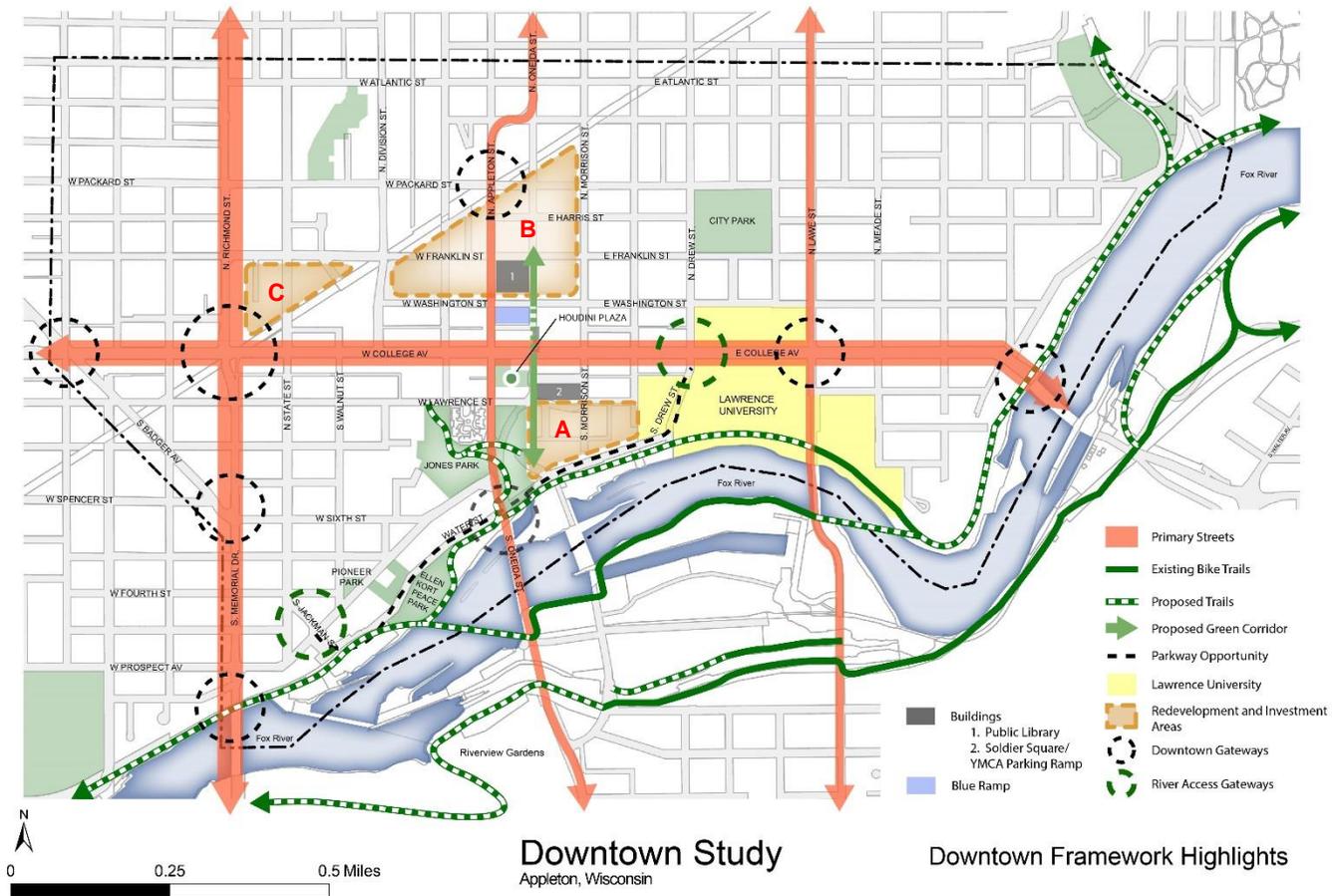
The frameworks include:

- Downtown Framework Highlights – a summary diagram which illustrates several of the key features from the other individual frameworks contained in the plan.
- Mobility Framework: Bike Lanes and Trails – a diagram which incorporates the findings from the 2016 Downtown Mobility Plan and the 2016 Appleton Trails Master Plan.
- Redevelopment Framework – a diagram showing proposed redevelopment projects within the study area.
- Street Type Framework – a diagram which presents a hierarchy of street types for downtown, each with an accompanying set of best practices to guide future streetscape enhancements.
- Access and River Connectivity Framework – a diagram summarizing key strategies for improving access and connectivity to the river from downtown.
- Jones Park Framework – a more detailed plan which focuses on enhancing access and connectivity to the river through a series of parks, trails, plazas, and pedestrian corridors.

## Downtown Framework Highlights

The diagram is intended to underscore several overall Plan recommendations including:

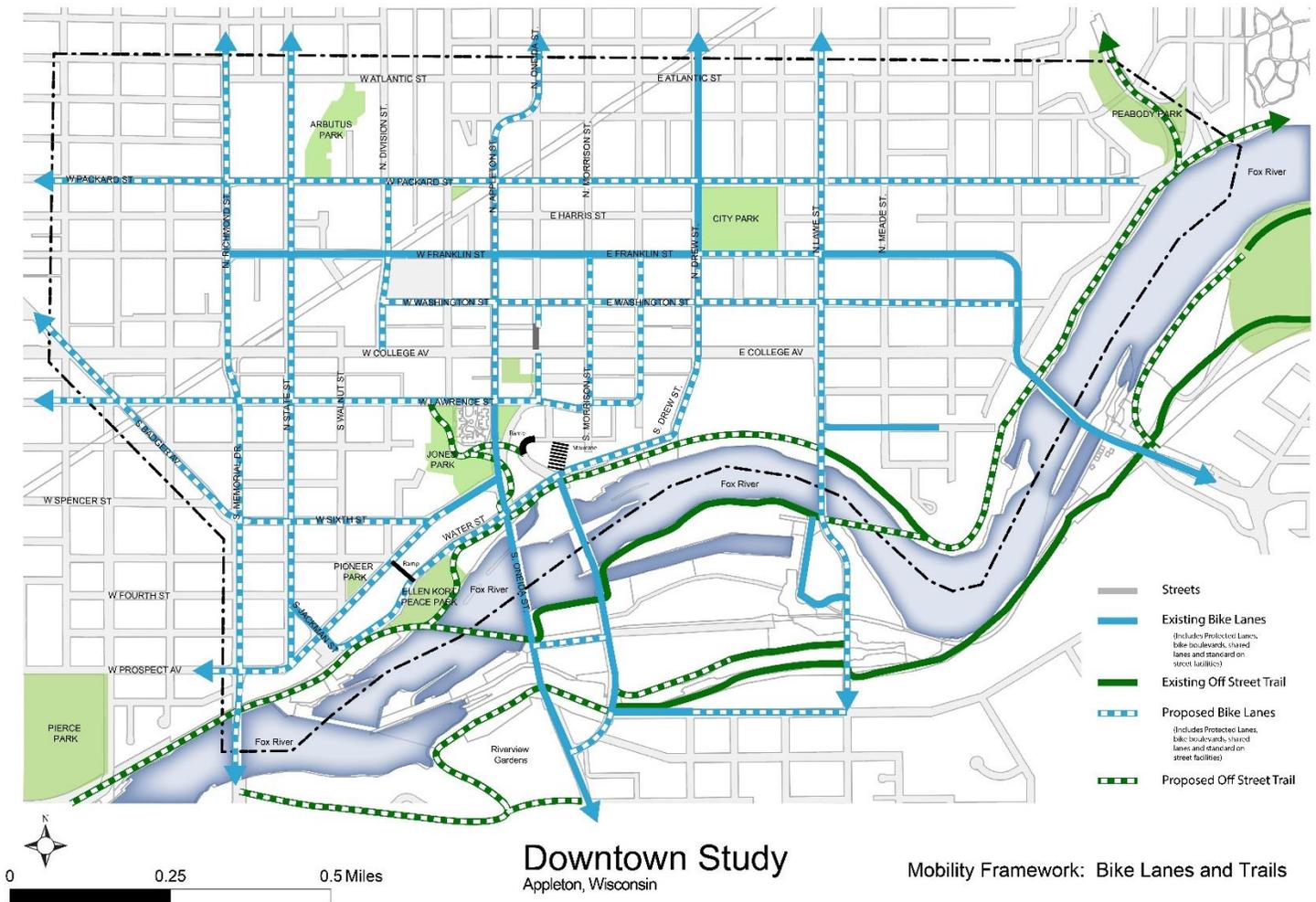
1. The establishment of a hierarchy of Downtown Street typologies, each with their own associated set of streetscape best practices.
2. Existing and proposed trails within and adjacent the study area, with the goal of creating uninterrupted continuous trails along both sides of the river through downtown.
3. A proposed pedestrian oriented corridor consisting of a series of pedestrian passages, sidewalks, ramps and staircases directly linking the neighborhoods north of College Avenue to the river, by way of City Center Plaza, and S. Oneida Street. Incorporated into a re-imagined year round public market inside City Center Plaza, as well as plans for redeveloping Soldier's Square and the bluff site, the corridor would combine to create a destination attraction and draw more residential development downtown.
4. The goal of redevelopment and investment in downtown Appleton within three large targeted zones shown on the diagram below:
  - a. The bluff site (A);
  - b. North of College Avenue (B) and;
  - c. Between the railroad tracks and N. Richmond Street south of W Franklin Street (C).



## Mobility Framework: Bike Lanes and Trails

The Mobility Framework: Bike Lane and Trails highlights the following recommendations:

1. Expansion of the existing bike lane network throughout the downtown study area, effectively linking downtown to the surrounding neighborhoods and beyond.
2. Expansion of the current trail network, to include new priority segments along both sides of the Fox River, creating a continuous, uninterrupted trail network along both sides of the river through the downtown.



## Street Type Framework

The Street Type framework identifies the following street types within the downtown study area:

- Residential Streets
- Community Connectors (scattered commercial)
- Community Connectors (higher density development)
- Urban Core
- Opportunity Streets/Green Corridors

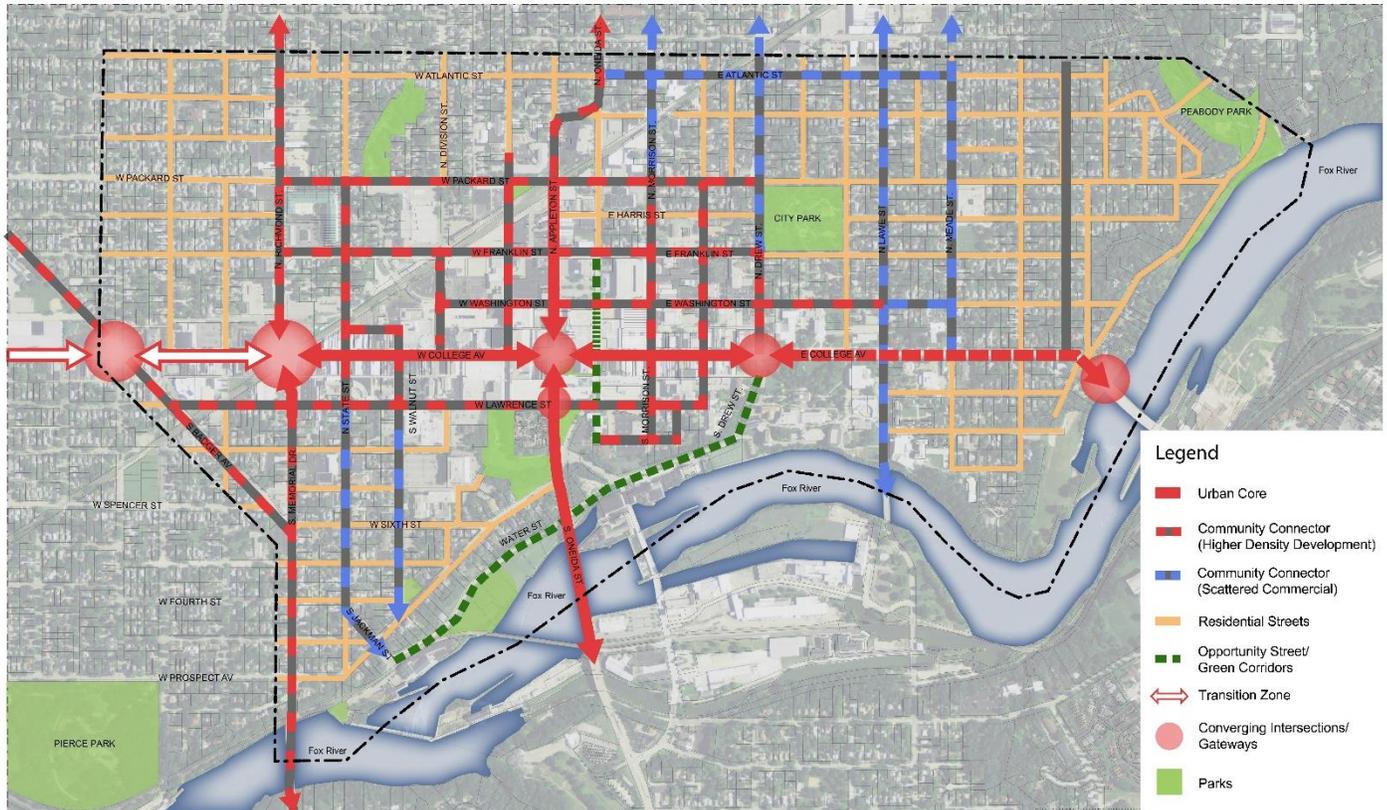


Figure 24 Street Type Framework

**Residential streets** are depicted with a solid orange line on the street type diagram. They carry primarily local traffic from within the neighborhood. Downtown Streets included in this category include most local streets throughout the neighborhoods adjacent to the downtown core.

**Community connectors (scattered commercial)** are depicted with a dashed blue/grey line on the street type diagram. They are located primarily within residential neighborhoods, but also front limited commercial development, often at key intersections. They connect downtown to external destinations throughout the City. They feature single or two story buildings, with sidewalks and some special amenities for demarcating a neighborhood commercial nodes.

Downtown streets in this category include:

- Lawe Street
- Meade Street
- State Street/Jackman Street
- S. Walnut Street
- N. Morrison Street

**Community connectors (higher density development)** are depicted with a red/grey dashed line on the street type diagram. They serve higher density development, including office, commercial, and mid to high density residential and are typically located adjacent to or very near the urban core. They connect pedestrians between the urban core, surrounding neighborhoods, University and riverfront.

