

**Downtown & Riverfront  
Redevelopment Plan Update**  
**City of Jefferson, Wisconsin**  
Adopted June 16, 2015



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## *EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

Vandewalle & Associates was retained by the City of Jefferson to revise its existing Downtown and Riverfront Plan, completed in 2007, to reflect the physical, economic and developmental conditions in the City. The work performed involved three primary tasks: Data Collection, Analysis, and Project Coordination; Project Kick-Off activities including Stakeholder Interviews, Site Visit and Physical Site Analysis, and Steering Committee Work Session; and a Downtown Redevelopment Plan Update and Concept with recommendation of key existing and catalytic redevelopment sites.

Making the most of the City's redevelopment opportunities will require a proactive stance on the part of the City decision makers. The intent of this plan is to set a forward-looking agenda for downtown and riverfront redevelopment over the next five to ten years that reevaluates the recommendations of the previous plan and is responsive to current market conditions and trends. The City should continue to rely on its Redevelopment Authority (RDA) established under the 2007 Plan, as well as maximize the potential of the existing downtown TIF district TID #5. Doing so will enable the City to carry out individual redevelopment projects, enter discussions with key property owners, and assist private developers in property acquisition and development. Professional assistance with developer recruitment, developer negotiations, project review and execution is also recommended.

The City of Jefferson has many assets to be leveraged. The community's key asset and therefore key market opportunity is downtown's proximity to the Rock and Crawfish Rivers. This asset provides a tremendous opportunity for Jefferson to capitalize on these rivers and breathe new life into downtown. Through implementation of this Downtown & Riverfront Redevelopment Plan Update the City of Jefferson can capitalize on its many assets and offer a concentration of residential, recreational, civic, retail, and office uses in the downtown and riverfront planning area.

Recommended policies for downtown and riverfront redevelopment:

1. Launch Downtown Business District Association to lay groundwork for Main Street Program and/or create a Business Improvement District, as well as lead other marketing, branding and programming efforts for downtown area
2. Strengthen design standards beyond the Façade Improvement Grant Program by requiring high quality design for both façade grant/loan project buildings as well as non-program renovations. This would include a stronger focus on design implementation by design/architectural professionals, whether paid or on a volunteer basis. Uniform city enforcement of design standards would benefit from the establishment of a downtown design review or architectural review committee/board.
3. Revisit Façade Improvement Grant and Loan program by engaging downtown property owners and understanding their building improvement needs. A refreshed program may raise the dollar amount allowed to make larger impact on projects (financed by TID #5), allow interior as well as exterior improvements and incentivize upper story residential development. Necessary structural upgrades to historic commercial buildings, such as plumbing, upgrades, roofing, HVAC, etc. – could be added to the list of eligible program costs. While many rehabilitation projects would far exceed the City's ability to provide

large-scale funding, many business owners may view public investment as a means of financing more than bare minimum improvements, thereby raising the profile of downtown as a whole.

4. Strengthen the popular downtown Farmers Market program. A dedicated non-profit or other local volunteer organization may be identified to work with city staff to raise operating expenses and raise the Market's profile within the community.
5. Consider specific incentives to help recruit businesses to downtown Jefferson and get them established in Jefferson, partnering with JCEDC and local lenders.
6. Explore creation of mural program to boost downtown arts/beautification program, engaging local artists, organizations and residents.

## ***INTRODUCTION***

### **Planning Purpose**

The City of Jefferson retained Vandewalle & Associates, a Madison-based economic planning and design firm, to update its Downtown & Riverfront Redevelopment Area Plan, adopted in January 2007. This Downtown & Riverfront Redevelopment Area Plan Update examines untapped market opportunities in Jefferson and analyzes the community's existing economic development tools that have changed over the past eight years, and provides a future vision and implementation strategy for Jefferson downtown and riverfront revitalization that is in line with current economic realities.

### **Planning Process**

This plan was developed with the assistance of the Jefferson Redevelopment Authority (RDA), City of Jefferson Staff, and other community stakeholders between December 2014 and March 2015. As part of the planning process, Vandewalle & Associates participated in site visits visual assessments, city staff meetings and stakeholder interviews to gauge local economic trends, private property concerns, and residents' and business owners' vision for the downtown and riverfront. The visual assessments of the study area served as background to further analysis of existing site conditions and to verify base map information.

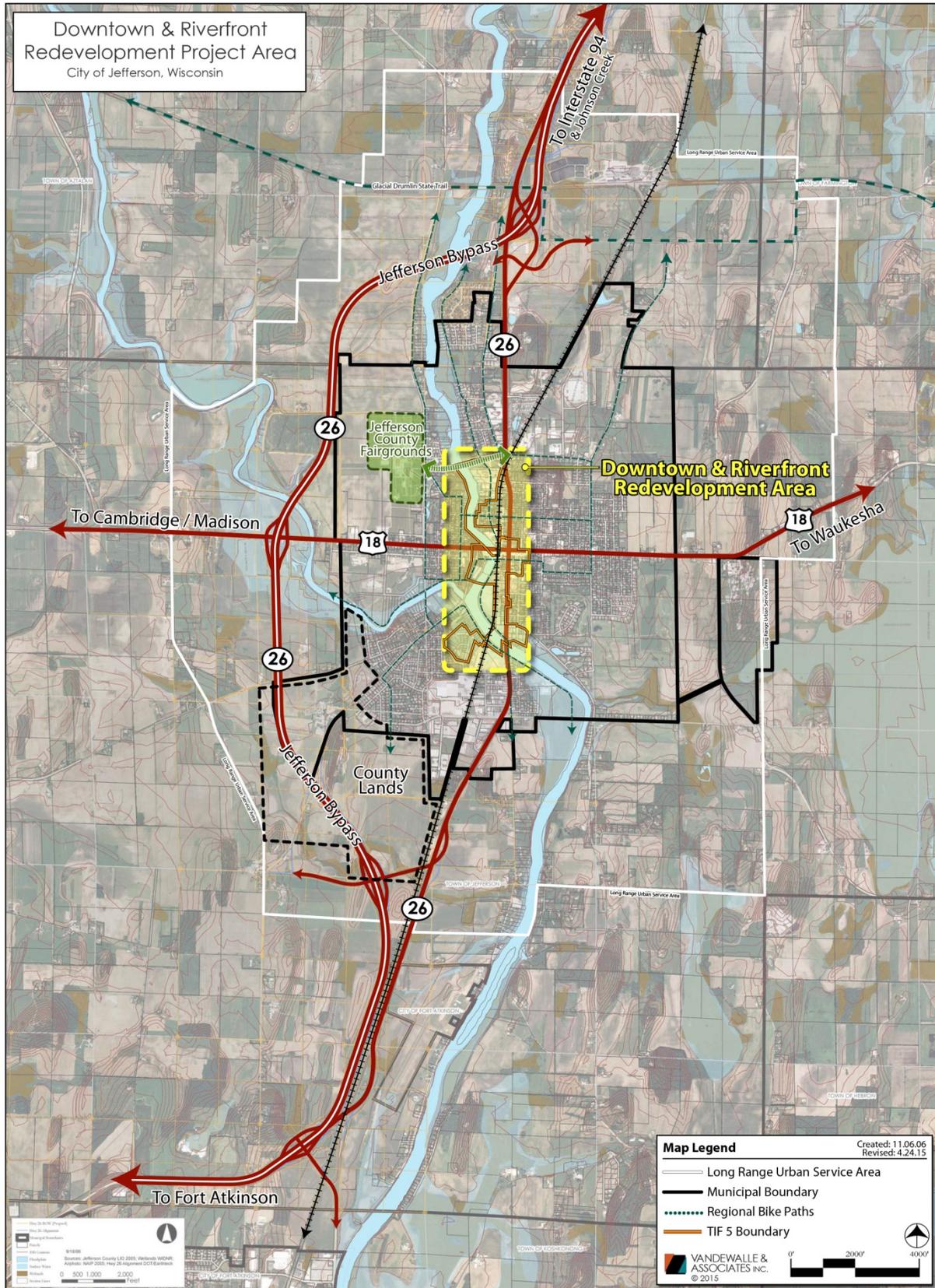
Vandewalle & Associates presented draft redevelopment opportunities and drafts of the Plan to meetings of the Jefferson Redevelopment Authority (RDA), Plan Commission and Common Council. The RDA, Plan Commission and City Staff provided feedback on the initial redevelopment master plan. A public meeting and open house was held in early June, and the Common Council formally adopted the Plan on June 16, 2015.

### **Study Area**

The area of focus for the Downtown Plan Update is similar to that of the 2007 Plan, but with several notable additions. As indicated in Map 1, the Study Area generally includes all the area within or near the boundary of Tax Increment District (TID) #5, encompassing the Downtown Core Business District and the highest priority blocks south of Racine St/Highway 18, including Main, Milwaukee and Dodge Streets, as well as several major activity centers on the east and west sides of the Rock River. These economic nodes include the County Fairgrounds, North Industrial Park, Tyson Foods, City Hall and County administrative offices. The Downtown Historic District, the boundary for which was the basis for the recommendation of the City's Design Guidelines, is also within the Study Area.

