THE CITY of Altoona

PLACE PLAN

UNIFIED PUBLIC SPACE STRATEGY

COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN STRATEGY

THE CITY of Altoona

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Amendments:

ADOPTION RESOLITION

To be substituted upon Plan Adoption

CONTENTS

A thriving public realm, high-quality open spaces, lively and safe streets, and a thoughtful built environment are hallmarks of a healthy, livable, equitable, and holistic world-class city of any size, culture or climate.

Communities take multiple approaches to plan, design and manage public space, including parks, facilities, recreational programs and events, trails, gardens, forestry, natural areas, streetscapes, and more. The most prevalent approach is to conduct planning for specific facility types or functional areas of departmental responsibility. In general, this methodology often results in relatively narrow plans that focus predominately on parks as recreational features largely removed from other systems and functions, and bicycle and pedestrian plans that are not well integrated into either recreation or transportation. Other related essential functions, such as stormwater management and climate resiliency, are frequently either not addressed or well-integrated.

Two subsystems account for the majority of the public realm: transportation, and parks & open space. This plan does not account for the whole of the transportation system in terms of mobility, but examines bicycle and pedestrian facilities, streetscapes, as well as characteristics of streets and the use of land that impact the safety, convenience and enjoyment of the transportation system by people. This plan also examines the aesthetic and non-automobile functions of the transportation system, such as green infrastructure, boulevards, and interactions between transportation and land use. Other recognized subsystems include public buildings, undeveloped natural areas, and stormwater infrastructure. Public space also includes "quasi-public" space on private property readily accessible by the public, or experienced by the public through viewsheds.

Altoona is utilizing this opportunity to create a more expansive, visionary, and thoughtful approach to the design and governance of all public space with the objective to institute a culture of multifunctional, high performing public spaces. This design and management approach strives to unify the public realm by breaking down the siloed method of viewing each system, place, and use relatively exclusive of others. This approach places important new focus on marrying how planning, funding, design and space management opportunities can be better integrated. This framework is further intended as a transformational paradigm for relentlessly pursuing continuous improvement in community livability through the design and management of public space.

> "For generations, parks were viewed simply as an amenity, a way to beautify a city. Whether they were planned for gardens, sports, or picnicking, parks were rarely seen as central to public safety and health. But that is beginning to change.
>
> As cities around the world continue their growth, the role of parks is shifting. Parks are no longer seen as something nice to have, but rather as a vital system within the city's overall network of infrastructure. These hard-working public spaces are probably the biggest untapped resource for cities in this century. Why? Livable, sustainable cities must balance density with open space for the health of their residents, their environments, and their economies."
>
> – Mitchell Silver, NYC Parks Commissioner & Former President, American Planning Association

This strategy is summarized as *pursuing excellence in place*, bringing together disciplinary and specialized perspectives and best practices in parks and recreation, active transportation, and urban design, combined with principles of planning for equity, public health, placemaking, climate resiliency, place-based economic development, and others. This pursuit is recognized as a continual process, not a fixed condition to be achieved. For example, this approach treats the ubiquitous streetscape as fundamental and multi-purpose public space, rather than one predominately designed as a utilitarian corridor for automobiles. Parks and open spaces are

planned and programmed as nodes in a comprehensive network, rather than as islands. Quality public spaces are recognized as integral to neighborhood identity, social cohesion, and quality of life.

This integrated, unifying planning approach seeks to encompass the entire constellation of public spaces, the systems and components that comprise them, holistically, while also functioning as a **parks, recreation and open space plan** and as a **bicycle and pedestrian strategy** in the conventional sense that a vision, goals, and functional recommendations are readily recognized, effective and implemented. This entails utilizing well-established methodologies as well as experimenting with emerging best practices and innovations in design, use, governance and management.

Excellence in people-focused place is the core building block of a healthy & prosperous city. Municipal policies and requirements should be intentionally aligned, and coordinated with other organizations and actors, to enable and further the creation of positive experiences for all users. Buildings and spaces of all scales and uses should be approachable and engaging to pedestrians. The role of government in this framework is to facilitate high quality of life, beyond merely efficient provision of basic infrastructure and services. Public spaces are what bind our communities and its peoples together.