Downtown streets in this category include:

- W. Packard Street and E. North Street
- E. and W. Franklin Street
- E. & W. Washington Street
- E. & W. Lawrence Street

**Urban core** streets are depicted with a Solid White/Solid Red/Dashed Red Line on the street type diagram.

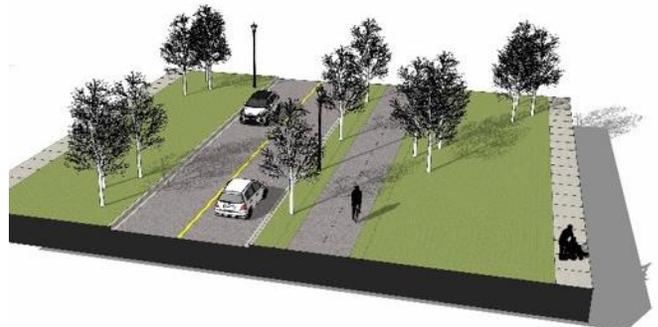
Downtown Streets in this category include:

- College Avenue – shown in three different line styles to reflect the distinct character of the street environment within different zones.
- S. Oneida Street from the bridge to College Avenue, Appleton Street from College Avenue to Packard Street.

### Opportunity Streets/Green Corridors

The street type framework identifies Water Street as an opportunity street and recommends special consideration be given to incorporating green elements and bike and pedestrian accommodation into future design and reconstruction.

The framework identifies another opportunity corridor extending from the intersection of N. Oneida Street and E. Washington Street through City Center Plaza, down S. Oneida Street, and ultimately connecting to the Fox River. This intent of this designation is to create a highly walkable, attractive corridor which provides a direct connection to the river from the heart of downtown.



*Figure 25 Conceptual cross-section of Water Street showing elevated sidepath adjacent roadway*

## Streetscape Typologies

The purpose of the streetscape typologies is to provide direction for future planning and design of Appleton's downtown streetscapes, in particular, the public frontages lying between building facades or front property lines and the curb line. These areas occupy a portion of the street right of way and include public sidewalks, planting areas or tree lawns (terraces), the curb line and streetside parking bay.

The streetscape typologies start to identify and illustrate the application of best practices which support a more walkable and livable downtown environment for residents and visitors alike, while encouraging private sector investment. While not a focus of this section, it is important to note that the design and appearance of the adjacent private property also impacts the pedestrian experience.

## Residential Streets

Residential streetscapes are intended to promote the safety of pedestrians, enhance the value of people's homes, and provide a comfortable walking environment.

### Streetscape Best Practices/Amenities:

- A. 5' min. sidewalk widths, 6' where space allows
- B. Sidewalk separated from curblines 3'-10' provides buffer from traffic; streets without parking bays require a wider strip to compensate for lack of protection afforded by parked cars
- C. 5' wide tree lawn (4' min.)
- D. Regular tree spacing (15' to 25' intervals depending upon species). Large tree canopies create a comfortable walking environment and contribute to the character and charm of the neighborhood
- E. Pedestrian lighting – achieve a pedestrian scale lighting with fixtures at height between 12'-16'; spacing should be determined by desired photometrics

Example streets include the majority of residential streets in downtown Appleton outside the core downtown area.



Figure 26 Example of well-designed and maintained residential streetscape

### Community Connector (Scattered Commercial)

The streetscapes associated with community connectors (scattered commercial) are intended to function as transition zones from residential to more urbanized zones. At commercial nodes they contribute strongly to neighborhood identity, often becoming local hubs where neighbors meet and mingle en route to and from neighborhood serving businesses.

#### Streetscape Best Practices/Amenities:

- A. 6' wide sidewalks
- B. 5' tree lawns (4' min.)
- C. Regular tree spacing (25' to 35' intervals depending on species)
- D. Increased pedestrian lighting signaling transition to urban center
- E. Neighborhood demarcation signage
- F. Awnings on commercial buildings oriented to the street
- G. Enhanced terraces, special lighting, bus stops at neighborhood commercial nodes
- H. Occasional outdoor seating and bike racks at commercial nodes
- I. Strategically located pedestrian/bike wayfinding signage
- J. Pedestrian lighting – achieve a pedestrian scale lighting with fixtures at height between 12'-16'; spacing should be determined by desired photometrics



### Community Connector (Higher Density Development)

The streetscapes associated with community connectors (higher density development) provide a wider mix of amenities than the more residentially focused streetscapes described above. They should be comfortable, safe, interesting places that encourage walking.

#### Streetscape Best Practices/Amenities:

- A. Street furniture (benches, trash receptacles, covered transit stops) concentrated at transit stops, primary building entries, retail/mixed use destinations and restaurants
- B. 7'-10' sidewalk with paved terrace up to storefronts
- C. Sidewalk setback from street for improved pedestrian safety
- D. 5' wide terrace
- E. Regular tree spacing (15' to 25' intervals)
- F. Limited pedestrian/bike wayfinding signage
- G. Bike racks at key destinations/intersections
- H. Places to sit
- I. Covered transit stops
- J. Public art
- K. Pedestrian lighting – achieve a pedestrian scale lighting with fixtures at height between 12'-16'; spacing should be determined by desired photometrics



Figure 27 Community Connector Streetscape Illustration

#### Example Streets:

- Monroe Street, Madison, Wisconsin (not shown)
- Grand Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota (not shown)



Figure 28 Streetscape in Linden Hills neighborhood, Minneapolis

## Urban Core

Urban core streets maintain a high volume of pedestrian amenities such as seating, lighting, plantings, and bicycle infrastructure. Over time, as business, social and traffic conditions evolve, these types of streets should be re-evaluated for enhancements or renovation.

The Urban Core streetscape is your idealistic “Main” street. Sidewalks are wide with additional event space areas. In Appleton, College Avenue between Badger Avenue and Drew Street is a perfect example of an urban core street. College Avenue east of Drew Street reflects a more suburban campus and residential character.



Figure 29 Urban Core Streetscape Illustration

### Best Practices/Amenities:

- A. Regular tree spacing (15' to 25' intervals). Canopy starting at 15' above ground
- B. Street trees in linear planter areas or in tree wells with tree grates
- C. 10-12' sidewalk
- D. Regularly spaced street furniture including benches, waste receptacles
- E. Flowers/special plantings
- F. Pedestrian/bike wayfinding signage
- G. Bollards at key locations for pedestrian safety, and to manage flexibility in programming and use
- H. Interactive information features, informational kiosks
- I. Historical interpretation
- J. Green infrastructure features such as trees, permeable paving, and linear subsurface filtration planters, etc.
- K. Integrated public art/streetscape furnishings
- L. Freestanding public art installations
- M. Covered transit stops
- N. Pedestrian lighting – achieve a pedestrian scale lighting with fixtures at height between 12'-16'; spacing should be determined by desired photometrics
- O. Outdoor dining – should be created through the use of movable furnishings and flexible enclosures. Placement of outdoor dining should accommodate pedestrian walking zone with a minimum of 5' clearance
- P. Tables/chairs – the placement and mix of fixed and movable furniture should be balanced to maximize the ability to provide an optimal environment for programming and socializing

**Example Streets:**

- Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois (not shown)
- Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (not shown)



Figure 30 High quality streetscapes (College Avenue, left, State Street, Madison, Wisconsin, right)

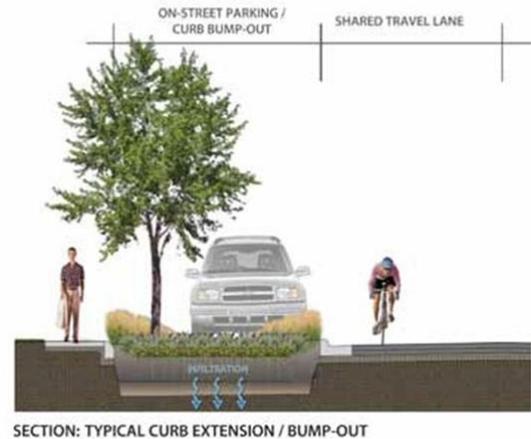
**Green Infrastructure (or Low Impact Development)**

The lack of greenery on streets and alleys and excessive surface parking downtown were identified as areas of concern during the planning process. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), green streets and alleys are created by integrating green infrastructure elements into their design to store, infiltrate, and evapotranspire stormwater. Permeable pavement, bioswales, planter boxes, and trees are among the elements that can be woven into street or alley design

Managing stormwater through the incorporation of green infrastructure also provides an opportunity to create more interesting and comfortable walking environments. Every street reconstruction provides an opportunity to assess the *potential* for incorporating green infrastructure, however it does not always make sense to do so.



Figure 31 Green infrastructure precedent photo and diagram



## Access and River Connectivity Framework

Appleton, like many other cities, is in the process of reorienting its face back to the water. Several current and anticipated projects will provide residents and visitors greater access to the Fox River. Collectively these projects will link downtown, surrounding neighborhoods, and the broader community to a variety of ecological, historical, cultural, recreational, and hospitality destinations along the Fox River.



Figure 33 River Access and Connectivity Framework

Key elements include:

- Green Connections to the River.**  
 These represent primary bicycle and pedestrian paths which would connect downtown destinations and adjacent neighborhoods, including proposed residential areas north of College Avenue, to the Fox River. The framework diagram shows these paths also connecting existing and potential open space and parks.



Figure 34 Jackman Street at W. Water Street. Public art, tasteful lighting, quality materials, landscaping, and easy access combine to create a memorable experience for visitors to the Fox River

2. **A continuous trail network along both sides of the Fox River.** Currently required, and as additional development occurs along the Fox River it is important to maintain public access to the water. The proposed trail network, when combined with on-street bike lanes, creates a series of loops connecting downtown, adjacent neighborhoods, and the river. The trail system would extend from Lutz Park to Vulcan Heritage Park across two train trestles through the Foremost site to Peabody Park. A continuous trail on the southern side of the Fox River would extend from Riverview Gardens to Newberry trail to Telulah Park.
3. **Key River Gateways.** Major river gateways are defined through purposeful use of public art, lighting, landscaping, and other treatments. For example, previous plans identified the potential for a pair of bridge houses at the north terminus of the skyline bridge. More recently, the City, ADI, and private businesses have created a compelling river gateway at the corner of Jackman Street and W. Water Street through a combination of flower plantings, murals, an off street trail, pedestrian walkway, and high quality lighting.
4. **Special Pedestrian Connections.** Special pedestrian connections include existing staircases, as well as proposed connectors.

During the May 16-18, 2016 Design Workshop the consultant team explored the idea of physically linking the heart of downtown Appleton to the Fox River utilizing the concept of a two pronged green corridor. This idea is reflected in the framework above.

The corridor would extend from Ellen Kort Peace Park east along the Fox River before heading in a northeast direction through Rocky Bleier Run into Jones Park. Beneath the current Oneida Street Bridge the corridor would branch in two directions. One branch would continue into Jones Park ultimately connecting to the new Fox Cities Exhibition Center, across E Lawrence Street up S. Superior Street to College Avenue and the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel. The second branch would head north from beneath (and just east of) the Oneida Street bridge, connecting to the proposed Soldier's Square Redevelopment site (YMCA ramp), then extending along S. Oneida Street through the City Center Plaza to the site of the current library.

A third major prong connecting downtown neighborhoods to the river exists from City Park through Lawrence University, down to the Fox River via a combination of designated pedestrian crossings and passages, green spaces, and staircases. It provides an excellent example for replicating elsewhere in the downtown.

## Jones Park Framework

The concept of a two-pronged green corridor linking downtown Appleton to the Fox River was further refined through a conceptual design for Ellen Kort Peace Park, Jones Park, and the Houdini Plaza/Soldier Square area. The framework links downtown's current and proposed public spaces in a holistic manner. The concept design is intended to inform, not replace, future master planning efforts for both parks. The design is based on citizen input at the May 16-18, 2016 Design Workshop, as well as a review of past and current plans for the area.



Key objectives of the framework include:

- Creating linkages from the Fox River into downtown, including through streetscape enhancements on S. Morrison Street.
- Connecting to the adjacent neighborhoods, including through new connections to W. Prospect Avenue.
- Providing spaces for cultural and educational activities, including a performance amphitheater within Jones Park.
- Embracing the Fox River as an ecological asset, including a variety of ecological enhancement demonstration areas.
- Stimulating private development opportunities, through an expanded trail network and Riverwalk in front of the Atlas Mill Building.



Figure 35 Jones Park Framework

Many ideas for enhancing river access and programming were identified through a variety of community engagement activities described earlier in this report. A few of the ideas which came up repeatedly are illustrated through the use of precedent images below. They include:

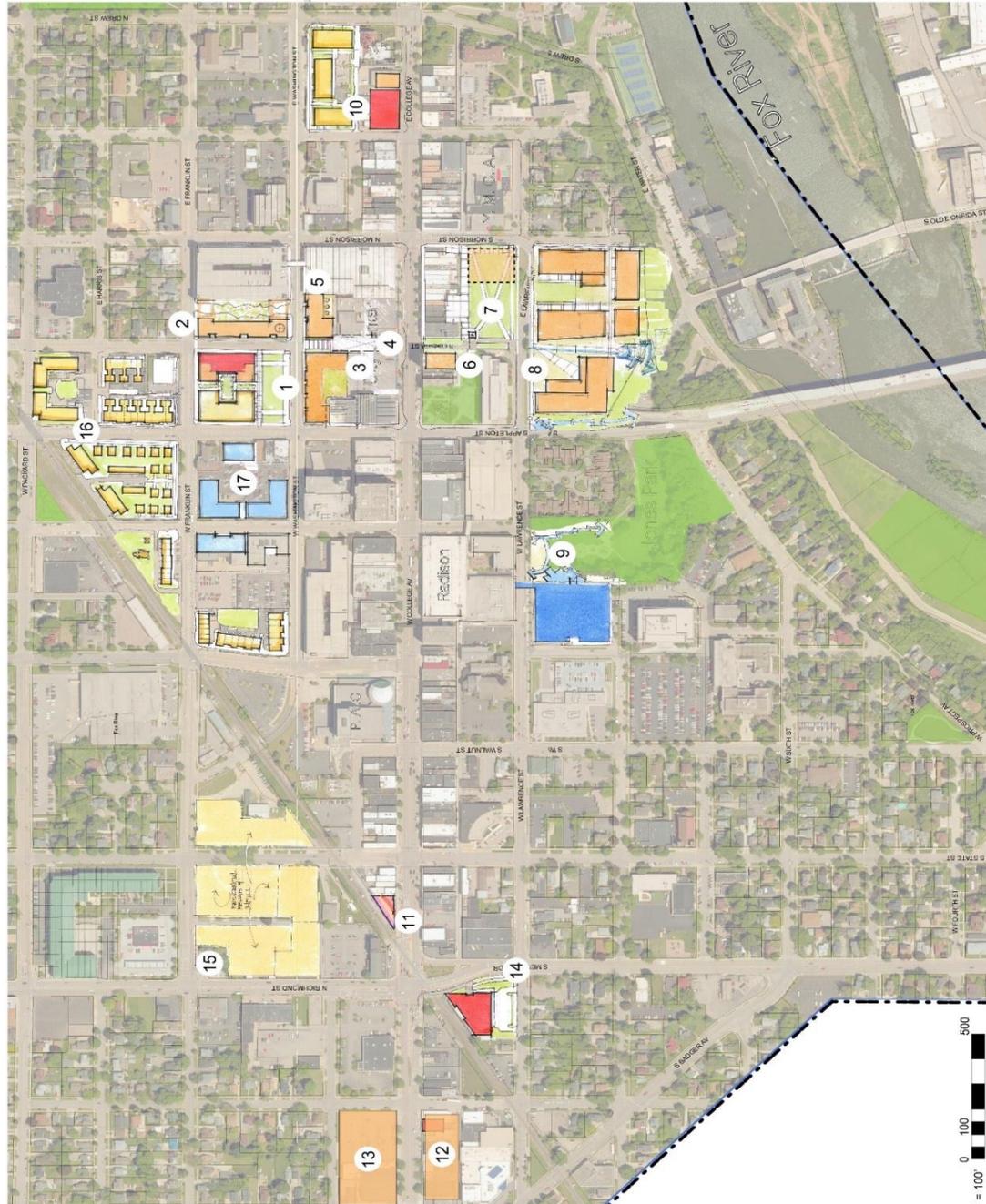
- A riverwalk in front of the Atlas Mill Building
- A gathering place on the river
- A slide, funicular, or other “folly” which could link uplands north of the Fox River down to the river in a fun, playful manner
- Environmental and historical interpretation

