

**Implementation
Program**

**Eau Claire
Waterways
Plan**



Eau Claire Waterways Plan: Policies and Actions

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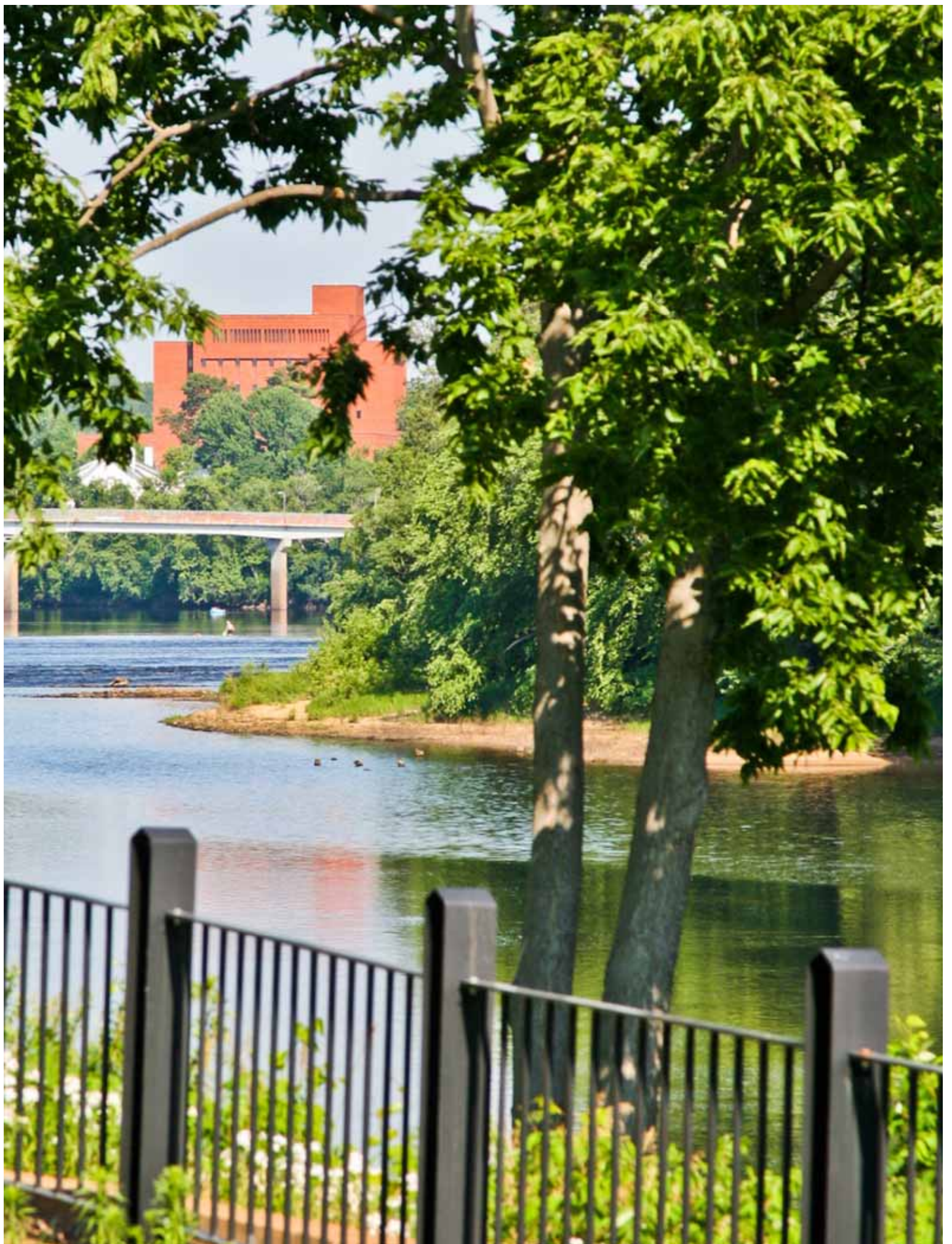
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Waterways Implementation Program

Introduction

The remarkable success of the 1988 *Waterways Plan* bodes well for the implementation of the ideas in this document. That original plan resulted in more than 34 major public capital improvements. Moreover, it represented a sea change in the local public attitude toward the rivers, creeks and Half Moon Lake.