Winter conditions typically impact the use, enjoyment and management of public space for about half of the year in Altoona. However, most spaces are not designed for multi-season use, and the specific considerations and strategies to encourage, invite and enable winter activity are specific to the conditions. Altoona is part of a regional "Wintermission" consortium to learn how to better design and program spaces for the winter.

The quality of public spaces of all types play a critical role as Altoona and the Chippewa Valley pursue strategies to become more compact, sustainable and socially equitable, and leverage our collective abundance of outdoor amenities to improve public health, quality of life, and economic vitality.

To avoid confusion with multiple other adopted planning documents, hereafter, this planning document will be referred and abbreviated as the "Altoona *Place Plan*".

Altoona Context

The City of Altoona has experienced tremendous growth in the preceding ten years. The City begin the decade with a population of 6,706 in the 2010 Census and has grown to an estimated 8,099 by 2020. This increase of 20.8% in ten years places Altoona month the second highest rate of population growth by a city in the State of Wisconsin during that period. Nearly one-third of the dwellings in the City have been permitted since 2001. Increase in the Eau Claire County population by 5.3% during this same period reflects this growth across the Chippewa Valley. Altoona is expanding and reinvesting in its public spaces to accommodate this growth with multiple park, facility, and trail projects recently completed, and others planned.

The investment in public spaces over the past five years is unprecedented in the history of Altoona. Over that period, the City has expanded its public space footprint to include Centennial Park, a long-envisioned park and natural area encompassing nearly 34 acres along Otter Creek. This is one treasured place in a new grand vision of a greenway following the Otter Creek Corridor. In September 2017, Altoona unveiled River Prairie Park, a 17-acre high-amenity public space along the Eau Claire River and centerpiece of the River Prairie development, including performance areas, multi-use trails, pavilions, splash pad, public art, gardens, and more. The park and overall development have already received awards by many State-wide associations. The Prairie Event Center in River Prairie Park opened in August 2017 and serves as the new home for the City recreation staff and features premier

space for public and private events. Nearly five miles of new off-street trails were completed, including nearly three miles in River Prairie and a new one-mile route connecting the Altoona Elementary School.

Physical and Cultural Characteristics

Altoona is predominately bounded by the Eau Claire River and Lake Altoona to the north and Otter Creek corridor to the south and west. Altoona adjoins the City of Eau Claire and generally features gateway-like entrances in crossing the river or creek corridor. Regionally located on the edge of the driftless region and northern forests, the Eau Claire area is punctuated by wooded hills, watercourses, and farmland. Western Wisconsin is a rural region with Eau Claire at its center.

Industry in the Chippewa Valley historically was built upon timber, paper, manufacturing and automobile tires. However, the City of Eau Claire and region has experienced a cultural renaissance and reinvention as "The Music City of the North". The result of a collision of organic forces: civic-minded entrepreneurs, successful artists and festivals, together with careful planning, strategic positioning, and ambitious partnerships, Eau Claire and the Chippewa Valley region of Northwest Wisconsin is on the map for performing arts, whimsical music festivals, and outdoor recreation.

This cultural renaissance has created a vibrant new community image, attracting young transplants, as well as retaining and attracting alumni of the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire. This dynamic has fueled the establishment and growth of creative new industries, from tech to advanced manufacturing. The result is reinforcing recognition including by Thrillist as "the mini-Portland of your dreams" as well as Time Magazine, Forbes, Outside Magazine, CitiLab, and more.

The Chippewa Valley has long been regarded as regional with excellent outdoor amenities that support many recreational activities from fishing to cross-county skiing, and support a vibrant tourism industry. Over the past ten years (and likely longer), regional economic development leaders and entrepreneurs have successfully leveraged these recreational assets to attract new residents and business activity to the region. A multitude of factors support this trend, some intentionally aligned and others organic. Communities including Eau Claire, Altoona and Chippewa Falls invested or reinvested in designation public amenities and large parks, including Phoenix Park in Eau Claire, Riverfront Park in Chippewa Falls, the aforementioned River Prairie in Altoona, and many more trails and smaller parks.