Highlighting new and existing connections and access to downtown attractions is critical to maintaining a strong identity and sense of place. The Plan considers access to downtown Jefferson from the Highway 26 Bypass, and identifies "Gateways" that most clearly signal entrance into the Downtown Core. These include the North Gateway area at the intersection of Puerner & Bus 26/Main Street, and the South Gateway area at south end of downtown, just north of Rock River. The natural attributes and riverfront setting of the Study Area and several key redevelopment sites should be further leveraged with respect to strengthened street and non-motorized pathway connections to existing parkland, pedestrian bridges, and riverwalk.

Map 1: Downtown Study Area Context Map



## ***COMMUNITY ASSETS & MARKET OPPORTUNITIES***

Downtown Jefferson sits at the political and cultural heart of Jefferson County - a jewel among its small-town living communities, with outstanding access to Wisconsin's largest metros from the I-94 corridor and State Highways 18 and 26. Many families working in Madison Milwaukee, or points north and south of the city choose the peaceful, rural living of the "Gemuetlichkeit City," a bedroom community with a proud German heritage and a culture all its own. With a picturesque riverfront setting at the confluence of the Rock and Crawfish Rivers, downtown Jefferson serves as a center of economic activity and civic life, hosting festivals, arts programming, dining, shopping and entertainment for local residents and visitors. Biking enthusiasts come from the surrounding area to ride The Glacial Drumlin Trail, and the two rivers providing ideal fishing, canoe and kayak opportunities.

Accomplishments since the adoption of the 2007 Downtown and Riverfront Plan have demonstrated steady progress towards the realization of its implementation goals and objectives, even in the face of the economic downturn. Among other things, the City established a Redevelopment Authority (RDA) tasked with encouraging and overseeing new development; implemented a façade improvement program for downtown businesses, and implemented additional park and riverfront improvements at Rotary Park. Successful use of flood disaster grants allowed relocation of flood prone businesses and residents and has provided new assets like the Rivers' Edge Meat Market, Watson Ace Hardware and NAPA Auto Parts.



Owing to its strong industrial base for a city of its size (population 7,984), downtown Jefferson is also served by the Union Pacific railroad. Jefferson has successfully retained some of its earliest manufacturing companies, which have grown to employ hundreds and represent global brands. A meat processing and packing plant on the southern edge of downtown, owned by Tyson Foods, employs 450. Nestle Purina PetCare manufactures pet food and employs 275 from its facility on Riverview Drive. The immediate area is also home to midsize employers as well as the City and County administrative and judicial offices located in Jefferson also constitute some of the largest employers, public or private, in the County. Other opportunities and market challenges are outlined in the following sections.

### **Hwy 26 Bypass**

The State Highway 26 Bypass, completed in 2011, reduces commercial truck and pass-through traffic from downtown to the City's western edge, which has contributed to a more pedestrian, bicycle, and residential friendly atmosphere downtown in recent years and provides the community with increased opportunities to focus on downtown reinvestment and redevelopment. However, the reduced traffic downtown reduces the visibility of downtown businesses and services, so downtown businesses must plan for increased coordination and

marketing. Several private and community-based financial institutions are located in Jefferson, and the city addresses these challenges by offering a revolving loan program, a redevelopment program and a façade improvement grant program. Strategic improvements to these incentive programs may help induce additional spending on new business construction and renovations that match the City's economic and aesthetic goals.



### **North and South Industrial Parks**

With both a North and South Industrial Park, Jefferson has aggressively positioned itself as a hub for companies of all sizes and economic sectors. The North Industrial Park, located at the intersection of Highway 18/Puerner Street and Highway 26, is home to American Weld Design, Carrico Aquatic Resources, Generac, Kendall Packaging, Milwaukee Delivery, Slewfoot Signs, Parkway Center, and Remis Power Systems. Americold Logistics, LD Foods, Jefferson Current Electric, Peter Bros Trucking, Jefferson Bus, Koenig Concrete and United Drilling are located in the South Industrial Park, sited south of the Rock River on Collins Avenue. Harley Davidson supplier Anderson Machining is located near the South Industrial Park and employs approximately 90 employees.

### **Jefferson Area Business Center**

Targeted as a priority reinvestment site in the 2007 Downtown Plan due to its location on the Rock River, proximity to downtown Jefferson and the Milwaukee Street pedestrian bridge, and the historic character of the building, the Jefferson Area Business Center is a successful multi-tenant commercial center with flexible event/party space.

Already home to over 20 different businesses, the JABC has the opportunity to serve as a creative hub for Jefferson and Jefferson County's small but thriving arts community and expanding cultural/arts amenities. Currently functioning as a multi-tenant business incubator building, this site and surrounding area has the potential to further artist-live work living, and shared gallery/display space.



## Arts & Culture

Respected artists with guests in residence are located in several prominent downtown studios, and organizations like the Arts Alliance, Council for Performing Arts, and Annual Arts Walk actively promote the arts in Jefferson. The Performing Arts Center is a 1,000-seat auditorium located in Jefferson High School and home to the Council for the Performing Arts. The CPA presents national and local talent throughout the school year. Interactive programming for families and younger generations would help cement the area as an arts and creative district, and redevelopment opportunities exist to incorporate an expanded arts scene in Jefferson. Promotion of the existing arts community as a means of attracting new residents and tourists downtown could provide an additional market niche in Jefferson.

## Public Spaces

Several publicly owned sites function as activity centers that could benefit from strategic infrastructure, signage and connectivity improvements. Jefferson has a total of eight parks, offering picnic areas, baseball fields, skateboarding, a golf course, volleyball courts, soccer fields, inline skating, and ice skating facilities. Rotary Park and Riverfront Park near downtown already host nature and river-based recreational activities, could be increased through limited improvements to existing pathways, lighting and landscaping. The City Center Parking Lot, which currently hosts the Farmers Market, Annual Art Walk and Street Dance, could be used as flex space for additional events.

Rotary Park on the Rock River in downtown, just steps away from City Hall and the Public Library is a tremendous downtown asset for recreational boating, fishing, as well as Concerts in the Park from late spring to fall annually.



The Jefferson County Fair Park just west of downtown, is a year-round, indoor/outdoor complex of event and rental spaces that hosts the annual County Fair, a variety of trade shows and exhibitions throughout the year, agricultural and livestock facilities, meeting rooms, and a commercial kitchen. With connections to downtown via Puerner Street as well as the Glacial Drumlin Trail via Jackson Avenue, there is an opportunity to position downtown as a destination to for visitors to the Fair Park.

## Dining and Nightlife

Downtown features a few destinations that form the heart of the City’s entertainment district. Located within short distances of each other, a strengthened Main Street organization may assist in highlighting these businesses as part of a larger, thematic district that serves local tastes and draws visitors from the surrounding area. Leading downtown established identified in stakeholder interviews and site assessments include Wedl’s Hamburger Stand, a local institution; the Rock Bottom Saloon, a regular destination for bands and younger bar goers; Brickhaus Café, a casual dining café and coffee house in a historic building on Milwaukee Street; and Heron’s Landing, a waterfront eatery on the west bank of the Rock River. The historic Jefferson Depot, a former train station which most recently housed a restaurant, is currently for sale and needs a new owner/operator for the prime riverfront site with views of the Milwaukee Street pedestrian bridge, riverwalk and Rotary Park. Fort Community Credit Union features a large community meeting and banquet facility seating up to 150 people. The burgeoning local foods movement that favors natural, Wisconsin-sourced ingredients is well represented in the community by businesses like the Brickhaus Café, River’s Edge Meat Market, and seasonal Farmers Market.



## Residential

In addition to single-family residential neighbors immediately adjacent to the Downtown Business District, many downtown commercial buildings have upper floors that are currently or have the potential to be leased for additional housing units. Expanded housing choices in the Downtown Business District could be located above existing downtown buildings as well as in rehabilitated or new residential and mixed use developments.

To assist property owners in advancing rehabilitation projects in buildings that have long sat idle, the current Façade Improvement Grant Program could be expanded to offer small grants for businesses and property owners interested in interior improvements and development of additional upper story residential units, as a higher density of downtown residents provides a built-in customer base for area businesses. Strong pedestrian connections along Candise Street, Racine Street, Milwaukee Street, and Dodge Street connect downtown to the riverfront and nearby housing.

Additional residential development may occur over time in the downtown and riverfront



planning area. Condominiums, apartments, and townhomes were previously recommended for priority redevelopment sites at the Foremost site (138 W. Candise Street), and the County Highway Department near Puerner and Main Streets. Riverfront housing, with water views and direct access to the riverwalk, provides a strong connection between residents and downtown’s greatest

natural amenity. New development utilizing environmentally friendly stormwater practices, such as rain gardens, bio-swales, and subterranean cisterns would serve to minimize runoff into the river and sustain water quality for the continued enjoyment of all users.