- LED lighting of bridges, trails, and other structures along the river
- A variety of boardwalks and piers which allow visitors to touch the water





Figure 36 Fox River related precedent images used during the May 2016 Downtown Design Workshop



- 1 Commercial (Shops, Dining, Services)
- 2 Mixed Use (Office, Commercial, Residential)
- 3 Residential (Stacked Flats, Row Houses, Cottage Homes)
- 4 Professional Office
- 5 Public/Institutional
- 6 Redevelopment of library site into mixed use
- 7 New mixed use transit center w/ green roof
- 8 Commercial, residential, parking, mixed use
- 9 Renovate City Center market arcade
- 10 Residential stacked flats w/ rooftop deck
- 11 Residential conversion of upper floors in Zuelke Bldg.
- 12 Soldiers Square
- 13 Mixed use public, office, residential and parking
- 14 Expo Center w/ elevator access to Jones Park
- 15 Expanded Heid Music & adjacent mixed use residential
- 16 Conversion to artist studios and gateway enhancement
- 17 Building Rehabilitation
- 18 Former Thompson Center Rehab
- 19 Commercial Redevelopment
- 20 Residential Rehab and Infill
- 21 Mix of new Infill Housing Types
- 22 Professional Office



## Downtown Study

Appleton, Wisconsin

## Redevelopment Framework



## Redevelopment Framework

Downtown Appleton's strong retail and office environments, thriving arts and entertainment scene, and proximity to the Fox River, all make the area desirable for building rehabilitation and new development. Seventeen key development sites throughout the downtown area were identified during the planning process. A key feature of this plan is a deliberate shaping of the City with a focus on stimulating development north of College Avenue, where large areas of surface parking currently exist. Rehabilitating existing and adding new housing downtown is also identified as a priority.

### Opportunity Sites (Listed in no particular order)

#### 1. Existing Library Site

This site, north of E. Washington Street between N. Appleton Street and N. Oneida Street, is the site of the current library. The library occupies the northern half of the block, while the southern half of the block is surface parking. The site's close proximity to City Center Plaza, City Hall, and College Avenue make it a high priority location for future development north of College Avenue. If the library were to leave this site (or stay) the development concept envisioned is a three to five story mixed use development including a combination of office, commercial, and residential uses. Potentially, current on-site library parking would need to be accommodated on-street and in the Yellow Ramp.

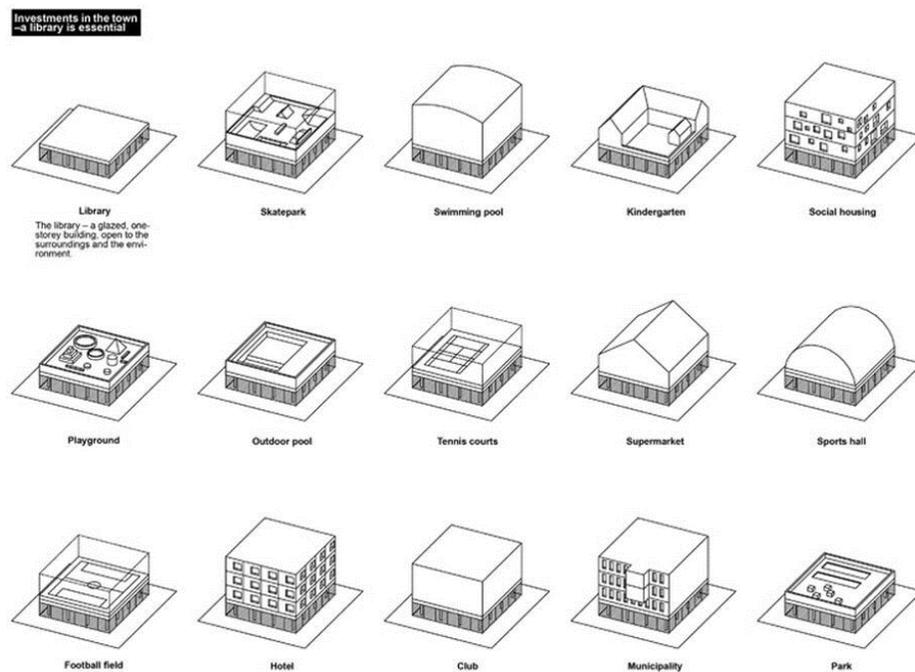


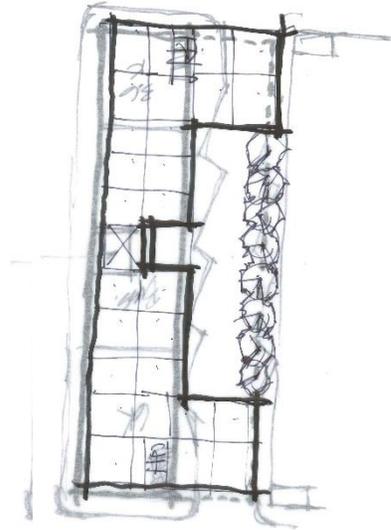
Figure 37 Libraries can be incorporated into a building which incorporates a variety of uses. The Kaukauna Public Library recently moved into a historic, mixed use building which includes professional office space.

## 2. Transit Center

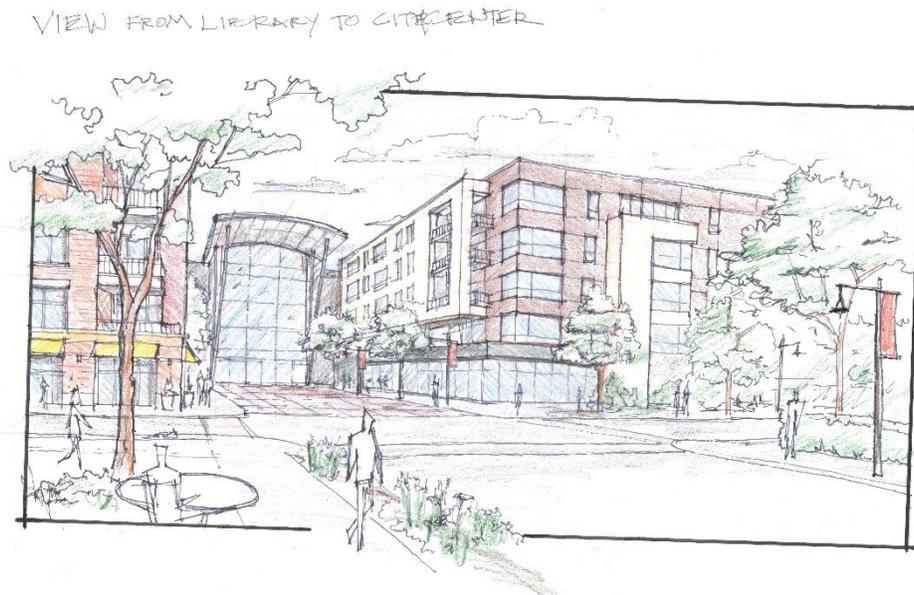
The current transit center site, located between the library and the Yellow Ramp, is also strategically located near a number of key destinations downtown. The concept envisioned for this site is a vertical mixed use building which would maintain the transit center as the primary use on the first floor of the building. The additional 3-4 stories of development over the transit center would include a mix of office and commercial uses. Sound is mitigated by a green deck over the bus loading area and through the use of green screens on the existing parking deck.

## 3. The Blue Ramp

The Blue Ramp parking garage is anticipated to come down by 2019, according to the 2015 Downtown Parking Study. The site is located just south of the library, and adjacent to City Center Plaza. The proposed concept is for a 5-6 story development which would include a mix of office, residential, and ground floor commercial uses that address the green space of the library adding vitality to the street and capitalizing on the investments being made in the area providing a long term value for the community. The perspective drawing below is from the Transit Center and shows a conceptual redevelopment option for the Blue Ramp (right) and Washington Square (left), with City Center Plaza taking on a public market character through targeted renovations.



*Figure 38 Birds eye view of mixed use redevelopment with green roof on top of existing transit center*



*Figure 39 Sketch from May Design Workshop showing new mixed use development concept where Blue Ramp currently exists. View is from transit center looking south.*

#### 4. City Center Plaza

The City Center Plaza has succeeded where other downtown enclosed malls have failed. The current facility has a diverse mix of tenants including a significant number of office professionals, as well as hosting a winter farmer's market. This conceptual plan envisions enhancements to the existing building which would create a unique pedestrian environment within portions of the first floor of the existing structure, especially along the north-south corridor of the building which connects College Avenue to the current library site and Transit Center. The conceptual vision involves increasing the transparency of the structure to promote the visual connectivity to the street and to permit the activity to “spill out” to the streets and engage pedestrians. The planning process identified strong support for a public market concept, which would create another year-round attraction in the heart of downtown.



*Figure 40 Milwaukee's Public Market provides a year-round destination for downtown office workers and visitors to the Historic Third Ward neighborhood. The City Center Plaza, which already hosts a successful winter farm market, might benefit from interior renovations designed to create a public market atmosphere. The public market concept could also be explored in conjunction with redevelopment of Washington Square.*

#### 5. Washington Square

This site is located directly north of City Center Plaza along E. Washington Street across the street from the Transit Center. This conceptual plan envisions a 4-5 story residential apartment development with a rooftop deck and first floor retail or office. By placing new buildings close to street edge, it would create a strong urban/dense pedestrian scale, promoting street level activity. A redesign of the back entrance to City Center Plaza would help bring interior activity outside, create a place for public events and markets while also drawing people into the pedestrian mall. The perspective drawing below is from the current library site and shows redevelopment of the Blue Ramp (right) and Washington

Square (left), with City Center Plaza taking on a public market character through targeted renovations.



Figure 41 Perspective from site of current Appleton Public Library looking south toward back side of City Center Plaza

## 6. Zuelke Building

The historic Zuelke building, completed in 1931, provides commercial office and retail space. At 12 stories, it provides exceptional views of the surrounding City and landscape. Its location in the heart of downtown Appleton is desirable from a residential standpoint. This conceptual plan envisions converting the upper floors of the building into residential uses, however it is recognized that several developers have completed due diligence on renovating the building to residential and have discovered significant cost and construction challenges. Therefore, converting the building to residential may require some degree of public investment and the use of Historic Tax Credits in order to be financially viable.

## 7. Soldier's Square/YMCA Parking Ramp

A mixed use concept would replace a portion of the YMCA parking ramp site with a public plaza, while preserving a portion of the site for a development which might include a mix of parking, office, and commercial uses. The concept illustrated in the perspective drawing below would allow for a combination of flexible outdoor pedestrian zones. Features of the proposed mixed use development could include:

- 4 story mixed use building could include a mix of residential, office, commercial, or parking uses
- Possible arcade with retail shops on ground floor
- Rooftop seating
- Green roof



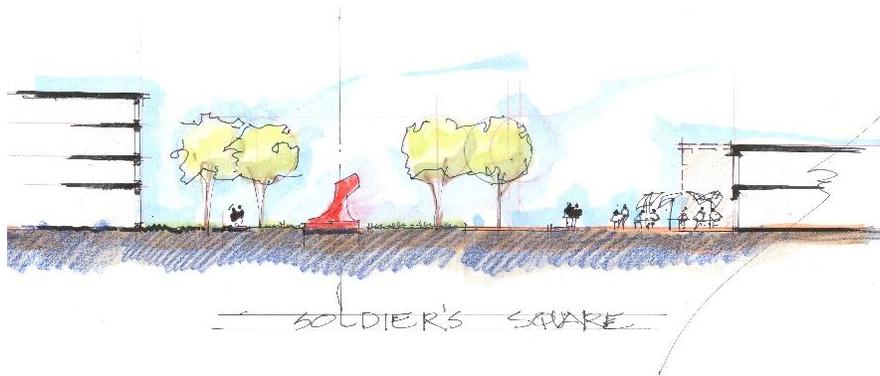
Figure 42 Soldier's Square/YMCA Parking Lot Perspective

The Soldier's Square concept would be designed in a flexible manner to accommodate a mix of daily, weekly, seasonal, and special event uses. For example, the use of retractable bollards at both entrances to S. Oneida Street and Soldier's Square would allow for multiple configurations of pedestrian-only space two of which are described below.



*Figure 43 Perspective looking west down Soldier's Square toward Zuelke Building*

- A two square block pedestrian zone between College Avenue and E. Lawrence Street, bounded by Appleton Street to the west and Morrison Street to the east. Such a configuration, which would include Houdini Plaza, could support larger downtown events such as the farmer's market, music festivals, art festivals, and night markets.



*Figure 45 Cross section view of Soldier's Square with conversion of portion of YMCA ramp into park plaza featuring public sculpture*

- Two pedestrian zones separated by S. Oneida Street which would remain open to traffic. Such a configuration would support two distinct events or programs, if heavy foot traffic between both locations was not a concern.



*Figure 44 Retractable bollards and textured concrete help define temporary pedestrian zones*

## 8. Bluff Site

The bluff site is identified as a desirable redevelopment site, which could include a mix of public, office, residential, and/or parking uses.

## 9. Fox Cities Exhibition Center

Final design for the 65,000 sq. ft. Fox Cities Exhibition Center is underway with a goal of reaching substantial completion by fall 2017. This Plan recognizes the role the Center will play in maintaining and strengthening the economic vibrancy of downtown with an anticipated economic impact of \$6.5 Million annually. Final design elements include:

- 30,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space
- A distinctive 82-foot tall tower with LED lights
- 17,000 sq. ft. of outdoor space at Jones Park
- Views of the park 35 feet below street level



Source: City of Appleton

*Figure 46 Rendering of Fox Cities Exhibition Center*

### 10. 300 Block E. College Avenue

The 300 Block of E. College Avenue is conceptually identified as a site for new multi-family residential development over a mix of commercial/ office space which could serve the needs of existing property owners, including but not limited to Heid Music and Lawrence University. The goal is to fill a housing demand, transition to the small scale neighborhoods and enhance the immediate surroundings with small commercial space to pull foot traffic north of College Avenue. See conceptual site plan and perspective drawing.