Arts and cultural activities have become ascendant with artist entrepreneurs from a variety of backgrounds spanning fiber arts, sculpture, writing, performance, music, and more have achieved sustainable success. The area has long been home to successful artists, and the music and arts programs at local schools and UW-Eau Claire are storied. The past several years has seen broader and deeper success, resulting in a vibrant arts scene, recognition of the role of the arts in the economy and quality of life, and efforts large and small to highlight and promote the arts ecosystem as an economic and cultural destination. Notable among these efforts is the public-private partnership resulting in The Pablo Center at the Confluence performing arts center. These efforts are supported by several new or reinvigorated arts organizations, including Artisan Forge Studios maker hub and artist community, Forage culinary incubator, Eau Claire Writers Guild, and many public and private music venues. Each year, installations of sculpture, murals, and other public art expands in spaces public and private.

The Chippewa Valley has also experienced a larger trend of "festivalization", described as events becoming immersive and often multi-day engagements, intermingling different art forms, and cross-pollination of business and tech into creative industries. The area now hosts several music and arts festivals including Jazz Fest, Eaux Claires, Blue Ox, Country Jam, Rock Jam, and many smaller events. Free music events are hosted in outdoor municipal venues on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays throughout the summer just between Eau

Claire and Altoona, plus the weekly Farmer's Market at Phoenix Park that grows each year and incorporates live performance.

The role of public spaces in supporting this reinvention, and the impact of attention on these spaces is layered and complex, creating some positive feedback cycles. Many new public spaces include performance areas with associated amenities for free public shows as well as ticketed events. These programmed events elevate interest and use of public spaces that is thought to result in greater passive use of the amenities, as well as revenue to construct and support their ongoing maintenance. These venues provide opportunities for artists to perform and become known, elevating careers. Events draw people to artist stands and vendors, mobile food establishments, performance artists, and other entrepreneurs. These regular gatherings create opportunities to walking and biking, build social capital, and improve public self-image.

The successful regional collaboration and public-private partnerships related to the arts and public spaces has built and reinforced relationships and capacity to work together on collective efforts, from public spaces, arts and outdoor recreation efforts, to essential government and public services.

As the City continues to grow, new challenges are created by increased use and expectations of parks and open spaces, as well as cultural change yielding new and different uses and activities of public space. With new significant public spaces recently and soon to be completed, this Place Plan is a timely opportunity to comprehensively examine public space planning and management in Altoona.

Altoona Snapshot

Area:	4.73 square miles, approx. 3,027 acres	
Population:	8,099	Jan 1, 2020 WI DOA est.
MSA Population:	214,068	+4.43% since 2010
Labor Force (MSA):	93,839	Federal Reserve Bank Estimate, February 2021

Income Summary:	Altoona	Eau Claire County
Median Household Income	$ 55,571	$ 59,476
Per Capita Income	$ 31,960	$ 30,983

Income figures are 2015-2019 U.S. Census ACS Estimates, in 2019 dollars.

Public Lands:
194.7 acres of parks and conservancy areas
2 community parks
8 City Parks and Playgrounds
4.8 miles of paved multi-use paths
River Prairie Center
Hobbs-Altoona Sports Center
Fish House at Altoona City Park

Housing:		
	4,247	dwelling units
	1,843	single-family detached
	388	duplex / twin home
	1,173	multiple family dwellings (3+)
	473	senior living
	363	manufactured homes