### Health & Wellness

Healthcare facilities, including alternative and traditional medical offices, sports medicine, massage, and acupuncture, represent a market niche that may be expected to grow in the coming years, especially as Baby Boomers begin to retire and wish to “age in place”. The College of Osteopathic Medicine (not yet accredited) site, if it proceeds, has the potential to drive development of a medical industry cluster in the City, both in terms of education and treatment as well as in induced demand for ancillary services and housing for students and staff. The City has conducted a feasibility study and will know by the end of 2015 if the project will proceed to construction in 2016. Project leaders are actively engaged in fundraising at the state level.

### REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN

This Downtown & Riverfront Redevelopment Area Plan provides detailed recommendations based on analysis of Jefferson’s community assets and market drivers, current market opportunities, downtown TID #5 and Main Street Commercial Historic District. The Downtown Master Plan Update graphic (Map 2) illustrates general locations for suggested land uses. The overall goal of the Plan Update is to revisit and capitalize on new post-Recession development opportunities in downtown Jefferson, creating a vibrant, sustainable downtown and riverfront with a mix of uses that complement and help to grow downtown businesses and increase downtown connectivity to community amenities, in particular the Rock River.



Downtown Jefferson embodies the City’s history and serves as the community’s civic and cultural core. To improve the level of activity, residential and commercial development should be encouraged. This will not happen automatically. The community will need to set the stage for redevelopment through direct public investment including select public projects, private-public partnerships, and the possible acquisition of key properties.



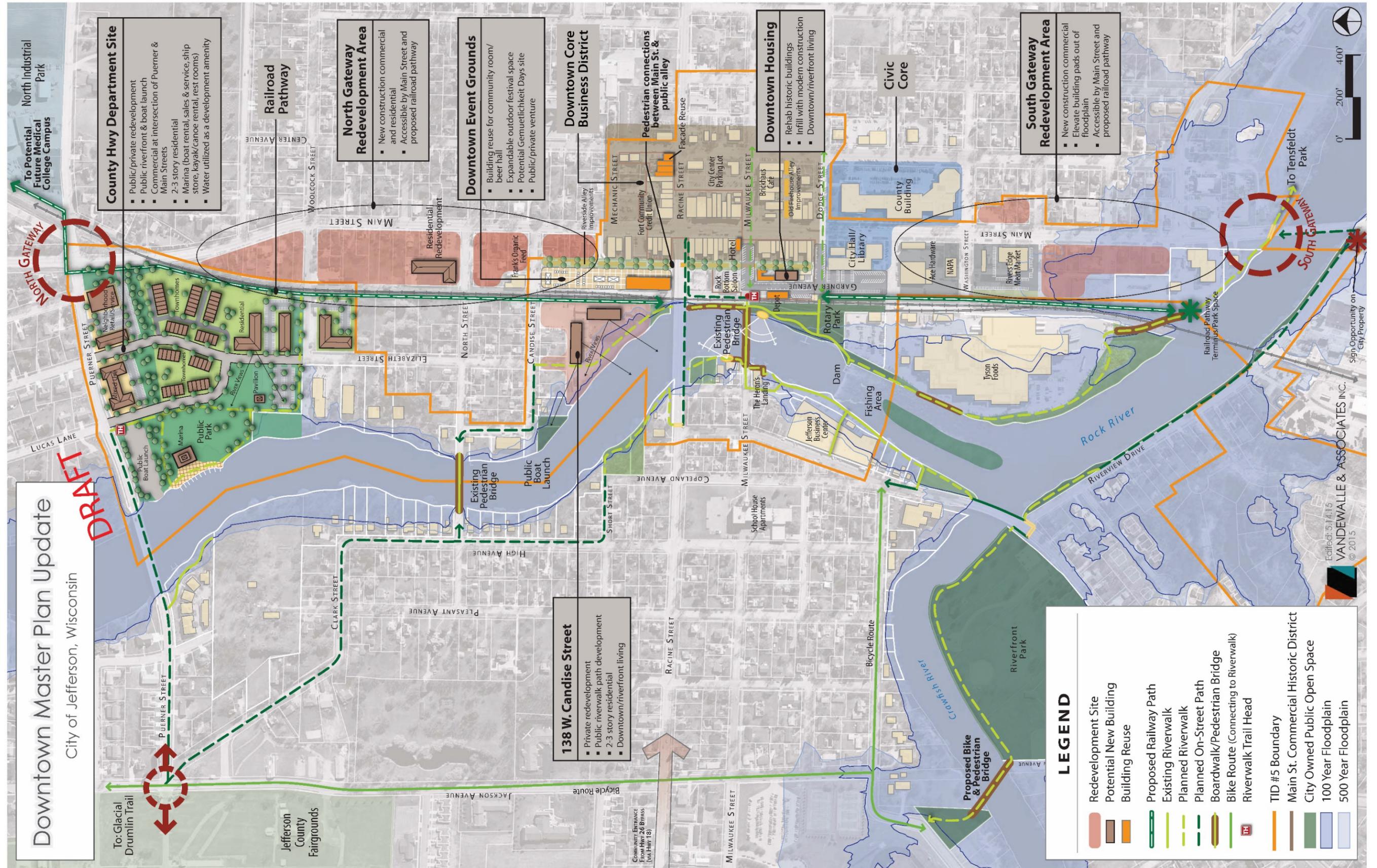
The value of new development near downtown could be greatly enhanced by public improvements and investment in the arts, greenways and open space, cultural event programming, physical infrastructure and connections, wayfinding, educational signage, and banners that thematically link downtown core businesses and open spaces. But public projects will need to be coordinated with private development and phased so that they can largely pay for

themselves through the existing downtown TID #5. The City/RDA will need to actively engage with property owners and developers to ‘broker’ the projects.

Key redevelopment recommendations for the Downtown & Riverfront Planning Area are described in the Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan and correspond with the following planning recommendations which focus on providing a sustainable mix of uses to revitalize downtown Jefferson. The following sections move from a broad view of the Study Area to more specific site recommendations, first describing the existing downtown district parameters of Tax Increment District #5, the City’s primary means of financing public improvements and developer incentives; major redevelopment subareas depicted on the Plan; and finally, identifying specific priority redevelopment sites and reuse concepts.

### **Tax Increment District #5**

Much of the Downtown Study Area is within the boundaries of the existing TID #5, established in 2001 as a pay-as-you-go TIF district. New development in TID #5 has consisted of developer-led agreements over time. With a 2014 increment value of \$9,487,200, the following redevelopment recommendations focus on City execution of TIF-funded improvements including Riverside Alley improvements, Main Street and alley (including Firehouse Alley) streetscaping and road improvements, and expanded riverwalk/riverfront connections, while maximizing the increment potential of key redevelopment sites. Strategic deployment of developer incentives should continue as needed to catalyze market feasible residential, commercial, or mixed use projects in the downtown and riverfront area that are in keeping with the design, density and public amenity recommendations of this Plan.



## Redevelopment/Reuse Opportunity Areas

The three major redevelopment areas of the Updated Downtown Plan generally follow the Main Street corridor, bookending the Study Area between Highway 18 and Dane Street: the North Gateway, Main Street Commercial District, and South Gateway. Based on existing or anticipated economic conditions, each represents a generalized area within which anchor businesses/institutions and specific redevelopment parcels are identified for further analysis.

### North Gateway Redevelopment Area

The North Gateway represents the northern terminus of the downtown area, as well as a crossroads for peripheral sites including the North Industrial Park, County Fairgrounds and the proposed Medical College Campus. As the major gateway for visitors entering the City from I-94 and points north, it is essential that this area improve upon existing conditions to impart a more welcoming entry point into the Downtown Business District.

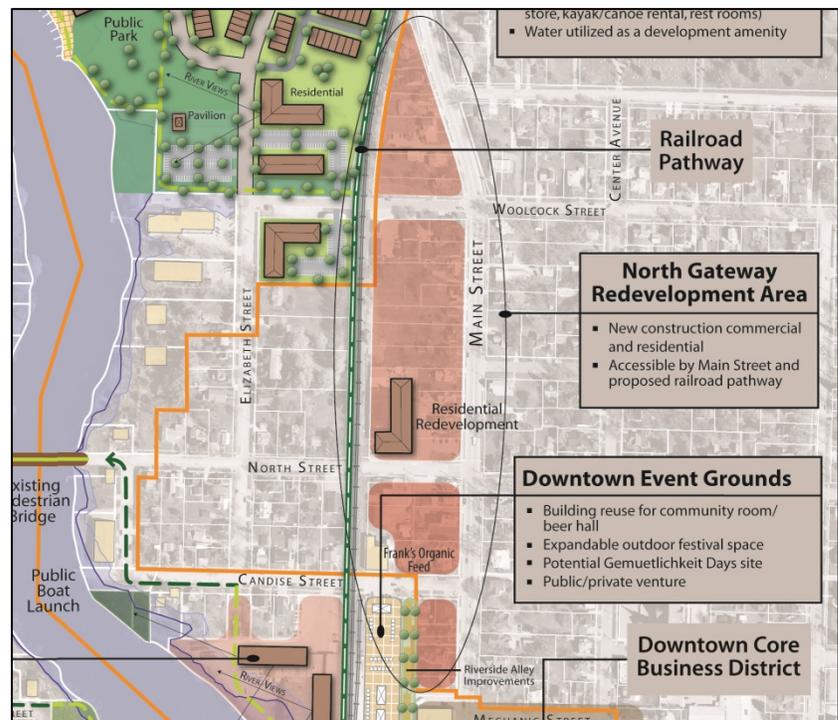


The redevelopment of the Jefferson County Highway Department site at the corner of Puerner and Main Streets for residential and mixed-use will greatly enhance the look and feel of the North Gateway area as an activity center and point of visual interest.

