City of Prairie du Chien

Waterfront Plan 2009

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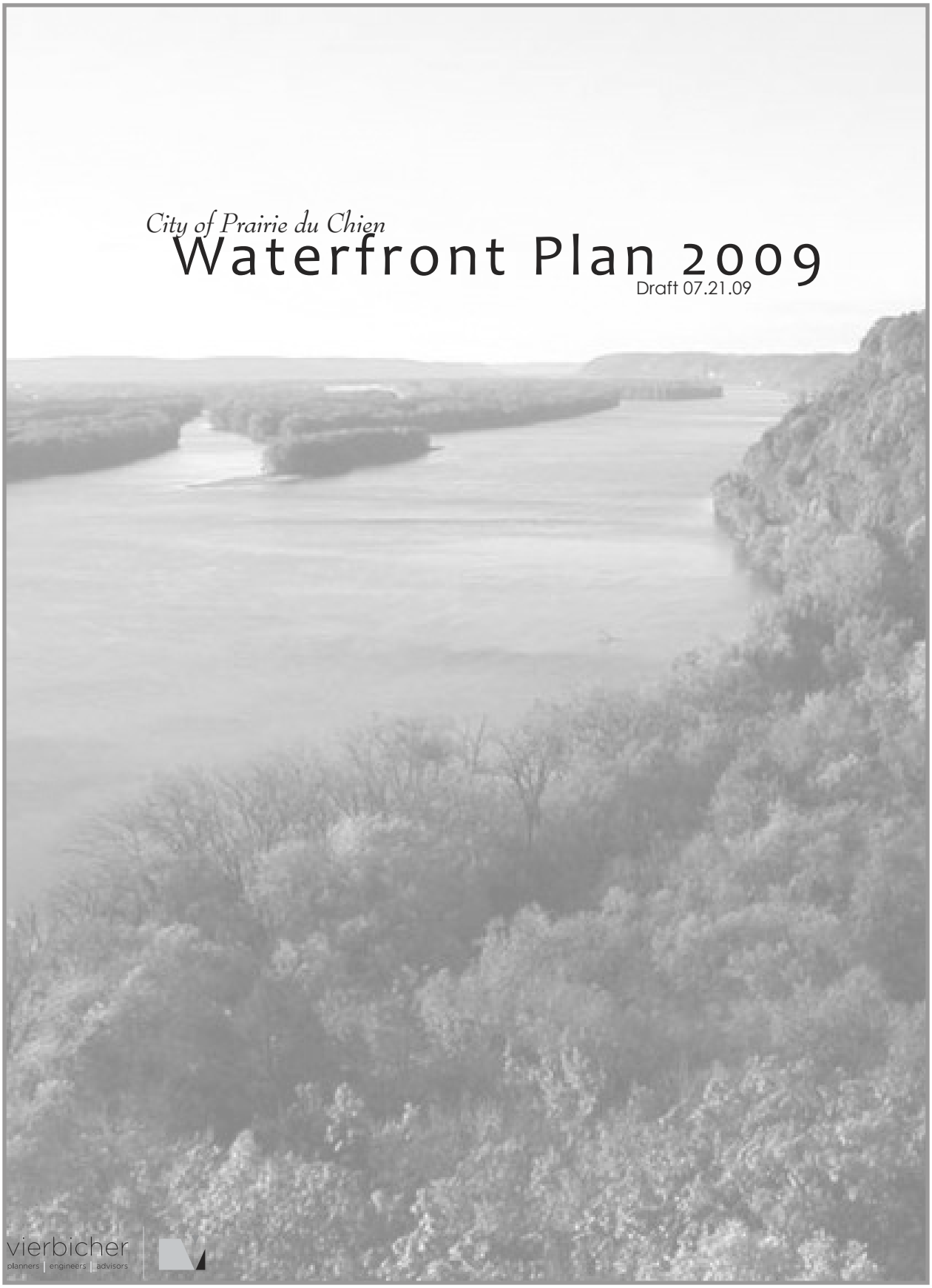

vierbicher

planners | engineers | advisors

Contents

Contents

Acknowledgements 1
Executive Summary 2
Inventory & Analysis 3
Public Input 23
Goals & Objectives 32
Implementation Plan 49
Appendix A 52
Appendix B 71

Maps

Map 1: Regional Context 21
Map 2: Property Ownership 22
Map 3: Washington Park Plan 36
Map 4: St. Feriole Island Amphitheater Site 44
Map 3: Future Improvements 48
Map 6: Quality of Life & Improvement Ideas Summary Map 1 69
Map 7: Quality of Life & Improvement Ideas Summary Map 2 70
Map 8: St. Feriole Island Gardens Master Plan 71

Tables

Table 1: Identification of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats 26
Table 2: Summary of Responses to Word Association Exercise 29
Table 3: Summary of Specific Ideas and Recommendations 29
Table 4: Summary of Issue Priority Exercise 30
Table 5: Summary of Responses to Quality of Life Assessment 31
Table 6: Implementation Chart 50

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Prepared for: The City of Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin
Prepared by: Vierbicher Associates, Inc.

Acknowledgements

WATERFRONT STEERING COMMITTEE
COMPRISED OF PLAN COMMISSION AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Plan Commission
Mayor Karl Steiner, Chairperson
David Hemmer
Jaaren Riebe
Mark Peterson
Chris Kane
Blair Dillman
Roger Grunow
Kelly Gochenaur

Public Works Committee
David Hemmer, Chairperson
Kathleen Hein
Judeen Ames
Jaaren Riebe
Jean Titlbach

CITY OF PRAIRIE DU CHIEN
City Staff
James Gitz, Administrator
Larry Gates, Co-Manager of Public Works
Terry Meyer, Co-Manager of Public Works
Michael Ulrich, Parks and Recreation Director

Common Council
Karl Steiner, Mayor
Jaaren Riebe, Alder
Becky Hackett, Alder
David Hemmer, Alder
Linda Munson, Alder
Mary Wayne, Alder
Kathleen Hein, Alder
Karen Solomon, Alder
Sharon Boylen, Alder
Jean Titlbach, Alder
Frank Pintz, Jr., Alder
Judeen Ames, Alder
Joe Ruskey, Alder

CONSULTANT
Vierbicher Associates, Inc. Madison, Reedsburg, & Prairie du Chien, WI

Executive Summary

The City of Prairie du Chien, located along the Mississippi River on the western boundary of Wisconsin, has taken many steps in recent years to improve the overall aesthetic and sustainability of its historic downtown. St. Feriole Island, adjacent to the City's downtown, is a natural and historical treasure. Separated by the Marais de St. Feriole slough, this area holds the potential to enliven the downtown and re-establish the waterfront as a substantial economic force within the City. Transportation improvements are being planned in the area, and the recent streetscaping enhancements have triggered additional interest from the community.

The City of Prairie du Chien received funding from the Wisconsin Department of Commerce in 2008 to prepare a Waterfront Plan that would define cohesive vision for this area and identify those improvements that will help that vision be realized. This Plan outlines connections, enhancements, land uses, and provides a guideline for redevelopment that the City can utilize when reviewing proposals and planning for future facilities. Specifically, the Plan is intended to:

- Encourage and better manage development along the slough;
- Ensure development is consistent with the City's plans;
- Protect the natural and cultural resources of the City;
- Encourage the incorporation of appropriate waterfront recreational uses in private and public development; and
- Connect residents and visitors to the waterfront through improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

The Plan also includes an implementation component that identifies the various tasks necessary to achieving the vision and guidelines for how to implement the tasks, including responsible parties, probable opinion of costs, and potential funding sources for each item. This document includes a number of illustrative site plans and exhibits that identify desired improvements throughout the planning area.

The end product is a plan that concentrates on goals based on five overriding themes: historical context, economic development, waterfront recreation and accessibility, natural resources and aesthetics. Each of these priorities has subsequent objectives and recommendations. All of the recommendations were developed based on the combined efforts of the City's Plan Commission and Public Works Committee, and the results of a series of public planning workshops. The workshops invited the community at large to participate in waterfront planning by providing ideas and input on drafted recommendations.

This Waterfront Plan includes those recommendations that the community feels are important to improving the waterfront along the slough for residents, visitors, and the vital natural eco-system that exists there.

Introduction and Context

The Mississippi River waterfront and St. Feriole Island have played important roles in the rich history of the City of Prairie du Chien. The Marais de Saint Feriole (also known as "the slough") is a side channel of the Mississippi River that separates St. Feriole Island from the mainland portion of the City. Prairie du Chien recognizes the value and importance of the waterfront and has completed this Riverfront Plan to guide improvements to the area. The area of focus for this plan is the waterfront property abutting the Marais de Saint Feriole on both St. Feriole Island and the mainland. This Riverfront Plan is intended to:

- Encourage and better manage development and improvements along the slough;
- Ensure that waterfront development is consistent with the City's plans;
- Protect the City's natural and cultural resources;
- Encourage the incorporation of appropriate waterfront recreational uses in private and public development;
- Connect residents and visitors to the waterfront through improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

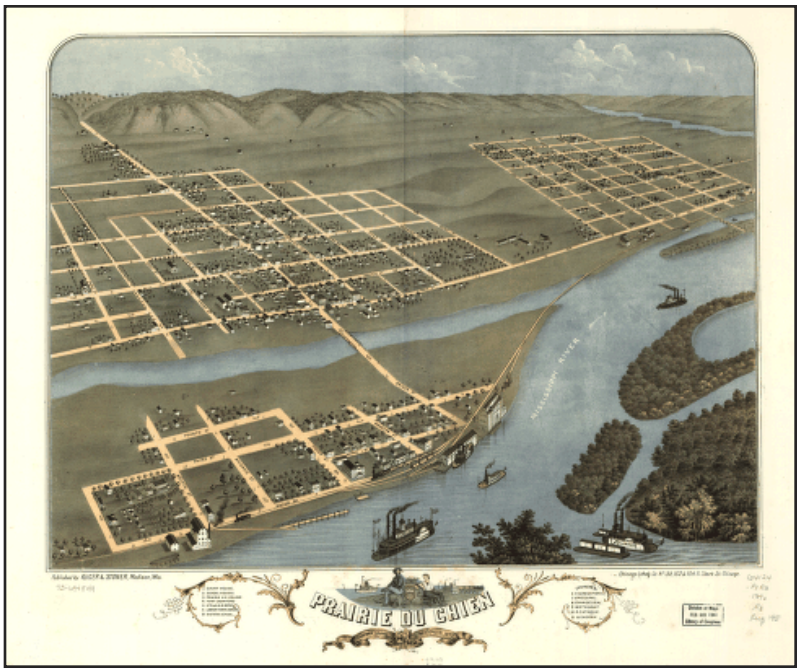
The recommendations of this plan are based in part on the following review of the history and regional context of the City, as well as previous plans that impact the waterfront area. This will provide a context for the subsequent recommendations.

St. Feriole Island and the Mississippi River

The City of Prairie du Chien is located along the Mississippi River on Wisconsin's western border. As the second oldest city in the state, Prairie du Chien celebrates a rich history, dating back to Native American settlements though exploration and occupation by French and English explorers. Early settlers were drawn in part by the City's strategic location near the confluence of the Mississippi and Wisconsin Rivers. A succession of French, British and United States forts were established on or near St. Feriole Island to protect the regional fur trade and other economic interests. The City grew into an important trade and transportation center. By the mid-1860s the City saw the arrival of up to 70-80 steamboats per week. Much of this development was centered on St. Feriole Island, including military forts, showcase homes for many of the City's most prominent citizens, railroad warehousing and river ports.

The Mississippi River continued to be an important economic resource for the City as interests shifted from the fur trade to activities such as shipping, clamming, freshwater pearling, and sand and gravel production. The Island was also developed for recreational uses such as Lawler Park and a swimming pool.

A major flood on the Mississippi River in 1965 prompted the relocation of ninety residences and two businesses. Subsequent periodic flooding has led to additional relocations. Today, much of St. Feriole Island serves as open space or recreation land. The Port of Prairie du Chien remains on the Island's north end, while the Prairie du Chien Marina is located along the Marais de Saint Feriole. Several historical properties, such as Villa Louis and the Dousman Hotel also remain on the Island. The Mississippi River continues to serve as an important economic and transportation corridor extending from Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico. The Mississippi River also provides numerous recreational opportunities, such as boating, fishing, canoeing and kayaking, and bird and wildlife watching.



An aerial image of Prairie du Chien in 1870

Great River Road Signage

Regional Context

Prairie du Chien is surrounded by scenic, recreational and natural resources. A number of state and federal parks and other tourist attractions are located nearby. The City capitalizes upon its proximity to this wide range of resources in order to serve as a regional tourist destination. There are two nearby communities and five notable state and federal parks and roadways within approximately 12 miles of the City, as outlined in more detail below (Map 1).

City of Marquette, Iowa

The City of Marquette, Iowa is located on the western bank of the Mississippi River, directly opposite from Prairie du Chien. Marquette is home to the Lady Luck Casino, located approximately two miles from downtown Prairie du Chien. The casino annually draws thousands of visitors to the area.

City of McGregor, Iowa

The City of McGregor, Iowa is located approximately four miles to the southwest of Prairie du Chien. Tourists are drawn year-round to McGregor's restored downtown, antique shops, bed and breakfasts, and nearby Pikes Peak State Park.

Great River Road

The Great River Road is a collection of roads that follow the course of the Mississippi River from Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico. The Great River Road is part of the National Scenic Byways program. This program is operated by the U.S. Department of Transportation to recognize roads with particular archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational or scenic qualities. A portion of the Great River Road passes through Prairie du Chien on State Highway 35.

Upper Mississippi National Fish and Wildlife Refuge

The Upper Mississippi Refuge encompasses the islands just to the west and south of St. Feriole Island (Map 1). This 261-mile refuge was established in 1924 by an act of Congress and is operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) as "a refuge and breeding

Marching Bear Mounds at Effigy Mounds National Monument

place for migratory birds, fish, other wildlife, and plants." The refuge stretches from near Wabasha, Minnesota in the north to Rock Island, Illinois in the south. The refuge encompasses over 240,000 acres of wooded islands, marshes and backwaters. Visitors to the refuge include anglers, waterfowl hunters and birdwatchers. The refuge is also open to biking, hiking and canoeing. The Sturgeon Slough hiking trail and wildlife viewing area are located nearby. A district office for the refuge is located just across the river from the City in McGregor, Iowa. According to the FWS, the refuge sees an average of 275,000 annual visits for waterfowl hunting, one million visits for fishing, 300,000 visits for wildlife observation and environmental education, and 1.3 million visits for water and beach-related activities.

Wyalusing State Park

Wyalusing State Park covers 2,628 acres at the confluence of the Wisconsin and Mississippi River, approximately five miles south of Prairie du Chien (Map 1). The park features burial mounds, a canoe trail, bird watching, hiking, fishing, camping and bicycling.

Effigy Mounds National Monument

This 2,526 acre national monument protects over 200 manmade earthen mounds on the Iowa side of the Mississippi River approximately seven miles to the northwest of the City (Map 1). Thirty-one of these mounds are effigies in the shape of bears and birds. Effigy mounds are commonly defined as raised mounds of earth built by American Indians in the shape of an animal, symbol, human or other figure. The national monument also offers opportunities for hiking wildlife observation and education.

Pikes Peak (Iowa) State Park

Pikes Peak State Park is located on the Iowa side of the Mississippi River, several miles to the southwest of Prairie du Chien (Map 1). In addition to scenic vistas from the top of 500-foot bluffs, the park offers camping, hiking, bicycling and wildlife viewing.

Project Area

The study area for the Riverfront Plan is centered along the Marais de Saint Feriole, a slough or side channel of the Mississippi River, that separates St. Feriole Island from the mainland portion of the City of Prairie du Chien. The boundaries of the project area are defined as follows (Map 2):

- The eastern boundary is formed by Main Street, between Cedar Street on the north and Wisconsin Street on the south;
- Wisconsin Street serves as the southern boundary, from Main Street on the east to a line extended southward from Fourth Street on St. Feriole Island;
- The western boundary is formed by Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Streets, along a line generally following the alignment of the slough;
- The northern boundary is defined by Cedar Street and a line extended from Cedar Street westward to Sixth Street on St. Feriole Island.

Soccer Fields on St. Feriole Island

St. Feriole Island Marina

Downtown Prairie du Chien is located just to the east of the project area, as shown on Map 2. Connections between St. Feriole Island, the waterfront, and the downtown district are important as each of these districts complements the others. Blackhawk Avenue currently serves as the primary transportation link between the downtown and St. Feriole Island.

Current Land Uses

The project area incorporates several land use types, many of which are defined by their proximity to the waterfront (Map 3).

The westernmost portion of the downtown district of Prairie du Chien is located just to the east of the project boundary. This district is centered along Blackhawk Avenue and Wisconsin Street. This area is characterized primarily by commercial and municipal land uses. A number of historic buildings line Blackhawk Avenue and other streets within this district. Many of the former retail spaces within this district have given way to professional offices.

Much of the mainland portion of the project area north of the downtown district is currently utilized for single-family residential homes. Some former residences and other structures in this area have been relocated or demolished due to their location within the Mississippi River floodplain and some open space exists where these structures were formerly located.

St. Feriole Island is an agglomeration of uses that have expanded as time and changes progress. Remaining City streets still exist as a reminder of the many vacation homes that were located on the island in the early- to mid-twentieth century. Due to the island's continuous flooding, the City worked with state and federal agencies to relocate these homes off of St. Feriole Island. The island is now largely comprised of open green space with several of the historic structures still standing.

There are also several opportunities for current recreational uses on the

Island. Open soccer fields and a bicycle trail are located on the northern end of the island, while a new baseball and softball complex has been constructed along Blackhawk Avenue, immediately to the west of the planning area.

The Port of Prairie du Chien is located on the Island, just to the north of the project area. The Prairie du Chien Marina is located along the slough in the northwestern portion of the project area. The remainder of the project area on the island to the south of the marina is currently open space, with the exception of the St. Feriole Island Gardens. A private not-for-profit organization has established a master plan for the gardens, and construction on several portions of the gardens has already been completed. The remainder of the gardens will be constructed as funds become available.

State of Wisconsin Statutes

State of Wisconsin statutes contain provisions that are specific to St. Feriole Island (§87.305). These provisions relate to the connection of a sanitary sewer line and public water service to the Dousman Hotel and the railroad depot on the Island. The statute also authorizes the historic use of the Dousman Hotel as a hotel under certain conditions. Both the hotel and the railroad depot are outside the Riverfront Plan project area; however, through this provision the City has also been able to utilize the sewer and water extensions to service several other land uses on the island (e.g., restrooms and concessions at the baseball diamonds). Improvements that comply with other City, state and federal regulations may also potentially be provided with sewer and water via the extensions allowed under this statute.