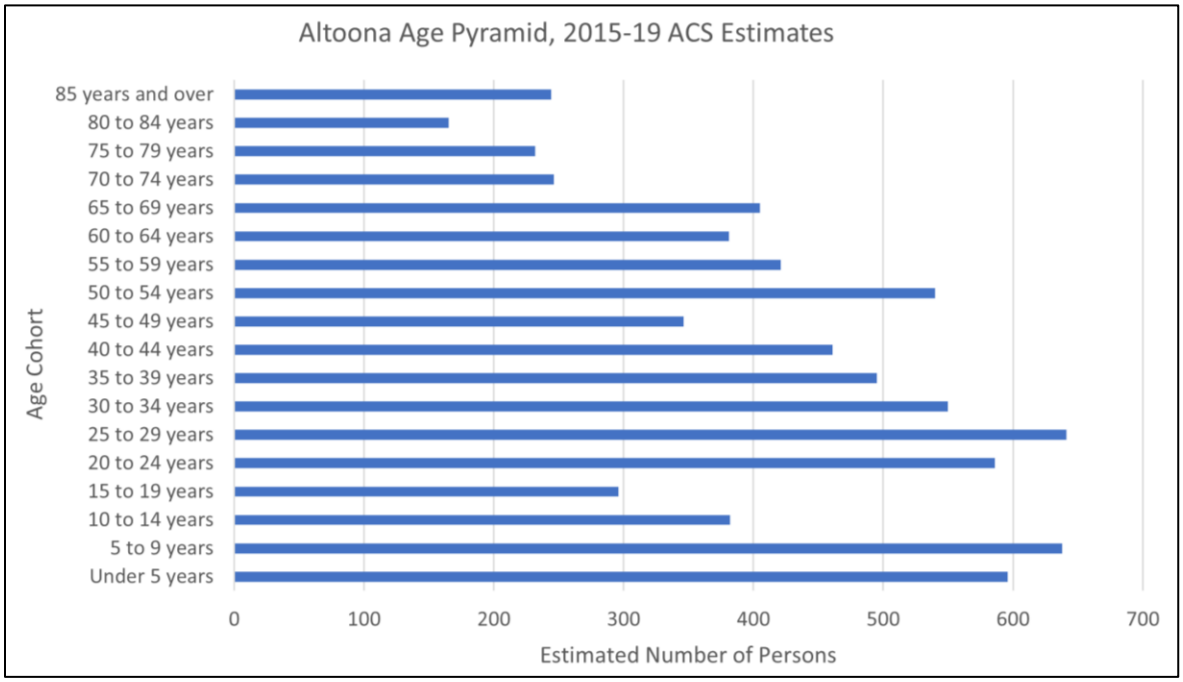
* Completed or under construction, as of January 1, 2021

Racial and Ethnic Composition

Identification	Altoona[(a)]	Eau Claire County[(b)]
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	90.6 %	89.6 %
Asian	3.5 %	4.3 %
Hispanic or Latino	3.5 %	2.7 %
Black of African American	0.8 %	1.2 %
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.0 %	0.6 %
Pacific Islander	0.0 %	0.2 %
Two or More Races	1.6 %	2.0 %
	(a) U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2015-2019 Estimate	
	(b) U.S. Census, 2019 Estimate	

Age Characteristics

Median Age 35.7 (US Census 2015-19 ACS Estimate)



Population Forecast

The State of Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) population projections were most recently released in 2013. The DOA January 1, 2020 population estimate of 8,099 exceeds the 2040 population projection of 7,945. Altoona's population is estimated to have increased by 20.77% between the 2010 U.S. Census and the 2020 DOA annual estimate. This translates to an annual growth rate of approximately 1.9%.

The following forecast is staff-derived from a simple projection of a reasonable 1.5% annual growth estimate through 2040. For historical context, the annual growth rate of the City was 4.45% in the 1970s and 2.97% in the 1980s.

	2020 Est.	2025	2030	2035	2040	Annual Rate
City of Altoona	8,099	8,725	9,399	10,126	10,908	1.5%

Purpose of this Plan

The City of Altoona emphasizes a holistic approach to community wellbeing and quality of life by thoughtfully integrating quality, functional, and enjoyable public lands and facilities throughout the City. In order to do this effectively, this Place Plan is intended to provide strategic direction in the development of parks and open spaces, recreational facilities and programs, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and all public space generally. Recommendations include direct identification of projects and policy impacting public space as well as standards and guidelines applicable to private development.

Parks and open space planning, and bicycle and pedestrian planning, narrowly or traditionally defined, does not describe the purpose of this planning effort. Each are well-established methodologies responding to contemporary needs and opportunities. This approach is more accurately identified as how the public realm can be conceptualized, planned for, and managed in a holistic way to support community vitality. This plan must weave together the necessary elements to successfully function and be recognized as a "parks & recreation plan" and a "bicycle & pedestrian plan" while pursuing a unifying approach to public space.

> "Great cities are known for their great parks [and public spaces], and one measure of any city's greatness is its ability to provide recreation, natural beauty, and signature open spaces for its citizens (…) Successful parks pay dividends for cities – building civic pride, increasing tourism and economic investment, and contributing to health and quality of life."
>
> - Will Rodgers, President & CEO, The Trust for Public Land (Harnik, 2006) [added]

Many publications describe the tremendous value that parks and open spaces provide in the lives of individuals, communities, and the environment. This recognition is increasingly expanding to other public spaces such as streetscapes and trails. To sample one such recent report, "The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space" by the Trust for Public Land, makes the following observations about the health, economic, environmental and social benefits of parks and open space:

- Physical activity makes people healthier and increases with access to parks.
- Contact with the natural world improves physical and physiological health.
- Positive impacts on residential and commercial property values increase.
- Value is added to community through economic development and tourism.
- Trees and natural landscapes improve air quality, provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife, and assist with storm water and erosion control.
- Crime and juvenile delinquency are reduced.
- Public spaces are at the center of stable neighborhoods and strong communities.