Figure 47 The conceptual site plan shows parking behind the proposed development just north of Johnston Street, between N. Durkee Street and N. Drew Street



Figure 48 Perspective of conceptual redevelopment of 300 block of E. College Ave. Vantage point is looking southwest toward the Fox River from the corner of N. Drew Street and E. Washington Street.

**11. 600 Block W. College Avenue**

This site includes a mix of 1-2 story historic buildings located on the north side of the 600 block of W. College Avenue. A few of the buildings are in poor condition, and some of the existing first floor businesses do not maintain regular hours. The block is strategically important because of its high visibility immediately east of the key intersection of W. College Avenue & Richmond Street This area is prime for redevelopment. Street level could be retail, service, and/or hospitality. College Avenue front-facing lots cannot be used for surface parking and continuity of businesses cannot be broken.

**12. 800 Block W. College Avenue**

This site includes a mix of older buildings located on the south side of the 800 block of W. College Avenue. This plan identifies an opportunity for a mixed use redevelopment on the site with residential uses over commercial ground floor.

**13. Former Thompson Center**

The former Thompson Center and adjacent parking provides an opportunity for an in-fill project. While a specific use has not been designated, the site may be a good location for housing due to the close proximity to transit, employment centers, downtown, shopping, daycare, and educational facilities.

**14. Underdeveloped Gateway Parcels**

Parcels on both sides of the street just south of the intersection of S. Memorial Drive and College Avenue are currently underdeveloped, with low rise commercial buildings setback from the street. Taller buildings with no setback from the sidewalk at this key corner would provide a much strong visual sense of arrival for visitors to downtown Appleton. Potential concepts include office with top floor residential. These sites could also provide a good location for an additional downtown hotel.

**15. Residential Rehabilitation and Infill**

This plan envisions removing and replacing blighted homes with a mix of affordable and market rate units. Row houses or clusters of homes could be constructed within this site while preserving well maintained existing houses. The image below shows a recently completed affordable housing development along E. Johnson Street near downtown Madison, Wisconsin.



*Figure 50 Medium density affordable housing development in Madison, Wisconsin*



*Figure 50 Medium density affordable housing development in Madison, Wisconsin*

### 16. Mix of new Infill Housing Types

This conceptual project would strengthen existing mixed residential neighborhood with a mix of new multi-story stacked flat apartment homes, townhomes and a pocket neighborhood of small detached homes and row houses north of Franklin Street and west of N. Oneida Street. The plan identifies a small dog park adjacent the railroad tracks which could serve the broader neighborhood. Significant private interest and investment would be necessary to establish the single family homes. The public good for single family homes is not as compelling as other priority public projects.



Figure 51 Residential Concepts north of W. Franklin Street

### 17. Professional Office

This project could redevelop underutilized surface parking as multi-story multi-building office facilities to support increased professional employment and live-work opportunities.



Figure 52 Mixed use parking structure with liner shops. While mixed use parking structures have been successfully developed in some cities, insufficient market demand has undermined their economic viability in others.

## Block Level Framework

In addition to the redevelopment opportunities described above, a summary of block level conceptual ideas for College Avenue, between Badger Avenue and Drew Street, were prepared based upon field analysis and market study results. One of the keys to on-going success downtown is the ability of the private sector and public sector to work cooperatively together to facilitate the adaptive reuse of existing buildings along College Avenue. All of the conceptual ideas would require further due diligence and market feasibility analysis.

### N. Richmond Street & W Franklin Street to S. Memorial Drive & W. Lawrence Street

#### Conceptual Ideas

- This four block stretch straddles downtown Appleton's key corner and should function as a primary gateway area.
- Use landscaping, public art, better space definition to create a more walkable environment and enhance the image of this important downtown gateway.
- Create a more dramatic entrance to downtown through use of a larger, vertical sculpture or lighting element on the pedestrian island just south of College Avenue.
- Incorporate additional seat walls, fencing, and vegetative screening to provide a visual buffer between the street and surface parking.
- Pursue redevelopment opportunities on the west side of S. Memorial Drive just north of W. Lawrence Street. Explore potential for commercial uses with back access, built up to sidewalk with parking in the rear.
- Consider implementing streetscape recommendations consistent with commercial community connector.



*Figure 53 View looking south from N. Richmond Street across College Avenue*

### 300 EAST (South) SW Corner of Drew Street & College Avenue to Avenue Jewelers



#### Conceptual Ideas

- Use landscaping, public art, better space definition to strengthen path along alley connecting Lawrence University to Durkee Street, YMCA.
- Add additional seating options for face to face conversation and people watching.
- Work with Lawrence University to activate open space.

### 300 EAST (North) History Museum at the Castle to Heid Music



#### Conceptual Ideas

- Encourage continued clustering of arts and music education businesses in this area.
- Add additional outdoor seating options for face to face conversation and people watching.
- Create more deliberate pedestrian path connecting College Avenue through The Art Alley to Washington Street and adjacent neighborhoods.
- Add trees, lighting to create pedestrian path along East Johnston Street connecting west across Durkee to North Morrison Street.
- Add additional murals and other public art along East Johnston Street.
- Assist with the retention and expansion of businesses that are activity generators for Downtown Appleton, including but not limited to Heid Music.
- Pilot a small interactive game table such as outdoor checkers or place for kids to draw with sidewalk chalk.



*Figure 54 Seating arrangements which allow for face to face conversation draw small groups of people together on State Street in Madison, Wisconsin*

### 200 EAST (North) The Fire to Peterson, Berk & Cross



#### Conceptual Ideas

- Explore recommendations to use underutilized window displays for public art or other displays which change regularly.
- Improve public realm through trees, street furnishings, and lighting to create stronger physical connection north and south along Durkee Street to extend retail environment off of College Avenue.
- Install pedestrian oriented wayfinding to guide visitors to river, YMCA, Soldiers Square, other nearby destinations.
- Target façade improvements in this block to elevate its character, strengthening its desirability as a business location.
- Target specific users for vacant retail space, in keeping with, or complementary to existing tenants on the block.

- Seek out office tenants for space above retail on this block. For example, small counseling offices, accountants, attorneys or other single professional or small medical offices could be appropriate targets.

### 200 EAST (South) Lou’s Brews to Gabriel Furniture



#### Conceptual Ideas

- Create pop up places outdoors for small groups to gather, play music, interact.
- Target façade renovation for anchor businesses in this block to improve traffic for everyone.
- Maximize second story uses downtown.
- Target specific users for vacant retail space, in keeping with, or complementary to existing tenants on the block.
- Seek out office tenants for space above retail on this block. Small counseling offices, accountants, attorneys or other single professional or small medical offices would be appropriate targets.

### 100 EAST (South) Kippa Law to Bagelicious



#### Conceptual Ideas

- Add more outdoor seating, public art.
- Pilot a small interactive game table such as outdoor checkers or place for kids to draw with sidewalk chalk.
- Retail recruitment targets for this block should be in keeping with existing tenants, primarily retail/boutique. The vacant space on this block may be a good candidate for the “try it on for 3 months” concept. In cooperation with the building owner, three months would allow the retailer to test the waters in this retail environment without a lengthy commitment, and it would provide a small amount of rent to a landlord in an otherwise empty space, which works to promote the space whether the retailer testing it is successful long term or not.



Figure 55 Chalk on the Town draws visitors to College Avenue

## 100 WEST (South) Zuelke Building to Houdini Plaza

### Conceptual Ideas

- Explore feasibility of adding trees to the streetscape adjacent the Zuelke Building.
- Explore taller infill development retaining existing ground floor uses, such as redevelopment of the Zuelke Building to include residential units on upper floors.



## 100 WEST (North) College Avenue Hoffman/ThedaCare to The Building for the Arts



### Conceptual Ideas

- Pilot a small interactive game table such as outdoor checkers or place for kids to draw with sidewalk chalk.
- Explore the feasibility of the central atrium as a “public market” to better define positive space inside building. Retail recruitment for City Center and reimagined public market will provide opportunities for boutique retail space absorption from the most successful and year-round market vendors. Complementary retail/service opportunities (such as shoe repair or craft supply store) would also be appropriate.
- Strengthen pedestrian path from Washington Street south through plaza across College Avenue, down Oneida Street to Water Street.
- Pursue development opportunity - Blue Ramp/Washington square redevelopment.
- Create more transparency and entryways through front with more individual looking storefronts, and inviting ways to draw people in.



Figure 56 Re-imagined streetscape outside City Center Plaza

### 200 WEST (South) Crazy Sweet to BMO Harris Bank



#### Conceptual Ideas

- Target façade renovation to open up second floor windows across entire block,
- Recruit restaurant to fill vacancy.
- Retail recruitment to fill space in keeping with existing tenants.

### 200 WEST (North) Chase Bank to 222 Building



#### Conceptual Ideas

- Program newly created parklet to increase pedestrian activity on north side of block.
- Target dynamic commercial uses for vacant first floor space in 222 building to pull people in. Other service related business could be attracted to serve the needs of office workers in the building.
- Office space available in 222 building should be marketed to synergistic businesses with current tenants who need prominent space in a dynamic environment.

### 300 WEST (North) CopperLeaf Boutique Hotel to Katsu-Ya



#### Conceptual Ideas

- Recruit additional tourist oriented retail establishments.
- Work with property owners that experience vacancies to brainstorm users and encourage owner to prepare space so it is appealing to more types of tenants. This is important for the entire downtown, not just this block.
- Office space available on this block is significant (30,000 sq. ft.). Securing a large single user for this space would be incredibly impactful. Continue to encourage any potential new office user downtown to absorb existing space if it can be tailored to meet their needs.

## 400 WEST (North) Fox Cities Performing Arts Center

### Conceptual Ideas

- Enhance public realm at corner of College Avenue and Division Street with planters, shade structure, outdoor standing area such as taller bollards to lean on
- Consider a trail behind the PAC connecting the intersection of N Division Street and W. Washington Street to the intersection of W. Johnston Street and N. Walnut Street. The connection would create a safe, alternative east-west connection for bicyclists to access downtown destinations without biking on College Avenue.
- Strengthen connection to neighborhood and future redevelopment recommendations to north through streetscape enhancements.
- Install pop up art installations.

## 300/400 WEST (South) Radisson Paper Valley Hotel to The Bar



### Conceptual Ideas

- Improve street maintenance to reduce amount of trash and cigarette butts on sidewalk.
- Target fine dining restaurant to fill vacancies.
- Incentivize façade renovation and provide property maintenance code enforcement to ensure proper building maintenance.
- Retail space in this block will require collaboration with building owner to reimagine its use, then a proactive recruitment plan for a new tenant.

## 500 WEST (North) Acoa Coffee to Home Pro



### Conceptual Ideas

- Target façade renovations.
- Incentivize redevelopment in this block as properties become available. Consider mixed use to support and maintain contiguous vibrant commercial activity along College Avenue with upper floor residential as market allows.
- Target categories could include:
  - Destination specialty food related home-industry such as home brewing/wine making
  - Food/kitchen incubator with home-made foods specialty store attached (sauces, cupcakes, baked goods, specialty canned foods, cheeses, meats, etc.)
  - Space for cooking classes, or higher capacity cooking school (The Art Institutes – School for Culinary Arts)
  - Specialty store for cooking supplies and equipment

### 500 WEST (South) Victoria's Restaurant to Jack's Pub



#### Conceptual Ideas

- Target several façade renovations.
- Increase lighting and/or security presence to deter negative activity.
- Work with Riverview Gardens to activate the upper floors of their building in this block, potentially with residential units.
- Increase lighting and/or security presence to deter negative activity.

### 600 WEST (North) Muncieez to Good Company



#### Conceptual Ideas

- Develop a plan for redevelopment at western end of block adjacent train tracks.
- Target high quality façade improvements.
- Provide low rent artist studio space to activate block and draw foot traffic.

### 600 WEST (South) Pixel Pro Audio to Insty Prints



#### Conceptual Ideas

- Stimulate in-fill development to create a solid, uninterrupted block face.
- ADI should work with business on this block to help them take advantage of the façade and signage incentives offered by ADI to improve image and enhance attractiveness of block
- As a gateway into downtown, and with addition of a new micro-brewery restaurant there is strong potential for redevelopment to occur.

### 700 WEST (North)



#### Conceptual Ideas

- Enhance the seating area at the northwest corner of N. Richmond Street and W. College Avenue to create a more interesting and comfortable environment.

### 700 WEST (South)



#### Conceptual Ideas

- This block should be targeted with a comprehensive façade plan. Each building has unique character that could be accentuated in a higher quality fashion.

### 800 WEST (North) - Thompson Community Center



#### Conceptual Ideas

- Conduct feasibility study for possible reuse of existing building or demolition.
- If not financially feasible to repurpose the building, it could be acquired, demolished, and marketed as a site for new mixed use development

### 800 WEST (South)



#### Conceptual Ideas

- Blighted properties on this block should be acquired and inspected for possible demolition and redevelopment.
- Possible new uses could include:
  - New commercial on main level with residential on two or three upper levels.
  - Destination Service (computer repair, medical equipment, vision care).
  - This side of the street could use some feasibility analysis for recommended future uses.

### 900 WEST (North)



#### Conceptual Ideas

- This block is good as is.

## 900 WEST (South)



### Conceptual Ideas

- BP station. ESRI Retail Marketplace Profile shows opportunity in gasoline station category so this is a good use in this location. As close as it is to the entrance to downtown, it could use some landscaping and general site improvements.

## Section 5: Initiatives

Appleton has taken a comprehensive planning approach to develop its downtown. The Comprehensive Plan, of which the Downtown Plan is a chapter, has been key to past successes. At the heart of this success lies a very strong partnership which includes the City, ADI, downtown property and business owners, and many other organizations and individuals.

The previous section of the Downtown Plan summarized several physical concepts for downtown Appleton. This section of the Plan presents a set of initiatives which provide an overall strategy for achieving those desired physical changes downtown while also addressing policy priorities identified during the planning process. The goal is to continue the collaborative efforts to achieve the overall vision for downtown:

***“Downtown Appleton is a great American urban neighborhood and employment center with world class arts and entertainment.”***

### Initiatives

Appleton has identified seven initiatives. The order of presentation is not intended to suggest level of priority. They include:

1. Urban Form and Design Initiative – policies and projects to create an identity and improve the appearance of downtown.
2. Tourism/Arts/Entertainment/Education Initiative – policies and projects to develop cultural attractions and promote travel to the downtown.
3. Neighborhood and Residential Development Initiative – policies and projects to foster new residential development and create healthy neighborhoods surrounding the downtown.
4. Downtown Development and Business Retention Initiative – policies and projects to support existing businesses in the downtown and to attract desirable new ones.
5. Mobility and Parking Initiative – policies and projects to provide convenient access to the downtown for all modes of travel.
6. Downtown Management Initiative – policies and programs to ensure that resources are available to continue to advance the vitality of downtown.
7. Public Spaces and Riverfront Initiative – strategies for enhancing the public realm to support strong neighborhoods and the growth of Appleton’s tourism industry, while also strengthening connections between downtown and the riverfront.