City of Prairie du Chien Zoning Ordinance

Redevelopment of Prairie du Chien's waterfront must conform to both the underlying zoning district as well as the Floodplain Overlay Districts defined by the City's Zoning Ordinance. These regulations restrict the design of structures to those that have low flood damage potential and offer minimum obstruction to flood waters.

Project Area Zoning Districts

The City of Prairie du Chien zoning districts within the project area are shown on Map 4. It is important to identify and understand the zoning districts within the planning area because the City's zoning code regulates the type, form and location of development that may take place.

Riverfront (RF) Zoning District

The majority of the project area is part of the City's Riverfront Zoning District, which includes all lands immediately adjacent to the riverfront. This is a multi-purpose district that primarily delineates lands that front onto the Mississippi River. The City considers these lands a unique resource that should be preserved or held for uses that require river frontage or river access. This district is also intended to preserve as open space those lands found to be too environmentally sensitive for development.

In order to safeguard the potential of lands with river frontage, there are no permitted uses other than open space within the RF district. The majority of land uses require conditional use approval by the City, including:

- Marinas
- Boat rentals
- Service and storage facilities
- Sit-down restaurants
- Vehicle rentals for touring
- Concession shops
- Clamming and industrial uses dependent on river access
- Train and tour vehicle depots
- Public camping areas
- Tourist information centers
- Hotels and motels
- Private open recreational facilities
- Utilities
- Recreational vehicle parks

Maximum building heights within this district are to be established by the City Plan Commission as part of the approval process for a conditional use permit. Buildings and uses that have been listed and approved by the City Council as having local, state or national historical value are exempted from the development standards of the RF district, upon approval of the City Design and Preservation Commission. Most of the land within the RF district is located within the Mississippi River floodplain and is, therefore, subject to the regulations of the City's Floodplain Overlay districts. These districts are explained in further detail in the following section.

The location of much of the Riverfront Plan project area within the RF District dictates that much of the area will either remain as open space or be developed for river-oriented uses subject to the City's conditional use process. Many of the conditional uses outlined for the RF District are tourism oriented. This will support the City's vision of developing itself as a regional tourist center based in part on its riverfront location.

Low Density Residential (R-1) District

Some eastern portions of the project area along Main Street are a part of the Low Density Residential (R-1) District. This district is intended primarily for low density detached single-family homes. Permitted uses within this district include:

- New or relocated single-family detached dwellings;
- Existing single-family dwellings;
- Home occupations;
- Family day care homes.

Land uses requiring conditional use approval in this district include:

- Public and semi-public houses;
- Professional home offices;
- Community living arrangements;
- Outside storage;
- Planned residential developments;
- Utilities;
- Bed and breakfasts;
- Existing single-family dwellings that are rented to tourists.

The maximum building height in this district is three stories or thirty-five feet.

The regulations for the R-1 district limit land uses to primarily single-family residential uses and bed and breakfasts. The R-1 portion of the project area is part of a larger area of existing residential uses extending from Main Street east to Illinois Street. All of the R-1 properties within the project area lie within the Mississippi River floodplain, and most of the properties lie partially or entirely within the floodway. Therefore, any redevelopment of these properties will also be subject to the Floodplain Overlay District regulations outlined in the following section.

Central Business (B-1) District

A portion of the southeast corner of the project area lies within the City's Central Business (B-1) District. This portion of the project area is located between Louis Street on the north and Blackhawk Avenue on the south, and is bordered on the east by Main Street. The B-1 district is intended to provide for businesses that will aid in restoring and furthering the development of the downtown area as a service, entertainment and trade center. Permitted uses within this district include a variety of commercial types defined by the zoning code. Some permitted uses that may be particularly relevant to waterfront redevelopment include:

- Hotels and motels;
- Professional offices;
- Restaurants;
- Tourist information and hospitality centers;
- Youth recreational facilities;
- Tourist homes;
- Government and cultural uses.

The maximum building height within the B-1 district is four stories or fifty feet. There is no requirement for providing off-street parking within this district.

The City's zoning code dictates that those portions of the project area within the B-1 District must be developed as a mix of commercial uses similar in character to that of the existing downtown. Several of the permitted uses in the B-1 District - such as hotels and motels, restaurants, and tourist and hospitality centers – would be consistent with the recommended uses set forth by previous City plans incorporating the waterfront.

Floodplain Overlay Districts

Areas within the City that would be inundated by the "regional flood" are subject to the requirements of this ordinance. The boundaries of the regional flood are based on the flooded outlines for the April 1965 high-water mark of the Mississippi River. The floodplain areas within the City are divided into two districts, the Floodway Overlay District (FW) and the Flood Fringe Overlay District (FF). These overlay districts establish regulations in addition to those of the underlying zoning district.

Regulations applicable to both floodplain districts include:

- No developments shall be allowed in floodway areas which, acting alone or in combination with existing or future similar uses, cause an increase equal to or greater than one-hundredth foot in height of the regional flood or waterways;
- No developments shall materially effect the storage capacity of floodplains;
- Subdivision proposals and other proposed new developments greater than five lots or five acres, whichever is lesser, shall include regional flood elevation data, the means to provide adequate surface drainage and to minimize flood damage;
- Water related uses such as docks, piers, wharves, bridges, culverts and transmission lines are permitted subject to Chapter 30, Wisconsin Statutes and applicable federal regulations.

The boundaries of the floodway and flood fringe areas within the project area are shown on Map 1. The entirety of St. Feriole Island is located within the floodway. On the mainland side of the slough, the floodway boundary is located at or to the west of Main Street. The flood fringe boundary is located generally at or just to the east of Main Street. The flood fringe area extends further inland in the northern portion of the project area.

Regional Flood: A flood determined to be representative of large floods known to have generally occurred in Wisconsin and which may be expected to occur on a particular stream. The flood frequency of the regional flood is once in every one-hundred years.

Floodplain: The land which has been or may be hereinafter covered by flood water during the regional flood. The floodplain includes the floodway and the flood fringe.

Floodway: The channel of a river or stream and those portions of the floodplain adjoining the channel required to carry and discharge the flood water or flood flows associated with the regional flood.

Flood Fringe: That portion of the floodplain outside of the floodway which is covered by flood waters during the regional flood; it is generally associated with standing water rather than rapidly flowing water.

Source: City of Prairie du Chien Zoning Code

Floodway Overlay District

Permitted uses in the Floodway Overlay District (FW) include those with low flood damage potential and which do not obstruct flood flows, provided that they are permitted by the underlying zoning district regulations. Permitted uses that may be appropriate for the project area include:

- Nonstructural industrial and commercial uses, such as loading areas and parking areas;
- Private and public recreational uses such as golf courses, tennis courts, driving ranges, archery ranges, picnic grounds, boat ramps, swimming pools, parks, wildlife and nature preserves and hiking trails;
- Uses or structures accessory to open space uses or historical areas;
- Marinas, boat rentals, docks, piers and wharves.

The storage of buoyant, flammable or other materials injurious to plant or animal life is not permitted within the Floodway District. Other prohibited uses include on-site sewage disposal systems other than portable latrines and wells used to obtain water for human consumption.

Developments within the Floodway District must also meet a series of development standards. Structures that are accessory to permitted open space uses may be allowed provided that those structures are not designed for human habitation, have low flood damage potential, and are constructed and placed in such a manner as to offer minimum obstruction to the flow of flood waters. The fill or deposition of any materials must not encroach on the channel area between the ordinary high-water mark on each back of the stream unless all necessary state and federal permits have been obtained, including a permit from the DNR pursuant to Chapter 30 Wisconsin Statutes.

Flood Fringe Overlay District

Any structures, land use or development may be permitted in the Flood Fringe (FF) Overlay District provided they are allowed by the underlying zoning district regulations and they meet any other federal, state or local regulations.

All development in Flood Fringe areas must meet a series of development standards. The first floor of any structure intended for human habitation must be constructed at or above the flood protection elevation for the particular area. With certain exceptions, contiguous dry land shall be provided from a structure or building to land which is outside of the floodplain, so that any structure shall be accessible by rescue and relief vehicles during periods of regional flooding. Certain yards, parking lots and other accessory land uses may be at lower elevations.

Nonconforming Uses in Flood Districts

Existing nonconforming uses in floodplain areas may be continued subject to a series of conditions set forth by the City's ordinance. There are regulations for nonconforming uses specific to each of the Floodplain Overlay Districts. These regulations are summarized below.

Floodway Overlay District

No modifications or additions to nonconforming structures in the FW district are allowed unless the activity will not increase the amount of obstruction to flood flows. Any addition to a structure must be flood proofed, by means other than the use of fill, to the flood protection elevation. No structural repairs, modifications or additions to a structure are permitted that exceed, over the life of the structure, fifty percent of its present equalized assessed value, unless the entire structure is permanently changed to a conforming use.

No new on-site sewage disposal systems or additions to existing on-site sewage systems are allowed in a floodway area. No new wells intended to obtain water for human consumption should be allowed in the floodplain area.

Flood Fringe Overlay District

All modifications or additions to any nonconforming structure in the FF district which do not exceed fifty percent of its present equalized assessed value, shall be protected by floodproofing measures. No structural modification or addition to any nonconforming structure, which over the life of the structure exceeds fifty percent of its present equalized assessed value shall be allowed unless the use is permitted in the FF district and the use meets the requirements for the FF district as summarized above. When compliance with these restrictions would result in unnecessary hardship, and only where the structure will not be used for human habitation or be associated with a high flood damage potential, the Board of Appeals may grant a variance. Modifications or additions to structures which are protected to elevations lower than the flood protection elevation may be permitted provided that they meet a series of requirements outlined in the City's zoning code.

Review of Relevant City of Prairie du Chien Plans

The City of Prairie du Chien has engaged in numerous planning efforts over the years. Several of the resulting planning documents are still in place and may impact efforts at waterfront improvements within the City. The following list is a summary of those previous planning documents. Those that impact this Riverfront Plan are highlighted in **bold**:

- 1967 General Plan
- 1981 Master Plan
- **1981 St. Feriole Island Reuse Plan**
    - Updated in 1986
- 1993 Stormwater Master Plan
- **1994 Recreation Plan**
    - Revised in 1995 and 1998
- 1997 Stormwater Planning and Preliminary Engineering
- 1997 Transportation Master Plan
- 2000 Area Transportation Study
- **2004 Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan**
- 2004 Bike Plan
- **2005 City of Prairie du Chien Comprehensive Plan**
- Environmental Assessment for the US 18/Marquette Road Corridor Study
    - Adopted in 2005

This section provides a summary of several of these documents that impact waterfront improvements.

City of Prairie du Chien Comprehensive Plan

The City of Prairie du Chien adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 2005 pursuant to Wisconsin's "Smart Growth" Law (1999 Wisconsin Act 9). The Comprehensive Plan can be viewed as an update and successor to two previous planning documents: The 1967 City of Prairie du Chien General Plan and the 1981 City of Prairie du Chien Master Plan. The Smart Growth law requires that, after January 1, 2010, all land use decisions made by the City be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The Smart Growth law also requires that a comprehensive plan must address a series of nine elements that affect land use planning.

- Issues and Opportunities
- Agricultural, Natural and Cultural Resources
- Economic Development
- Housing

- Utilities and Community Facilities
- Transportation
- Land Use
- Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Implementation

The Comprehensive Plan includes a set of goals, objectives and policies to provide guidance for land use decision-makers. A number of these goals, objectives and policies could potentially impact any waterfront or related improvements. A running theme throughout the Comprehensive Plan is the City's vision for St. Feriole Island and the waterfront as important components of the City's intention to develop and establish itself as the heart of a regional tourist destination. A summary of the pertinent goals, objectives and policies follows:

Community Vision

The Community Vision section of the Comprehensive Plan includes the following statement:

> *"Visitors to the City see Prairie du Chien as a vacation destination offering a variety of recreation opportunities that build upon the area's natural beauty and natural resources. Riverboats docked at St. Feriole Island are a common sight and take riders up and down the Mississippi River. Visitors from throughout the region and beyond are drawn to the City because of its uniqueness and its many historical, cultural and recreational assets. They find the City visually appealing. Because of these things, they visit the City time and time again and financially support a strong and growing tourism sector."*

This vision statement establishes St. Feriole Island and the waterfront as central components of the City's future development. Any improvements to the waterfront should be designed to provide or enhance recreational opportunities for City residents and visitors.

Transportation Network

The Transportation Network section includes the following objective:

> *"Establish trolley service within Prairie du Chien and between Prairie du Chien and Marquette and McGregor, Iowa."*

Several other planning documents adopted by the City have also recommended the development of a trolley system that would include stops along the waterfront and on St. Feriole Island.

Water Transportation

The objectives outlined in the Water Transportation section focus in large part on maintaining and/or increasing the viability of Prairie du Chien as a destination for both commercial and recreational boat traffic. The Comprehensive Plan also establishes an objective of increasing the opportunities for non-boat users to experience the Mississippi River.

The Water Transportation section includes a series of recommended policies and action items to meet the stated objectives. The section recommends the deepening of the slough between St. Feriole Island and the mainland in order to allow access by larger pleasure craft. The Comprehensive Plan also recommends that the City support the "*pleasure craft use of the Mississippi River originating from, or stopping at, Prairie du Chien*" and encourage formation of excursion boat services originating at the City. Specific action items recommended by the Comprehensive Plan include:

Public Boat Launch on St. Feriole Island

- Installation of river signage for larger boats;
- Improvement of existing boat ramps and development of new boat ramps;
- A study of the feasibility and support for developing additional boating facilities at the marina and for developing additional boat landings.

The implementation of many of the water transportation-related policies and action items in the Comprehensive Plan would likely take place within or impact the Riverfront Plan project area. The expansion of the marina would likely lead to an increase in recreational boat traffic and visitors to St. Feriole Island. The development of pedestrian and bicycle linkages or public transportation between the marina and the mainland will be important so that each can benefit from and support the other.

St. Feriole Island Reuse

The Comprehensive Plan includes a section of goals, objectives and policies devoted specifically to St. Feriole Island. The section includes the following goal statement:

> *"Develop St. Feriole Island as recreational and cultural asset, while recognizing constraints to development."*

The objectives outlined in the St. Feriole Island Reuse section focus primarily on decreasing the number of privately owned properties and public roads on the island, while increasing the number of public uses and events on the island. Another objective outlined in the section is to increase the economic benefit of the island to local businesses. The recommended policies in this section include:

- The promotion of the island as a steamboat junction and stopping place;
- The linkage of the island to the mainland by appropriate pedestrian and bicycle trails;
- The provision of recreational opportunities on or near the island that relate to the water resources of the island (e.g., improved and expanded marina, canoe and boat rental, new and improved boat ramps, floating restaurants, sand beach, riverfront park, fishing piers and excursion rides);
- The protection of the natural and historical resources of the island.

Taken as a whole, these objectives and policies are intended to continue the City's ongoing efforts to restore and redevelop the island to a mixture of tourism-based and open space uses that are appropriate to the island's location within a floodplain. This section recognizes the importance of developing a system of pedestrian and bicycle linkages between the island and the mainland in order to support any improvements to the waterfront. This Riverfront Plan should consider the appropriateness of locating within the project area some of the new or expanded recreational opportunities recommended by the Comprehensive Plan.

Natural Environment

The Natural Environment section includes the following policies:

> *"Restrict development along river corridors to protect riparian habitat and river quality and aesthetics."*
>
> *"Restrict development in designated floodway areas within floodplains."*

Much of the Riverfront Plan project area is located entirely within the Mississippi River floodplain. Any improvements to the waterfront will be subject to local, state and federal floodplain requirements. The slough also serves as a gateway to the City for water-related transportation. Therefore, it is important that the waterfront provide an attractive and welcoming impression to visitors. The slough and portions of the waterfront also provide opportunities to protect habitats that depend on the river.

Land Use

The Land Use portion of the Comprehensive Plan incorporates the Future Land Use (FLU) map. The FLU map divides the City into 14 base districts and 2 overlay districts for the purposes of general planning. These districts are intended to present a logical development pattern and extension of the city. The project area is divided among several of these districts, as shown on Map 5.

The majority of St. Feriole Island is identified by the FLU map as part of the Park/Recreational/Cultural District. A portion of the mainland waterfront is also designated as part of this district. The Comprehensive Plan defines this district as follows:

> *"This district is used to designate the large recreational and cultural resources in the City. These types of uses on smaller parcels are allowed throughout many of the other districts."*

Consistent with the City's Zoning Code and other planning documents, the Comprehensive Plan recognizes that, due to the many physical and legal constraints associated with the waterfront, the most appropriate land use for much of this area may be park or open space uses appropriate for location within a floodplain.

Another portion of the mainland waterfront is designated for Medium Density Residential uses. This area is located in the northern portion of the project area. The Comprehensive Plan defines this district as follows:

> *"This district is intended to accommodate the second highest residential density found in the City. Gross densities are in the range of 4 to 5 dwelling units per acre. Public facilities such as parks, trails, and schools are commonly found here."*

Improvements in the Medium Density Residential portion of the Riverfront Plan project area should be compatible with the character of the adjacent residential areas. The location of this area within the floodplain will influence what types of improvements are possible. The Comprehensive Plan also lists public facilities such as parks and trails as appropriate uses for the Medium Density Residential district. Such uses may be the most appropriate types of improvements for the Medium Density Residential portion of the project area due to floodplain restrictions.

The area centered on Blackhawk Avenue and Wisconsin Street just to the east of the waterfront is designated by the Comprehensive Plan as the Central Business District. The Comprehensive Plan defines this district as follows:

"This district is intended to be the focal point of the community with a wide range of uses and activities commonly found in a downtown area. Typical uses include commercial and professional offices on street level and on upper floors where residential uses could also occur. Uses that occupy large blocks of land such as storage facilities or auto sales or the like would not be appropriate."

The portion of the project area adjacent to the Central Business District serves as an important gateway to the downtown and as a link to St. Feriole Island. The proximity to the downtown may make this one of the most appropriate locations to provide improvements that will serve as a focal point of the waterfront area. The portion of the project area located west of Main Street between Louis Street and Wisconsin Street provides opportunities for development that capitalize on the proximity of both the downtown and the waterfront. It will also be important to provide pedestrian and bicycle links through this area to draw visitors from St. Feriole Island and the waterfront to the downtown and vice versa. Some potential improvements to this area are discussed in greater detail in the following section summarizing the 2004 Downtown Redevelopment Plan.

Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan (2004)

The City of Prairie du Chien adopted a Downtown Redevelopment Plan (Downtown Plan) in 2004. This plan focuses on what was identified as the "heart" of Prairie du Chien: the riverfront and downtown areas. This plan identifies the City's position within a historical and natural resource rich area as its greatest source of economic potential. The Downtown Plan envisions downtown Prairie du Chien's current role as a community service district being expanded to that of a tourist destination and regional hub.