This Place Plan provides a technical inventory and assessment of Altoona parks, recreational programs, natural areas, bicycle trails and routes, and pedestrian conditions. This Plan lays out comprehensive strategies for system-wide improvements and specifies a range of design, engineering, policy, management, and program strategies to achieve the City's goals of improving quality of life for all people. Recommendations seek to align and integrate open space and active transportation strategies comprehensively throughout overall city development, budgeting, and governance. As Altoona continues to grow and change, this plan will provide a guide to ensure a cohesive and ambitious approach to developing and maintaining high quality, high performance public spaces.

The preparation of this plan has involved a comprehensive review of each of the City's park and open space facilities, existing multi-use trails, and prioritized bicycle and pedestrian corridors. Based upon this review, specific needs, deficiencies, and opportunities have been identified. This analysis examined existing parks and City-owned properties, while envisioning where future parks and open space areas may be prioritized in the future.

Few improvements are likely to be implemented without a plan. Good planning can reduce the cost of improvements by allowing, for example, nonmotorized improvements to be incorporated into scheduled road projects, or creation of public amenities from a new development or redevelopment. Funding from Federal or State programs, corporate or philanthropic sources is often only available if the proposed improvement appears in an adopted community plan. Development proposals and funding opportunities often arise that enable implementation of a project or program that had been envisioned years earlier, sometimes in unexpected or unforeseen ways. It is therefore important to, in cooperation with other local governments, develop plans to facilitate, anticipate, and be ready for opportunities that may arise.

Throughout the planning process, community members repeatedly and strongly voiced their support for the tremendous value and benefits parks and open spaces provide in their lives and the community as a whole. This Place Plan will reinforce these values, and is intended to confer service to serve all users, citizen and visitor, including children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and those seeking to utilize non-motorized travel for commuting and recreation.

The structure of this planning document is laid out to be as simple, cohesive, and unifying as possible. Sections of this document address parks and natural areas as managed spaces, bicycle and pedestrian elements, and as other system components. This arrangement may suggest that each area is separate, but this structure is utilized to illustrate content in a rational manner such as to enable maximum understanding, reference, and implementation. As such, there may be some overlap or duplication as various concepts apply in multiple contexts.

Role of this Plan

The Place Plan serves as a foundational philosophical framework and policy guide providing direction for the development and operation of all public spaces, including parks, recreation programs, open spaces, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and streetscapes within Altoona and future development areas. Conditions for how private development impacts public space or furthers excellence in place objectives are likewise incorporated. This framework is intentionally designed as a catalytic instrument to nurture a community culture of excellence in public space and prioritize convenient, safe and enjoyable pedestrian and bicyclist mobility.

This Plan serves as the (1) municipal **parks, recreation and open space plan**[1] as well as (2) **bicycle and pedestrian strategy**. Further, this plan provides a broader, deeper strategy guide to pursue overall excellence in place. Recognizing that uses and purposes of parks, open spaces, trails and streetscapes are diverse and overlap, these elements are examined cohesively, rather than independently, to guide public space policies and priorities in Altoona. This framework seeks to functionally and seamlessly integrate two commonly separate planning approaches into a single systems perspective.

The design and governance of public space is explicitly linked to and informed by many of the City of Altoona's key planning documents and regulatory instruments. The *Place Plan* integrates and incorporates these aspirations that strongly influence public space to provide a cohesive direction. The policies in the *Place Plan* are informed by and contribute to the City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan, and subsequently guide the development and utilization of the variety of regulatory and implementation tools. The City adopts advisory plans, such as Safe Routes to School, which serve as informative documents to supplement specific areas of policy. A Summary of Existing Plans is included later in this chapter.

The role of the *Place Plan* is intended to be transformative, rather than tinkering at the margins or perpetuating more of the same. Open space planning and active transportation should be closely integrated with other public works and planning efforts to ensure measures work in concert toward achieving shared objectives and the community's vision.