Some of the recommendations of the *Waterways Plan* can be accomplished by the City working on its own, but many will require coordination and cooperation between the City and other public or private partners. These may include the University of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the US Army Corps of Engineers, Xcel Energy and others. The City Parks and Recreation Department should take the lead in coordinating the work of this plan with support from the Waterways and Parks Commission and its other partners.

The tools that the City may use to carry out this plan include reviewing land development applications, receiving donations of land, administering the zoning ordinance, and applying the design guidelines of the plan. The City will also extend trails and build new parks, acquire land for park and trail expansion and market the community as having great trails and parks through its economic development efforts.

There are three key waterway opportunities that should be seized: (1) extending the Greenway up First and Oxford Avenues corridor, across the High Bridge and down the Forest Street corridor to Phoenix Park., (2) extending the Greenway along the length of the Eau Claire River and (3) extending the Greenway around Half Moon Lake. Each of these projects is eminently do-able.



Public involvement helped prepare this plan and public involvement will help see that its recommendations are accomplished.

Key Actions and Measures of Success

1. **The Greenway**

Continue to improve waterfront access and enjoyment through growth of linear parks and connections from the neighborhoods in coordination with land development.

Key Actions:

- Complete the Greenway around Half Moon Lake
- Complete the Greenway loop on both sides of the Chippewa River north of Madison Street including the High Bridge river crossing
- Acquire steep, wooded slopes along the Eau Claire River and extend the Greenway.

Measures of Success:

- The High Bridge decking will have been connected to the existing City trail system
- A corridor of land from City-owned property along the Eau Claire River will have been dedicated as park
- A loop trail will be completed around Half Moon Lake.

2. **Land Use and Urban Design**

Guide land use and design in the waterway corridors in ways that enhance both the development and the Greenway.

Key Actions:

- Complete the redevelopment of the North Barstow District
- Redevelop Haymarket Square into multiple uses and Greenway
- Continue redevelopment of the Oxford Avenue corridor following the *West Riverside District Plan*
- Develop the 21-acre City-owned site near River Prairie Drive and Galloway Street
- Adaptively re-use the industrial building at Dewey and Galloway Streets

Measures of Success:

- Obsolete buildings will have been replaced
- Land uses will have taken advantage of and complement the Greenway
- The City's Waterways Development Guidelines will have been completed.

3. **Ecology**

Protect and improve the natural functions of the waterways and their riparian environment.

Key Actions:

- Prepare an ecological assessment and management plan for the existing and planned Greenway
- Protect and enhance the steep river banks according to the guidance of this plan.

Measures of Success:

- Invasive plant species will have been reduced in number and extent
- Steep riverbanks will have been protected in a visually pleasing manner
- Views to and from the water will have been improved

4. Economic Development

Boost jobs and economic investment in Eau Claire through the amenity of the Greenway in conjunction with other public facilities, services and infrastructure.

Key Actions:

- Use the Greenway in local and regional marketing campaigns
- Achieve or complete redevelopment with new jobs, businesses and housing at key riverfront locations including the North Barstow district, Haymarket Square and the Oxford Avenue corridor.

Measures of Success:

- The number of jobs across the city will have risen
- The number of jobs near the Waterways will have increased, especially in the sectors of professional services, finance, technology, hospitality, entertainment and the arts
- Private investment near the Greenway will have grown

5. Achievement

Implement this plan through sustained and continuous municipal investments aided by other public and private resources.

Key Action:

The Parks and Recreation Department through the Waterways and Parks Commission will facilitate and support coordinated enhancements to the Eau Claire Waterways, including:

- Advocating for funding requests
- Forging support from the business and not-for-profit sectors to further the aims of this plan, which may include financial or in-kind assistance or compatible land development
- Convening technical advisory groups for specific subjects or needs; sources may include city, state or federal agencies, academic faculty, independent experts or others
- Accelerating implementation of the *Waterways Plan*
- Monitoring the Measures of Success for waterways enhancements
- Generally becoming “champions” of the Waterways and this plan.

Measures of Success:

- Many of the public improvements recommended by this plan will have been accomplished
- Strong and sustained private and public support will exist for Greenway improvements and resource stewardship.

Priorities for Action

The following actions should be considered by the City of Eau Claire to carry out the initiatives recommended in the Waterways Plan. (1 = first priority.)