The west side of Main Street between Greenwood and Mechanic Streets, is largely comprised of low-density uses that offer long term potential for economic repositioning to new residential and commercial relative to the area's strongest assets.

The former Punzel Hardware site, with large parking lot frontage on Main Street, represents a prime redevelopment parcel for 2-3 story multifamily residential construction serving downtown, industrial park or medical college workers, which could reuse a portion of its historic façade and tie in to nearby historic homes and businesses.

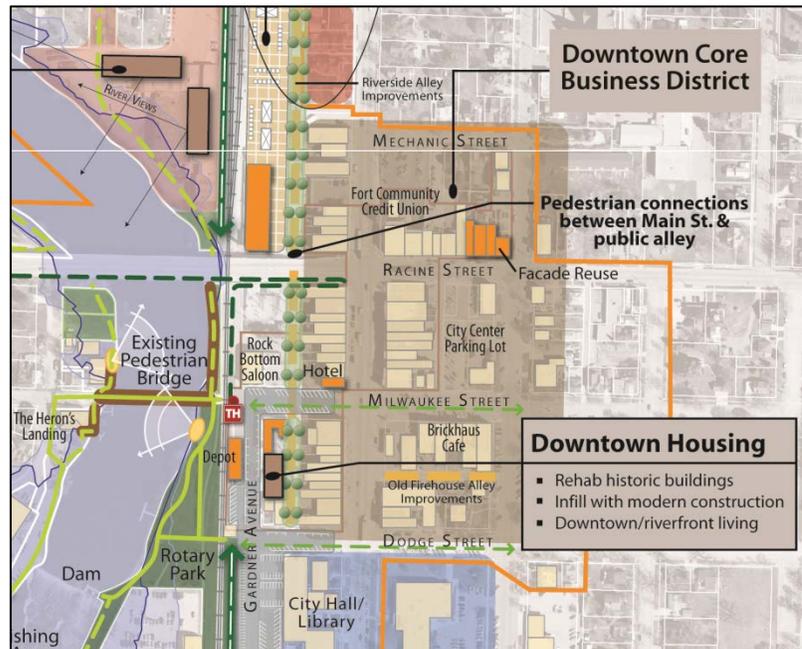
The block containing Frank's Organic Feed and the parcels immediately east of the city-owned Riverside Alley may also see redevelopment for new uses as high priority projects progress.



## Main Street Commercial District

Jefferson's STH 26/Main Street corridor maintains much of its original downtown commercial building stock. Many of the original downtown mixed use buildings have been rehabilitated in recent years, and others have yet to be restored. The blocks on the west side of Main Street, adjacent to the existing rail corridor, are targeted for commercial redevelopment, with the possible addition of a low-rise residential building near North and Main.

Due to the proximity of Jefferson County's offices and courthouse, the downtown has maintained a relatively low vacancy level, with the presence of attorneys, title companies, and other service businesses that regularly work with the County. Although there are many downtown businesses offering products to residents to meet their daily needs, a few restaurants, and personal services, the downtown business mix could be strengthened with additional restaurants and retail businesses. Facing competition from large-scale retail outlets elsewhere in Jefferson and in the County, downtown business owners must continue to focus on developing a business niche. This niche could focus on offering boutique products and services to downtown employees, as well as downtown residents and visitors. Coordination among downtown businesses by pooling resources, whether through a Main Street organization or Business Improvement District, is critical to competing with "big boxes" and shopping malls.



The location of both County and City offices downtown creates a civic core that is beneficial to both the City and County and critical to the long term economic health of the community. The location of County jobs and services in downtown Jefferson provides the opportunity for an active downtown during business hours where County employees and patrons shop, eat, and use services. This is crucial to the success of Jefferson's core because these customers help to keep the existing downtown businesses in operation and also attract others. In addition, County and City offices and services draw other businesses and services to downtown including law offices, title companies, restaurants, and daily needs retail and service establishments.

Other specific sites highlighted on the Plan may be targeted for specific redevelopment and/or reinvestment uses. The former Jefferson Depot restaurant and event space on the riverfront, currently for sale, should see a new operator in much the same capacity, utilizing the historic qualities of the building and its riverfront location. Across Gardner Street from the Depot, a parking lot could be used for infill residential with modern construction and/or reuse of the

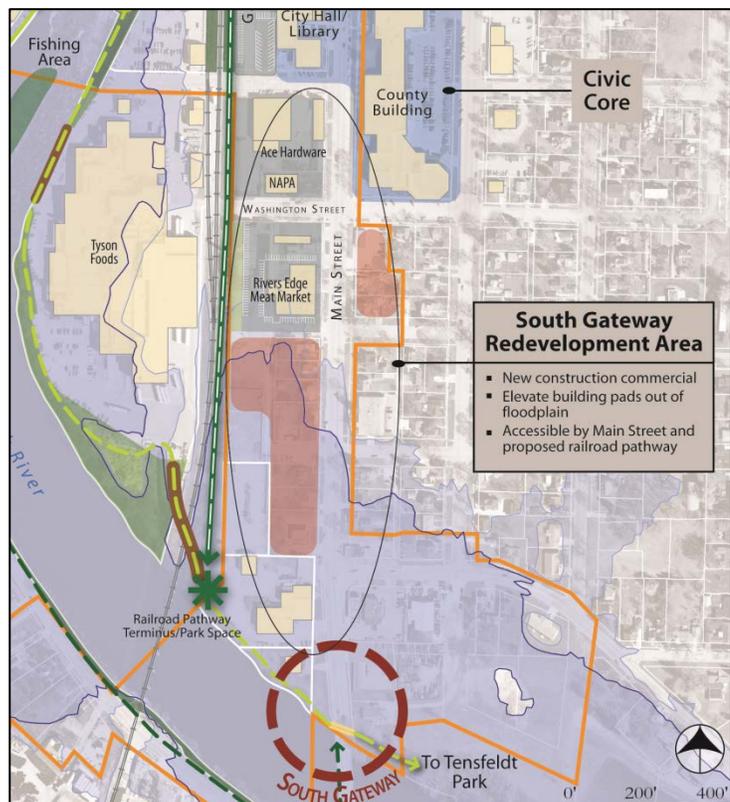
adjacent historic structures. Similarly, the El Chapparal Mexican Restaurant at the corner of Main Street & Milwaukee Street, a former hotel dating back to the nineteenth century, could accommodate new mixed-use or upper story residential dwellings at a prominent downtown intersection.



### South Gateway Redevelopment Area

There is a need to reposition the South Gateway area of downtown to build off of recent new business investments and plan for the long term reuse of the area for new commercial construction on the west side of Main Street that is accessible from nearby employment centers like City Hall, the Public Library, the County Building, Tyson and Purina, and existing residential neighborhoods. The remaining parcels adjacent to the Rivers Edge Meat Market, new Ace Hardware and NAPA Auto Parts are best suited to capitalize on their proximity to these new businesses and the Civic Core, just one block away.

Accessible by Main Street and proposed Railway Path, the South Gateway area is particularly attractive for workforce residential development, as it is the one part of downtown that is within a qualified census tract for state and federal housing tax credits. However, redevelopment on the east side of Main Street, on the north banks of the river, is complicated by the location of several commercial and residential blocks south of Walworth Street and Dane Street within the 100 and 500-year floodplains. The building pads will need to be elevated above the necessary storm levels, adding additional time and cost to any redevelopment of these parcels.



## Targeted Redevelopment Sites

Aside from established businesses, the Plan specifically differentiates sites in the downtown area that offer the greatest potential for redevelopment, that is, demolition and/or reconstruction (highlighted in red), and properties that could reuse the existing structures (highlighted in orange). Several sites could be reused or redeveloped, depending on the proposed new use. These sites are the focus of Downtown Plan implementation over the next 5-10 years and are prioritized due to their potential for turnover, whether in land use or ownership, as well as the potential for targeted City investment that would most immediately catalyze private development or new public amenities.