Economic Opportunities

The Downtown Plan identifies a number of economic opportunities for Prairie du Chien. In general, these opportunities are centered on a strategy of establishing Prairie du Chien as a strong regional tourism destination. A number of these opportunities directly or indirectly involve the waterfront area and/or St. Feriole Island. Examples of these economic opportunities include: the historic downtown area, Villa Louis and the Dousman Hotel. The Downtown Plan also recommends the implementation of a trolley loop that would connect destinations in downtown Prairie du Chien, St. Feriole Island and Marquette and McGregor, Iowa.

Preservation and Redevelopment Plan

The Downtown Plan identifies several areas as either priority or long-term redevelopment opportunities. Two areas identified as priorities for redevelopment are located within the project area along the riverfront (Map 6). The first is located between Blackhawk Avenue and Wisconsin Street and west of Main Street. The second area is located south of Iowa Street and west of Main Street. <Expand discussion of existing conditions at these sites>

Downtown Development Strategy

The project area for the Downtown Plan was divided into five planning districts. Three of these areas (St. Feriole Island District, Riverfront Entertainment/Hospitality District and the Riverfront Residential District) are located within the riverfront project area. The Downtown Plan includes several recommendations for each of these districts that may impact waterfront improvements.

St. Feriole Island District

The Downtown Plan envisions St. Feriole Island as potentially becoming a "multifaceted visitor destination accessible not only by automobile but by boat, rail, bicycle, and foot." The Downtown Plan suggests that expansion of the Island's marina would facilitate an increase in the number of boat travelers who stay overnight at the Island and patronize downtown businesses. The plan suggests that the existing rail line that crosses the Island could become part of a regional excursion rail system. The Downtown Plan also recommends the development of a waterfront pedestrian and bicycle trail system linking the Island to the mainland. Specific recommendations from the Downtown Plan for St. Feriole Island include:

- Enhance tourism and recreation activities on St. Feriole Island;
- Rehabilitate the Dousman Hotel;
- Create an excursion rail stop on the island;
- Expand the marina.

Riverfront Entertainment and Hospitality District

The Downtown Plan identifies this district as offering the greatest potential for economic expansion in the riverfront and downtown area. The plan suggests that access to the downtown area could be improved by dredging the slough and by making modifications to the railroad bridge supports. The plan also recommends the development of a riverwalk as a pedestrian-friendly link between the Island, new riverfront development and the downtown.

This district includes the area between Blackhawk Avenue and Wisconsin Street identified as a priority for redevelopment. The Downtown Plan outlines two potential redevelopment concepts for this site. The first of these is the Great River Roadhouse. According to the Downtown Plan, the Roadhouse is "envisioned as an exciting multi-faceted entertainment complex that draws visitors from the Great River Road into downtown Prairie du Chien." The Roadhouse would contain a variety of spaces including a restaurant/diner with outdoor seating, river-view lodging and space for banquets/special events. The second concept is known as the Mississippi Outpost. The Outpost is "conceptualized as a one-stop outdoor recreation center". Services available at the Outpost would include fishing and hunting guides and assistance in finding hiking opportunities, camping sites or hotels.

Specific recommendations for the Riverfront Entertainment and Hospitality District include:

- Develop a riverfront bicycle and pedestrian path (*note: to be developed in this Plan)*;
- Dredge the Marais de Saint Feriole (slough) to allow boats to dock at the Mississippi Outpost and downtown area;
- Modify the railroad bridge to enable boats to enter the slough;
- Redevelop key riverfront sites (concepts include the Great River Roadhouse, Mississippi Outpost and a potential performing arts center);
- Improve the Main Street gateway into the downtown, particularly for those entering the City of Prairie du Chien from Iowa;
- Develop riverfront lodging and hospitality facilities;
- Encourage riverfront residential development.

City of Prairie du Chien Downtown Streetscape Project (2006)

In 2005, the City of Prairie du Chien, in conjunction with Prairie du Chien Downtown Revitalization Inc., developed a document to prepare possible design themes and preliminary construction budgets as part of an overall revitalization strategy for the City's downtown area. This project was intended to initiate a process of conceptualizing the character or identity the City seeks to present and the physical amenities that could illustrate that character, and to develop these ideas to a level of detail that enables preliminary construction budgets.

The project area for this document included a portion of the waterfront between Court Street on the north to just south of Wisconsin Street and extending eastward past Dousman Street.

The project document includes a set of plans for streetscape improvements throughout the downtown area. These recommended streetscape improvements incorporate a set of six symbols intended to reflect some of the City's primary assets. These include history, fish, wildlife, native vegetation, waterfowl and railways.

As of early 2009, the recommendations of this project have been implemented on Blackhawk Avenue between Main Street and Illinois Street. The City is currently working to extend the streetscape improvements southward on Main Street between Blackhawk Avenue and Wisconsin Street. The City is also in the process of applying for funding to implement the streetscaping recommendations for several side streets identified in the project document along Blackhawk Avenue.

City of Prairie du Chien Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (1999-2004)

The Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) is intended to serve as a guide for future recreational development in the City. The CORP's major objective is to "provide quality outdoor recreation for area residents, visitors, and to set priorities to improve these facilities in the future". Several of the goals, objectives and policies set forth in the CORP could potentially influence waterfront redevelopment:

<u>Goals</u>

- Increase tourism through recreation opportunities focusing on St. Feriole Island.

<u>Objectives</u>

- Implement activities on St. Feriole Island that promote recreation and tourism opportunities (for the purpose of improving local recreation opportunities);
- Maintain recreation areas to protect the natural environment while providing public enjoyment of resources;
- Implement the St. Feriole Island Re-Use Plan.

The CORP identifies St. Feriole Island as a regional park. The Island's potential for tourism is described as centering on its historical significance and its ideal location for recreational opportunities on the river and its environs. Lawler Park is located on the western side of St. Feriole Island and existed as a community park before the floodplain relocation project. Maintenance and improvements to Lawler Park are identified as a priority on the Island.

The CORP also includes several recommendations that pertain to St. Feriole Island and the waterfront. These include:

- Recreation uses in flood-prone and other environmentally sensitive areas should be planned and designed to comply with floodplain regulations while also protecting the City's natural resources.

- Island trails should be improved and extended for access to the variety of recreational, historical and tourist facilities on St. Feriole Island.

St. Feriole Island Re-Use Plan (1981, revised 1986)

The 1986 St. Feriole Island Re-Use Plan (Re-Use Plan) is an update to the original 1981 St. Feriole Island Re-Use Plan, which served as a portion of the original City of Prairie du Chien Master Plan. Both plans are intended to guide the City's actions in transforming St. Feriole Island "*from a source of problems and concerns into a center of cultural and economic vitality as it was a century ago*". The 1986 update includes revisions that are:

- More tolerant of public-private arrangements for implementing the plan;
- More tolerant of integrating contemporary economic and industrial activities;
- Less insistent on physical separation of potentially conflicting uses;
- More concerned with finding ways to link diverse uses to create a sense of critical activity mass.

Both Re-Use Plans envision the development of a variety of active and passive recreational uses that relate to the historical nature of St. Feriole Island. These include a staging area for tours of historic sites within the City, steam train rides, steamboat rides and a horse race track. The plan also recommends the development of pedestrian and bicycle trails to link the Island to the mainland. The 1981 Re-Use Plan incorporates an overall design concept for the redevelopment of the island. The 1986 update recommends that the municipal arena is best located either at its current location or at the northern end of the island. The latter location would only be possible upon the relocation of the municipal port currently located there. The plan emphasizes that locating the municipal marina at one of these locations would contribute toward the formation of a "critical mass" in combination with a private marina recently developed to the north of the island at the time of the 1986 update. The 1981 Re-Use Plan recommended that the municipal marina be relocated on the mainland to the south of the island; however, the 1986 update recognized that this would not contribute toward a "critical mass" of boating facilities and would also pose greater chances for conflict with the freshwater mussel preservation efforts in the slough.

St. Feriole Island Public Garden Master Plan (2004)

The St. Feriole Island Public Garden Master Plan (Garden Plan) was developed to "document the issues and the evolution of conceptual plans for developing a public garden on St. Feriole Island". This plan recommends the development of a public garden that could potentially meet several goals set forth in the St. Feriole Island Re-Use Plan (1986). The proposed site is located within the project area and adjacent to the slough, between Blackhawk Avenue on the south and Fisher Street on the north (Map 6). The Garden Plan suggests that the development of a public garden on the island would be shaped in large part by the environmental and archaeological constraints in place (e.g., floodway status, historical regulations).

The Garden Plan recommends that the gardens accommodate and enhance the staging and functioning of cultural events on the Island. This is suggested in order to preserve the long-standing history of events being held on the Island. The Garden Plan "*encourages the use of cultural and environmental resources to develop an educational and recreational system based upon not only the Island's history, but that of Prairie du Chien and the upper Mississippi valley*".

Despite the regulatory, environmental and archaeological constraints on the island, the Garden Plan identifies numerous opportunities for the development of a public garden and related attractions. Site-appropriate features may include a plant maze, labyrinth, interactive sundial, sculptures, pergolas or gazebos. The Garden Plan recommends that the gardens begin on higher ground to the south, which was formerly planted with prairie species. This area largely escaped inundation from floods observed during the planning process. The original area selected for consideration experienced extensive flooding. The southern site also has greater visibility due to its location bordering Blackhawk Avenue. Recommended features for the public garden include a grand lawn and pergola, backwater garden, woodland wildflower walk, stream and shade gardens, and perennial, wildflower and butterfly gardens.

Construction on improvements for the public gardens has commenced, and the Garden Plan is in the first stages of being implemented.

Other Development Factors

Development or redevelopment within the project area will also be impacted by a number of factors or agencies other than the City itself, as discussed under the headings below.

Flood Constraints

Development within the floodplain must conform to state and federal regulations in addition to the City of Prairie du Chien's zoning ordinance. The DNR office in La Crosse has oversight of construction-related issues within floodplains. Most types of structural development are not permitted within the floodway. Certain activities and uses are allowed within the floodway pursuant to Chapter 30 and Chapter 31 state permits. Most activities are permitted within the flood fringe by the DNR provided that they meet certain development standards.

There is an existing bulkhead on St. Feriole Island just to the east of the baseball diamonds on the southern end of the island (Map 1). This bulkhead was established by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in preparation for a planned dredge spoils dumping site. The site was never used for the dumping of dredge spoils, and the City has developed a series of ball fields and related structures on the property. No placement of fill material is permitted between the bulkhead and the Mississippi River floodway boundary to the east.

Historical and Archaeological Constraints

The State Historical Society office in Madison holds jurisdiction over any issues related to archaeological or historical sites in the project area. According to the 1986 St. Feriole Island Re-Use Plan, there may be several known or alleged historic sites within the project area. These include a reported camp and workshop site on St. Feriole Island along the slough, a log cabin at 113 Villa Louis Road, and a log jail site on the east end of Fisher Street on the Island. As specific improvement projects are implemented, it will be necessary to consult with the State Historical Society to verify that no historic or archaeological sites would be impacted. In the event that any archaeological remains are uncovered, work must be halted until an inspection can be performed by Historical Society officials.

The site for the St. Feriole Island Public Garden Master Plan is located within the project area. Leslie Eisenberg, the State Historical Society's Burial Sites official, reviewed the Garden Master Plan and determined that no known sites would be disturbed by its implementation.

Bulkhead: A wall or embankment, as in a mine or along a waterfront, that acts as a protective barrier.
Source: American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language 4th Edition ©2006

Contaminated Sites

The Wisconsin DNR maintains the Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) as part of the Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program. The RR program oversees the investigation and cleanup of environmental contamination and the redevelopment of contaminated properties. BRRTS includes an online database that provides information about contaminated properties and other activities related to the investigation and cleanup of contaminated soil or groundwater throughout the state. This review includes only those sites shown on the BRRTS online mapping system. Not all BRRTS sites are shown on the map. The locations of BRRTS sites within or near the project area are shown on Map 6.

A review of the BRRTS database in March 2009 found one site located within the project area boundaries, the former location of Joe's Service Station at 300 W. Blackhawk Avenue. This site is listed on the State's Environmental Repair Program (ERP) Database, which list sites other than Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUSTs) that have contaminated soil and/or groundwater. These sites often involve historic releases to the environment. The BRRTS database indicates that there was both soil and groundwater contamination involving volatile organic compounds, polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (petroleum) and lead. The Joe's Service Station Site is listed as an open site, indicating that cleanup efforts at the site are ongoing.

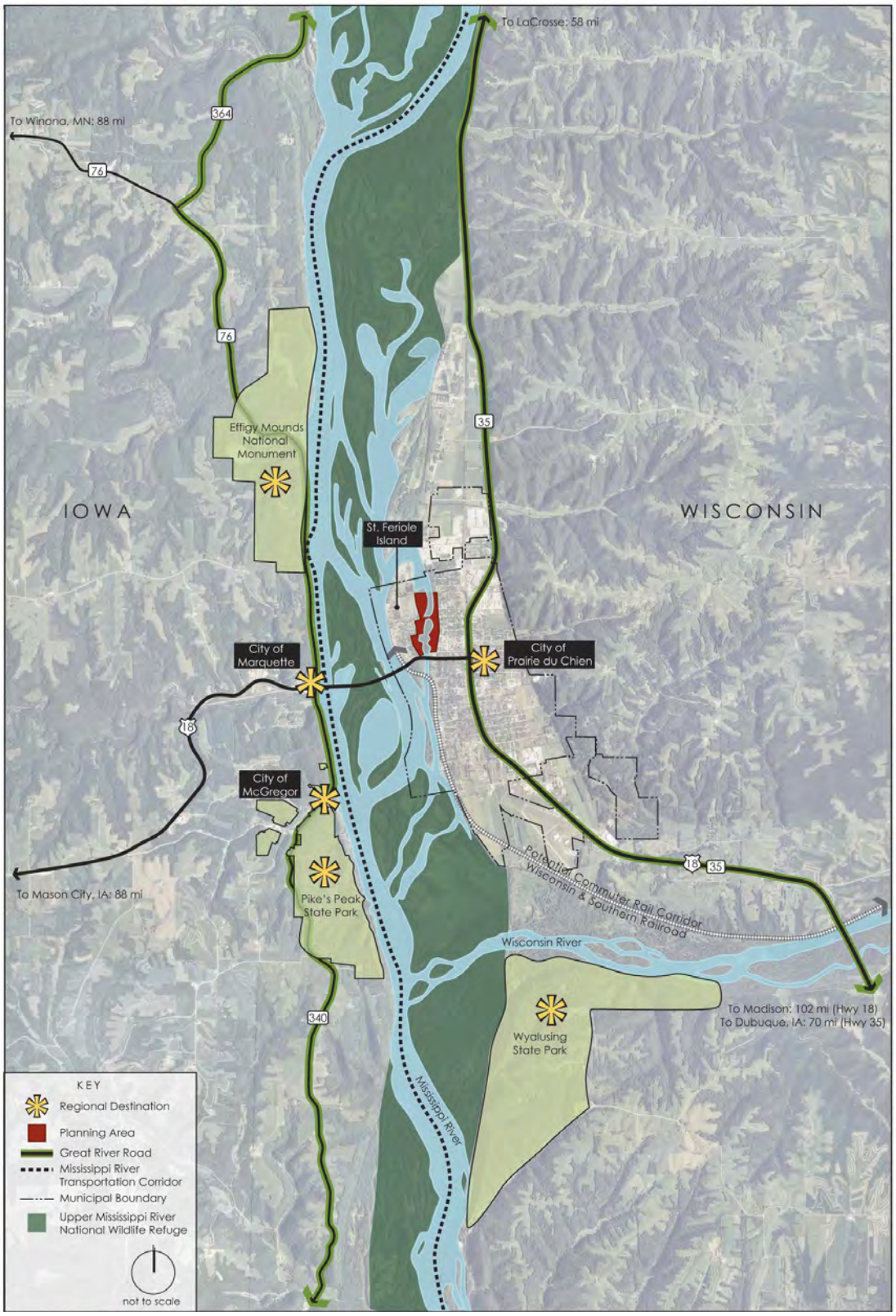
The former Joe's Service Station site is also listed in the State's LUST database as a closed site. Cleanup efforts related to this listing have been completed. BRRTS indicates that soil contamination by gasoline was involved.

Several other sites near the project area are listed on the BRRTS database. Two of these are located on St. Feriole Island, the Prairie Sand and Gravel Site located on the northern tip of the island, and the Northern Engraving site located on the western side of the island on Villa Louis Road. Groundwater contamination was reported at the Northern Engraving site. Cleanup activities at both of these sites are listed as closed. The 3M Consumer Products Group site is located just to the east of the project boundary at 217 North Prairie Street. Soil contamination was reported at the site, and cleanup activities at the site are listed as closed.

Summary

The Riverfront Plan project area is impacted by previous City of Prairie du Chien planning documents, as well as numerous local, state and federal regulations. The location of the project area within the Mississippi River floodplain and the various floodplain-related regulations will be the most important and restrictive factor in determining what improvements and development are most appropriate for the area. In general, any improvements within the project area should contribute to the City's vision of utilizing the historic, natural and recreational aspects of the waterfront to help establish itself as a regional tourist destination. At the same time, any waterfront improvements must be appropriate for locations within a floodplain and should be compatible with the character of neighboring areas. Even when considering these physical and legal constraints, the waterfront area provides opportunities for expanded recreational opportunities, improved linkages between St. Feriole Island and the mainland portion of the City, and the support and enhancement the downtown and other neighboring areas.

Map 1: Regional Context



Map 2: Property Ownership

Public Input

Public Involvement Summary

Community input is essential in developing a plan that is supported by the community and that will address the true needs of the City. A series of exercises were conducted during the Joint Public Works Committee/ Plan Commission meetings to provide direction for developing the goals, objectives and recommendations for this Plan. The City also held a series of public workshops to gather public input and provide for access to draft plan elements and other materials to the general public and community interest groups. Summary tables of the results of these sessions are included at the end of this chapter, and the complete results of each of the public involvement exercises can be found in Appendix A.

Several common themes were prominent throughout each of the input exercises. Many of the most commonly cited topics were related to the waterfront's historic nature. Stakeholders recognize that Prairie du Chien's rich history draws visitors to the area. The waterfront is at the center of much of that history. The City's residents want to see the waterfront's history preserved, while at the same time expanding education and public awareness efforts to draw new visitors to the area. Stakeholders also expressed a strong interest in preserving the waterfront's natural resources and amenities. The Marais de Saint Feriole (the Slough) is the most prominent, but not the only, natural feature that draws visitors to the waterfront. Stakeholders want to see opportunities for wildlife viewing, fishing, boating, bicycling, walking and other activities improved and expanded while still preserving the area's natural habitats. The need for improved and additional boating and fishing facilities were among the most commonly cited concerns.