**Table 6
Major Projects along the Waterways**

| Reference | The Greenway | Priority |
|-----------|---|----------|
| 1 | Acquire steep slope along the Eau Claire River East of River Prairie Drive for use as a park | 3 |
| 3 | Extend Greenway trail along the Eau Claire River upriver of Hastings Way | 1 |
| 3 | Coordinate park and trail improvements with the City of Altoona | 3 |
| 4 | Formalize the Chippewa River overlook west of Airport Road | 3 |
| 5 | Build Northwest Community Park | 2 |
| 6 | Improve a bicycling route around Dells Pond from Mt. Simon Park to Riverview Park | 3 |
| 7 | Rebuild the path from McDonough Park down to Dells Pond | 2 |
| 8 | Acquire the three houses surrounded by Mt. Simon Park | 3 |
| 9 | Build a paved trail to the northern end of Mt. Simon Park | 3 |
| 10 | Negotiate for a boat launch of the Xcel Energy property immediately north of Domer Park | 1 |
| 11 | Extend the multi-use path across a renovated High Bridge | 1 |
| 12 | Extend the Greenway and trail in the West Riverside Neighborhood from the High Bridge to Madison Street | 1 |
| 13 | Consider creating one or more new parks in the West Riverside Neighborhood near Maple Street and the river to replace Kessler Park | 1 |
| 14 | Acquire the privately-owned former railroad corridor that runs northwest from the High Bridge | 2 |
| 15 | Build multi-use paths on both former railroad corridors in the West Riverside Neighborhood | 1 |
| 16 | Improve walking routes from the neighborhoods to the waterfronts | 3 |
| 17 | Extend the Greenway in the West Riverside Neighborhood from Madison Street to the State Trail bridge (near Fulton Street) through voluntary property sale | 3 |
| 18 | Extend the trail from High Bridge to Phoenix Park along the east side of the Chippewa River | 2 |
| 19 | Provide for waterfront access at Haymarket Square in conjunction with redevelopment | 1 |
| 20 | Seek to extend the trail from Haymarket Square to Lake Street | 2 |
| 21 | Improve the greenway from Grand Avenue to Lake Street (west side of the river) | 1 |
| 22 | Add water access features fishing docks, boat launches, canoe landings, bluff stairs and scenic overlooks along both rivers and Half Moon Lake; including a fishing dock on Half Moon Lake south of the causeway with access for the handicapped | 2 |

| Reference | Priority |
|---|-----------------|
| 23 Improve the trail route along the 600 block of Menomonie Street | 3 |
| 24 Create a park along University Drive and a walking path down the slope to the arboretum trail | 2 |
| 25 Relocate the trail crossing of Menomonie Street south of Carson Park | 3 |
| 26 Negotiate for or purchase riverfront access between Clairemont Avenue and Short Street | 3 |
| 27 Extend a bicycling route across Short Street to the Ferry Street open space | 3 |
| 28 Prepare a development and management plan for the Ferry Street public open space | 2 |
| 29 Enhance the walking the driving connections between First Avenue and Carson Park along Grand Avenue and Lake Street | 3 |
| 30 Rebuild and improve the causeway to Carson Park | 1 |
| 31 Extend the trail around Half Moon Lake | 1 |
| 32 Acquire floodplain land along Otter Creek through donation | 3 |
| 33 Complete Otter Creek Park | 2 |
| Land Use and Urban Design | |
| 34 Use the urban design guidelines of this plan when reviewing applications for land development | 1 |
| 35 Acquire through voluntary sale certain floodplain properties for park use | 2 |
| 36 Promote more appropriate land uses near the Greenway through the use of public improvements, the zoning ordinance, the guidance of this plan and the financial help of the Eau Claire Economic Development Authority; several target locations are suggested in this plan | 1 |
| 37 Follow " best management practices " along the creeks and throughout all watersheds under the City's jurisdiction | 1 |
| 38 Seek opportunities for public art | 2 |
| Environmental and Cultural Resources | |
| 39 Engage a professional to prepare an ecological assessment of the Greenway and a management plan with emphasis on park properties along the Eau Claire River | 2 |
| 40 Protect and enhance the steep river banks according to the guidance of this plan. | 1 |
| 41 Thin the riverfront forest along Owen Park of invasive plant species and dead or dying trees | 2 |
| 42 Continue to work with the DNR to improve water quality in Half Moon Lake | 1 |
| 43 Install interpretative and wayfinding signs along all segments of the Greenway | 2 |