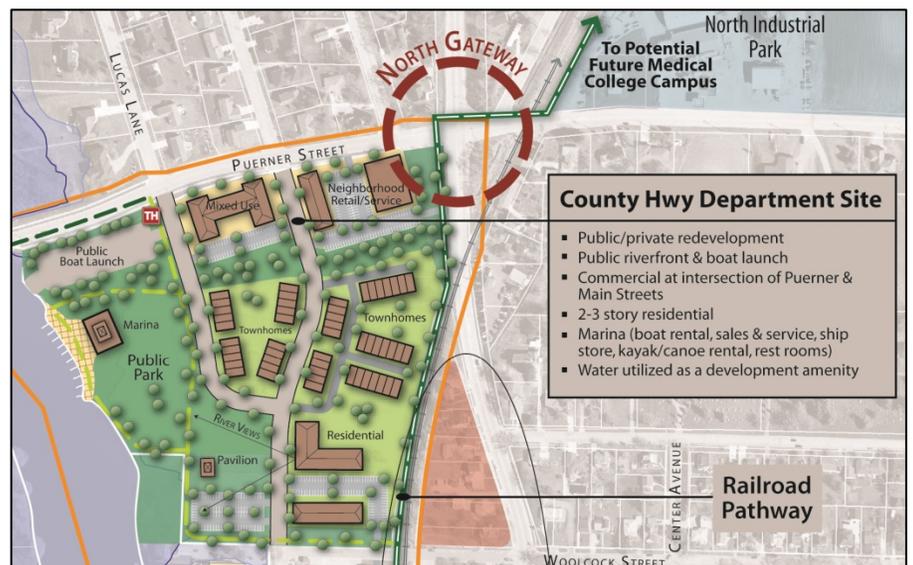
The central downtown planning area on both sides of the Rock River between Main Street and the Jefferson County Fair Park should contain a mix of retail, office, residential and recreation uses that orient residents and visitors to the Main Street business district and the Rock River and capitalize on both as development amenities. Uses in this planning area could include enhanced retail, restaurants and public space offerings and recreation areas along the riverfront.

## Jefferson County Highway Department Site

The Jefferson County Highway Department Site (approximately 19.2 acres over eight parcels) is currently home to the County highway facilities maintenance vehicles, salt, and garages. This site has been identified as a future redevelopment site due to the County's upcoming relocation of the facilities to a more central/highway accessible location, its location on the Rock River and proximity to single-family neighborhoods.

Following environmental due diligence, this site could be redeveloped commercial on the corner of Puerner and Main Streets, with a mix of low rise (2-3 story) multifamily residential buildings in different building forms (townhome, apartments, etc.) clustered around an extension of Elizabeth Street south of Puerner Street, connecting to the existing street grid.

Residential buildings should have pitched roofs to compliment adjacent single family residential neighborhoods, be located along public streets, and when applicable, contain under-building tenant parking and surface lot visitor parking. The Puerner Street/Main Street frontage has higher



levels of visibility and traffic and may accommodate mixed-use residential with first floor commercial, as well as other neighborhood service commercial buildings.

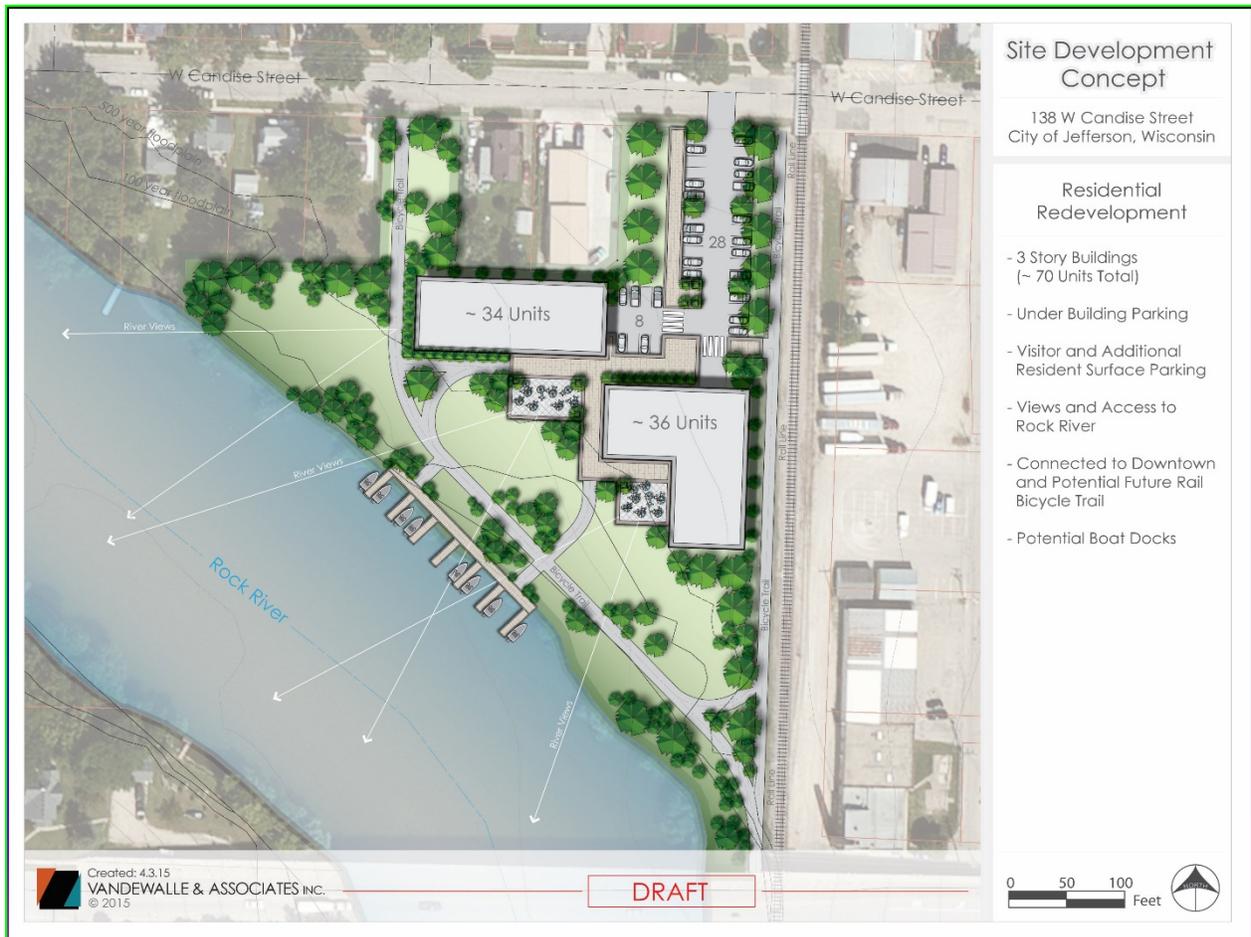
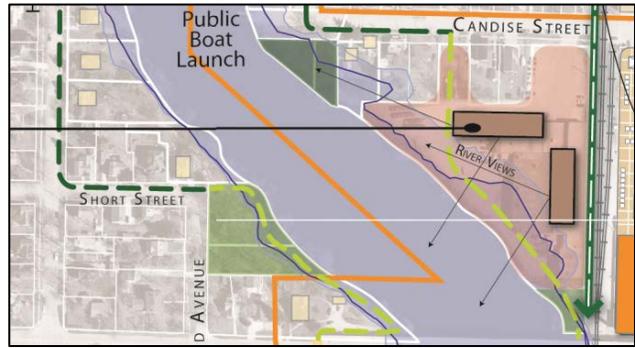
It should be explored if the creek running through the north end of the site, partially underground, should be uncovered and utilized as a development amenity and be surrounded by green space. Conversations with the Wisconsin DNR also indicate a willingness to explore development of a small public marina on the Rock River with transient docking, boat rentals and sales, ship store, small craft (kayak/canoe) rentals, storage and restroom facilities, pending a detailed permit application and review for compatibility with river ecology.



The floodplain should be surveyed at this site to determine the exact amount of buildable land as well as the ability to dredge a portion of the riverbank to accommodate more slips. Eventually the Downtown Jefferson Riverwalk Loop should extend to this site, with the new marina and the existing Puerner Street Bridge serving as a trailhead for the North Gateway. The site should also be connected to the proposed Railroad Pathway. A triangular green space between the site's parcel line and Main Street frontage near the intersection of Puerner Street/Main Street could serve as an ideal location for Downtown arrival signage for this Gateway.

**138 W. Candise Street (Foremost Building)**

The Foremost Building, the location of one manufacturing business on this 3.95 acre site, is currently for sale and is a priority redevelopment site due to the location on the Rock River, adjacency to downtown, the uncomplicated parcel ownership, and the interest of the property owner in selling the property. This site currently houses an industrial building which could be razed to provide room for two residential buildings. The buildings may be 3 story condominiums or apartments sited to maximized views of the Rock River. The buildings should have balconies and under-building tenant parking. The buildings should also connect to downtown, the riverwalk and proposed Railroad Pathway. Finally, the floodplain should be surveyed to determine the exact amount of buildable land.