Although focusing predominately on public space and infrastructure, this Plan is a guide for the Council, Plan Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, and other advisors when they review development proposals or policies impacting the character or use of the built and natural environment. Further, this planning process serves in preparation of the appropriate elements of the next update to the City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan.

The Place Plan illustrates goals and objectives for the public space system of the City and includes site-specific recommendations for each existing park and identified corridor. This plan is not intended to serve as a detailed facility plan for each site, but rather as a guide, and additional study is recommended prior to undertaking significant projects.

The Place Plan incorporates standards and best practices from respective professions, state and federal government agencies. Together with existing ordinances, these serve as the basis for technical recommendations.

The Place Plan serves as a philosophical and cultural guide to public places that is intended to be a living document that is periodically revisited and revisited for refinement. Practically, a **five- to ten-year implementation period** is intended for most recommended policies and actions.

> "Two public realm planning processes in particular that may benefit from closer collaboration include parks and recreation master plans and comprehensive transportation plans; together these two processes address the majority of public realm subsystems. For example, [parks plans] typically address most of the sites within the public realm, including parks, community centers, trails, civic spaces, cultural and historical facilities, public art, environmental preserves, and greenways and blueways. [Transportation] typically address most of the linkages or connectors within the public realm including streets, sidewalks, bikeways, and transit." [Parks and transportation] planning process collaboration "could lead to the planning and design of the public realm as a plexus."
>
> – David Barth

[1] The content of the *Place Plan* is intended to meet the standards of "Local Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans" as defined by the WI Department of Natural Resources for eligibility for Wisconsin Stewardship Fund and Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Program opportunities.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan

> "Over 87% of Wisconsinites enjoy some form of outdoor recreation. This staggeringly high number reflects a state that is passionate about outdoor recreation and the traditions that go with it. Outdoor recreation happens over a variety of landscapes… providing high quality outdoor recreation experiences for a diverse population."
>
> - Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), 2011-2016

Open space can take on many forms, shapes, and functions, as can the recreation programs and public uses of these spaces. Traditionally, plans focus on designated municipal parks and other recreational features, in terms of current use, deficiencies, and envisioned improvements. This Place Plan will also include other public spaces and uses, such as streetscapes, natural areas, and green infrastructure.

This plan is intended to serve as the core element to produce the prerequisite five-year plans for eligibility for funding from various grant programs offered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Federal agencies, philanthropic and corporate funders. Altoona completed a five-year plan for parks and recreational programs in 2015, focusing primarily on inventorying existing facilities and addressing immediate needs. This Place Plan goes beyond that exercise to examine public space as a whole system.

The public realm is our common property, the fundamental element around which everything grows. Therefore, in order to systematically improve and curate desirable, enjoyable, and functional public space throughout the City, streetscapes must receive equal attention in our common place making efforts. This goes equally for ensuring maximum enjoyment and functionality of our environments for bicycle and pedestrian activities. The quality, character and completeness of our streetscapes are not limited to sidewalks and turf boulevards, but also include trees, landscaping, intersections, signs, adjoining uses- they are linear places, rather than pipes for vehicles.

Parks & Open Space Plan Priorities:

A. Maintain and Improve Existing Parks (*top priority from City Council & Parks Board*)
B. Address needs (in terms of maintenance and replacement of existing park elements; areas of City without proximity to quality parks or trails)
C. Improve active use of existing parks, especially underutilized parks
D. Identify an ambitious long-term vision for the public realm

> The Altoona Parks & Recreation Department's Mission is to provide the City of Altoona with quality of life enhancement through athletic, recreational and leisure activities for all age groups.

Parks, recreation, and open spaces perform numerous functions and provide numerous public and private benefits. Briefly, they provide:

- Diverse array of active and passive recreational opportunities, from sports fields to walking trails.
- Direct health and safety benefits (such as flood control, protection for water supply and groundwater recharge areas, cleansing of air, separation from hazards).
- Protection for important critical areas and natural systems, such as wetlands, corridors, shorelines, steep slopes, and for protection for wildlife diversity and habitat.
- Economic development including enhanced real estate values, tourism, resident and business attraction.
- Natural features and spaces important to defining community image and distinctive character.