Another priority for City residents is the improvement of accessibility to the waterfront, as well as connections between the waterfront, downtown, and the rest of the community. Stakeholders want to see accommodations made so that activities along the waterfront are accessible to people of all ages, interests and abilities. They would also like to see the continuing development of the area's trail network.

Finally, the City's residents envision development along the waterfront that will increase tourism and contribute to the City's taxbase, while at the same time respecting the waterfront's natural and historic character. Among the most commonly cited improvements were: condominiums, a downtown hotel and convention center, an outdoor recreation center, and the continued development of the St. Feriole Island Memorial Gardens.

Public Workshops

The City and Vierbicher facilitated two public planning workshops, held on April 23, 2009 and June 4, 2009. The first workshop was intended to gain input about stakeholders' perception of current conditions and ideas for the future. Attendees rotated between several stations where they participated in a series of activities designed to gather input regarding their likes, dislikes and recommendations for the waterfront. A total of approximately forty individuals attended the workshop. A compilation of the results, which also includes responses to the same questions from the Public Works Committee and Plan Commission members, can be found in Appendix A.

The second public planning workshop was held as an open house, and allowed community stakeholders the opportunity to view the drafted recommendations for the Riverfront Plan. Interested community members were able to attend the open house at their leisure and spend as much time as they desired reviewing all of the drafted ideas and recommendations. They were asked to provide their input and feedback on the materials in order to allow the Public Works Committee and Plan

Commission the opportunity to revise the draft document accordingly before forwarding it to the Common Council.

Public Input Exercises

Several public input exercises were conducted at both the April 15, 2009 Joint Public Works Committee/Plan Commission meeting and at the April 23, 2009 Public Workshop #1. The combined results of these exercises are summarized under each heading below.

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis helps to identify current trends as well as opportunities or threats that may impact the planning area and its ability to change or adapt in the future. The City conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis with the Joint Public Works Committee and Plan Commission, and also at the initial public open house. The results of these sessions are summarized in Table 1 at the end of this chapter, and served as an important resource for the City in developing the goals and objectives of this Waterfront Plan.

Word Association

The Joint Commission members and attendees of Public Workshop #1 were asked what words would describe their vision for the waterfront. Table 2 provides a summary by category of some the most common responses or themes expressed.

Goals

The Joint Commission members and Public Workshop #1 attendees were asked "What goals do you have for this area in the future?" The following is a summary by category of the most common responses or themes expressed.

Natural Amenities

- "More nature"
- Maintain existing natural habitat
- Plant additional trees

Historic Resources

- Development that respects the historic nature of the community
- Opening of the Dousman Hotel
- Increased education and awareness of the historical importance of the waterfront in local schools

Active Recreation

- Development of additional fishing piers
- Increased number of outdoor recreation facilities that meet the needs of all ages and ability levels
- Improved marina
- Accommodations for boat traffic to be possible at all water levels

Planning and Funding

- A waterfront plan that is consistent and integrated with the downtown

Transportation

- Waterfront that is accessible for all

- Increased connectivity with the rest of the community

Tourism

- Further development of the St. Feriole Island Memorial Gardens
- Market the waterfront throughout the region and the nation
- Expanded use of the waterfront for events

Commercial and Residential Development

- Promote cooperation with local businesses
- Develop a hotel with boat access

Specific Recommendations

The Joint Commission members and Public Workshop #1 attendees were asked to provide specific ideas or recommendations for the future of the waterfront. The most common responses or themes are summarized by category in Table 3, at the end of this chapter.

Topic Priority

A facilitated discussion asked workshop attendees to identify which topics they felt should be priorities during the planning process. These topics were then prioritized by participants. Each participant was giving a set of seven stickers. Attendees were then asked to distribute their stickers by placing them under the topic headings they felt were the highest priority. It was explained that they could distribute their stickers among various topics, or group them together, depending on their personal opinion of priorities. The results of this exercise are summarized in Table 4. The numbers provided in parentheses are the number of attendees that identified that topic as a priority.

Circulation Analysis

Another station at the workshop asked attendees to indicate what issues they felt were important in terms of the overall transportation network in the waterfront area. The following is a summary of the most common responses or themes expressed.

- Reduce speed limits
- Improve bicycle connections for Washington and Beaumont streets
- Bicycle facilities on Blackhawk Avenue are good
- Dredging of the slough and/or raising of bridges is needed to improve access for boat traffic
- Truck traffic creates conflicts with some other waterfront uses
- Develop a boardwalk along the slough
- Development of additional bicycle/pedestrian trails
- Improve traffic flow by eliminating some stop signs
- Lack of sidewalk on North Main and Washington streets
- Close some of the excess streets on St. Feriole Island
- Improve accessibility to waterfront for all users
- Identify a specified truck route

Quality of Life and Ideas for Improvement Assessment

Workshop attendees were asked to pinpoint specific locations on a map of the waterfront that represented either an "amenity/like" or a "nuisance/dislike" (Refer to Maps 6 & 7 in Appendix A). Attendees were also asked to provide recommendations or ideas for improvement at specific locations. The most common responses by category are summarized in Table 5. Numbers provided in parentheses correspond to location numbers on the maps.

Table 1: Identification of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
Natural Amenities	• Natural amenities and scenery • Duck pond • Riverfront location • Fishing • Trees • Water recreation • Marais de Saint Feriole • Wildlife habitat	• St. Feriole Island's location within floodway limits options • Industrial development along the waterfront detracts from natural beauty	• Youth fishing amenities • Maintain scenic views • Create a land trust to conserve waterfront in perpetuity	• Sensitive ecosystem • Potential loss of natural beauty • Restrictions on floodplain development • Main Street homes may lose view of slough if waterfront is raised • Siltation of slough and shallow water
Historic Resources	• Villa Louis • Dousman Hotel • Native American heritage • National landmarks • State historic site		• Develop historic attractions	
Transportation	• Easy access • Pedestrian access via Blackhawk Avenue	• Accessibility • Railroad is underutilized • Lack of handicapped accessibility • Excess of roads • Rustic roads needed • Difficult access via Washington Street for pedestrians	• Expansion of facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians • Develop meandering roadways	• Truck traffic, noise and pollution in residential areas near Main Street and Overview Court
Planning and Funding		• St. Feriole Island presents a large area to maintain • Lack of established goals for the island • Lack of long-range design plan • Lack of funding for maintenance • Lack of funding for rehabilitation and improvements • Potential impact on tax rates • Lack of willingness to charge for island events • Lack of funding for public gardens		• Lack of funding • Need for maintenance and prevention of vandalism

	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
Active Recreation	• Expansion of boating facilities • Baseball diamonds • Access to athletic facilities • Athletic fields	• Marina • Shallow depth of the Slough • Low bridges • Lack of handicapped accessible fishing facilities • Lack of water recreation (e.g. kayaks and canoes) • Increasing waterfront development makes some forms of recreation more difficult (e.g. fishing, boating, wildlife viewing)	• Safe sheltered area for family recreation in paddleboats • Additional fishing areas • Improved recreation facilities • Improvements to the marina • Expand and develop connections between trail facilities • Water recreation (e.g. kayaks and canoes) • Handicapped accessible fishing facilities • Develop outdoor recreation/ learning center • Handicapped accessible picnic areas • Upgrade of boat launch with power washer • Fish cleaning station • Playground with merry-go-round • Sandy public swimming beach • Disc golf course • BMX bicycle park • Harboring for transient boat traffic • Increase accessibility to downtown for boat traffic	• Difficulty in expanding marina due to presence of large private marina just north of the City • Access to the waterfront from the south by large boat traffic hampered by low bridges • High boat traffic due to fishing tournaments • Conflicts with personal watercraft
Commercial and Residential Development			• Waterfront restaurant • Hotel/motel • Condominiums with boat docks	• Potential for over-development

	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
Tourism	• Waterfront is a major tourist draw • Public gardens • Established history of public events on St. Feriole Island		• Additional events • Large area to hold events • Outdoor theater/arts facility • Weekly concert events • Consolidate memorials on the island (e.g. veteran's memorial) • Reed House	
Miscellaneous	• St. Feriole Island is large enough to accommodate multiple uses • Central location near lodging, eateries and shopping • High level of public interest	• Some existing structures may not fit into plans • Portions of waterfront are currently underutilized • Portions of the slough currently cluttered with debris and trash • Indifference of some citizens toward the waterfront • Lack of maintenance for some homes along Main Street		• Issues with the river wall • Resistance to change from neighboring citizens

Table 2: Summary of Responses to Word Association Exercise

Natural Amenities	• Enhancement of natural areas • Attractive • Left open • Natural beauty • Sustainable • Habitat for wildlife • Slough as a gateway
Historic Resources	• Respect and promote history
Tourism	• Multiple events • Tourist destination • Regional center for tourism with a historical theme
Active Recreation	• Outdoor recreation destination • Water-based activities
Transportation	• Multi-modal access • Limit automobile traffic
Miscellaneous	• User-friendly • Family • Educational • Attractive • Proximity to downtown

Table 3: Summary of Specific Ideas and Recommendations

Natural Amenities	• Wildlife sanctuary • Natural prairie area(s) • Bird and wildlife viewing walkways or platforms
Active Recreation	• Improvement and expansion of trail network • Dredging of the slough and/or raising of bridges to accommodate boat traffic • Improvements to marina • Outdoor recreation center • Develop handicapped accessible fishing facilities
Tourism	• Continued development of St. Feriole Island Memorial Gardens
Transportation	• Provide additional parking • Increase multi-modal connections between to the waterfront
Commercial Development	• Convention center and hotel • Waterfront restaurant

Table 4: Summary of Issue Priority Exercise

Topic	Comments Generated From Discussion
1. Historical Context (38)	• Tourists enjoy history • Prairie du Chien has a wealth of history, but education and promotion is needed
2. Tourism (33)	• Tourism is an existing strength • Pieces are in place for the waterfront to be a major destination
3. Natural Resources (30)	• Natural resources draw visitors • Existing natural resources should be enhanced (plant more trees) • Highlight the river
4. Recreation (26)	• Fishing, bicycling, walking, events, ball games • Opportunity for new activities (e.g. Frisbee golf or BMX) • Recreational opportunities draw tourists
5. Asset to Economic Development (23)	• Opportunities needed for young people • Excess of minimum wage jobs • Land along Blackhawk Avenue should be developed for multiple uses that are accessible to everyone • Boats need to be able to access the slough
6. Visually Appealing (15)	• Waterfront sometimes looks unkempt • Keep natural • Need to maintain quality of visual appearance of the island
7. Education (10)	
8. Family (8)	• Consider the needs of families
9. Continuity With the Rest of the Community (7)	
10. Safety (6)	• Safety issues with dredging the slough • Need for safety or people will avoid the waterfront
11. Uniqueness (5)	
12. Destination (4)	
13. Informal Gathering Area (3)	

Table 5: Summary of Responses to Quality of Life Assessment

	Amenity/Like	Nuisance/Dislike	Recommendation
Natural Areas and Amenities	• Eagle watching area (43)(205)(268) • Maintain natural beauty/amenities (183)(225)(219)(251)		• Maintain natural beauty/amenities (183)(225)(219)(251)
Transportation	• Pedestrian/bicycle path (192)(111)	• Lack of pedestrian/ bicycle trail or poor trail connectivity (110)(129) • Truck traffic (131)(157) • Lack of available parking (293)(302) • Need for traffic control (252)(245)	• Develop and/or extend pedestrian/ bicycle trail (153)(154)(159)(209)(249)(326)(322)(334)(348)(413) • Avoid development of trails on private property (212)(250)
Active Recreation	• Existing trails (295)(301) • Boat landing (301) • Existing park amenities (424)	• Condition of marina (42)	• Improve access for fishing (65)(207)(208)(255)(314)(341)(424) • Improve and/or expand marina (63)(245)(246)(256)(315)(346) • Raise bridges or dredge slough (176)(328)(347) • Improve boating facilities (304) • Provide daily/transient docking (265)(63)
Tourism			• Improve/expand memorial gardens (145)(147)(263) • Install public information kiosk (158)(159) • Improve island gateway (206)(254)
Public Facilities	• Picnic area	• Maintenance of public shelters (324)	• Install dog waste disposal station (226) • Install lighting (232) • Install benches (232) • Enclosed meeting space (327) • Public showers (337)

Goals & Objectives

Informational signs such as this one can educate visitors about the historical significance of sites and structures in the planning area.

The following goals and objectives were developed using information collected in the assessment stage of the planning process, as well as input gathered through public meetings (full summary in Appendix A). The goals and objectives are intended to address the specific issues and needs of the waterfront while also being consistent with the City's other planning efforts. Goals provide general statements in regard to future outcomes; objectives provide the broad tasks which contribute to achieving a goal; recommendations identify the detailed action items that should be followed in order to meet the objectives. Recommendations identified correlate to the Implementation Table included in Chapter 4 of this document. Each recommendation in the Implementation Table is prioritized and includes information about cost estimates, responsible parties, and potential funding sources.

Vision

The future of the slough will preserve the long-term viability of the waterfront as a place for public enjoyment and a source of pride within the community. It will foster an environment that enhances local quality of life while also responding in a calculated manner to inevitable changes. It will create a future which preserves local character and historical context, recognizes and preserves the vast natural resources, and encourages residents and visitors to utilize and appreciate the unique qualities and amenities along the slough.

Goals

When reviewing public input and ideas that were discussed throughout the process, five main topics were established as the priorities for this planning area. These are the overriding considerations that drive improvements along the slough, each with their own goal, as discussed below:

1. **Historical Context: Create an awareness of the historical context of the island and area; utilize this as an educational and aesthetic component to all improvements.**

The history of the City, and St. Feriole Island in particular, was identified as a recurring theme in discussions. As one of the oldest cities on the Mississippi, Prairie du Chien has a recognizable character not prevalent in newer communities. The events and history that have occurred on the Island are treasures to hold onto. However, visitors to the area are currently provided with very little information or education about the contextual nature of their surroundings. To make improvements to the Island or slough without recognizing and celebrating this history would cause any project to fall short of its true potential.

2. **Economic Development: Utilize the waterfront as an opportunity for economic development and growth by creating a destination and promoting tourism within the region.**

Many municipalities envy the position of the City of Prairie du Chien. The City holds large portions of a 240-acre public island on the banks of the Mississippi River. While this situation alone is enough to provide outstanding opportunities for economic growth, the City also has a revitalized downtown and major transportation corridors bisecting the area. Natural resources, small-town charm, easy access and good visibility combine to develop a recipe for economic success. Tourism became a recurring theme when discussing economic development throughout the planning process. While the slough and Island are well utilized by local residents, there is an opportunity to establish this area within the larger region as a place for recreation and natural resources. Also, depending on the

Amenities such as benches and landscaping can increase the visual appeal of a place & help create a unified character or theme.

ability to redevelop key downtown parcels with uses that could serve a larger population, such as a convention center, additional amenities are desired to attract public and private events to the area. Amenities are necessary to enhance local quality of life and to attract households and jobs to a community. With an enhanced waterfront, the City will better establish itself as a competitor for workforce opportunities and improve its ability to draw jobs to the area.

3. **Waterfront Recreation & Accessibility: Create an accessible destination for residents and visitors of all ages that is user-friendly and safe, and that can be utilized for a multitude of purposes ranging from passive enjoyment of natural resources to active recreation and community events.**

The waterfront is an amenity that can be enjoyed by all residents and visitors, regardless of age or ability. It is important that the City promote use and enjoyment of the waterfront that is diverse and attracts various types of users. The natural resources prevalent in the area lend themselves to outstanding passive recreational activities, including fishing, walking, and bird watching. More active recreational opportunities currently exist throughout the Island with a baseball park and open soccer fields; however, there are opportunities for additional active recreational uses to be enhanced or introduced along the waterfront that are not currently available, such as kayaking and canoeing. This diverse set of recreational activities will promote use of the waterfront by a larger segment of the local and visiting populations.

4. **Natural Resources: Preserve and enhance natural resources and provide opportunities for public education and viewing of these resources.**

The Mississippi River creates a stage of scenic beauty and natural resources unmatched elsewhere in the state or region. The eco-system created by this river brings an abundance of diverse wildlife and vegetation to the Prairie du Chien area. It is important for the community and greater region to ensure the long-term preservation of these resources. Public education about these resources and their systems is crucial so that people understand the importance of their actions and how they affect these eco-systems.

5. **Aesthetics: Improve the visual appeal and aesthetic of the waterfront and ensure that all improvements work to achieve this goal.**

The waterfront and slough should be an inviting place for people to recreate and visit. While the natural resources provide a superior level of visual appeal to the area, it is important that any improvements made complement the context that these resources provide. Design of improvements and overall aesthetics are important when developing amenities in order to establish a cohesive and coordinated waterfront.

The interconnected nature of waterfront planning in Prairie du Chien means that nearly every recommendation developed during the planning process addresses multiple goals, if not every goal. For example, one recommendation is to create a new boardwalk on the island side south of West Blackhawk Avenue. While this recommendation primarily fits under the "Waterfront Recreation & Accessibility" goal, it could also address the historical context of the island by informing trail users of the island's natural history. It could be considered an economic development measure because it enhances activities for tourists and draws more people to the waterfront. Itimpacts natural resources by providing an opportunity for people to experience and learn about wetlands. Construction should proceed in a manner that improves the aesthetics of the sloughfront. Every recommendation contained in the categories below should be undertaken with the five main points above driving design and implementation.

Objectives and Recommendations

Recommendations for improving the Prairie du Chien waterfront along the slough were developed through an extensive public participation process. The objectives are grouped together based on category and are highlighted in bold print. All of the recommendations that meet a particular group of objectives is outlined and explained under those objectives.

A. Improve accessibility for boating through the slough and opportunities for boaters to access St. Feriole Island and the City's downtown district.

Prairie du Chien is not taking full advantage of its proximity to the Mississippi River. Increasing access to the River would improve recreational opportunities for residents of the City, while simultaneously fostering economic development through increased tourism activities. If done correctly, improving boat access to the slough could improve the natural habitat for fish as well because necessary dredging could help restore some diminished fish habitats. The recommendations below were formulated to improve the accessibility for boat traffic through the slough and to provide opportunities for boaters to access amenities including St. Feriole Island and the City's downtown district:

1. *Dredge select areas of the slough to improve boat accessibility.* Accommodating boat traffic through the slough is a problem because of the areas under the water that have accumulated sediment. In order to increase boat navigability, various portions of the slough will need to be dredged. Dredging will open up some of the areas that have become inaccessible by boat and reintroduce larger watercraft into the slough, which allows more residents and visitors to utilize the area and amenities. Two specific areas have been identified for dredging on the master plan map (page ___), but these areas are intended to provide better fish habitats, rather than to accommodate boaters. These areas are on each side of the slough immediately north of the Blackhawk Avenue Bridge. There are various areas within the main channel of the slough that will require dredging for the purposes of increasing boat navigability.