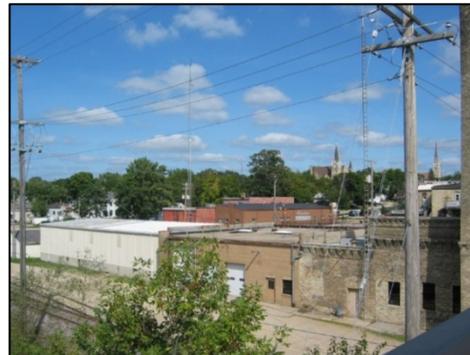


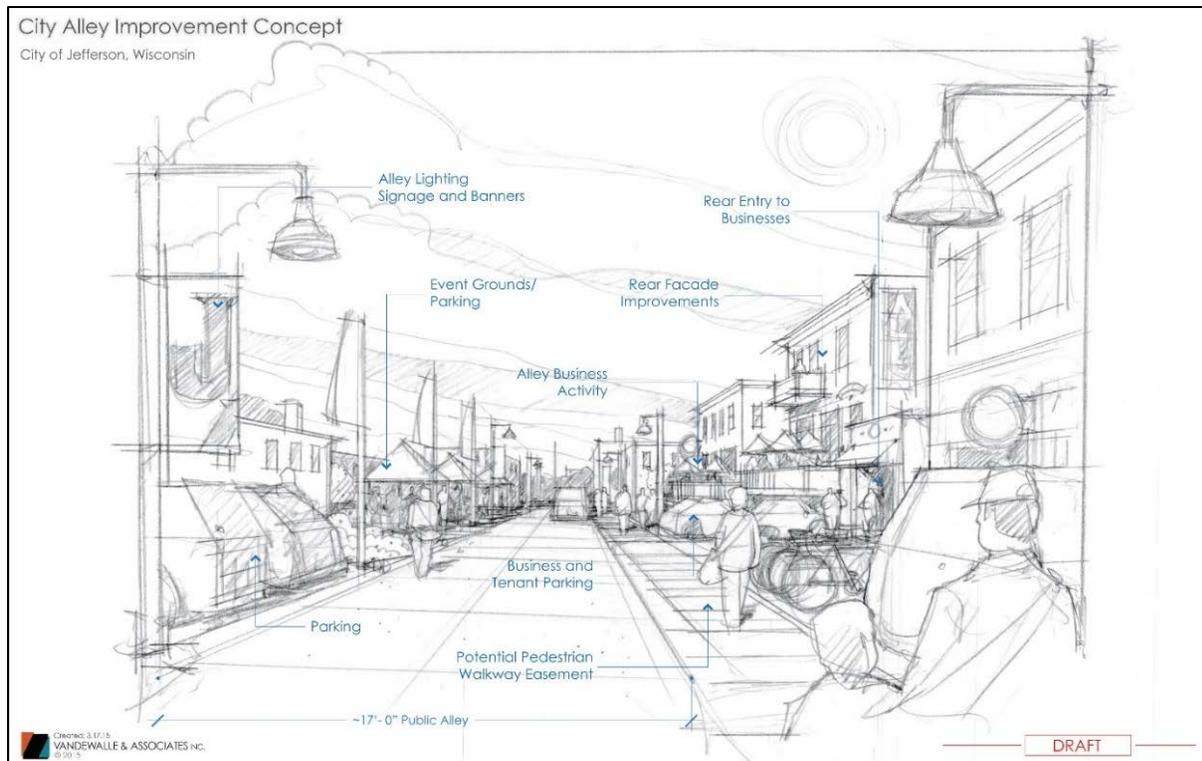
## Riverside Alley

The City of Jefferson has acquired several contiguous parcels, buildings and parking areas immediately east and south of the Foremost Site and the rail corridor, with intentions to improve the land and structures for public uses. These parcels, totaling 1.95 acres, offer potential for reuse as a community destination and event space downtown, offering an alternative location complementing the types of festival activities already taking place at the County fairgrounds, City Center parking lot, and City parks. The site should be designed to be flexible in holding various types and sizes of events, as well as, serve as a public parking lot.

The existing structures below the Racine Street Bridge, a mix of single story masonry and metal sided industrial buildings, offer ample open floor space that could be repurposed for indoor/outdoor activities, such as a community room and/or seasonal beer hall, with expandable outdoor festival space spilling into the previously unimproved parking area to the north that could potentially host events like Gemuetlichkeit Days in the future. A public/private venture could identify an operator to run these facilities on the City's behalf. This public space should connect under the Racine Street Bridge to the "Riverside Alley" sites to the south, forming a pedestrian spine with landscaped medians and street trees between Candise Street and Dodge Street and connecting to the Old Firehouse Alley and City Center Alley and Parking Lot. These kinds of improvements are further described in the next section.

It should be noted, improvements for public uses should be advanced as privately-led catalytic projects move forward (once increment is generated by new development). Improvements should include an updated streetscape program along Main Street, and the public alley behind Main Street businesses (as recommended in the 2002 Downtown Jefferson Improvement Plan), called "Riverside Alley".





As shown in the above vision concept, the Riverside Alley could be programmed as a more active, secondary access point for the businesses that back up to it, as well as the potential public riverfront event space. Specific improvements may include:

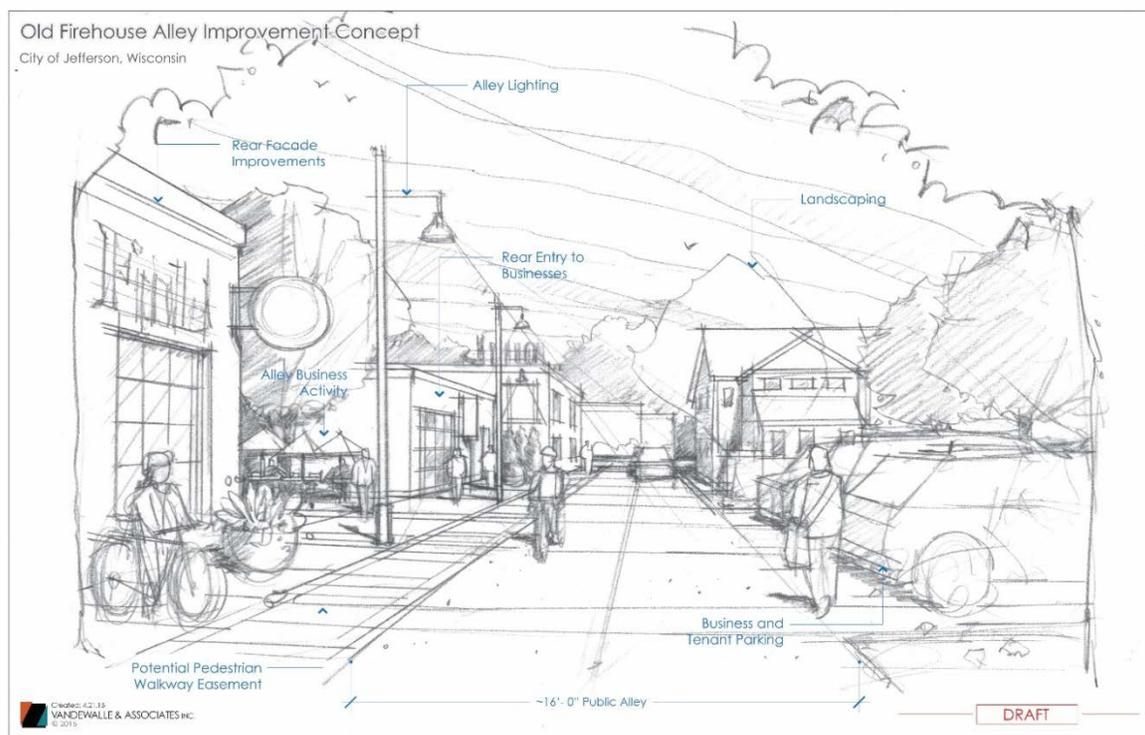
- 17 foot right of way for vehicular traffic
- Pedestrian walkway easement on east side of alley
- Rear façade improvements - paint, siding, awnings, window treatments and doors
- Improved visibility as a rear entry for business customers
- Business and tenant parking stalls
- Lighting, wayfinding signage and seasonal banners
- Downtown Event Grounds with dedicated public parking

### Firehouse Alley Improvements

As the downtown commercial district strengthens with the addition of new residents and amenities to attract visitors and businesses, Main Street property owners and the City could consider opening up its other alleyways with the Firehouse Alley Improvement Project. These improvement projects could include the organization of parking, dumpsters, and planting areas, as well as façade improvements and business signage on the back of buildings. These projects would provide additional shopping and gathering areas of interest in downtown Jefferson provide enhanced public connections between nodes of economic activity.



Like the Riverside Alley, the recently renamed “Old Firehouse Alley” should be given renewed focus as a public gathering space with aesthetic improvements and encouraging a high density of uses. Improvements could include a consistent design of paving, Main Street median, pedestrian-scale lighting, benches, light pole banners, planters, trash receptacles, and gateway and wayfinding signage. Street signage and maps should reflect this new name so that it develops a unique identity within downtown, and aids in navigation. Entry features at Main Street and Center Street should bookend the alley to accentuate this unique downtown feature. The City should also consider offering increased financial assistance to business owners along all the alleys (City Center Alley, Riverside Alley, Old Firehouse Alley) for rear façade improvements through its existing grant program to encourage increased use of visible rear entries to Jefferson’s Main Street buildings.