# 1 Urban Form & Design Initiative

Downtown is an urban place, but is also the cultural, social, and civic heart of the community. It has an image different from other parts of the city. It is a distinctive place.

The character and the quality of public and private spaces in the downtown should reflect the importance of the district to the community. This character takes in the broad pattern of composition and uses in the district, the urban form of its buildings, the significance of its public buildings and gathering spaces, and streetscape enhancements.

The following strategies are intended to create a downtown physical environment which creates a strong positive impression on visitors and reinforces the unique qualities of downtown Appleton.

## 1.1 Continue development of entry features on major routes into the downtown

Entry features should announce to people that they have arrived in the downtown. These features may be at different scales according to the level of traffic, or whether they are intended for automobile or foot traffic. The primary entries to downtown are located on College Avenue, Richmond Street, Appleton Street, Oneida Street, and Memorial Drive. Signage, landscaping, monuments, lighting, banners, and other design elements may be used to create entry features along these streets and bridges. Smaller signage can be used on other streets entering the downtown.

Bicycle and pedestrian routes entering the downtown should also have entry features signifying arrival at the downtown. The Fox River Corridor, Jones Park, and the trail system proposed for the downtown and riverfront are locations where entry features can be installed. As opportunities become available, such as during street reconstruction, the City should install gateway features at key entry points. In the meantime, this plan provides the following conceptual ideas to be considered:

- A. Partner with local artists to design entry features including at the intersection of College Avenue and Richmond Street.
- B. As opportunities become available, such as during street reconstruction, install gateway features at primary and secondary entries.
- C. Provide entry features along path systems connecting to the downtown.



*Figure 57 Vertical sculpture at key downtown entrances help define the district, and are particularly effective in more urbanized environments where monument signs are not as visible*

## 1.2 Continue to enhance the civic campus south of Lawrence Street

The presence of City of Appleton and Outagamie County offices in the downtown is an important statement of the local government's commitment to maintaining the vitality of the district. Balancing the needs of these operations with other neighborhood concerns has not always been an easy task. A well-defined civic campus will enhance the overall image of downtown while contributing to better neighborhood definition. Future City and County expansion should occur on the existing site and seek to replace surface parking with infill development or structured parking where feasible. The construction of the Fox Cities Exhibition Center provides an excellent near term opportunity to enhance the area.

- A. Continue to redevelop City and County properties to create a campus that relates to and compliments the new Fox Cities Exhibition Center. Incorporate a civic plaza as a component of the Fox Cities Exhibition Center.
- B. Continue to coordinate with Outagamie County on expansion plans within their existing campus footprint.

## 1.3 Implement appropriate streetscaping projects throughout the downtown

Streetscaping on College Avenue has been largely completed. As conditions change, maintaining an exceptional streetscape along College Avenue should be a high priority. Streetscape improvements should also be considered as other streets in the downtown area are upgraded, including Lawrence Street, Appleton Street, and Richmond Street. Improvements should include a focus on lighting to ensure that adequate illumination is provided along paths which connect downtown activity centers, contributing to a sense of safety and enhancing the aesthetic qualities of downtown.

- A. Adopt a menu of preferred best practices for different street types within the downtown.
- B. Utilize the preferred best practices to systematically implement the street streetscape typologies identified in this plan.
- C. Provide continued maintenance and replacement of streetscaping elements.
- D. Identify new streetscape elements to enhance downtown's walkability including pedestrian lighting.
- E. Use lighting to showcase the growing inventory of public art downtown, while contributing to a more interesting environment for walking. Continue to integrate public art into streetscape enhancements downtown.
- F. Integrate stormwater management best practices (also known as low impact development or green infrastructure) into streetscape design when feasible.
- G. Continue supporting private business efforts to create more comfortable outdoor seating and lingering areas downtown.

**1.4 Install sculpture, murals, and other art in public locations throughout the downtown**

City of Appleton, ADI, Creative Downtown Appleton Inc. and its partners should continue to install public art and implement creative placemaking projects throughout the downtown area. Recent successful projects include pocket parks, murals, and traffic control boxes wrapped in original works of art created by local middle school and high school students.



*Figure 58 Movable shrub boxes create a buffer from traffic and noise in Madrid*

**1.5 Continue to encourage quality urban design throughout the downtown through voluntary measures**

Building and site design on private property impact the aesthetics and experience of downtown. High-quality buildings contribute to downtown's sense of place.

- A. Continue to support ADI's façade grant program with BID funds and research additional funding sources to enhance the program.
- B. Promote a set of best practices for business and property owners to have available as a resource to help inform exterior physical improvements.

**1.6 Add additional flexible outdoor space throughout the downtown area**

- A. Identify specific locations and arrangements of outdoor seating and supportive outdoor furnishings which enhance the pedestrian experience.
- B. Review policies in place, identify barriers, and plan to adjust/remove barriers to encourage private businesses to add additional outdoor spaces including but not limited to outdoor seating, decks, patios, rooftop space, and sidewalk cafés.



*Figure 59 Experiential activities such as group drawing attract visitors downtown, including to the Art Alley during Mile of Music No. 4*

## 2 Tourism/Arts/Entertainment/Education Initiative

Tourism and local visitation creates business opportunities in the downtown. Visitors to the community stay in downtown hotels, shop in downtown stores, and eat in downtown restaurants. They help to maintain the district's vitality past normal business hours and on into the evening. Investments such as the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center have helped to increase the flow of tourists to the downtown.

### 2.1 Maintain and strengthen the vitality of the arts and entertainment niche

The arts and entertainment niche includes a variety of both formal and informal establishments and venues throughout a large portion of downtown. The Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, the Fox Cities Building for the Arts, art galleries, Houdini Plaza, The Building for Kids, musical instrument stores, restaurants and drinking establishments all contribute to its success. The Fox Cities Exhibition Center, scheduled to open in fall 2017, will generate additional customer traffic to support these and related businesses.

- A. Continue to partner with the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, Fox Cities Building for the Arts, and other entertainment providers in the downtown.
- B. Consider various models of providing broad municipal support for the creation, installation, and maintenance of public art.
- C. Continue and expand collaborative marketing efforts with other stakeholders which raise awareness of the arts in downtown Appleton.
- D. Strengthen the arts and entertainment district by targeting additional family oriented restaurants to locate downtown.
- E. Construct and program the Fox Cities Exhibition Center.
- F. Continue to keep the outdoor public gathering space needs associated with future development in mind as projects are proposed. Good urban design should support a quality public realm that encourages residents and visitors to stay and linger in the downtown.
- G. Make cleanliness of the district a priority in cooperation with the business owners.

### 2.2 Pursue opportunities to attract more artists and arts-related businesses to the downtown

Cities across the country are fostering their arts communities through programs targeting artists. The most aggressive places offer tax incentives, housing and studio space, and programming to attract customers. While not all of these tools will be available to Appleton, the city, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and the private sector, may explore artist-in-residence programs and downtown loft/studio space for artists. In Appleton, the



*Figure 60 The Torpedo Factory, Alexandria, Virginia, is a popular tourism destination where visitors can interact with artists*

Draw has made an impact on the river and proved there is a very strong market for artist studio space.

- A. Explore the feasibility of creating live/work or studio space for artists. Identify an area within downtown Appleton for possible development of a cluster of artist studio spaces. Consider using the development as an opportunity to address blighted or underutilized properties, and to help create a positive first impression for visitors entering into downtown.
- B. Enhance the organizational framework of Fox Arts Network to better provide mutual support to further Downtown's creative economy.
- C. Collaborate with The Refuge to welcome more artists to downtown.

### 2.3 Create new venues for arts and entertainment activities in the downtown

Large audiences for Appleton's downtown summer concerts in Houdini Plaza and strong turnout for Wednesday night Yoga in City Park are both testaments to the popularity of outdoor venues hosting arts and entertainment activities. As more events are hosted in the downtown and the number of attendees continues to grow, there will be an increased need for a variety of venues to accommodate them. Master planning for Jones Park is underway and will aid in this effort.

- A. Enhance Jones Park as a cultural and entertainment destination including music, dance, and different educational opportunities. Consider an outdoor performance venue such as American Players Theatre to support live performances of all types.

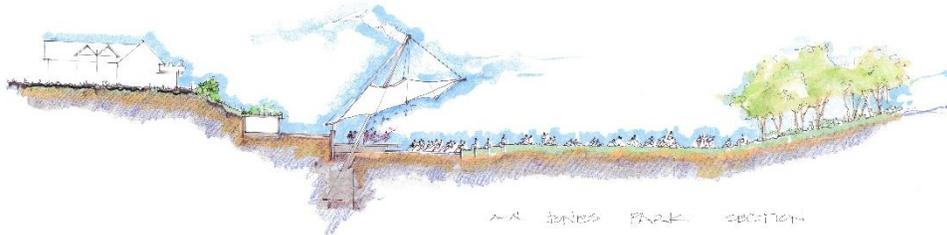


Figure 61 Sketch of proposed amphitheater in Jones Park

- B. Coordinate development of additional downtown performance space with Lawrence University.
- C. Construct a mixed use civic plaza on a portion of the YMCA ramp site when it is taken down.
- D. Develop and implement programs and policies which encourage private businesses to create both formal and informal entertainment venues.
- E. Explore the feasibility of creation of a small theater or an Art House<sup>7</sup> venue which could be used to show movies and host other smaller arts and cultural events and programs downtown.

<sup>7</sup> See <http://arthousebillings.com/about/> for example of an Art House

## 2.4 Continue to support the Fox Cities Exhibition Center as a vital component of the downtown

With the Fox Cities Exhibition Center final design and near term construction underway, proactive steps should be taken to fully maximize this new asset in downtown.

- A. Design the Fox Cities Exhibition Center to enhance connectivity between College Avenue and Jones Park.
- B. Incorporate complimentary uses into a newly designed Jones Park which will leverage the Fox Cities Exhibition Center most effectively, drawing visitors out into the park and downtown Appleton.
- C. Continue to foster dialogue between the hotels, Convention and Visitor's Bureau and the City on issues related to parking, conference attendee feedback and ideas to make the downtown experience as robust as possible for conference attendees.
- D. Develop an Ambassador program to provide visitor experience support between the Fox Cities Exhibition Center and the downtown experience.
- E. Set up cross promotional brainstorming meetings with ADI members and Fox Cities Exhibition Center staff when opened, in an effort to facilitate getting meeting and conference attendees to venture out of the Fox Cities Exhibition Center to experience all of Downtown Appleton.

## 2.5 Foster an arts education focus downtown

- A. Explore the feasibility of a multi-disciplinary arts education facility or collaboration that includes numerous disciplines. For example, collaborate with destination arts downtown (i.e., Heid Music, Pinots Palette, others), Lawrence University, and existing organizations such as Appleton Makerspace.



Figure 62 A comprehensive wayfinding system provides recognizable branding while orienting and directing visitors to downtown and riverfront destinations

## 2.6 Create more Fox River to Downtown tourism opportunities and connections

Create new opportunities to attract residents and visitors to the river by leveraging the proposed Fox River Locks Visitor Center.

- A. Encourage a canoe/kayak rental operation and boat storage on the river.
- B. Construct trailheads along the river to welcome visitors where appropriate and feasible.
- C. Plan, design, and install bike and pedestrian wayfinding to guide visitors to and from the Fox River.
- D. Continue investigating the potential for a bike share or bike rental program.



*Figure 63 Milwaukee Kayak Company operates out of three rail containers, providing a flexible, low cost solution to providing equipment rentals*

## 2.7 Support creation of a new or remodeled library with mixed uses downtown, which will significantly contribute to the arts and culture of downtown Appleton.

Mixed use options include but are not limited to a Senior Center, multi-family housing, and private sector office. A new or remodeled mixed use library will enhance the resident and visitor experience to downtown Appleton. The current library is a major trip generator for downtown Appleton, attracting 400,000 to 500,000 visitors per year many of whom patronize local downtown businesses. However, the current facility no longer meets the needs of a modern library system.



*Figure 64 New libraries are often built as mixed use projects, such as the Willard Square Branch library in Milwaukee, which incorporates housing*

## 2.8 Establish an Arts and Culture Plan for the City

An Arts and Culture Plan is recommended for the entire City, as described in Chapter 8: Agricultural, Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources. The plan would create a shared vision for the future of Appleton's investments in a wide range of public art, educational, and cultural activities and programs. It would help guide both public and private actions and enable a more coordinated strategy to maximize efficiencies and returns on investments. The plan would leverage the City's growing creative economy, strengthen tourism, and contribute to Appleton's high quality of life. Implementing this strategy will require additional discussion, direction, and buy-in. Recommended next steps include:

- A. The City forming a study group to explore alternative models for art and culture planning, inventory assets and opportunities, and survey best practices from other communities.
- B. Consider engaging an outside facilitator or consultant with experience developing similar plans in order to develop a comprehensive strategy, including a governance and management structure for arts and culture development with clear policies and procedures.
- C. Establishing criteria for oversight (review/approval) and ongoing maintenance of public art and cultural programs and activities.
- D. Identifying and securing funding mechanisms.



*Figure 65 In partnership with the City, a newly formed Public Arts Commission, and the Community Foundation, Grand Forks recently completed an Arts and Culture Plan for the City.*

### 3 Neighborhood and Residential Development Initiative

Residential development is critical to the success of downtown. The community envisions a mix of mid-density residential, higher density residential, and mixed-use redevelopment in several locations surrounding the core downtown district as illustrated in the redevelopment framework. In areas adjacent downtown, pockets of attractive older homes will be preserved and rehabilitated, while other areas are identified for redevelopment. Townhomes, pocket neighborhoods, and apartment units will offer a variety of housing options while contributing to the growth of strong downtown neighborhoods. New residents will be served by expanded retail and services, creating an amenity-rich, human scaled environment which is not entirely auto-dependent.



Figure 66 New residential in-fill development alongside existing 1 and 2 story storefronts (Monroe Street, Madison, Wisconsin)

#### 3.1 Encourage mixed-use and mid-density residential redevelopment on under-utilized or marginal sites on the edge of downtown

Additional housing in the downtown area will contribute to extending the hours of activity on downtown streets, and create more customers for downtown businesses. Apart from the riverfront, there has been little new housing in the core area of downtown, however market trends appear to support this type of development currently, as evidenced by the Housing Study (see Appendices).