2. *Develop boat docks south of Blackhawk Avenue in conjunction with redevelopment at the southwest corner of Blackhawk Avenue and Main Street.* Additional boat docks must be a priority in order to provide boaters with easier access to the Island and downtown area. While the marina is provided on the northern end of the slough, there is no direct access for boaters into the downtown area. The site at the southwestern corner of Blackhawk Avenue and South Main Street is identified for future mixed-use redevelopment. When this site redevelops, it is recommended that the plans incorporate public access to new boat docks at this location. The proximity of this site to amenities and the downtown, and the ability to incorporate public access into the overall site design, provide a unique opportunity that is not available elsewhere in the area. This promotes economic growth and could attract users, such as a restaurant, that could attract boaters that utilize the slips.

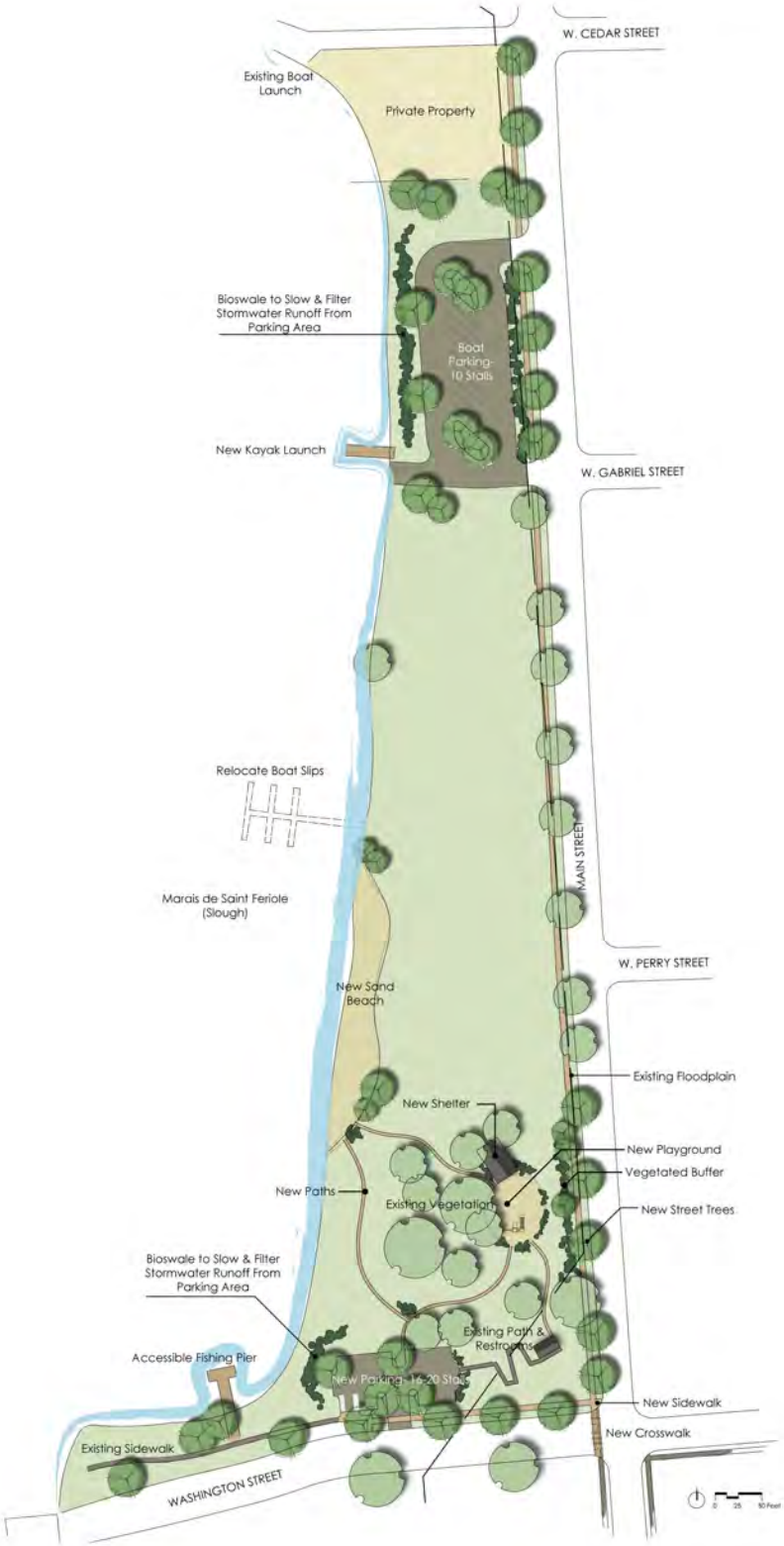
3. *Develop a kayak/canoe launch area in Washington Park.* All forms of boating are encouraged along the slough. While motorized boats have several launch areas available, there is currently not a dedicated area to put non-motorized boats in the water. The area south of the Cedar Street boat launch provides an opportunity to create a dedicated dock for launching these boats; however, it is important to separate motorized and non-motorized boat traffic when launching. The kayak/canoe launch should not be incorporated into either of the existing motorized boat launches. While not much space needs to be dedicated to construction of a pier, safety should be of the utmost importance. A launch location should also avoid any areas with particularly fast underwater currents, as inexperienced kayakers can easily be overcome in an unsafe situation.

4. *Remove the concrete abutment under the Blackhawk Avenue Bridge to improve navigability and safety.* The Blackhawk Avenue Bridge has an outdated concrete abutment that is hindering boat traffic in and out of the slough. In order to be removed, additional research needs to be conducted regarding the composition of the abutment and the best means for removing it. This will be necessary in order to safely accommodate additional boat traffic through this area.

5. *Improve the Cedar Street boat launch.* The Cedar Street boat launch has been serving the local community for decades. The boat launch has become run-down and requires some enhancements for it to remain viable in the future. (Additional information?)

6. *Study options for rehabilitating the marina and create a detailed plan for marina improvements.* The marina is a City-owned facility that is leased out to a private party. Although the marina provides a service for boaters in the City, it is in a serious state of disrepair. Opportunities exist, as discussed above, to dredge the slough and provide better accessibility for boaters along this waterway. As the demand improves, there will be an increased need for an improved marina facility. There are various options for improving this facility, including restoration, reconstruction, relocation, etc. A study should be conducted that will investigate the market potential of the marina in order to determine the best course of action. A market analysis will provide the City with a better understanding of the existing and future potential as far as size of a facility, amenities, etc. It is important to note that

Map 3: Washington Park Plan



Fishing piers like the one pictured above provide access points to waterways while protecting sensitive shoreline vegetation and fish habitat.

any future modifications or improvements to the marina will be required to abide by Department of Natural Resources regulations. If better facilities were provided, there may be the potential to substantially increase utilization of the marina, thereby attracting more people to the waterfront.

7. *Add a power washing station to the boat launch area on St. Feriole Island.* Invasive species are an on-going threat to natural resource systems. In order to mitigate this threat, it is important that boaters not transfer species that might be on their boat after removing it from the slough, and not introduce species into the slough that may have been attached to their boat from a previous location. A power-washing station would allow boaters to wash their boats prior to and after boating excursions along this waterway and assist with minimizing the impact of these species.

B. Preserve and enhance opportunities for passive recreation.

C. Develop park and open space amenities targeted at a wide range of population segments.

1. *Create a new fishing pier on the Island and a new handicapped accessible fishing pier in Washington Park.* Like boating, improving fishing opportunities in Prairie du Chien is aimed at increasing the City's ties to the Mississippi. Being on the river is not unique in and of itself, but, as the largest riverfront City between LaCrosse and Dubuque, Prairie du Chien is well-situated to take advantage of regional tourism opportunities. Improving area fishing could be a big factor in building upon the area's already impressive outdoor recreation offerings. The City does not currently have a handicap-accessible fishing pier, although there is demand for one. An accessible pier could be developed in Washington Park with minimal effort. This area is already owned by the City, is easily accessible from surrounding residential neighborhoods, and has the potential to provide designated handicap-accessible parking on site. A second fishing pier should be established on the Island and is identified for the point that extends into the waterway from the St. Feriole Island Gardens. This point, along with serving as a pristine viewing area, is centrally located and provides an ideal location for fishermen to access the slough.

2. *Add a fish-cleaning station near the boat launch area on St. Feriole Island*. Fish cleaning stations, depending on the type, provide the opportunity to be a revenue-generator for the municipality. While providing an additional amenity to fishermen along the slough and riverfront, the by-products of a fish cleaning station can offer fertilizer to local consumers. The remnants are picked up by a private company and then processed and distributed.

Although there are simpler versions, the City should investigate this alternative prior to determining what type of station to offer public users.

D. Ensure improvements do not have a negative impact on existing natural resources.

E. Where possible, restore the quality of natural resources, such as wetlands and fish spawning areas.

F. Develop opportunities for public viewing of natural resources.

There are several measures that can be taken to enhance the natural resources of the waterfront area. Investing in natural resources will benefit fishing and other nature-based recreation, such as bird-watching. Combined with other objectives, it is part of the overall strategy to improve the waterfront, which will lead to a better quality of life for residents and native species. With the abundance of natural resources available in this area, it is important to pay careful attention to any improvements that are made to ensure the continued sustainability of the local eco-system. All recommendations within this plan should work first and foremost to minimize any negative impact on the natural resources and strive to improve the quality of the resources available in all areas of the slough. Important resources such as fish spawning areas, bird migration and vegetative areas, and wetlands should be carefully managed and improved when possible to preserve them in perpetuity.

1. *Study the wetlands north of Lucky Park to determine their quality and identify the most appropriate way to improve them.* The wetlands located north of Lucky Park are an important natural feature within the planning area and provide habitat to a number of native species. It is important to identify the types and quality of species previously existing in this area and work to restore them, while improving the quality of the currently existing wetlands. Once improved, they provide an important link in the local ecosystem that can also be viewed and enjoyed by visitors to the area.

2. *Dredge the areas west of Lucky Park and east of St. Feriole Gardens to improve water quality and fish habitat.* These two areas have been identified as natural areas for fish spawning within the slough. They are outside of the main channel and present opportunities for restoration of water quality and improved fish habitat. In order to restore these areas, dredging will be required to remove sedimentation that has built up.

G. Improve infrastructure for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists to create a more efficient network and improve access to amenities along the slough.

The effectiveness of many of the objectives and recommendations in this Plan would be hampered without improving the roads and parking in the riverfront area. Increased recreational opportunities, including marina upgrades, expanded and new parks, and new trails, will all contribute to more activity along the waterfront. Commensurate investments must be made in infrastructure to accommodate these activities.

Boardwalks provide scenic routes through natural areas while protecting sensitive vegetation.

1. *Replace Washington Street Bridge*. The Washington Street Bridge has many existing deficiencies that qualify it for replacement. The bridge is currently too low to allow adequate boat traffic to travel underneath it. It also does not have a designated area for pedestrian and bicycle traffic to travel across it. The construction of the bridge does not allow the attachment of a pedestrian overhang on the side. When reconstructed, the bridge should include dedicated pedestrian and bicycle lanes and sidewalks.

2. *Create a new surface parking lot along Washington Street south of the marina.* This would provide some handicap-accessible and overflow parking for the proposed amphitheater site, marina, and St. Feriole Gardens. In designing this parking area, the City should avoid the addition of impermeable surface area on the Island that would increase run-off and have negative impacts on natural resources in the area. Creative design and materials should be explored to mitigate any potential impacts of providing additional parking facilities.

3. *Expand and improve the surface parking area in Washington Park.* This parking area should be expanded to accommodate increased traffic after a beach and amenities are enhanced in the park and to provide handicap-accessible parking for a new accessible fishing pier. Preliminary design layouts estimate approximately 16 to 20 spaces for this parking area.

4. *Improve the intersection of North 4th Street and Brisbois Street to create an organizing element that connects the proposed amphitheater (See Section L below) and gardens to the sculpture park and the Villa Louis.* There are number of improvements and amenities on St. Feriole Island that are rich in history and culture. Given the size and unique history of the Island, it is difficult to organize these elements to portray a cohesive and overall coordinated design. The intersection at the corner of the proposed amphitheater site has the potential to begin organization of some of these amenities based on the location and relationship between sites. Improvements to this intersection could help to create a better organizing factor on this area of the Island by creating visual linkages between the sites. Paving enhancements, landscaping and stone structures could all be utilized to enhance these connections. Example sketches of these improvements are included on page 44.

H. Establish a continuous circulation loop for pedestrians and bicyclists around the slough.

I. Ensure adequate pedestrian and bicycle crossings at key points of circulation.

This crosswalk is clearly marked by differentiation in pavement color & texture, and provides a mid-crossing median, allowing pedestrians to cross one lane of traffic at a time.

J. Improve connections from local circulation routes in the planning area to city-wide and regional networks for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.

The City has an opportunity to increase resident and tourist activity along the waterfront by constructing a trail network. Trails, in addition to providing a recreational resource, would connect the Downtown to other waterfront activities. A trail network will go hand-in-hand with other improvements to increase the area's vitality and draw more people to the riverfront. The recommended improvements to develop this trail network include the following:

1. *Create a river walk along the island side of the slough between Blackhawk Avenue and Washington Street.* The waterfront between Washington Street and Blackhawk Avenue along the Island provides an opportunity for a continuous north/south trail connection for visitors and residents. The City will need to work with some organizations, such as the St. Feriole Island Gardens Committee, to develop this trail system. The design and location of this trail will be dependent on many natural features and may change form as it travels along the waterfront, such as a boardwalk or paved trail. There is a strong tree-line along much of this area of the waterfront, and the trail system should be designed in a manner that would preserve the existing natural habitats.

2. *Construct a new boardwalk on the island side south of Blackhawk Avenue for the purposes of viewing natural resources.* The wetlands and woodlands that exist on the Island south of Blackhawk Avenue provide an abundance of natural resources that are home to numerous species of wildlife and vegetation. While this area should be carefully managed and remain undeveloped, the erection of a boardway trail look, would offer the opportunity for public viewing and education. Careful attention must be paid when designing this system to mitigate any potential negative effects on the natural systems that exist in this area.

3. *Add a new sidewalk/path connection along North Main Street north of West Washington Street.* A sidewalk should be constructed adjacent to Washington Park along North Main Street to provide better accessibility and safety to patrons utilizing this park and traveling to and from St. Feriole Island. The sidewalk should extend the full length of the block and make a connection between Washington Street and Cedar Street.

4. Create a trail connection from Lucky Park to the Visitor Center on South Main Street. The City's visitor center is located on the waterfront along South Main Street. It is important when trying to improve access to information and educational materials that an efficient connection be made between the visitor's center and the waterfront pedestrian networks. A connection

Riverwalks provide access to the river as well as a scenic & peaceful walking route.

should be made between Blackhawk Avenue and the visitor's center to the south when public access and boat docks are created on the redevelopment parcel. This would provide additional opportunities for visitors to the area to easily obtain information.

K. Enhance the public riverfront park system and improve the overall aesthetics of parks and open spaces; develop amenities within the planning area that improve local quality of life.

L. Improve and maintain the appearance of prominent public facilities and utilities throughout the planning area.

A City with such a prominent riverfront deserves a park system that matches the river's visibility and importance. A number of recommended park system improvements are included in this riverfront plan:

Washington Park

1. *Create a new sand beach in Washington Park.* Even with the substantial amount of waterfront property owned by the City, there is no public beach for local residents and visitors to enjoy. Washington Park provides an easily accessible long stretch of shoreline with the potential for expanded parking. There are also other amenities within the park that lend it to family use, such as play equipment and bathroom facilities. With the other improvements recommended for this park, the beach would ideally be positioned to the north of these other amenities so as to provide a substantial separation from any fishing activities.

2. *Construct a new park shelter and play equipment in Washington Park.* A new park shelter and play equipment would provide additional amenities that would enhance this park as an environment conducive to families. Along with a new beach, a handicap-accessible fishing pier, and expanded parking, this park would provide a range of recreational amenities to serve a wide segment of the population. The majority of this park is located within the 100-year floodplain and, therefore, any park shelter improvements would need to abide by the requirements of the Department of Natural Resources.

Lucky Park

3. *Clean up the shoreline and improve the facilities at Lucky Park.* Luck Park is located to the north of Blackhawk Avenue on the mainland side of the slough. It essentially creates one of the entranceways to St. Feriole Island, and has the potential to become a better utilized park facility with its location near downtown and a designated redevelopment site. The shoreline of the park is currently in a state of disrepair with overgrown vegetation and broken concrete. The shoreline should be cleaned up and restored to make this park is an inviting place

Example Outdoor Performance Structures

for people to visit and utilize. With the opportunity to improve existing wetlands immediately adjacent to Luck Park, this area could provide additional opportunities for enhanced natural resources and public viewing and education.

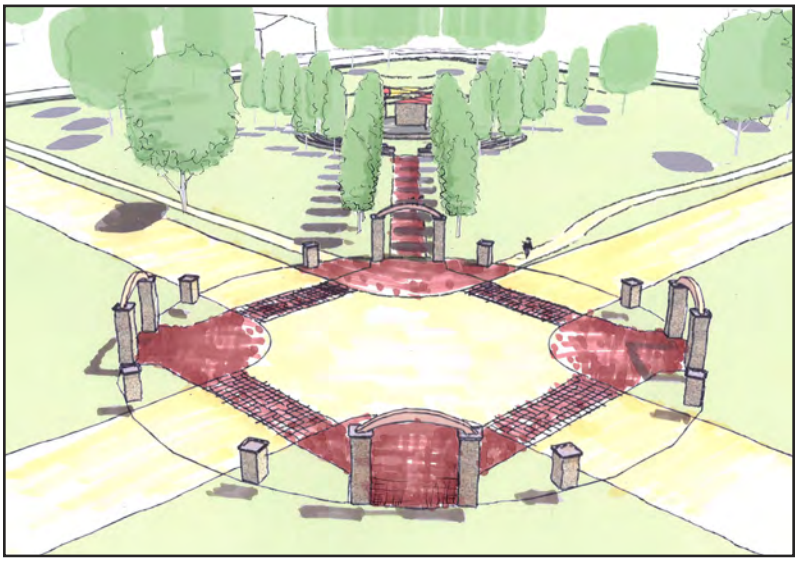
4. *Place wayfinding and regional context maps in Lucky Park*. Located along a prominent area of Blackhawk Avenue at the entrance to St. Feriole Island, Lucky Park has the potential to see high volumes of foot and bicycle traffic in the future. This is an ideal location for some way-finding maps and educational signage about the area and the larger region. This could potentially be integrated into a larger signage system for the planning area that focuses on educating visitors about the history of the Island and City.