The Old Firehouse Alley Improvement Concept shows potential treatments for the 16 foot right of way and surrounding area. These improvements are intended to activate the rear parking areas for existing businesses and allow greater interaction with the alley as a defined public space, additionally the alley may be designated one-way for thru traffic from Center Street to Main Street, alley improvement may include:

- Increased indoor/outdoor business activity
- Rear façade improvements
- Outdoor seating and bicycle racks
- Potential pedestrian walkway easement
- Expanded tenant and business parking

- Landscaping, street trees and lighting

### **Streetscaping and Connection Improvements**

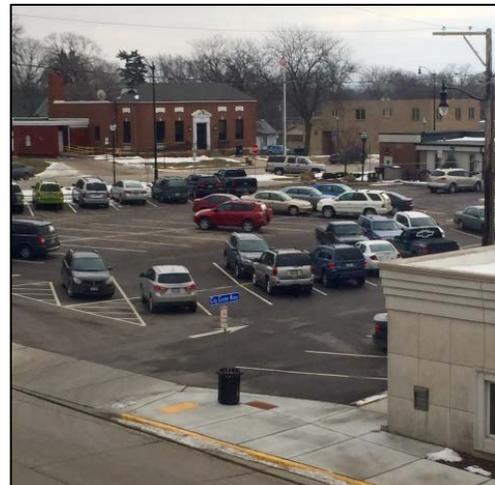
Other streetscaping and non-motorized improvements would serve to better connect pedestrian and bike routes within the downtown area as well as to surrounding neighborhoods and employment centers in both a physical and conceptual sense. Updated street amenities, wayfinding signage, art installations, community/downtown gateway arches or arrival features, as well as pedestrian scale streetscapes and pathways with interesting scenery enhance one's "sense of place" and establish downtown as a distinct destination.

Improvements should integrate riverfront projects from previous riverwalk planning with enhanced on-road and bicycle/pedestrian connections, and riverfront greenway space should connect and highlight key redevelopment sites, including Foremost and County Highway Department sites that may accommodate the highest density of new construction or reuse. Repairs to Candise Street in front of the Foremost Site could be paired with an upgraded on-street connection to the nearby North Street pedestrian bridge. The proposed Railway Path and trail heads alongside existing Union Pacific rail corridor represents a direct link between the North and South Gateway, and links public and private riverfront development to priority redevelopment areas on the west side of Main Street.

### **City Center Parking Lot**

A successful project that came out of the 2007 Downtown Plan, the City Center Parking Lot and Alley is a new public space for multiple downtown events. There is potential to invest additional improvements to the City Center Parking Lot that allows for more flexible use.

As the longstanding host to the seasonal farmers' market, a permanent awning structure could be installed that would offer cover for vendors on market days, and double as shelter for other large scale downtown events. On off days, these awnings provide covered parking for visitors. Coordination with local artists on installations or murals in nearby gathering spaces could help drive traffic to the market during the season and further position it as a downtown institution.



### **Rock River Connections and Recreation**

Establishing connections between the Rock River and downtown Jefferson is essential to the business district's continued viability. The scenic waterfront represents a significant aesthetic and recreational amenity that attracts both residents and visitors that, in turn, look to nearby businesses for additional shopping, dining and leisure opportunities. The existing riverwalk along the east bank of the Rock River, already a favored route for water views, walking and biking, should be expanded in phases to advance the planned Jefferson Downtown Riverwalk Loop. This recreation loop would expand downtown Jefferson bicycle and pedestrian access as well as connect to regional recreational trails.

The first phase of riverwalk expansion should focus on connecting Rotary Park to Candise Street via the Foremost redevelopment site, which would interact with private redevelopment on the site. Further improvements to on-street pathways on both sides of the Rock River would connect the Fairgrounds to downtown via existing pedestrian and vehicular bridges, and new interior streets at the County Highway redevelopment site.

Additional riverwalk loop development should connect the existing riverwalk to the south, including an east section along the Rock River from Rotary Park to Main Street Bridge along the Tyson Foods river frontage. A west expansion of the riverwalk loop should connect downtown to the Crawfish River, Riverfront Park, and continue southeast to connect to Tensfeldt Park. Jefferson is fortunate to have two existing pedestrian bridges (Milwaukee Street and North Street) and one pending pedestrian bridge at Jackson Avenue. In the long-term, additional pedestrian bridges could be constructed to connect the community to the island in the Rock River.



### Green Infrastructure and Stormwater Best Management Practices

Improving water quality and river health is a priority outcome for all redevelopment concepts proposed in this Plan. Every future project in the study area should include stormwater best management practices, green design and infrastructure whenever possible to reduce runoff into the Rock and Crawfish Rivers. The following opportunities have been identified to incorporate into public alley design improvements and private development projects:

**Low Impact Design (LID)** strategies integrating green space, native landscaping, natural hydrologic functions, and various other techniques to generate less runoff from developed land. These objectives include re-creating natural landscape features; reducing effective impervious cover; increasing hydrologic disconnects; increasing drainage flow paths; enhancing off-line storage; and facilitating detention and infiltration opportunities.

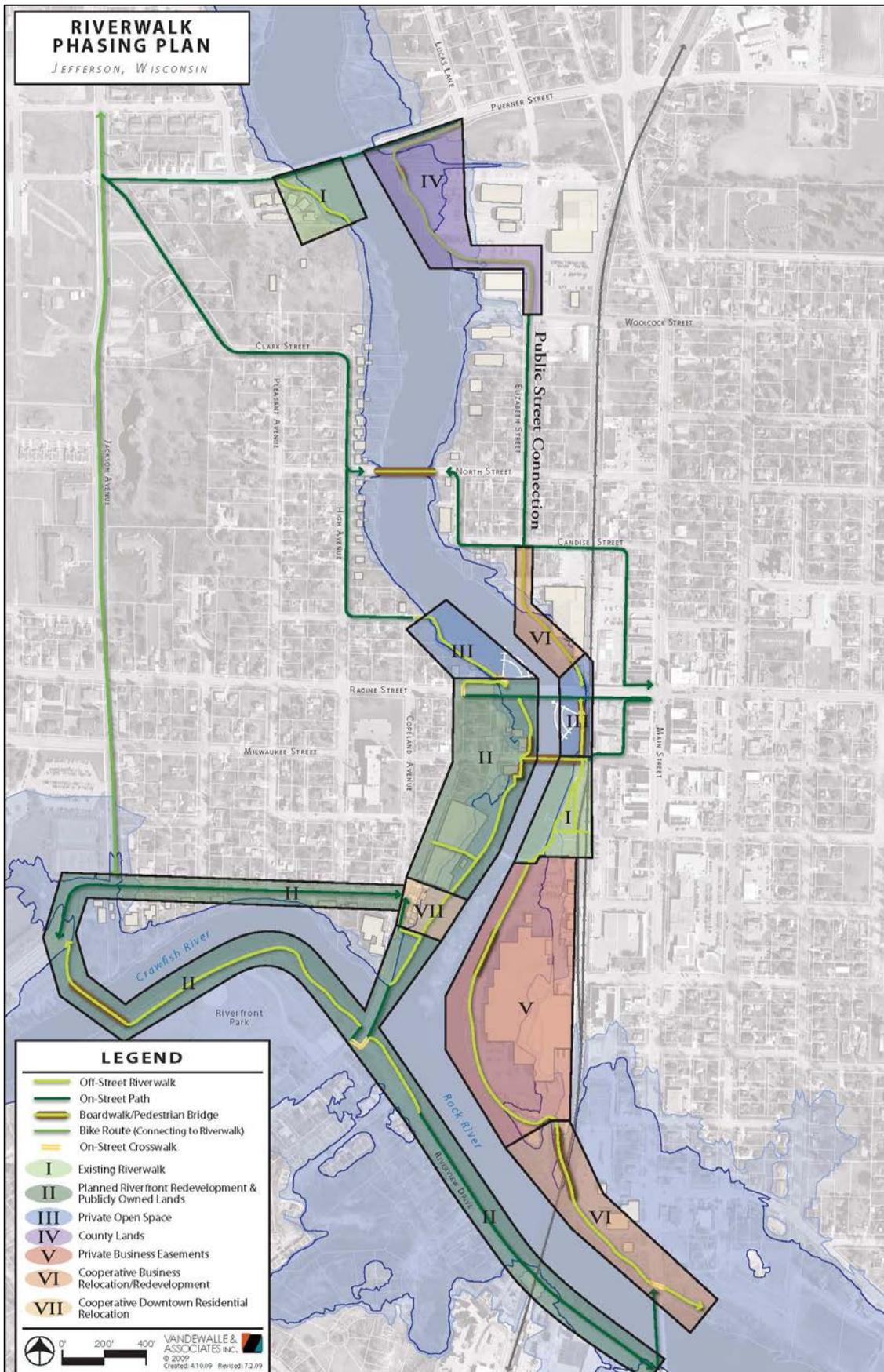
**Bioswales/Green Parking Lots** - Larger parking areas of entirely impervious surface may allow for bioswales to be constructed in medians between automobile parking bays. These bioswales generally contain a mix of native plantings that filter the stormwater runoff and potentially collect stormwater into subterranean cisterns, if site contamination is found.

**Porous pavers** made from permeable materials allow runoff to reenter the soil more quickly, while acting as a filter for pollutants. Such materials can have a substantial impact on water quality on parcels nearest to the rivers running through Downtown Jefferson.