A large share of the housing which has been recently added in the downtown area has either utilized programs for low- and moderate-income housing or been intended for the elderly. As Appleton moves forward it will need to also provide a substantial amount of market rate housing downtown. These may still target a broad spectrum of buyers and income levels.

Getting the “right product” will be critical both to finding a willing market and gaining community acceptance of higher-density housing and mixed-use development. However, City participation in the form of financial assistance and code changes may still be necessary to help spur this development. Other activities proposed for these areas, such as the open space and connectivity enhancements will help to make the area more desirable for residential infill.

- A. Continue to assess potential strategies, the developments, and appropriate city investment in redevelopment sites.



Figure 67 Green roofs provide an oasis for apartment dwellers

- B. Continue to ensure that redevelopment projects comply with best practices for encouraging a human scale, walkable downtown environment. Pay attention to how buildings are sited in new development areas so they positively contribute to an active street.
- C. Continue to explore shared use policies for residential use of commercial off-street parking lots.
- D. Continue to aggressively seek out and attract developers which have successfully built similar residential products in other markets.
- E. Work to facilitate the development and preservation of a variety of both multi-family and single family housing options downtown. Potential sites for new construction have been identified in the downtown redevelopment framework, primarily north of College Avenue.
  - E.1 Develop a vision and key messaging to market residential opportunities downtown to potential residents as well as developers.
  - E.2 Consider working with a developer to create a pocket neighborhood to bring close to downtown a popular new style of single family homes, featuring small lots with small yards and larger common areas. A site for this type of development has been identified north of College Avenue, just south of the railroad tracks.
  - E.3 Continue to sponsor downtown development tours for targeted developers to highlight recent projects, future plans, and specific opportunity sites.
  - E.4 Explore the feasibility to incent existing landlords who own property above first floor retail spaces on College Avenue to improve the quality and increase the value (and subsequently the rents) of these units. Some incentive may be necessary due to high cost of bringing second floor units up to code, which makes investment cost prohibitive. For example, Tax Increment District financing could be used as a financial incentive for owners of existing buildings in a newly created Tax Increment District to renovate underutilized upper floors into market rate residential rental housing, creating additional housing supply downtown, increased property values, and additional consumers close by to support local businesses.
  - E.5 Continue to encourage adaptive reuse and redevelopment to increase residential density. Opportunities include the Zuelke Building and former Thompson Center block.

### 3.2 Preserve and enhance historic neighborhoods adjacent to downtown

All of the areas surrounding downtown contain some housing which is attractive and helps to create a sense of history within the neighborhood. Even in places where large-scale redevelopment is contemplated, efforts should be made to preserve well preserved and historic homes and to have new construction harmonize with existing neighborhoods.

- A. Identify existing pockets of housing where rehabilitation and preservation efforts should be focused.
- B. Continue to enhance and promote the Historic Central, Old Third Ward, Lawrence-City Park, Peabody Park, and Downtown neighborhoods as desirable, well maintained neighborhoods which are important to the future success of the downtown as a whole.

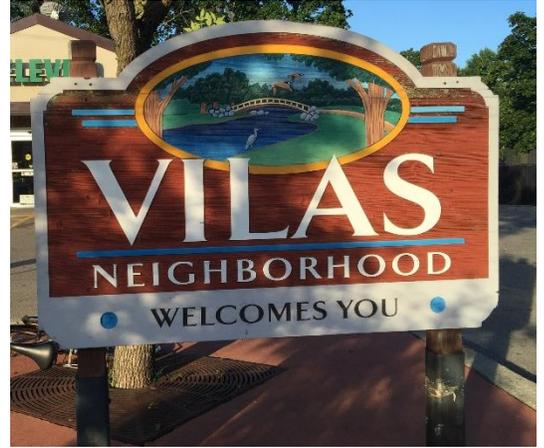


Figure 68 Example of neighborhood identifier signage

### 3.3 Promote development of neighborhood serving businesses and amenities to meet the basic shopping and service needs of downtown and nearby residents

Residents in the neighborhoods in and surrounding downtown do not have convenient access to all neighborhood-level retail and services.

- A. Support the growth of existing grocery providers including but not limited to Jacobs Meat Market, Green Gecko Grocer and Deli, Just Act Natural, Kwik Trip, Kate's Corner Store on the Lawrence University campus, and Riverview Gardens on W. College Avenue.
- B. Evaluate potential for a year-round public market in or adjacent to City Center Plaza.

### 3.4 Evaluate the need to amend the Zoning Code and other tools to facilitate redevelopment in mixed use areas bordering the downtown Central Business District

A majority of the proposed mixed-use areas shown in the updated Future Land Use Map are zoned either CBD Central Business District or C-2 General Commercial District. The CBD district allows for full lot coverage, with no open space and no parking required, and permits building heights up to 200 feet. The C-2 district, on the other hand, establishes a less urban feel than may be desired in these areas, and requires substantial parking which may be difficult to provide on small sites.

- A. Review the existing Zoning Code and set of tools to more easily promote a mix of appropriate development types in and adjacent to downtown, with the goal of transitioning development intensity downward as one moves off of College Avenue toward older historic neighborhoods.
- B. Revise CBD zoning classification to permit first floor dwellings on parcels within the district which do not front College Avenue.

### **3.5 As future housing is added downtown, coordinate efforts with the Appleton Area School District (AASD)**

A major focus of this plan is adding additional housing into the downtown. If successful, these efforts will attract a variety of new residents including but not limited to those with school age children and older adults. Practical steps should be taken to proactively plan for these demographic changes downtown.

- A. Discuss existing and potential school capacities to support additional downtown housing with the AASD.
- B. Explore partnerships between downtown residents and school needs, including mentors and volunteers.
- C. Explore convening an education summit or process to develop mutual goals and objectives among area educational institutions and the City, including but not limited to Appleton Area School District, Lawrence University, and Fox Valley Technical College. This idea was identified as an objective in Chapter 7 Utilities and Community Facilities. Downtown could be one of several topics explored through a summit or other process.

### **3.6 Enhance the image of downtown north of College Avenue**

Much of the area north of College Avenue is dominated by large expanses of surface parking, which undermines the area's walkability and hinders additional residential and commercial development.

- A. Incorporate additional amenities, such as green space and benches, to make the area more attractive to future residential development.
- B. Plan, design, and install a small dog park as identified in the redevelopment framework. A dog park was identified as a priority during the planning process and would provide a desired amenity which downtown residents often find appealing.
- C. Encourage parking structures as development occurs and as is feasible to eliminate surface parking.

### **3.7 Support green energy and sustainable infrastructure development**

Homebuyers are increasingly interested in energy efficient features when shopping for a new home or evaluating rental options. New housing development and rehabilitation of existing housing stock should incorporate energy efficiency and other sustainable features. These efforts not only support downtown livability but can also help the City address air quality issues.

- A. Continue to encourage solar power installations and charging stations on new building construction downtown.
- B. Continue to encourage the incorporation of green roofs into new building construction downtown.
- C. Continue to evaluate potential for installing electric car charging stations at key locations downtown.
- D. Continue to evaluate potential for incorporating solar powered device charging stations into future park and trail developments.

### 3.8 Promote a broad spectrum of residential housing types within the downtown study area.

A multitude of different housing types at various density levels are envisioned for the downtown. For more information on housing demand see the Downtown Market Analysis as located in the Appendix. In the peripheral areas of the downtown study area in existing neighborhoods lower density residential housing will predominately be single-family detached units with the potential for some twin homes and other low density attached homes. The overall density anticipated is between 7-10 units/acre.

As one moves toward the downtown core, medium density residential is anticipated. Known as the “missing middle” appropriate housing types may include duplexes, triplexes, courtyard apartments, townhomes, and multiplexes. Medium density residential in downtown Appleton will likely accommodate a mix of housing types at a density between 20-30 units/acre. Several of these housing types may be particularly relevant in transition areas bordering the core downtown.

Closer to the core downtown area, within 2-3 blocks of College Avenue, higher density residential infill would include apartments, condominium buildings, and senior housing. Overall density would likely exceed 30 units/acre.



Figure 69 "The Missing Middle" refers to a spectrum of housing types which used to be more common in U.S. cities. Promoting these types of housing developments can help increase residential density while maintaining neighborhood character.

### 3.9 Fund and Implement a “Quiet Zone” within the downtown Appleton study area.

In 2016, concurrent with the planning process the City hired a firm to conduct a quiet zone study to evaluate the technical feasibility and cost implications of implementing a quiet zone, which would dramatically reduce the frequency and intensity of train whistles. The study identified four scenarios for implementing a quiet zone based on cost and level of risk reduction. The scenarios ranged from \$457,985 to \$785,785. City Council subsequently voted to move ahead with the quiet zone designation within the downtown study area, which help incentivize additional housing infill by creating a more desirable living environment downtown.

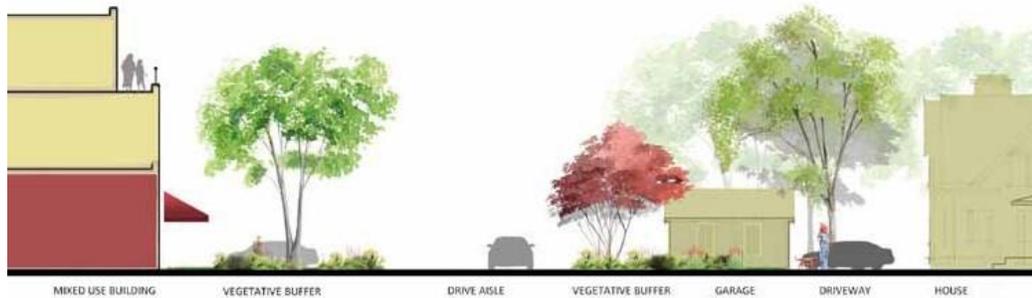
**3.10 Promote well-designed transitional areas between higher density development downtown and lower density development in adjacent, largely single family neighborhoods.**

As additional development occurs downtown, effectively transitioning from higher density development to lower density will become more of an issue. This will be especially the case in downtown areas undergoing redevelopment surrounded by low-scale, one to two-family residential areas that have their own distinct character.

Transition issues include: negatively affecting the overall character of the block, shading of back yards caused by taller adjacent buildings, disruption and degradation of views, loss of privacy, and increases in noise and traffic. One way to approach transitional areas is by establishing a building height maximum (for example, 3-stories) if the development occurs along the fringe of the CBD adjacent a residential area.



*Figure 70 Cross section illustrating new 3-story mixed use development*



*Figure 71 Cross section illustrating the transitional zone between the back side of 3-story development and existing residential and no alley*



*Figure 72 Stepping back upper stories and articulating the rear façade can reduce the overall mass and scale of new development. This is especially important in transitional mixed use*

## 4 Downtown Development and Business Retention Initiative

More and more businesses are finding downtowns highly attractive for both their business and to employees. Younger employees find the downtown setting to be particularly appealing, and all employees enjoy the access to restaurants, services, and entertainment in the downtown. This environment is the unique selling point for downtown. It can be equally appealing to home-grown businesses and to corporations seeking branch sites. Downtown Appleton should be among the top business locations pitched by local and regional economic development agencies.

### 4.1 Sustain and grow the retail niches which have formed downtown

Niche development strategies typically identify marketing and business clustering as high priorities. The efforts of ADI, the City and other organizations should tout the strength of Appleton's downtown retail niches, where shoppers can explore a wide variety of related goods and services. Taking this strategy to the next level, events developed around these clusters can further build the city's reputation and market recognition within one or more related retail categories.

- A. Develop strategies for growing existing niches including aggressively marketing current business clusters. As part of this study several target industries were identified. ADI, the City and its partners should regularly re-evaluate those target industries in order to stay abreast of important trends related to the formation and decline of market niches. .
  - A.1 Identify target retail stores from surrounding areas and create an opportunity for them to "try on" a commercial space for a period of three months by negotiating with the landlord to facilitate this possibility when it is cost effective for both parties.
  - A.2 Create a comprehensive multi-media business recruitment packet and process.
- B. Visit with retailers in space surrounding the vacant space asking those retailers for ideas for complementary or natural fit-type neighbors.
- C. Target the following specialty categories as identified in the Appleton Downtown Market Analysis and Economic Development Strategic Plan:
  - C.1 Art related businesses: music, painting, sculpture, ceramics, dance, photography, and others where customers can get involved in the process of creating, art-related incubator (stained glass, printmaking, candles, sculpture, etc.).
  - C.2 Crafts and craft supplies (quilting store, knitting/yarn store).
  - C.3 Organic grocery, small specialty food store.
- D. Promote continuity of hours among similar business categories.
- E. Proactively seek to concentrate new businesses in areas of downtown where similar and complimentary businesses already exist. Examples from the market study include specialty retail, home furnishings, art-related retail and services.

#### **4.2 Identify and aggressively recruit target industries**

- A. Target mall medical device or medical service labs/clinics: attracting a high-tech work force who appreciates the downtown setting such as dental labs, prosthetic labs, eye care/vision centers, to support the health care cluster existing in the Fox Cities and foster entrepreneurship. This could take place in smaller office nodes, or the main floor of a proposed mixed use development with residential above.
- B. Target training related specialty schools: cosmetology school, cooking school, beer/wine/spirits school, dance schools, foreign language services, financial training centers, other medical related schools or branch campuses for extended learning programs.
- C. Target commercial Arts related businesses: recording studios, photography studios (commercial and consumer), graphic artists, design studios, architects, video production, advertising agencies, high tech gaming/app production.
- D. Target other industries identified in the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan which are compatible with Downtown including but not limited to office, food and beverage, healthcare, retail, and logistics.

#### **4.3 Protect the existing retail blocks on College Avenue**

A pedestrian retail environment can only be successful when there is a critical mass of retail shops which are concentrated geographically, and not broken up by expanses of non-retail uses. This strategy recognizes the importance of preserving three ingredients which have made retail nodes successful: 1) a concentration of retail uses; 2) a pattern of development with small storefronts and frequently-spaced openings; and 3) the historic architecture of the downtown's buildings. These traits must be maintained to secure the future health of downtown retail nodes. Appleton's historic commercial buildings bring a truly unique design feature to the district. Preserving and restoring these buildings should be a priority.

- A. Encourage retail uses within and adjacent to strong retail blocks downtown.
- B. Preserve a pattern of small storefronts with frequent openings to the sidewalk.
- C. Encourage business owners to maintain highly transparent front window facades which create a more interesting browsing environment and support retail clustering.
- D. Encourage property owners and developers to pay close attention to how their buildings "land" on the street. New buildings should be located directly adjacent the sidewalk rather than set back, and should fit within the context of their surroundings.

- E. Encourage property owners and businesses to provide outdoor seating areas, maintain transparent facades, and take other measures to enliven the pedestrian experience adjacent their businesses while not breaking continuity of business activities.