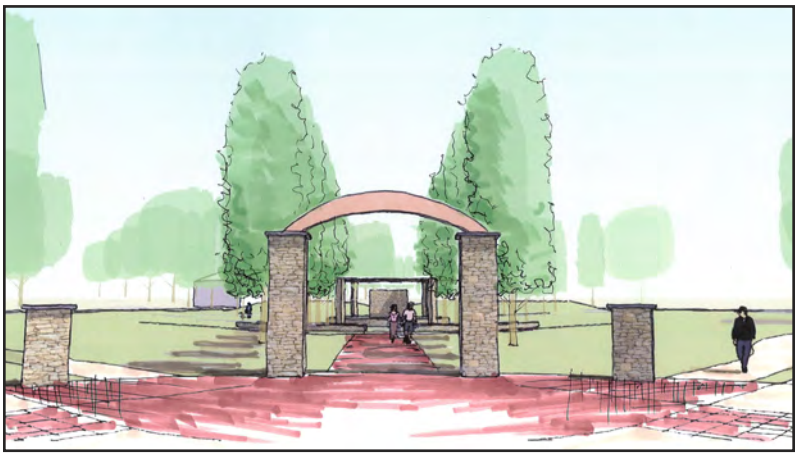
<u>St. Feriole Island Gardens</u>

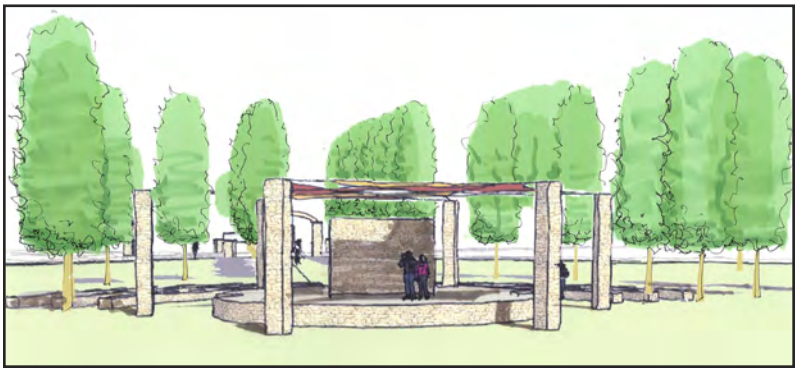
5. *Develop the St. Feriole Island Gardens.* A group of private citizens of the City of Prairie du Chien initiated the visioning and fundraising for a formal garden area on the Island north of Blackhawk Avenue. This Committee raised funds to develop a master plan for this 10-acre area immediately north of Blackhawk Avenue and have since raised funds to start creating improvements consistent with that master plan, which is included in more detail in the Appendices of this document. The master plan for the gardens, which are estimated to cost $1.7 million, includes a series of walking paths, a spring-fed pond, various plantings and gardens, a waterfall and an observation point on the slough. These gardens will be seen as one enters the Island from Blackhawk Avenue and the downtown. This Plan proposes one minor change to the Garden Master Plan, which is to include a public fishing pier at the end of the observation point that extends into the slough.

6. *Acquire private parcels as needed to implement construction of the Gardens as shown on the future improvements map included in this Plan.* One obstacle to completing the development of the Gardens will be to acquire the properties that are still owned privately on the Island. There are currently six privately held parcels within this area that will need to be acquired before any improvements can be made.

Amphitheater Site Character Sketches







New Park Space

7. *Create an outdoor amphitheater and performance space on St. Feriole Island north of the Gardens.* The St. Feriole Island Gardens provide an amenity to users of the Island by enhancing this area of the waterfront and providing a formal space for walking and enjoyment. There are several parcels adjacent to the gardens to the north along Washington Street that would provide a natural end-cap to this improved area and help create a cohesive waterfront plan between Blackhawk Avenue and Washington Street. A public amphitheater is proposed for this area that helps to serve as an organizing element for the greater Island by aligning with the Villa Louis and creating a transition into the Gardens from the north.

A more detailed site plan for the amphitheater site is included in this document. Any structure that is developed must be in conformance with the regulations of the Department of Natural Resources, as the entire Island is located within a floodplain. Because of this, a typical structure will not be allowed. The ultimate design of the facility should utilize stone columns complimentary to the stone retaining walls constructed in the City's downtown area. Although a roof may not be allowed, there may be some flexibility to design an open-air facility that utilizes an alternate roof system, such as a pergola structure or fabric coverings.

The amphitheater should be designed so that it is two-sided, meaning that it can be viewed from both sides. One side should provide more formal seating with

Map 4: St. Feriole Island Amphitheater Site

benches, while the opposite side closer to the slough should be more organic with open lawn and berms created for seating. This will provide flexibility for the use of the facility and lends itself to different types of performances or entertainment.

As shown on the detailed site plan, the location of the amphitheater should align with the Villa Louis on the northwestern side of the Island. The ultimate site design should carefully consider this connection and emphasize its relationship in order to provide an element of organization between these amenities and pay respect to the historical context of the Island.

In conjunction with the construction of an amphitheater, existing right-of-ways separating this space from the St. Feriole Island Gardens should be removed. This area, which includes a portion of Fisher Street and the southern portion of North 5th Street, should be removed in order to provide a continuous green space along the waterfront. Also, the City owns a storage shed immediately to the west of this area, located on North 5th Street. The City should consider the relocation of this storage shed in order to improve the aesthetic and overall design of the waterfront area and amphitheater site.

Other Improvements

8. *Add gateway features on St. Feriole Island along Washington Street.* While the southern end of the slough has seen some improvements with gateway features along Blackhawk Avenue, the Washington Street entrance does not have any defining features and amenities to announce it as an entryway onto the Island. Entry features mimicking those along Blackhawk Avenue should be added to designate this area as a more prominent portion of the planning area.

9. *Enhance pedestrian amenities in parks and along trail routes.* As improvements are made throughout the area, it is important that benches, trash receptacles, lighting and other pedestrian amenities be included in the design and implementation. The design of these components should be compatible with those styles already present on the Island and in the downtown area.

M. Identify areas where future redevelopment is recommended and specify development guidelines for those areas in order to respect the natural resources and historical context of the area and provide an opportunity for economic growth.

N. Ensure new development incorporates pedestrian and bicycle connections to the surrounding neighborhoods and waterfront.

The public investment in the improvements listed above will create demand for new construction near the waterfront. The City should evaluate projects based on how successfully they are integrated with existing development and to what degree they complement the many improvements that are recommended for the waterfront. One site in particular has been identified for redevelopment within the planning area. This site, at the southwestern intersection of Blackhawk Avenue and South Main Street, has the potential to provide substantial investment and economic growth in the downtown area. Several uses have been discussed for this site in the past, including

a potential convention center, hotel, and condominiums. With its prevalent location near the downtown and at one of the entrance-ways to the Island, it is an important piece of the overall aesthetic of the downtown. Care should be taken to develop a site that is sensitive to its context.

The area between the slough and Main Street on the mainland side currently consists of single-family residential homes. This area is identified to continue as residential use in the future. However, as demand grows along the waterfront, redevelopment pressures may also increase and higher-density residential uses may be requested with potential condominium homes or other types of attached single-family housing. Any redevelopment of residential uses should also be sensitive to its context and carefully address the prominent location along the waterfront.

Outlined below are the design guidelines for waterfront development or redevelopment within the planning area. These design guidelines are not specific to any particular site or land use, but should be applied to all development or redevelopment as a means of creating an aesthetically pleasing and cohesive waterfront environment.

Context

- The pursuit of unique and defining design characteristics should be encouraged in any new development, except where such design would detract from the character of surrounding buildings. In addition, the design of all new development should harmonize with the surrounding historic context by integrating complementary design materials or replicating the distinguishing design elements of prominent historic structures.

- Building height and mass should respect and compliment surrounding buildings by positioning the most significant building mass away from smaller, neighboring structures. If the building is located in close proximity to smaller structures, the design should include stepbacks that reduce the perceived building height and mass as it approaches neighboring buildings.

- Front-yard and side-yard setbacks should mimic the most common setback size of surrounding buildings.

Waterfront Views

- All new waterfront development should respect the three components of waterfront viewsheds:

    1. All new buildings should be positioned, designed and landscaped in a manner which provides occupants of the building with unobstructed waterfront views.

    2. All new buildings should be positioned, designed and landscaped in a manner which provides views of the waterfront to street level users. No waterfront development can obstruct the view of the water across the entirety of its street frontage.

    3. The design and materials used on the water-facing side of the building must be of the same quality as those used on the street-facing/parking-facing side of the building. This is to ensure that development provides an attractive façade that addresses boaters and users of the slough.

Waterfront Access

- All new development and redevelopment should provide attractive, landscaped waterfront access to its on-site users.

- All new commercial or mixed-use development and redevelopment should provide public waterfront access. The waterfront should be accessible by the public via landscaped and lit pedestrian paths that can be accessed from sidewalks or other pedestrian areas without the need to enter the structure itself.

Parking

- Parking should be located in a manner which does not interfere with pedestrian access from the sidewalk/street, or interfere with waterfront access. Whenever possible, parking should not stretch across the entirety of a building's front façade.

- No development should locate parking lots near the River's edge.

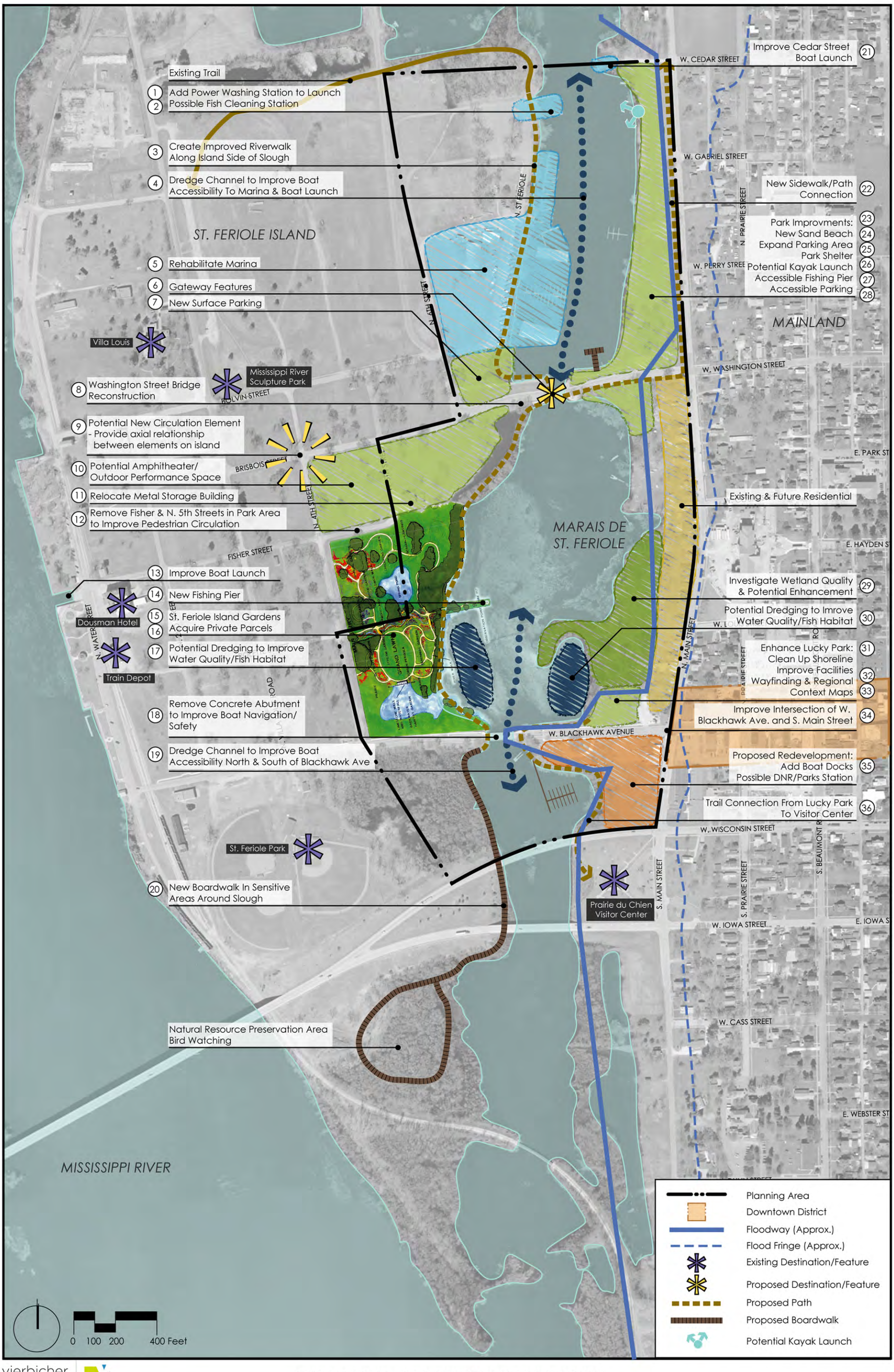
Environmental Considerations

- Impervious surface should be minimized to the greatest extent possible. Any impervious surface that is included – e.g., parking lots – should incorporate grass covered medians and trees or, if possible, bio-swales and curb cuts to reduce stormwater run-off.

- Implement site design, grading and landscaping that works to mitigate run-off of sediments and nutrients into the River.

O. Ensure that all improvements along the slough and Island are coordinated and carefully managed to ensure a cohesive vision for the future.

Several planning efforts have been conducted over the past twenty years to ensure the sustainability and longevity of the Island and waterfront. While several agencies have an interest in various portions of the Island, such as the City Harbor Commission, State of Wisconsin Historical Society, St. Feriole Island Gardens Committee, etc., there is not a single overriding agency or joint venture between agencies that is responsible for overall planning and improvements on the Island. In order to preserve the integrity and future of the Island and waterfront, a partnership should be created between the various entities that have an interest in the Island to oversee planning and improvements. This will improve communication between these agencies and ensure that future recommendations are conceived and executed in a coordinated manner.



vierbicher
planners | engineers | advisors

FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

city of prairie du chien waterfront plan

Implementation Plan

The recommendations presented in the Riverfront Plan represent the initiatives necessary to create the desired future for the planning area. In order to make those initiatives a reality, they must be paired with implementable action steps. The implementation matrix found in this Chapter transforms the recommendations into specific tasks by assigning a responsible party, action steps, a time frame, cost estimate, potential funding sources and priority level. With these pieces of information, the responsible party can undertake the task of putting the Riverfront Plan into action.

Not all of the recommendations are included in the implementation plan. Some recommendations, such as the design guidelines for redevelopment, are policy statements that do not have an actionable party or time frame. As a result, those recommendations are not found in the implementation matrix. Although not located in the implementation portion of this Plan, it is still the intent to have the City utilize policy statements and design guidelines when making future decisions that impact the planning area.

Table 6: Implementation Chart

Implementation Plan: Prairie du Chien Waterfront Plan

Priority Scale = 1 - 5: Highest Priority = 1-2.4 (Green) Middle Priority = 2.5-3.0 (Yellow) Lowest Priority = 3.1-5 (Blue)

Short-Term: 0-3 years **Mid-Term: 4-6 years** **Long-Term: 7 years or more**

***Denotes high priority and short-term**

#	Priority	Recommendation / Improvements		# on Map	Opinion of Probable Cost	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Sources	Time Frame
1	1.9	Clean up shoreline of Lucky Park - incl removal, conc, debris, new rip-rap, vegetation	*	31	$10,000	Parks and Recreation Dept	WDNR Boating Facilities Program	Short-Term
2	2	Develop a new handicapped accessible fishing pier in Washington Park (per concept)	*	23	$34,000	Parks and Recreation Dept	WDNR Boating Facilities Program	Short-Term
3	2	Create outdoor amphitheater / performance space (per concept design)	*	10	$300,000	Common Council	City parks budget /special appropriation (legislator)	Short-Term
4	2	Dredge slough to improve boat accessibility (north and south of Blackhawk Avenue; marina and boat launch area)	*	4,17,19,30	$400,000 (Includes all aspects of permitting, mobilization and spoil site)	Harbor Commission	WDNR Boating Facilities Program (navigation channel only)	Short-Term
5	2	Develop handicap accessible parking for fishing pier north of W. Washington Street (16 space lot)		24	$28,000	Parks and Recreation Dept	WDNR Boating Facilities Program	Mid-Term
6	2.1	Develop a park shelter in Washington Park (incl conc base slab - approx 24'x40')	*	25	$30,000	Parks and Recreation Dept	City parks budget /special appropriation - if part of larger project (legislator)	Short-Term
7	2.1	Create improved riverwalk along Island side of slough (per concept incl guardrails) (2000LF)	*	3	$440,000	Parks and Recreation Dept	WDNR Stewardship (if connected to trail)	Short-Term
8	2.1	Develop a kayak/canoe launch area in Washington Park (with dock)		26	$18,000	Parks and Recreation Dept	WDNR Boating Facilities Program	Mid-Term
9	2.1	Improve Lucky Park facilities including primarily parking lot (32 space lot)		32	$41,000	Parks and Recreation Dept	WDNR Stewardship (if connected to trail)	Mid-Term
10	2.3	Place wayfinding and regional context maps in Lucky Park	*	33	$10,000	Parks and Recreation Dept	WDNR Stewardship (if connected to trail)	Short-Term
11	2.3	Study options for rehabilitating marina and create a plan for improvements (feasibility study)	*	5	$75,000	Common Council	CDBG Waterfront Planning Grant (confirm current status)	Short-Term
12	2.4	Create new boardwalk on Island side south of W. Blackhawk Avenue through wetlands (2800 LF)	*	20	$225,000	Parks and Recreation Dept	WDNR Stewardship (if connected to trail)	Short-Term
13	2.4	Develop boat docks south of Blackhawk Avenue (approx. 20 slips, marina style)		35	$400,000	Harbor Commission	WDNR Boating Facilities Program	Mid-Term
14	2.4	Replace Washington Street Bridge to enhance pedestrian/bike access and raise the clearance to improve boat traffic		8	$800,000	Common Council	DOT/County Bridge Program; DOT Enhancement Funds	Long-Term
15	2.5	Create trail/path connection from Lucky Park to Visitor Center on S. Main St. (sidewalk only 1200 LF)		36	$65,000	Public Works Dept	WDNR Stewardship (if connected to trail)	Short-Term
16	2.5	Improve boat launch on western side of Island along N. Water Street		13	$20,000	Harbor Commission	WDNR Boating Facilities Program	Mid-Term
17	2.6	Investigate and potentially improve quality of wetlands north of Lucky Park (feasibility study)		29	$15,000	Parks and Recreation Dept	WDNR Lake Programs /Private foundations - e.g. Ducks Unlimited, others	Mid-Term
18	2.6	Add new sidewalk/path connection along N. Main Street north of W. Washington Street (1500 LF)		22	$38,000	Public Works Dept	Stewardship/WDOT Enhancement if connected to a larger project	Mid-Term
19	2.9	Create new surface parking lot along Washington Street south of marina (32 space lot)		7	$45,000	Common Council	City funds	Mid-Term