- Boundaries between incompatible uses and breaks from continuous development. They can shape land use patterns to promote more compact, efficient-to-service development.
- Places for facilities, such as playing fields, pavilions, cultural and historical sites, and community centers that contribute educational, social and cultural benefits.
- Opportunity to prevent youth crime through park and recreation programs that offer social support from adult leaders; leadership opportunities for youth; intensive and individualized attention to participants; a sense of group belonging; youth input into program decisions; and opportunities for community services.
- Healthy lifestyles enhancement by facilitating improvements in physical fitness through exercise, and also by facilitating positive emotional, intellectual, and social experiences.
- Spaces for celebration, entertainment, civic engagement, intentional and accidental meetings.
- Linear park or natural area corridors to define and protect natural features, and serve as high-quality routes for non-motorized transportation and active recreation.
- Historic preservation opportunities to remind people of what they once were, who they are, what they are, and where they are.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Strategy

The City of Altoona is committed to being a leader in shifting away from dependence on automobiles and toward more holistic, safe, affordable, just and sustainable system of mobility enabling greater range of options. Bicycle and pedestrian mobility are the enduring modes that maximize these values.

This Place Plan creates a framework seeking to adapt best practices and innovations in bicycle and pedestrian planning with intent to elevate bicycle and pedestrian travel modes as the top priority and consideration in the area of transportation policies and projects. This plan moves beyond providing limited locations for bicycle facilities for transportation, or regarding these facilities as primarily recreational use. The intended outcome is to nurture a systems change at the city scale such that bicycle and pedestrian travel are the most efficient, safe, comfortable, interesting and convenient choice. Riding a bicycle and getting around on foot shall be a comfortable and integral part of daily life for people of all ages and abilities.

This portion of the Place Plan builds upon previous technical studies completed in 2005 and 2016 by SEH examining multi-use trails, and 2008 and 2017 Safe Routes to School study completed by West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC).

The City is currently engaged with West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning to complete a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and Safe Routes to Parks Plan throughout 2021. That effort will provide greater focus on this aspect of space planning and management, and the *Place Plan* is intended to be amended to incorporate and reflect those efforts.

Since the time period when most area roadways where constructed, the generally accepted engineering best practices to build and retrofit roadways, especially to improve bicycling and pedestrian conditions, has expanded to include treatments such as travel lane markings, buffered bike lanes, green bike lanes, wayfinding signage, bump-outs and enhanced intersections, left

> "If you plan cities for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places"
> – Fred Kent, Project for Public Spaces
>
> "Streets and their sidewalks- the main public places of a city- are its most vital organs. Think of a city and what comes to mind? Its streets. If a city's streets look interesting, the city looks interesting; if they look dull, the city looks dull."
> – Jane Jacobs

turn bike boxes, bicycle boulevards, among others. This toolbox continues to expand as communities' experiment with techniques and materials, evaluate and share their experiences. As such, during this planning process staff and citizens revisited the 2005 bicycle route study completed by SEH within the context of the existing and future transportation system. In order to improve safety and circulation for all people and to improve mode choice, these best practices should be thoughtfully deployed throughout the City with context-sensitive solutions to achieve both individual and community level objectives of improved safety, circulation and connectivity, and quality of life.

Over half of the City of Altoona, predominately those areas platted before 1970, features the traditional rectilinear street grid with small block sizes and high intersection density. This structure generally facilitates bicycle and pedestrian circulation due to modest lot sizes, density of intersections, existing sidewalk, and predictable wayfinding. Other portions of the City are laid out in a more auto-dependent method, such as limited-access developments, rural roadways subsequently incorporated into the City, or long curving streets and cul-de-sacs necessary to navigate topography. While additional growth and development is anticipated, gains in improving place quality, including walking and bicycling accommodations, must occur by retrofitting existing developed areas that exist in a variety of forms.

Excellent planning and design resources are now available from governmental and specialized associations for use to help plan, evaluate, design and maintain nonmotorized facilities. There is no need to reinvent the wheel, and no excuse for employing inadequate or outdated methods.

Bicycles are identified as vehicles and equal users of the roadway, per Wisconsin State Statues § 346.04(4)(a). Bicycles are particularly vulnerable due to exposure of the rider as compared to significantly larger and faster automobiles. Thus, infrastructure should meet this legal recognition and in recognition of ensuring safety.

The subsequent chapters and appendices of this plan include information utilized or referred to develop this document and its recommendations. Included is a listing of general assumptions and trends relating to current and future park demands and needs (Chapter 4) and a detailed facilities inventory of each park and open space site within the City (Chapter 5). Projects previously identified in the 2015 Parks & Rec Plan (2015-2020) are listed in Appendix C. and updated to reflect current implementation status.