*Figure 73 Outdoor games are an inexpensive way to enliven retail districts*

#### **4.4 Add depth to retail nodes beyond College Avenue by encouraging new businesses on side streets and fronting Soldier's Square**

College Avenue stretches just under one mile from the intersection of Badger Avenue to Drew Street. The primary retail node occurs in the 100 East and 200 East blocks of E. College Avenue. Appleton's best prospect for adding more retailers and broadening its market pull will be to add depth to this node by encouraging retail on side streets, especially Appleton, Oneida, Morrison and Durkee Streets. Additional depth may be created by redeveloping Soldier's Square.

As noted in the plan, Soldier's Square and the conceptual idea for the YMCA ramp location can create a pedestrian oriented street with small shops fronting a new mixed use development (or park plaza) and College Avenue buildings opening their backs to it. Creation of a park on a portion of the YMCA ramp location would allow for much larger event space connecting to Houdini Plaza, resulting in a true downtown central park plaza which could support larger events and induce more customer traffic off of College Avenue, thereby stimulating new business demand.

- A. Encourage retail development along side streets.
- B. Redevelop a portion of Soldier's Square/YMCA parking ramp site into a pedestrian-oriented retail space.
- C. Pursue a public market concept for a portion of City Center Plaza and Washington Square area as shown and discussed in the redevelopment framework.
- D. Consider a mixed use housing redevelopment opportunity at the 300 block of E. College Avenue (north side), as shown and discussed in the redevelopment framework.

#### **4.5 Facilitate and pursue entrepreneurial business development in the downtown**

Downtown's retail and service business community is largely comprised of independent business owners. This is one of its strengths, as it creates a unique environment and these businesses have the flexibility to quickly respond to change. At the same time, it can be difficult for entrepreneurs to start their business, and businesses such as these have a high rate of failure. Addressing these issues by providing education and support to downtown entrepreneurs and small businesses is critical. Partnerships are a great opportunity to provide training programs and business support initiatives around retail businesses. Organizations such as the Venture Center at Fox Valley Technical College,

Senior Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) and the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) fill this role.

Start-up costs are another factor in business formation. New businesses often seek locations with comparatively low rents, and still may face issues due to cash flow. For starting businesses, however, the issue of space may be of less importance than cost and a location with good traffic. As the business gains clientele it can move to another, larger location in the downtown.

- A. Continue working with business development organizations serving the region to provide education and support to retail entrepreneurs.
- B. Consider creation of low-cost retail incubation spaces, including but not limited to within small shops lining the outside of future parking ramps.
- C. Encourage mentoring of new businesses by successful downtown entrepreneurs
- D. Continue to identify and pursue specific strategies to support entrepreneurship among Farmer's Market vendors and artists with downtown studio space including but not limited to The Draw.
- E. Consider allocating more funds for blight elimination in the downtown.
- F. Conduct a feasibility study for additional funding for business recruitment initiatives.
- G. Establish a networking forum for entrepreneurs to make their business sales pitch to property owners with vacant space downtown, with the intent of fostering additional pop up retail opportunities to support newer entrepreneurs.

#### **4.6 Create opportunities for smaller offices and business services to locate downtown, including north of College Avenue**

This plan has endorsed continuation of past initiatives to attract corporate and other office tenants to downtown locations. A variety of other businesses and professionals will cater to the needs of these primary employers. It will be desirable to the downtown to develop locations for these uses in close proximity to their clients. As Appleton also has a strategy of maintaining the integrity of its downtown retail nodes, these business services should be encouraged to locate north of College Avenue.

As with multi-family and mixed use residential redevelopment, the City may spur redevelopment to create these spaces by identifying priority locations for redevelopment, investing in public facilities which may help to spur redevelopment, and providing targeted incentives for key projects.

- A. Develop office building(s) on target block(s) north of College Avenue as shown and discussed in the redevelopment framework. Continue to further explore feasibility including evaluation of available incentives.
- B. City and ADI staff should maintain regular ongoing communication (semi-annually or annually) with downtown office space users as a retention effort, and to determine future needs for additional office space.
- C. In retention visits with corporate tenants elsewhere in the City, continue to be cognizant of the opportunity to ask if an office expansion is pending, and if they would be interested in locating downtown.



#### **4.7 Maintain an environment favorable to larger employers in the downtown**

Downtown benefits from the presence of several companies with a large employee base. These companies occupy a good share of the available space in the downtown area. They help to support downtown and community organizations, and their employees are an important source of customers for downtown restaurants, retailers, and other businesses.

- A. Continue to proactively meet with downtown's larger employers and respond to their needs to remain and expand in the downtown.
- B. Continue to promote downtown as a desirable location for large office-based businesses to locate.
- C. Continue to implement business retention and attraction efforts focused on supporting Downtown as an employment center.
- D. Continue targeting office related uses focusing on local corporate headquarter sites in areas designated for new office development.
- E. Continue to work with large employers to solve employee parking challenges or perceived problems and continue bulk discount rate for ramp permits.

#### **4.8 Support private sector efforts to redevelop and invest in downtown**

- A. Continue to implement the recommendations contained within the City's 2015 Strategic Economic Development Plan in order to streamline and clarify development process.
- B. Organize and/or sponsor small developer "boot camp" to provide newer developers with the training, tools, and networking required to be successful developers in downtown Appleton.
- C. Continue to evaluate incentives to attract, support, and retain businesses. See the Funding Options attachment contained within the Appendix.

#### **4.9 Implement the block level conceptual Ideas contained in Section 4**

The City of Appleton, ADI, downtown property and business owners should work together, where appropriate, to implement the recommendations described in Section 4 of this plan.

## 5 Mobility and Parking Initiative

The mobility and parking initiative is intended to facilitate access to and through the downtown for all forms of transportation, and sufficient, appropriately-located parking in the downtown area. This initiative recognizes the growing importance of bike and pedestrian access, as well as providing greater access to people of all abilities.

### 5.1 Support Access Appleton initiatives through the City and BID

There are a variety of tools and techniques available to improve access to downtown and the riverfront for all. Improving ADA compliance in city-owned facilities is also a priority.

### 5.2 Continue to proactively address real and perceived parking needs as they arise

Whether it is a reality or not, parking is always perceived to be a problem. The issue is further complicated by changes in the downtown or surrounding areas which may increase or decrease demand for parking, or simply shift the demand to another location within the downtown area.

Appleton should work with stakeholders to establish a process for reviewing its parking needs and management practices on a regular basis, to be aware of changing demands and make informed choices for future parking investments.

- A. Implement recommendations from the 2015 Parking Study.
- B. Increase the awareness of the key findings from the recently completed parking study so that business owners and property owners, as well as residents and visitors to downtown are more educated on the parking assets and system options available to them.

### 5.3 Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections to and through the downtown

There has been a growing trend for cities to make access and safety improvements which make travel easier for bicyclists and pedestrians. Appleton has recently developed new plans for multi-modal mobility in and around the downtown including the 2016 Downtown Appleton Mobility Plan and 2016 Appleton Trails Master Plan. The focus of this strategy is to implement the recommendations contained within the recently completed plans, including but not limited to:

- A. Focus on enhancing walkability by taking steps to ensure the pedestrian experience is safe, comfortable, useful, and interesting.
- B. Restore Appleton Street to two-way traffic flow.
- C. Develop a walking and bicycling path in the railroad corridor north of downtown.
- D. Construct the riverwalk along the Fox River and path connections through Jones Park.
- E. Prepare a bicycle and pedestrian map showing on and off-street routes through the downtown.
- F. Provide locations for secure bicycle storage in the downtown.
- G. Provide bike friendly amenities including but not limited to bike racks and fix it stations.
- H. Expand the on-street bike lane network.



- I. Partner with non-profits and business owners to provide education to vehicle drivers, cyclists and pedestrians regarding best practices when utilizing shared space throughout the downtown and citywide.
- J. Continue to strengthen bicycle and pedestrian connections which link adjacent neighborhoods to downtown, the Fox River, and the rest of the City.

**5.4 Implement the recommendations contained in the 2016 Downtown Appleton Mobility Plan**

Several key traffic related recommendations which are most relevant to the core downtown area are listed below:

- A. Converting Appleton Street to two-way traffic flow.
- B. Reconstructing Lawrence Street to accommodate two-way traffic.
- C. Converting several other one-way streets to two-way traffic flow.
- D. Reconstructing the northbound lane of the Oneida Street Bridge between Prospect Avenue and Lawrence Street, which would create a large parcel of land for potential future development.
- E. Reconstructing the Appleton Street/Oneida Street/Pacific Street intersection.
- F. Realignment of Allen Street with new extension of Oneida Street.
- G. Sidewalk additions to address sidewalk connectivity gaps

**5.5 Endorse a system of public transportation centered on downtown**

Appleton and the broader region have a good public transportation system with a transit hub located in the heart of downtown. In addition to the regular bus routes, Appleton began offering a downtown trolley in 2006.

- A. Continue to support public transportation serving the downtown.

**5.6 Plan, design, and implement bike and pedestrian wayfinding signage**

Downtown Appleton’s existing wayfinding signage is largely focused on vehicles, while the pedestrian focused wayfinding program does not adequately illustrate the relationship between downtown and the river. Well-crafted, consistent, pedestrian oriented wayfinding programs not only facilitate mobility but also help tell the story of the community while becoming objects of art themselves.

- A. Plan, design, and install pedestrian oriented directional signage at primary and secondary decision points.



*Figure 74 Trail signage can help orient visitors and highlight key destinations within a community’s park and trail system*

- B. Install destination arrival signs and features that integrate public art into infrastructure.
- C. Update existing fixed downtown maps to show access and connectivity to the river.
- D. Heighten awareness of the “Fox Trot” route.

**5.7 Promote downtown development best practices which encourage walkability**

- A. Evaluate proposed developments against the requirements for walkability (the walk must be safe, useful, interesting, and comfortable).



Source: Wall Street Journal, March 11, 2016

*Figure 75 Detroit's Historic Eastern Market*

## 6 Downtown Management Initiative

Strategies related to ongoing management of the downtown and the revitalization process are grouped within this initiative. While not necessarily as tangible as some of the other strategies in the plan, they are vital to the process of creating a vibrant downtown.

### 6.1 Update the Downtown Plan as initiatives are completed or new opportunities arise

In planning for the future it is impossible to recognize every possible outcome or opportunity. Plans, then, are general guidelines and should be continually re-evaluated in the light of present circumstances. Appleton's organizations with a role in downtown revitalization should continue conducting an annual review to measure progress in implementing the plan, to assess priorities for investment of their resources, and to consider changes which respond to current situations. The entire plan should be completely updated on a ten-year cycle.

- A. Establish a process for reviewing and updating the downtown plan.
- B. Host a "State of the Downtown" session open to the public on an annual basis. Use as an opportunity to grow volunteer base, as well as share information on downtown successes, challenges, and upcoming events and programs. Encourage underrepresented groups which have a stake in downtown to participate and contribute their own ideas.

### 6.2 Uphold support for Appleton Downtown, Inc. and the Business Improvement District

These organizations have been critical to restoring vitality to the downtown. With broad support from property owners, businesses, community organizations, and city government, these organizations have been effective in coordinating the interests of all of these stakeholders. ADI has further served as a leader in implementing the initiatives of the Downtown Plan. These organizations should continue to be recognized for their role in creating a vibrant downtown.

- A. Continue support for ADI and the BID.
- B. Consider amending the City's special events policy to make the process easier for organizations to host events downtown.
- C. Continue to support a cooperative branding process with the City and ADI, and explore collaborative opportunities with other partners, such as the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitor's Bureau, to strengthen the message of downtown being a destination for business and leisure.

### 6.3 Ensure the cleanliness and safety of the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods

Downtown Appleton is perceived by residents to be a clean and safe place. Still, there are areas of concern. Several comments pertained to trash and cigarette butts in a few places in the downtown. Others expressed perceived safety concerns in Jones Park and in downtown neighborhoods. With the construction of the Fox Cities Exhibition Center it will be even more important to maintain a clean, safe environment downtown in order to attract and retain visitors.

- A. Implement plans for Jones Park and the railroad corridor path to address safety concerns.



- B. Continue to enhance the plan aimed at keeping the downtown clean and well maintained.
- C. Develop a neighborhood solid waste collection plan to improve livability for downtown residents.
- D. Continue to support efforts such as the Downtown C.A.R.E collaboration with Riverview Gardens. Identify funding options to expand the daily program to provide more comprehensive maintenance. This innovative collaboration links ServiceWorks job-training participants with opportunities to beautify the downtown.
- E. Continue support for creative ideas to maintain a clean downtown environment, including but not limited to the recently implemented “vote with your butt” containers which encourage smokers to deposit their cigarette butts in the trash.
- F. Continue working cooperatively with Project Rush initiative to address homelessness and explore the need for a downtown drop in center.

**6.4 Continue to explore potential for formation of a Riverfront Business Improvement District (BID)**

- A. Exploration of a BID or other funding mechanism should be done in conjunction with development of an overall plan to address riverfront opportunities.

## 7 Public Spaces and Riverfront Initiative

Public spaces make cities more livable by offering opportunities for exercise, gathering, activities, or simply relaxation. They serve an important role in establishing the downtown as the central social district for the region. They also serve as venues for a wide variety of programming including for events such as the Mile of Music, Christmas Parade, Art Walk, Octoberfest, Art in the Park, among others.

Appleton is preparing to invest in improvements to Jones Park and Ellen Kort Peace Park, as well as several trails in and adjacent to downtown. These improvements should leverage planned private sector investment helping indirectly generate tax base in downtown as well. In addition to larger public spaces, ADI is spearheading the development of smaller public spaces such as pocket parks downtown.

For all public parks and spaces, the City and its partners should continue to ensure they are designed and constructed in a manner which ensures accessibility to people of all abilities. Likewise, these spaces need to be planned and designed with input from people which reflects Appleton's growing diversity.

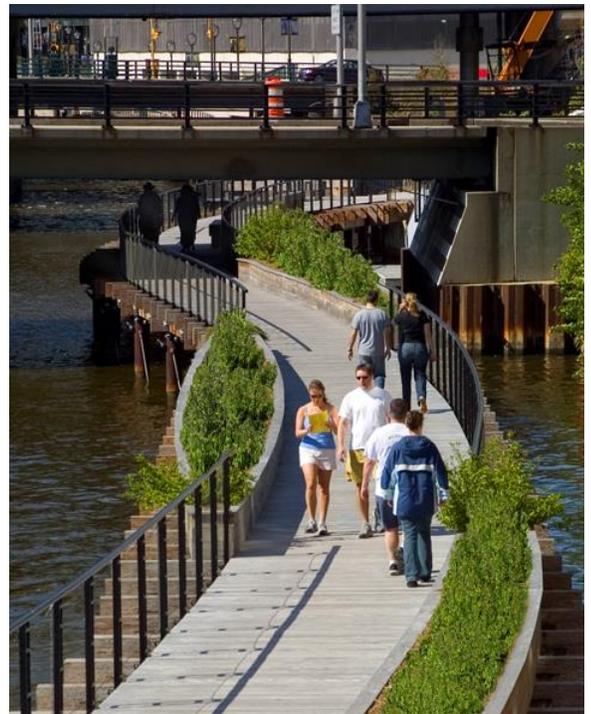
By expanding and enhancing the system of urban parks, plazas, and trails in the downtown, the City will create a unique destination to draw visitors to downtown Appleton and the Fox River, in turn helping support local and regional tourism efforts.