Implementation Plan: Prairie du Chien Waterfront Plan

Priority Scale = 1 - 5: Highest Priority = 1-2.4 (Green) Middle Priority = 2.5-3.0 (Yellow) Lowest Priority = 3.1-5 (Blue)

Short-Term: 0-3 years **Mid-Term: 4-6 years** **Long-Term: 7 years or more**

***Denotes high priority and short-term**

#	Priority	Recommendation / Improvements		# on Map	Opinion of Probable Cost	Responsible Party	Potential Funding Sources	Time Frame
20	2.9	Improve Cedar Street Boat launch		21	$150,000	Harbor Commission	WDNR Boating Facilities Program; WDNR Recreational Boating and Waterways Grant	Mid-Term
21	2.9	Acquire private parcels within St. Feriole Island Gardens		15	$100,000	St Feriole Island Garden Foundation	City funds	Long-Term
22	3	Create new fishing pier on observation point at St. Feriole Island Gardens (floating dock)		14	$22,000	Parks and Recreation Dept	WDNR Boating Facilities Program	Short-Term
23	3	Remove concrete abutment to improve boat navigability and safety at Blackhawk bridge		18	$15,000	Harbor Commission	WDNR Boating Facilities Program	Short-Term
24	3.1	Develop St. Feriole Island Gardens (colored conc walks, plantings, furnishings)		16	$75,000	St Feriole Island Garden Foundation	WDNR Stewardship	Short-Term
25	3.1	Create new sand beach in Washington Park		27	$20,000	Parks and Recreation Dept	WDNR Stewardship	Long-Term
26	3.2	Remove public right-of-way from area surrounding amphitheater site, including a portion of Fisher Street and N. 5th Street (convert to lawn)		12	$25,000	Public Works Dept	City funds	Mid-Term
27	3.2	Relocate City storage shed on Island east of future amphitheater site (access off Brisbois)		11	$40,000	Public Works Dept	City funds	Long-Term
28	3.3	Improve intersection of N. 4th Street and Brisbois Street (per amphitheater concept)		9	$145,000	Public Works Dept	City funds	Mid-Term
29	3.4	Add power washing station to boat launch area on Island incl conc pad, catch basin.		1	$8,500	Harbor Commission	WDNR Boating Facilities Program	Mid-Term
30	3.5	Add gateway features on Island along Washington Street - stone piers, atchway signage		6	$60,000	Common Council	Stewardship/WDOT Enhancement if connected to a larger project	Mid-Term
31	3.5	Redevelop intersection of W. Blackhawk Avenue and S. Main Street (west side only)		34	$20,000	Public Works Dept	City funds	Mid-Term
32	3.4	Expand and improve the surface parking area in Washington Park (approx 28,000 SF)		28	$75,000	Parks and Recreation Dept	City funds	Long-Term
33	3.9	Add fish cleaning station near boat launch area on Island incl ss table, water, waste (non-refrig)		2	$5,000	Harbor Commission	WDNR Boating Facilities Program	Mid-Term
	Other Items Not Identified On Master Plan Map Exhibit							
	A	Include pedestrian amenities in all trail and park improvements including benches, lighting and trash receptacles that are compatible with amentities currently utilized in both the downtown district and on the Island.						
	B	Create an authority or Committee to manage overall planning and improvements on St. Feriole Island in order to improve communications between public and private entities and ensure coordinated enhancements in the future.						

All costs are in anticipated 2010 dollars and are for anticipated construction cost only. Add minimum 10% to each item for engineering and permitting; add 5% inflation factor for items anticipated to be construction after 2010.	This Opinion of probable costs is based on our experience and qualifications. It represents our best judgement based on current information. Vierbicher Associates does not have control over changes in scope, regulations, materials or services furnished by others, market conditions and pricing. As such, we cannot guarantee that final costs will not vary from these opinion.

Appendix A

Joint Public Works Committee/Plan Commission Meeting and Public Workshop No. 1
Priorities/SWOT Analysis/Visioning (4.15.09 & 4.23.09)

General Comments:

1. In creating a high backwall and abutment on railroad overpass: With significant truck traffic on by-pass and vibration from train traffic, a high backwall and abutment would seem to be a trouble spot.

2. In developing anything, many times the maintenance of the project is overlooked. Therefore, plan accordingly. Don't forget future costs of maintenance. The less maintenance the better.

1. Priority of Topics to Address

Comments generated from discussion provided below item.

1. Historical Context – 38
   - Have historical homes and visitors like history. There's so much history and people don't know about it. Need historical education, events and hard features.
   - Historical homes on Main St. – education of history.
2. Tourism – 33
   - Existing strength. Everything is here for this to be a major destination.
3. Natural Resources – 30
   - People come because of the natural resources – enhance it. (More trees!)
   - There's a river there – highlight it! Crazy that you can drive all the way through the City and never see the river. Shouldn't be blocking views of the river.
4. Recreation – 26
   - Fishing, biking, walking, events, ball games. Great opportunity for more (ie Frisbee golf or bmx trail)
   - Brings tourism and people to the community.
5. Asset to economic development – 23
   - Want job so kids can stay – need opportunities for young people.
   - Too many minimum wage jobs.
   - Land along Blackhawk = Entertainment, restaurants, accessible to everyone.
   - Boats need to be able to get in the slough.
6. Visually appealing – 15
   - Sometimes looks unkempt.
   - Keep natural.
   - Concerns about maintain quality of visual appearance on the island.
   - Natural flow is aesthetically pleasing.
   - Keep beauty – not too organized.
7. Education – 10
8. Family – 8
   - Families are coming here – have to consider them, not just tourism.
9. Continuity with rest of community – 7
10. Safety – 6
    - Safety issues with dredging the slough.
    - Needs to be safe or people won't want to use it.
11. Uniqueness – 5
12. Destination – 4
13. Informal Gathering Area – 3

SWOT Analysis

2. Strengths

- St. Feriole Island already a place of recreation
- Located at the heart of the City
- Natural Beauty (8)
- Recreational Opportunities
- Major tourism draw
- History (4)
- Port
- Boating expansion
- Baseball park (2)
- Nice park area
- Dousman House – draw of people
- Duck pond – children love it (needs to be rip-rapped)
- Harbor facilities
- Villa Louis
- Island is sizeable in area; can accommodate multiple uses
- Lots of "clear" area – open, accessible, natural
- Nice location on the river in geography. No other major port quite like it between Dubuque & LaCrosse. Development potential.
- Villa Louis provides an asset for future history-related development.
- Colorful history – Indian heritage & use
- Aesthetic potential
- Easy to access (3)
- People/user -friendly (2)
- Good for fishing (3)
- Trees
- Island gardens
- Water recreation
- The slough
- Green space on either side of the slough
- River is a very attractive place for people to enjoy
- Location – close to lodging, eateries & shopping
- Some annual festivals already are established on the island
- People care about the area – willing to get involved.
- Located in area of high bird activity (all seasons).
- Select habitats already present.
- National landmarks.
- State historic site.
- Sports areas (soccer, baseball).
- Volunteers.
- Access to athletic facilities.
- Ease of access via Blackhawk Avenue for pedestrian traffic.
- The slough & island – both sides can be developed – twice the fun!
- Friendly city with beautiful scenery!
- Beautiful area – needs to be completed.
- River – tourism.

3. Weaknesses

- Existing buildings along river may not be what's desired in the plan
- Accessibility
- Under-used waterfront & island.
- No set goals for the island. No projects for 3-5 or 5-10 years down the road.
- Lower slough area catch-all for debris & junk.
- Not used enough
- Large area to keep maintained

- Under-utilized
- Under-developed
- Marina
- All in floodway on Island side – limits options.
- Slough is shallow. Boat & marina potential requires overcoming obstacles.
- Bridges are low – large boats can't get under.
- Not a lot of infrastructure & amenities like bathrooms for large assemblies of people.
- Marina is pathetic.
- Railroad under-utilized.
- No really good fishing dock.
- Small
- Needs a "design plan"/ no long-range plan.
- Parts need protection from too much development.
- Ugly
- Too shallow for boats
- Not handicap accessible
- Lack of fishing spots for handicap accessibility
- Money to maintain
- Lack of water recreation (i.e. kayaks, canoes)
- This area is filling in over time and it is difficult to use this area (fishing, boating, natural wildlife)
- Funding for major rehab projects/improvements
- Marina – eyesore
- Some un-kept homes along Main Street
- Potential for flooding
- Marina (opportunity)
- How can we afford the development?
- Too many roads – creates checkerboard.
- Private property ownership.
- Rustic roads needed.
- Resident's indifference to this treasure!
- Hard access via Washington for pedestrians.
- Cost of making these visions reality increases taxes.
- We're afraid to charge for the use of this island on many occasions.
- Not enough money to fund memorial gardens.
- Garbage.
- Already lots of ugly industrial development on river. Not so scenic.
- City needs to listen and work with private land owners.
- Best views of river are blocked by industry and structures.

4. Opportunities

- Waterfront restaurant
- Kid's fishing hole?
- Hotel/motel, up-scale condos?
- Walkway along river
- Safe, sheltered area for family recreation in paddleboats, perhaps tourism
- Unlimited opportunities from S. Main to Island incorporating condos, restaurants, convention center, etc.
- Great opportunities of expansion for more events.
- Large area to have multiple events on weekends.
- Allow more eagle tree migration
- Fishing areas
- Better recreation facilities
- Tourism draws – possible train tours, Dousman House, community events, riverboats.

- Can accommodate multiple users
- Port building off Railroad Line
- Outdoor theater / arts facility along the river
- More riverfront festivals
- Could develop attractions that are historical
- Slough could accommodate more
- Marina improvements – or a new marina
- Lots of trail and walking path possibilities for connections
- Can be expanded for bikes and walkers and promoted for this purpose
- Paddle boats & canoes
- Walk / bike-way
- Handicap accessible fishing ramps / docks
- Outdoor recreation center (canoes, kayaks, outdoor learning center/area, fishing tournament area)
- Accessible picnic spots
- Shade
- Upgrade of boat launch with power washer
- Fish cleaning station
- This is a tremendous opportunity to develop the gateway for St. Feriole Island
- Tax base put condos in a select area with boat docks
- Attract more tourists – well maintained beach suitable for swimming with bath-houses, rentable shelter area.
- To incorporate amenities into the waterfront plan for varied interests and all ages.
- Health of citizens – walking & biking
- Tourist destination
- Make use of engraved metal area
- Playground with a merry-go-round.
- Almost every weekend has an "event features".
- Nice, sandy, public swimming beach.
- Size of island welcomes many diverse areas.
- Meandering county roads for motorcycles.
- Consolidate memorials on island – create a destination (e.g. vets)
- Great place for bike trails.
- Opportunity for increased non-stick/ball recreation (i.e. disc golf course, also includes tournaments in long run, that increases economic input to community.)
- Reed House – public baths
- Opportunity for BMX trail/jump park/pump-track
- Opportunity for weekly music in the park.
- Boat traffic up and down river; need transient harboring near downtown?
- Need to make downtown accessible to boat traffic.
- Maintain scenic views.
- Put island on a land trust for conservation in perpetuity.

5. Threats

- Lack of funds
- Need to preserve small town quality and yet leave room for modern development
- Over-development
- Restrictions by DNR & Army Corp of Engineers
- Floods (5)
- River wall problems
- River wall
- State regulations could affect development options for even tourism
- Mississippi flood potential
- Hard to develop marina when a large private marina is just north of the City.
- People who live near the slough may not want changes to the area.
- Over-use
- Need to keep area free from trash & unauthorized use

- Maintenance / up-keep
- Vandalism
- This is a sensitive eco-system, but very manageable.
- Homeowners on N. Main Street – if land is raised, lose their view of slough.
- Access to area from the south by larger watercraft – railroad bridge and 2 bridges on City streets (Blackhawk & Washington)
- Develop it to the point that all the natural beauty is gone
- So developed that the area restricts fun
- Siltation of slough – shallow water.
- Natural vs. developed &use of non-native plants, etc.)
- Fishing tournaments, jet skis, etc.
- Shallow water – no southern access.
- Property owners rights.
- Habitat for nature ruined.
- Jet ski events are loud and annoying.
- Property owners keeping their land private – losing their property to commercial development.
- Truck traffic noise and pollution in residential area behind S. Main/Overview Court.
- Possible threat of higher flood waters also due to higher elevation of proposed street level now!

6. What WORDS describe your vision for this area in the future?

- Developed "pockets"
- Left open
- Peaceful
- Family-oriented
- Historical
- All inclusive to families and individuals for activities ranging from respite to recreational.
- Enhancement of natural areas.
- Tourism – events
- Tourist destination
- Attractive
- St. Feriole Island is the greatest resource our community has (Recreation, botanical & commercial ventures can live in harmony)
- User-friendly
- Centerpiece
- Outdoor recreation destination
- Hiking/biking premier trail on the Mississippi River
- Beautiful
- Use the history
- Multiple purpose: tourism, arts, music, festivals, recreation.
- The slough is a gateway to the Island. It should be beautiful, charming & respectful of history.
- Development of the area to attract more people to Prairie as a regional center for tourism with a historical theme incorporated.
- More festivals
- More modern facilities (i.e. toilets/showers), which will cause more economic growth & expansion.
- Tourism destination point
- Active involvement to increase use of waterfront & tying it all together with downtown project.
- Natural beatify.
- Habitat for wildlife
- Historical development
- Recreation
- Beautiful
- Attractive
- Draw people to the area
- Destination point
- Nature's showcase
- Respectful of history (emphasize it)

- Family
- Recreation
- Accessible
- Nature
- Educational
- Safe
- Unique sense of place – make the island like no other place in area so folds choose PDCH to live and visit.
- Waterfront boardwalks to get people healthy with walking.
- Make island more accessible to all who want to enter from water.
- Allow more natural "Prairie" areas, less maintenance.
- After seeing this area – people (out of town) would say how they wish they had that in their area.
- Beautiful place to "float a boat".
- Increased multi-modal access via water, trail, car.
- Limit to auto traffic.
- Increased alternation recreation opportunities – disc golf, BMX trails/jumptrack/pumptrack (limited jumps)
- Peaceful area to visit at all times of the year.
- Maintain tranquility – don't over organize.
- A beautiful island with easy access so we can stroll, fish, boat & relax.
- Sustainable
- We have a beautiful area to be proud of.
- Take advantage of tourism on the water-ways and access to downtown area.

7. What goals do you have for this area in the future?

- Promote usage of this area by a wide variety of groups/people through a multitude of activities – some planned and some on-going leisure/recreational opportunities.
- Market "the Island" throughout the Midwest and nation.
- Make it a place where one could go to enjoy the beauty of the slough.
- Fishing piers – quite a few people fish along the slough; mainly by Blackhawk Bridge & Washington St. Bridge
- How can this plan be used to develop the major parts of St. Feriole Island Memorial Gardens?
- An outdoor recreation area that meets the needs of young to old and all ability levels along with a destination point for tourism.
- Make it available for all, while still keep it aesthetically pleasing.
- New, improved marina.
- Improve banks and land area along slough aesthetically.
- Make slough an attractive gateway to the island and mainland.
- Development of the area keeping in mind the historic nature of our community.
- Major tourism area.
- Less costly event charges
- Dousman Hotel opening
- Increase in Island activities utilizing the waterfront in a more user-friendly way.
- Beautification programs using plantings and landscaping but also keeping some natural areas (specifically rodeo grounds)
- Develop a better plan for the Marina, beach area and slough.
- Promote tourism
- Continue to expand as an event facility
- An area, easily accessible, for people to be close to nature.
- Recreational area – people visit for hours.
- Increase tourism.
- River history preserved and displayed.
- Increase in cultural awareness.
- Education on historical important & awareness in elementary school.
- To have our veterans recognized properly.

- Be self-sustaining – whatever we do needs to last a long time (50+ yrs).
- Access for ALL.
- Increased connectivity with the rest of the community.
- Increased recreation opportunities.
- Increased "forest" feeling. Plant more trees!
- Less emphasis on abusive recreation (i.e. drinking).
- Deep enough water to "boat" through at low water levels (including under ALL bridges).
- Improve visual eye appeal from roads ("Second")
- Block sight lines to the lone business on the island and the one north of mainland.
- Maintain natural habitat on rivers edge.
- Tourism with families as a choice group.
- Retirement – condo's – what do I do when I no longer want to maintain a home but want all the same inside amenities & ownership (one floor) with no maintenance? Want to walk to town/parks/ shops – not too close to train?
- French fur trader village – recreation – events to match. Make it a draw for people to come here.
- Better beach & park area for families to meet – across from marina?
- Island plan is consistent & integrated with downtown – small scale, pedestrians, silent sports, friendly.
- More nature.
- Community gardens on the island.
- Destination of choice.
- Expand tourism.
- "Play" on island – enjoy spending time on island, festivals.
- Promote cooperation with industry (jobs!). More jobs in clean, green businesses!
- Existing residents/private land owners need to keep their property private.
- Hotel in downtown area with boat access.

8. What specific ideas do you have for the future of this area?

- Dog park
- Ice cream shop
- Natural prairie area
- Community effort – opportunities for all ages to help create and maintain
- Raising the area from Washington Street northward.
- Possibly have a beach for boats to go to as well as the public.
- Enlarging Marine to hold more boats.
- West side of slough – clean up tree line, raise land, possibly put condos – more tax base for City.
- Raise flood-prone areas and make most use of land – combination of possibly some housing / condos but more importantly beautifying the area with trails, landscape, etc.
- Provide walking/bike trails to connect from north to south of City.
- Outdoor recreation center/area that can be utilized by a large variety of users.
- More opportunities for on-shore fishing, boat launch & power washing; fish-cleaning facilities.
- Parks, trails, fishing dock
- New, improved marina
- Walkways & bicycle paths.
- Dredge the slough & improve boat access
- Create a usable port on Island for use by railroad
- Excursion rail on the Island
- Expansion of public parking / RV area
- Make it a family destination point
- Convention center/hotel
- Some kind of major waterfront restaurant focusing on a historical them
- Steamboats
- Wild life sanctuary
- Dredge north east side of Slough below Luck Park, creating a small boat harbor for the Public including boat docks giving access to the downtown.
- Dredge southeast side of Slough below Willy & Nellie's creating a small boat harbor for the

proposed motel and condos.