**Outfall cisterns, rain gardens, roof water collection systems** and other infrastructure may be used to reduce the volume of stormwater runoff being discharged from a site. "Green Street" design concepts use a natural stormwater management approach, incorporating plants and soil to slow, filter, and cleanse stormwater from streets. While traditional stormwater management directs runoff into pipes, a Green Street manages stormwater at its source, where rain falls.



Map 3: Riverwalk Phasing Plan (2009)



## IMPLEMENTATION

This Downtown Plan Update, has been adopted by the City as an amendment to 2007 Downtown & Riverfront Plan and the City of Jefferson Comprehensive Plan. The following Implementation overview outlines a number of specific programmatic recommendations that may help guide redevelopment planning and implementation in the Downtown Area, including the establishment of new organizations or expansion of existing programs include the following specific actions:

1. Launch Downtown Business District Association to lay groundwork for Main Street Program and/or create a Business Improvement District, as well as lead other marketing, branding and programming efforts for the Downtown Area. The City, Jefferson County EDC, and Downtown business leaders should also advance a study and/or survey of market needs and opportunities with respect to specific commercial and retail businesses that have the highest likelihood for success Downtown and then develop a strategy to recruit these businesses.
2. Strengthen design standards beyond the Façade Improvement Grant Program by requiring high quality design for both façade grant/loan project buildings as well as non-program renovations. This would include a stronger focus on design implementation by design/architectural professionals, whether paid or on a volunteer basis. Uniform enforcement of design standards would benefit from the establishment of a downtown design review or architectural review committee/board.
3. Revisit Façade Improvement Grant and Loan program by engaging downtown property owners and understanding their building improvement needs. A refreshed program may raise the dollar amount allowed to make larger impact on projects (financed by TID #5), allow interior as well as exterior improvements and incentivize upper story residential development. Necessary structural upgrades to historic commercial buildings, such as plumbing, upgrades, roofing, HVAC, etc. – could be added to the list of eligible program costs. While many rehabilitation projects would far exceed the City's ability to provide large-scale funding, many business owners may view public investment as a means of financing more than bare minimum improvements, thereby raising the profile of downtown as a whole.
4. Strengthen the Downtown Farmers Market program, which suffers from a lack of time and resources for administration by City staff. A dedicated non-profit or other local volunteer organization may be better equipped to raise operating expenses and raise the Market's profile within the community.
5. Consider specific incentives to help recruit businesses to downtown Jefferson and get them established in Jefferson, partnering with JCEDC and local lenders.
6. Explore creation of mural program to boost downtown arts/beautification program, engaging local artists, organizations and residents.

Existing organizations from the public, private and non-profit sectors should be consulted in the formation of specific policies outlined above, and may include the following:

1. Engage local non-profits in public arts and events planning, including groups such as the Arts Alliance, Council for the Performing Arts, and Gemuetlichkeit Days organization.

2. Consult public bodies such City of Jefferson Redevelopment Authority (RDA), created by recommendation of the 2007 Plan, and expand upon momentum of other City-sponsored initiatives such as Friends of Rotary Park, Movies in the Park and the Farmers' Market.
3. Private economic development organizations may pool their resources for the purposes of maintaining the downtown area and marketing local businesses. The Downtown Business "Main Street" Association, which is currently under development, meets once a month, and Jefferson Chamber of Commerce, represented on RDA, could increase its involvement in downtown plan implementation.

The following recommendations are a summary of the redevelopment recommendations detailed in the Plan. Projects are listed based on priorities for next steps:

### **Targeted Redevelopment Sites**

1. Jefferson County Highway Department Site
  - Conduct meeting with Jefferson County staff and committees to discuss long-term redevelopment strategy
  - Determine additional environmental due diligence needed on site, and conduct analysis
  - Develop RFP in partnership with County to advance redevelopment
  - Promote redevelopment through developer recruitment and ongoing reuse planning
2. 138 W. Candise Street (Foremost Building)
  - Engage current owner regarding property sale to City or private developer
  - Conduct detailed housing study for 2-3 story riverfront housing development, with views of the riverfront, balconies and riverwalk access
  - Survey floodplain to determine the exact amount of buildable land
  - Plan for public improvements to improve connectivity from residential to Downtown Commercial and the Alley Improvement Areas
3. EMS Site/City Property and Riverside Alley
  - Study feasibility and develop a strategy for the reuse of the EMS/City owned property for a maker's space, year-round market, and other potential uses. Incorporate new indoor/outdoor public event space in City-owned buildings below Racine Street Bridge (using increment generated by new private development)
  - Coordinate improvements with larger Main Street streetscape program update, and the public alley behind Main Street businesses.
  - Engage local cultural organizations about programming space through public-private ventures, including community room, seasonal beer hall, and/or expandable outdoor festival space
  - Add landscaping and pedestrian-scale improvements between Candise Street and Dodge Street
  - Connect to the Old Firehouse Alley and City Center Alley and Parking Lot

4. Old Firehouse Alley Improvements
  - Consider Alley Improvement Project - organization of parking, dumpsters, and planting areas, as well as façade improvements and business signage on the back of buildings
  - Renew focus as a public gathering space with aesthetic improvements and encouraging a high density of uses.
  - Implement public improvements such as consistent design of paving, Main Street median, pedestrian-scale lighting, benches, light pole banners, planters, trash receptacles, and gateway and wayfinding signage
  - Add entry features at Main Street and Center Street
  - Consider increased financial assistance to business owners along the alleys for rear façade improvements through its existing grant program
5. Streetscaping and Connection Improvements
  - Enhance “sense of place” and establish downtown as a distinct destination through updated street amenities, wayfinding signage, art installations, Gateway Arches or arrival features, and pathways with interesting scenery
  - Integrate riverfront projects from previous riverwalk planning with enhanced on-road and bicycle/pedestrian connections
  - Utilize riverfront greenway space to connect and highlight key redevelopment sites, including Foremost and County Highway Department site that may accommodate the highest density of new construction or reuse
  - Repair Candise Street in front of the Foremost site, adding an upgraded on-street connection to the nearby North Street pedestrian bridge
  - Establish Railway Path and trail heads alongside existing Union Pacific rail corridor represents linking North and South Gateways, and priority redevelopment areas on the west side of Main Street
6. City Center Parking Lot
  - Invest in improvements to the City Center Parking Lot that allows for more flexible use
  - Explore installation of permanent awning structure for farmers’ market and other downtown events
  - Coordinate with local artists on installations or murals in nearby gathering spaces

## **Redevelopment/Reuse Opportunity Areas**

1. North Gateway Redevelopment Area
  - Establish connections between the Fairgrounds to downtown via Puerner Street and the North Gateway, as well as the Glacial Drumlin Trail via Jackson Avenue, to position Downtown as a destination for Fairgrounds visitors and promote the North Gateway as a walking-distance amenity for new and existing development in the Downtown Business District
  - Focus on improved signage and development density signaling entry into the Downtown Business District
  - Phase public improvements to coincide with redevelopment of Jefferson County Highway Department site
  - Reposition long-term residential and commercial redevelopment sites

- Former Punzel Hardware site for 2-3 story multifamily residential
  - Block surrounding Frank's Organic Feed
  - Parcels immediately east of Riverside Alley
2. Main Street Commercial District
- Target blocks on the west side of Main Street for commercial redevelopment, with the possible addition of a low-rise residential building near North and Main.
  - Increase coordination between downtown business owners to focus on developing a business niche in offering boutique products and services.
  - Establish Main Street organization or Business Improvement District
  - Market downtown as complementary to activities taking place at County offices to draw other businesses and services to downtown including law offices, title companies, restaurants, and daily needs retail and service establishments
  - Explore specific redevelopment and/or reinvestment uses for key sites:
    - Recruit new operator for Jefferson Depot restaurant and event space
    - Redevelop parking lot across Gardner Street from the Depot for infill residential with modern construction and/or reuse of the adjacent historic structures
    - Consider new mixed-use or upper story residential at El Chapparal building
3. South Gateway Redevelopment Area
- Build off of recent new business investments and plan for the long term reuse of the area for new commercial construction on the west side of Main Street that is accessible from nearby employment centers and existing residential neighborhoods
  - Target remaining parcels adjacent to the Rivers Edge Meat Market, new Ace Hardware and NAPA Auto Parts for new commercial uses
  - Explore workforce residential development, taking advantage of status of area within a qualified census tract for state and federal housing tax credits
  - Elevate redevelopment parcels on the east side of Main Street above 100 and 500-year storm levels
4. Rock River Connections and Recreation
- Establish connections between the Rock River and Downtown Business District
  - Expand existing riverwalk in phases to create a Jefferson Downtown Riverwalk Loop, with initial focus on connecting Rotary Park to Candise Street via the current Foremost site
  - Explore further improvements to on-street pathways on both sides of the Rock River, connecting the Fairgrounds to downtown via existing pedestrian and vehicular bridges and new interior streets at the County Highway site
  - Consider long-term option of additional pedestrian bridges connecting community to the island in the Rock River