### 7.1 Complete proposed trail segments along the Fox River

Developing a continuous network of connected trails along the Fox River will help support additional downtown housing development and serve as an attraction for residents and tourists alike. The City should continue to aggressively plan and implement the proposed new trail segments identified in the bike lanes and trails mobility framework.

### 7.2 Construct a grand stair case and similar stair and ramp linkages which connect downtown to the river.

A number of pedestrian linkages do exist currently. Looking ahead, the City and its partners should consider use of a “folly” such as a slide, interactive fountain, or a unique connector down to the river. A folly would act as a lure to attract people to the bluff and down to the river, serving as both a connection as well as a tourist destination itself.



*Figure 76 Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward Riverwalk has helped drive residential development and attract visitors to the Milwaukee River. Photo credit: Ellen Pizer*

**7.3 Consider developing a civic plaza on a portion of the YMCA ramp site when it comes down.**

A civic plaza would allow for connectivity to Houdini Plaza to accommodate large community events. The area can be repurposed as a mixed use area, with complementary development which supports the civic plaza concept.

**7.4 Plan, design, and construct improvements to Jones Park and Ellen Kort Peace Park**

It is anticipated that future improvements to Jones Park will be designed in a manner which fully embraces the Fox Cities Exhibition Center while also strengthening connectivity between downtown Appleton and the river. While a preliminary plan for the area was developed during the downtown planning process, the City intends to conduct a formal park planning process in order to identify a preferred vision and design for the park. Future planning should leverage opportunities to integrate with the proposed redevelopment on the bluff site, as well as the Fox Cities Exhibition Center.

It is anticipated that Ellen Korte Peace Park will emphasize nature, art, and culture over active play areas or highly formal programming. While a preliminary conceptual plan for the area was developed during the downtown planning process, the City intends to conduct a formal park planning process in 2017 in order to identify a preferred vision and design for the park.

**7.5 Continue to support public and private efforts to identify and develop pocket parks, alleyways, and other pedestrian opportunity zones off of College Avenue.**

In addition to promoting a more walkable environment downtown through streetscape enhancements, the City and its partners should continue to support efforts to make downtowns alleyways more interesting, safe, comfortable, and useful.

**7.6 Promote the identity of the riverfront through creative use of lighting**

As the riverfront area continues to develop as a neighborhood and as a destination attraction within the City, lighting can be a powerful tool to create a unique identity and help brand the area. The Fox River is highly visible from each of Appleton's bridges and through the use of lighting the bridges can become important gateway features which welcome and guide people down to the river.

- A. Investigate successful examples of lighting used to define riverfront districts, such as Providence, Rhode Island, and Paris, France.



*Figure 77 Art-inspired alleyways attract tourists in San Francisco's Mission District*

**7.7 Support creation of a new or remodeled library downtown providing space for contemplation, creation, and collaboration.**

This will significantly contribute to the quantity and quality of public spaces in downtown Appleton. Public libraries are essential hubs for inclusive civic engagement. A new or

remodeled library in downtown Appleton will bring visitors to the downtown and provide lifelong learning, engagement and interaction for the entire region.

- A. Strengthen physical connection to current library site through proposed green corridor enhancements identified in the Access and Connectivity framework.

#### **7.8 Continue both public and private redevelopment along the Fox River Corridor**

The Fox River is one of the region's outstanding natural amenities. Recent renovation and redevelopment projects along its shores have met with a great deal of success. The community supports a mix of private and public uses along the river. In the public realm, the community looks forward to riverfront enhancements including the development of several new trails along the Fox River. Private redevelopment is anticipated on former industrial properties along the river.

- A. Encourage continued public/private investment to redevelop industrial sites along the river into residential uses and neighborhood serving retail and restaurants.
- B. Seek stronger integration between Chapter 14: Downtown Plan and Chapter 13: Fox River Corridor Plan. Considering the geographic proximity to downtown, for the next Downtown Plan update, consider adding a portion of the Fox River into the Downtown Planning study area and treat it as a special district.
- C. Continue to ensure that new development along the riverfront include continuous, uninterrupted public access to the water including a mix of trails, parks, open space, and publically accessible private areas such as restaurant decks or patios.

## Section 6: Implementation

The Downtown Plan provides a long-term vision for success. The initiatives and related strategies create an overarching framework for plan implementation. This section of the report provides more detail in terms of how those strategies can be implemented. It includes the following subsections:

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Implementation Matrix
- Funding Options
- Performance Benchmarks

### Roles and Responsibilities

Plan implementation will require continued collaboration among the City, the Appleton Redevelopment Authority (ARA), Appleton Downtown Inc. (ADI), the Business Improvement District (BID), property owners, business owners, downtown residents, and volunteers. The primary roles and responsibilities of the City and ADI are described below.

#### **The City of Appleton (including the ARA)**

- Coordinate major redevelopment efforts.
- Plan, design, and construct major infrastructure improvements.
- Provide financial incentives for larger redevelopment and rehabilitation projects.
- Work with ADI to identify barriers to downtown business development and public realm enhancements, as well as strategies to overcome them.
- Continue to coordinate regular business retention and expansion visits with large downtown employers.
- Continue to identify funding sources for projects.

#### **Appleton Downtown Inc., Creative Downtown Appleton Inc., and the Business Improvement District**

- Coordinate downtown programming, promotions, and events.
- Create and distribute downtown marketing materials to support vibrant programming and attract desirable businesses.
- Plan, design, and construct low-cost placemaking improvements (such as parklets, pop-ups, murals, etc...).
- Provide façade enhancement and other smaller grant programs to stimulate private investment to enhance existing buildings.
- Work with the City to identify barriers to downtown business development and public realm enhancements, as well as strategies to overcome them.
- Prepare grant applications and solicit private funding to support the mission of ADI.
- Advocate for downtown businesses and projects which support them.
- Conduct business recruitment calls to assist property owners in tenant attraction. Support with business recruitment grant funding.

## Implementation Matrix

A matrix was developed to guide plan implementation. For each strategy listed in the plan, a measure of success and the key organizations responsible for executing the strategy are identified.

Strategy	Measurement	Organization(s)
<b>Urban Form &amp; Design Initiative</b>		
Continue development of entry features on major routes into the downtown	Richmond and College Avenue gateway transformed into artistic landmark	City of Appleton, Appleton Downtown, Inc. (ADI), Downtown Business Improvement District (BID)
Continue to enhance the civic campus south of Lawrence Street	Project implementation reflects a unified approach	Outagamie County, City of Appleton
Implement appropriate streetscaping projects throughout the downtown	Streetscape enhancements implemented on E. Lawrence St.	City of Appleton, ADI, BID
Install sculpture, murals, and other art in public locations throughout the downtown	Number, type of installations	City, ADI, other arts organizations including but not limited to Sculpture Valley, Property owners
Continue to encourage quality urban design throughout the downtown through voluntary measures	Number of façade renovations	ADI, City of Appleton
Add additional flexible outdoor space throughout the downtown area	Number of outdoor space projects	ADI, City of Appleton, Property owners
<b>Tourism/Arts/Entertainment/Education Initiative</b>		
Maintain and strengthen the vitality of the arts and entertainment niche	Continued success of existing venues	City of Appleton, ADI, Fox Cities CVB, Appleton Art Center, Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, Property owners
Pursue opportunities to attract more artists and arts-related businesses to the downtown	Establish strategy for arts/artist recruitment	ADI, Appleton Arts Center, Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, Property owners
Create new venues for arts and entertainment activities in the downtown	Construction of Soldier's Square Plaza and new stage in Jones Park	City of Appleton, ADI, Fox Cities CVB, Appleton Art Center, Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, Property owners

Strategy	Measurement	Organization(s)
Continue to support the Fox Cities Exhibition Center as a vital component of the downtown	Construction and opening in late 2017; Visitation rates	City of Appleton, ADI, Fox Cities CVB, Appleton Redevelopment Authority Exhibition Center Advisory Committee
Foster an arts education focus downtown	Number of art education related businesses and classes	City of Appleton, ADI, Appleton Art Center, Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, and other Art NGOs
Create more Fox River to Downtown tourism opportunities and connections	Number, type of publically accessible connections to river	City of Appleton, WDNR, Fox Cities CVB, Fox River Navigational System Authority (FRSNA)
Support creation of a new or remodeled library with mixed uses downtown, which will significantly contribute to the arts and culture of downtown Appleton	Construction of new or remodeled library	City of Appleton, Library Board, Friends of the Library, Private Sector, Property owners
Establish an Arts and Culture Plan for the City	Plan completed	City of Appleton, ADI
<b>Neighborhood and Residential Development Initiative</b>		
Encourage mixed-use and mid-density residential redevelopment on under-utilized or marginal sites on the edge of downtown	Redevelopment is occurring on targeted sites	City of Appleton, Private Developers, WDNR
Preserve and enhance historic neighborhoods adjacent to downtown	Neighborhood vitality preserved	City of Appleton Neighborhood organizations, Property owners, Outagamie County
Promote development of neighborhood serving businesses and amenities to meet the basic shopping and service needs of downtown and nearby residents	Redevelopment in the Richmond Street corridor	City of Appleton, Richmond Street businesses, Private developers
Evaluate the need to amend the Zoning Code and other tools to facilitate redevelopment in mixed use areas bordering the downtown Central Business District	Zoning Code is amended	City of Appleton
As future housing is added downtown, coordinate efforts with the Appleton Area School District (AASD)	Coordination meeting(s) with AASD	City of Appleton, AASD
Enhance the image of downtown north of College Avenue	Amenities Added	City of Appleton, Private Developers



Strategy	Measurement	Organization(s)
Support green energy and sustainable infrastructure development	New Renewable Energy Installations	City of Appleton, Private Developers and Building Owners
Promote a broad spectrum of residential housing types within the downtown study area.	New Housing Types Constructed	City of Appleton, Private Developers
Fund and Implement a “Quiet Zone” within the downtown Appleton study area.	Quiet Zone Established	City of Appleton
Promote well-designed transitional areas between higher density development downtown and lower density development in adjacent, largely single family neighborhoods.	Compatible Development within Transition Zones	City of Appleton, Private Developers
<b>Downtown Development and Business Retention Initiative</b>		
Sustain and grow the retail niches which have formed downtown	Retail niches grow in strength	ADI, City, College Ave. businesses
Identify and aggressively recruit target industries	Target industries opened downtown	ADI, City of Appleton, Fox Cities Regional Partnership
Protect the existing retail blocks on College Avenue	Retail remains the dominant use	City of Appleton Appleton Downtown, Inc. Property owners
Add depth to retail nodes beyond College Avenue by encouraging new businesses on side streets and fronting Soldier’s Square	New Retail Businesses Established off of College Avenue	City of Appleton, YMCA ADI, Private Developers
Facilitate and pursue entrepreneurial business development in the downtown	New initiatives for entrepreneurs	City of Appleton, ADI, Private developers,
Create opportunities for smaller offices and business services to locate downtown, including north of College Avenue	Redevelopment of properties in the mixed-use area	City of Appleton, Private developers, WEDC
Maintain an environment favorable to larger employers in the downtown	Regular meetings with large companies	City of Appleton, ADI, Property Owners
Support private sector efforts to redevelop and invest in downtown	Property valuation within study area	City of Appleton, ADI, Private Sector, Appleton Redevelopment Authority (ARA)
Implement the block level conceptual ideas contained in Section 4	Number of recommendations acted upon	City of Appleton, ADI, Private Sector



Strategy	Measurement	Organization(s)
<b>Mobility and Parking Initiative</b>		
Support Access Appleton initiatives through the City and BID	Growth in accessible businesses downtown	City of Appleton, ADI
Continue to proactively address real and perceived parking needs as they arise	Parking analysis process is identified	City of Appleton, ADI
Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections to and through the downtown	Recommended facilities are constructed	City of Appleton, Private Developers
Implement the recommendations contained in the 2016 Downtown Appleton Mobility Plan	Recommendations implemented	City of Appleton
Endorse a system of public transportation centered on downtown	Maintain or increase current levels of service	ValleyTransit City of Appleton, ADI
Plan, design, and implement bike and pedestrian wayfinding signage	Signage installed	City of Appleton, ADI
Promote downtown development best practices which encourage walkability	Increase in walkscore	City of Appleton, ADI, Private Developers
<b>Downtown Management Initiative</b>		
Update the Downtown Plan as initiatives are completed or new opportunities arise	Annual review process is established	City of Appleton, ADI
Uphold support for Appleton Downtown, Inc. and the Business Improvement District	ADI and the BID are maintained or expanded	ADI, BID, City of Appleton , Business Owners, Property Owners
Ensure the cleanliness and safety of the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods	Areas are seen as clean and safe by residents	City of Appleton, BID
Continue to explore potential for formation of a Riverfront Business Improvement District (BID)	BID established	City of Appleton, BID
<b>Public Space and Riverfront Initiative</b>		
Complete proposed trail segments along the Fox River	Number, length of new trail segments	City of Appleton Fox River Navigational Authority Riverview Gardens Lawrence University Riverside and St. Joseph Cemeteries, Canadian National Railroad
Construct a grand stair case and similar stair and ramp linkages which connect downtown to the river.	Staircase constructed	City of Appleton, Private Developers



Strategy	Measurement	Organization(s)
Consider developing a civic plaza on a portion of the YMCA ramp site when it comes down.	Plaza constructed	YMCA, City, ADI, Private Developers
Plan, design, and construct improvements to Jones Park and Ellen Kort Peace Park	Improvements constructed	City of Appleton
Continue to support public and private efforts to identify and develop pocket parks, alleyways, and other pedestrian opportunity zones off of College Avenue.	Number, type of enhancements	City of Appleton, Business Owners, ADI
Promote the identity of the riverfront through creative use of lighting	Lighting plan developed	City of Appleton, ADI
Support creation of a new or remodeled library downtown providing space for contemplation, creation, and collaboration.	New or remodeled library constructed	City of Appleton, Appleton Public Library
Continue both public and private redevelopment along the Fox River Corridor	New construction along the river corridor	City of Appleton, FRSNA, Private Developers

## Funding Options

A summary of relevant funding options for plan implementation was prepared (See Appendix: Funding Options).

## Performance Benchmarks

A set of indicators were developed to measure and monitor the impact of plan implementation efforts. (See Appendix: Performance Benchmarks).



## Appendices

**Past Planning Efforts**

**Downtown Market Analysis**

**Full Results of Community Engagement**

**State of the Downtown Report**

**Funding Options**

**Performance Benchmarks**

All appendices for the Comprehensive Plan are available online at [www.appleton.org](http://www.appleton.org).