- Dredge the backwater habitat garden pond for St. Feriole Island Gardens and develop plans for waterfall feature in the Grand Lawn.
- Remove concrete bridge abutment under the Blackhawk Ave. Bridge.
- Riprap high banks adjacent to the Blackhawk Bridge on the east and west side.
- Ground level walkways on the west side of the slough creating a nature walkway which will be easier maintenance. This could be bricked in the Grand Lawn area block with a walking bridge (keystone) going across the backwater pond.
- Elevated Nature Walkway extending out from Luck Park extending to N. Feriole St. out to the point with a Birders Out-Post observation deck.
- Develop St. Feriole Garden Observation Point.
- Design and develop the Spring pond in St. Feriole Gardens.
- Design and develop the Water Feature that runs through the Gardens from Roulette St. to the Slough.
- Purchase of private property located in the gardens.
- Outdoor Recreation Center with deck for Outdoor ed. Instruction and storage of canoes, kayaks, fishing equipment, etc to expand existing program for possible rentals. This facility could also be reserved as a shelter for picnics, fishing tournaments, etc…located by existing Wash St. Shelter
- 2 Handicap fishing docks…one located by north of wash. street on east side and one located north of Blackhawk bridge on West side. (we currently offer youth and special needs programs with a poor wheelchair access.)
- Stainless steel fish cleaning station and boat wash area at both boat landings
- Double wheel chair accessible picnic tables with shaded structures to accommodate large groups on trials

City of Prairie du Chien
Waterfront Plan – Public Workshop No. 1
Circulation Results 04.23.09

Group 1

- Eliminate stop signs
- Reduce speed limits
- Blackhawk Ave. bike traffic is good
- Provide better bike connections over Washington St. bridge
- No sidewalk on N. Main or Washington St. Park
- Drainage on NW side of island not good.
- Private usage on island is questioned
- Kayak/canoeing – area where this will happen
- Blackhawk & Iowa St. – Dredge out area(s)
- Shut down some streets on the island to discourage traffic
- Disc golf course would be good
- 4-way stop at Main & Blackhawk because of large amount of traffic
- Develop Luck Park to the north

Group 2

- Dislike semi-traffic – no reasoning re: where they go
- No police to enforce rules on these trucks/speed
- For both bridges there is little room for bikers/pedestrians
- Beaumont & Washington St. crossing – separate bridge for ped/bike
- Intersection to entrance, bike path to Dillman's is not well marked.
- Take out some of the roads for park land area to make walking paths
- The City gets paid from state for these roads to keep in there
- Dog park for large and small park – a designated area
- Would like to keep some natural areas
- Provide a winding trail/bike path with bollards, but may be intrusive to wildlife
- Dredge entire area to allow boat traffic to uptown.
- Boardwalk under the bridges on either side
- Dredge would be great for private owners

Group 3

- Dredge slough from one end to other by Lucky Park
- Raise the bridges on each street or "drawbridge"
- Boardwalk on park side only
- Issues as private landowners with boardwalk
- Don't have a raised boardwalk as we could lose the sight of island
- Provide boardwalk north of Lucky Park by Point
- Clean up entire shoreline
- Sidewalks on Washington over bridge is not good
- Provide a walkway for "harbor people"
- Boat docks with steps by Lucky Park
- Clean up all
- Clean up under bridges
- Upgrade beach "area" at Washington Street
- Develop entire Washington Street park area
- Enhance with playground with river theme
- Include pavilion & info area
- Improve accessibility
- Provide for large boats to go around entire island
- Is it necessary that the railroad has to be on the west side?

Group 4

- Too many roads with intersections & some streets could be eliminated
- Large trucks use a variety of roads and are dangerous to pedestrian/bike traffic
- Have a set path for truck routes
- Acquire all private property as it's confusing that users come down and see campers utilizing
- Better markings on bike trails on west side
- Provide only a one-way drive
- Eliminate the west side boat ramp because of lack of use
- Look at redoing entire road system
- Get away from grid pattern and put more scenic "curvy" roads
- Lawler Park's waterfront diagonal parking is too small
- Improvement of existing parking lots throughout
- Raise Washington & redo bridge
- Trail/path on one or both side of slough
- Lighting/benches on trails
- Keep as natural as possible

WORKSHOP #1 CIRCULATION SUMMARY

city of prairie du chien waterfront plan

City of Prairie du Chien			
Waterfront Planning - Public Workshop No. 1			
Quality of Life & Ideas for Improvement - Results			
Sticker #	**Amenity/Like**	**Nuisance/Dislike**	**Recommendations & Ideas for Improvement**
41	Plant grass and trees		
42	Clean up marina area		
43	Eagle watching area		
44	Fishing Pier		
63		Improve marina facilities for transient boaters.	
64	Opportunity for rec. development - BMX trail/track/pumptrack. Non-traditional athletic opportunity!		
65	Access to fishing hole	Rock to climb down to get to river	Access to river for fishing.
109	Development! 1st hole on disc golf course		
110		Poor trail connectivity for pedestrians with mainland.	
111	Good connectivity for pedestrians!		
112	Lucky Park = make it nicer!		
114		Get rid of the ugly docks on east side of channel across from marina.	
115			Don't like parking cars (here & there) in this area.
129		Needs sidewalk/bike path installed.	
131		Less truck traffic?	
132		Too many City maintained streets - shut a few down!	
137	Benches		
141	Buy Kramer Property		
142	Beach		
143	Bird Sanctuary		
145	Memorial Garden Expansion		Development / garden area like the gardens in Janesville

Sticker #	Amenity/Like	Nuisance/Dislike	Recommendations & Ideas for Improvement
146	Boardwalk Area		Boardwalk area for walking path - people to view the waterfront.
147	Drain small pond - entry to garden area		Review Master Plan for Memorial Gardens
148	Disc Golf - Frisbee golf course		Develop 9-hole frisbee (disk) golf course.
153	Extend bike path.		
153	Bike path along the water to connect with the one started.		Continue bike path; increase gardens & paths.
154	Bike/walking path.		Lighted bike/walking path
154	Bike path on this side also or walking path, but may not work because of private property.		
157	Truck traffic	Very distracting for such a historic piece of land!	Trucks needs to be limited
158	Kiosk		
159	Walking path		Kiosk that allows promotion for all St. Feriole Island events.
160		Clean up trash & debris!	This site needs to be cleaned up!
173	Continue gardens and landscape riverfront.		
174	Clean up trees & willows.		
175	Raise road - flooding		
176	Raise bridge for larger boats		
183			Maintain natural beauty of slough. No major developments - eagles gather here!
184			Upgrade playground area
190		Negative rea - needs beautification - prairie plantings?	
191	Prairie site = awesomeness!		
192	Bike trail - very nice here!		
205	Raised (like a tower) eagle viewing station(s)		
206	Expand island gateway	Need to call attention	
207	Fishing pier - walking path to pier - ADA. Alternate plan #208.		

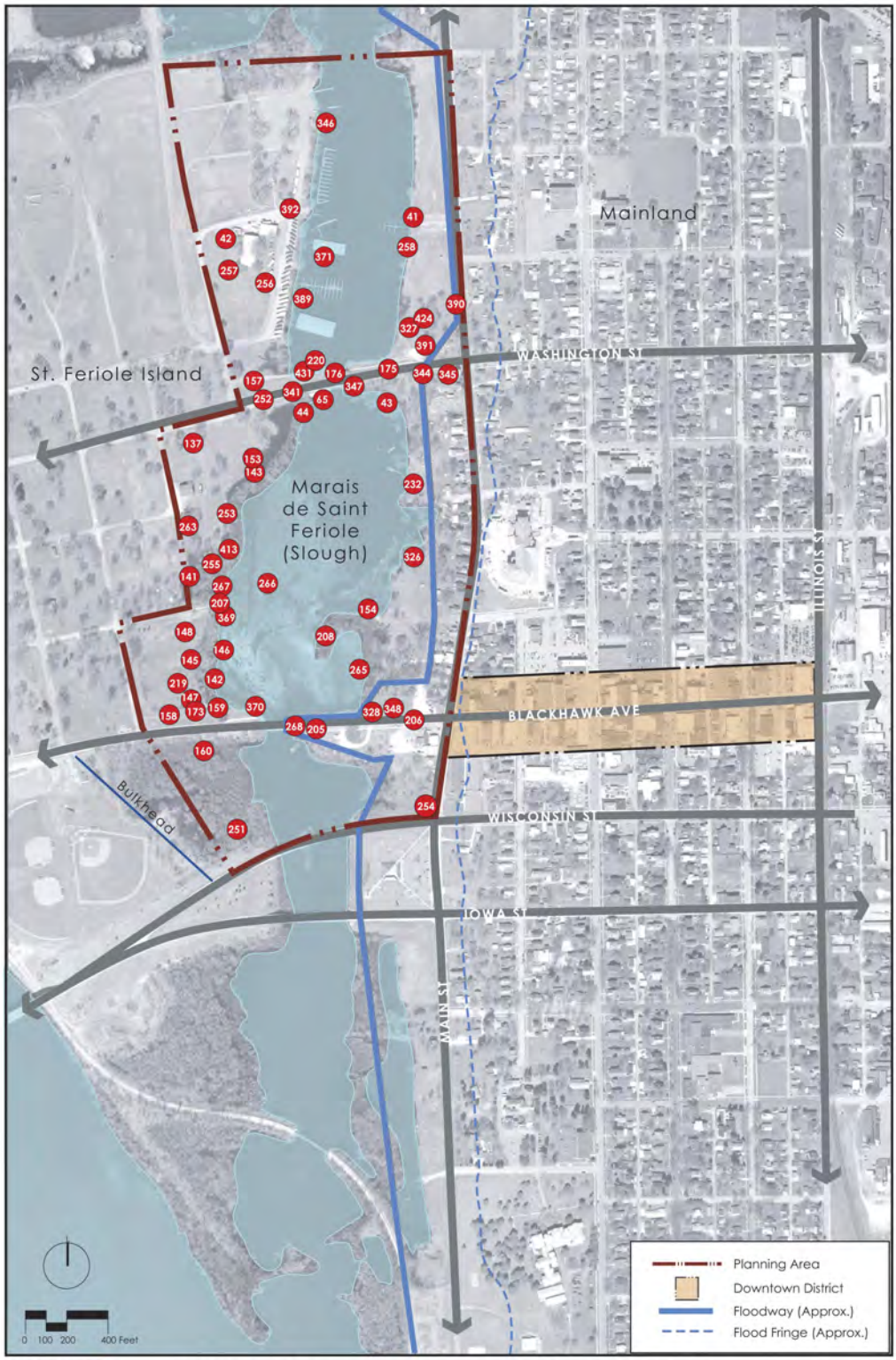
Sticker #	Amenity/Like	Nuisance/Dislike	Recommendations & Ideas for Improvement
207	Fishing pier. Walking path to pier - ADA. Alternate plan #207.		
208	Fishing pier. Walking path to pier - ADA. Alternate plan #207.		
209	Bike path and/or walkway from marina to Blackhawk Ave.		
210/211	Dredge back slough to make access for bigger boats.		
212		No boardway or walkway from Blackhawk to Washington on private land.	
217	Raise bridge or dredge so boats can pass under.		
218	Since future site of hotel, boat docks. Possibly dredge back slough.		
219	Keep native prairie.		
219	Native prairie - hope this continues.		
220	Fishing area - bench.		
221			The Hotel/convention block is another prime block of property that needs attention so development looks coordinated and public has access.
225			Leave area "natural". Duck/goose gathering area.
226			Garbage receptacles, dog baggie station throughout the island.
232	Streetlights, path lights, benches by paths all around slough.		
245	Marina	Move it!	
246	Marina	If can't move it, kick out tenant and rebuild it.	
249	Bike path. Boardwalk on City property.		
250		Blackhawk to Washington - no boardwalk or bike path - this is private land.	
251			Keep for bird/animal protected.

Sticker #	Amenity/Like	Nuisance/Dislike	Recommendations & Ideas for Improvement
252		Washington Street - poor traffic control.	
253	Better boat ramp.		
254	Archway - gateway entrance.	Needs to call attention.	
255	Fishing pier	Need handicapped - lots of fishment there need nice space.	
256		Upgrade marina, not attractive	
257		Semi - trailers	
258	Enhance pontoon dock		
259	Promote island use on City side.		
260	Raise bridge or dredge so boats can pass under.		
263			Electricity for the gardens
265	Daily docking		
266	Fishing Pier		
267	Walking Path		
268	Winter eagle watching; pier		
293		Needs better parking development.	
294		Could be bad - don't put a Cleary building up!	
295	Nature trail through woods.		
296	Opportunity - silent sports. Put in canoe/kayak.		
301	Nice landing at marina. Nice parking - good access to paved paths.		
302			Parking? New buildings flow with the history of the area.
303			No jet skis on slough!
304			Improve Cedar St. landing. Isn't that what we pay landing fees for?
313	Trees are good - plant more!		
314	Nice, but increase access for walk in fishing.		
315		Covered boat slips look shoddy.	

Sticker #	Amenity/Like	Nuisance/Dislike	Recommendations & Ideas for Improvement
316	Nice park - make it nicer!		
321			Dredge bridge areas to allow boat traffic.
322			Improve the bike path/access over Washington St. Bridge
323		Extend bike trail.	
324		Cleaner shelters.	
326			Pathway please!
327	Picnic area - keep tables out!		It would be nice to have an enclosed public meeting space on the island.
328			Clean-up & make area more accessible.
333		Clean up shoreline - sandy beach.	
334			Make sure bypass bike path meets bike path to Blackhawk & Island & Washington St.
337	Public showers - fur use by boaters/canoeists.		
338	Dog run/park		
339	Lucky Park - more benches, water fountains, etc.		
340			Developer that would like to build condos; should be required to include retail or other public access areas. Housing is needed downtown and could command a high price with river views, but making such a prominent spot the exclusive use of a small percentage of total population would seem unfiar. When a business like Willie & Nellie's was there, everyone had access.
341			Fishing areas are not clearly labeled.
344			Signage
345	Need four-way stop.		
346	Expand marina for more boats		
347	Raise road / new bridge.	Floods - bigger boats.	
348	Walking path all around slough		
369			Bike path

Sticker #	Amenity/Like	Nuisance/Dislike	Recommendations & Ideas for Improvement
370			Walking path
371			Marina
389		I don't like this area - avoid	
390	Main is a great recreational route		
391	Improved parking area	This area needs to be kept clean & look like other shelter areas.	Add sidewalk down Main. Improve accessibility to slough along Main.
392	Great job on boat landings & parking. Keep these up - they are great!		
409			New bridge across Washington Street
410			Improve the Wasthington St. area
411			Dredge the entire slough.
412	Public Access in winter.	Need access improvement.	
413	Walking path that would circle slough from Blackhawk Ave. to Washington St.		
414			Eagle viewing station - observation area.
422		Not deep enough for boat traffic.	
423		Ugly shoreline between Cedar St. & Wash. St.	
424	Park - keep. More play equipment; Like the park and shelter - could there be a place to fish close by?	No more fill on Washington St. Park	
429			Dredge slough for boat traffic.
431	Improve sidewalks.		Sidewalks need improvements and continuity - very uneven.

Map 6: Quality of Life & Improvement Ideas Summary Map 1



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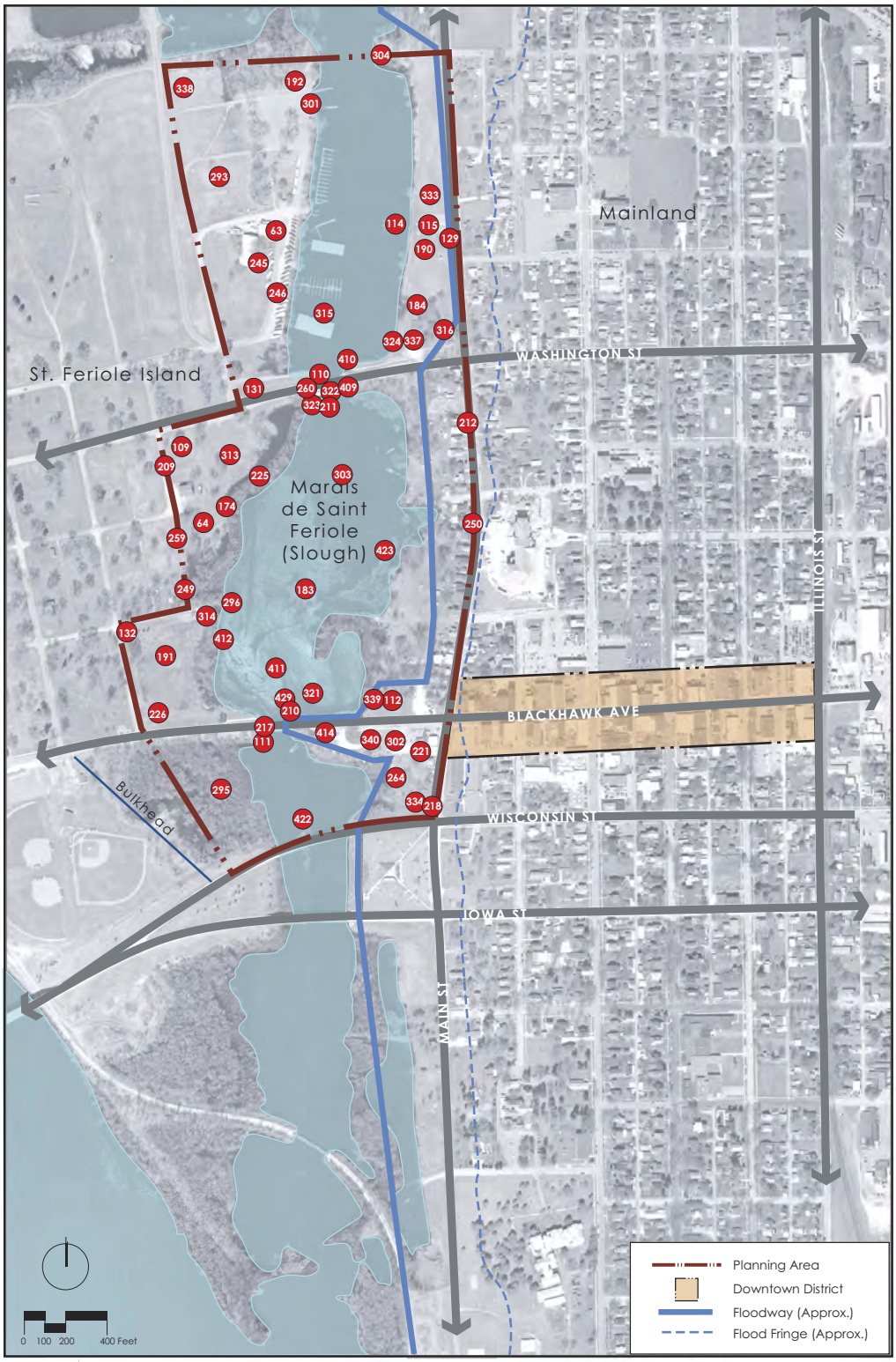
WORKSHOP #1 PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

city of prairie du chien waterfront plan

GROUPS 1 & 3

Map 7: Quality of Life & Improvement Ideas Summary Map 2



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WORKSHOP #1 PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

city of prairie du chien waterfront plan

GROUPS 2 & 4

Appendix B

Map 8: St. Feriole Island Gardens Master Plan