Policies and Actions: Implementation Program

Economic Development

| | | |
|----|--|---|
| 44 | Continue to prominently feature outdoor recreation, access to nature and quality of life in local marketing campaigns | 1 |
| 45 | Achieve the private redevelopment of Haymarket Square with City or Redevelopment Authority assistance; acquire land for riverfront park and trail | 1 |
| 46 | Complete the redevelopment of the North Barstow District | 1 |
| 47 | Achieve the private redevelopment of the Oxford Street corridor with Redevelopment Authority assistance; acquire land to extend the Greenway | 2 |
| 48 | Achieve the private redevelopment of industrial properties along Menomonie Street | 3 |
| 49 | Achieve the private redevelopment of properties along Market Street | 3 |
| 50 | Achieve the private redevelopment of excess City property along Galloway Street | 2 |
| 51 | Adaptively re-use the former industrial building along the Eau Claire River at Dewey Street | 2 |

Achievement

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 52 | Coordinate planning efforts with other implementing agencies (see the table on the next page) | 1 |
| 53 | Update the City's Waterway Development Guidelines | 1 |
| 54 | Reference the Waterway Development Guidelines in the Zoning Ordinance | 1 |
| 55 | Designate high priority public improvement projects from this plan for the annual and multi-year capital improvements program | 1 |

Implementation Partners and Their Roles

Officials of the City of Eau Claire are experienced in the process of accomplishing improvements along the Waterways, as evidenced by many prior years of success along the Waterways and across the community.

Based on that experience, the following table lists the principal actors in plan implementation and their roles.

**Table 7
Implementing Partners and their Roles**

| Organization | Role in Plan Implementation |
|--|---|
| City of Eau Claire | |
| Community Development Department | Update and administer the zoning ordinance Review development applications Coordinate efforts of other departments and outside groups or agencies Prepare district and neighborhood plans Expand historic interpretative opportunities Lead continual public involvement |
| Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department | Lead in design and construction of park and trail improvements Lead in natural resource management |
| Economic Development Department | Help attract new companies and property investment |
| Public Works and Engineering Department | Lead or coordinate on all City capital improvements Lead on surface water management |
| Administration | Approve annual departmental work programs Approve multi-year capital improvement program and annual budgets |
| City Council | Adopt the <i>Waterways Plan</i> Adopt the amended <i>Comprehensive Plan</i> Approve budgets and capital improvement programs |
| Plan Commission | Review development applications Oversee new or amended plans and designs |
| Waterways and Parks Commission | Review development applications Comment on new or amended plans and designs |
| Economic Development Authority | Establish Redevelopment Districts, plans and assistance programs Apply financial assistance tools |
| Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation | Use the Greenway in marketing campaigns |

Policies and Actions: Implementation Program

| Organization | Role in Plan Implementation |
|---|--|
| Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Bureau of Community Financial Assistance | Provide technical assistance in resource management Provide grant funding for conservation projects, land acquisition, water access and outdoor recreation projects |
| US Army Corps of Engineers | Assist in flood plain management |
| Federal Emergency Management Administration | Lead in flood plain management and flood insurance |
| University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire | Provide expertise in natural and cultural resource management |
| Local recreational organizations | Advocate for the parks and trails and their funding Comment on plans and programs |
| Local environmental organizations | Advocate for sound ecological stewardship Comment on plans and programs |
| Local foundations | Provide funding help on major projects |
| Major local businesses and industries | Provide funding help on major projects Invest in Waterways locations |

Potential Sources of Funding Assistance

**Table 8
Potential Funding Sources**

| Source | Program | Uses |
|---|---|---|
| City of Eau Claire | General Fund / Departmental budgets | Planning, design, construction |
| | General obligation bonds | Land acquisition, major capital projects |
| | Tax increment financing | Land redevelopment assistance |
| Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Bureau of Community Financial Assistance | Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund Recreational Boating Facilities Fund River Protection Management Fund | Land acquisition, outdoor recreation capital improvements, resource conservation |
| Wisconsin Department of Transportation | Transportation Enhancements | Trail construction |
| Major local corporations | Charitable giving | Specific park or trail projects, public art, land acquisition or donation |
| Xcel Energy Company | Chippewa River Natural Resources Fund / Dam Relicensing Agreement | Capital improvements related to invasive species or water quality |
| Local or regional foundations | Charitable giving | Specific park or trail projects, public art, land acquisition or donation, natural resource education |