Why Plan for Walking and Cycling

The ultimate goal of transportation is to provide access to goods, services and activities. In general, the more transportation options available, the better the access, and nonmotorized modes are increasingly important and desired choices for locomotion and recreation. Safe and convenient nonmotorized travel provides many benefits, including reduced traffic congestion, user savings, road and parking facility savings, economic development and a better environment.

Walking, cycling and skating are also enjoyable and healthy activities. They are among the most popular forms of recreation as reported by the 2016 Altoona Parks & Recreation Survey as well as the Wisconsin State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2011-2016). Public health officials increasingly recognize the importance of frequent aerobic

"A complete, connected, comfortable network of protected bike-lanes is a:

- Social equity strategy
- Affordability strategy
- Healthy cities strategy
- Climate mitigation strategy
- Economic development strategy
- Smart mobility strategy"
- Brent Toderian, former Chief Planner, Vancouver BC

exercise, and the critical role of urban design and public places play in public health outcomes.

A built environment that is unfriendly to non-motorized users reduces everybody's travel choices and does not create streetscapes that are inclusive or comfortable for positive activities. The result is the creation of what are effectively single-use roadways and systemic "automobile dependency", reduced mobility and choices, increased traffic congestion, higher road and parking facility costs, increased consumer costs, and greater environmental degradation.

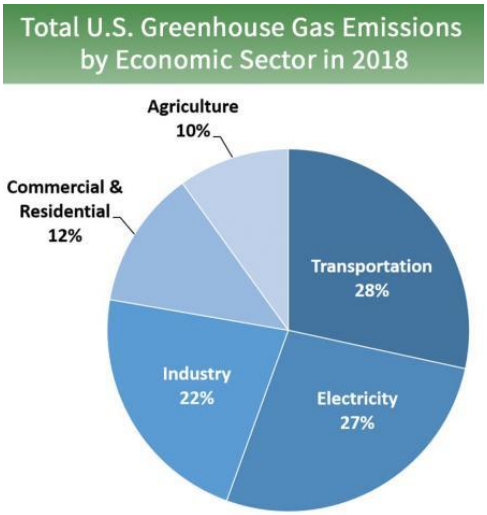
As a broader philosophy of positioning Altoona with engaging public spaces, this plan recommends specific projects and adopting best practice policies to balance pedestrian and cyclist transportation with the automobile. Chapter 6: Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility expounds upon the City's strategic direction and commitment to expanding safe, convenient and enjoyable bicycle and pedestrian mobility in all contexts.

Environmental & Climate Impacts

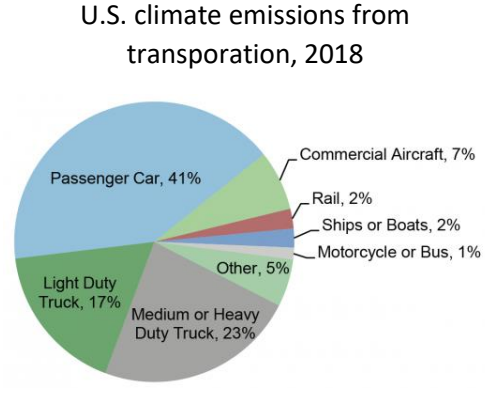
The transportation sector generates the largest share of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, approximately 28.2 percent of the 2018 total. Of this, approximately 58 percent are passenger vehicles. Greenhouse gas emissions from transportation primarily come from burning fossil fuel. In addition to other environmental pollutants resulting from fossil fuel combustion and vehicle operation, personal vehicles are a significant contributor to climate change due to carbon emissions and land use impacts. Travel by foot or bicycle nearly eliminates the operational emissions of the trip.

National Household Travel Survey, study conducted for the Federal Highway Administration every eight years and released in April 2017 indicated that over 35 percent of vehicle trips are under 2 miles, 21 percent are one mile or less, and five percent less than ½ mile. Yet, 77 percent of daily trips take place in personal vehicles. Many of these trips could be conducted on foot or bicycle, reducing environmental impacts and financial costs, and improving personal health.

Automobile infrastructure occupies a significant portion of the urban landscape, and automobile storage facilities such as garages and parking lots occupy a great deal more. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan indicates 22.3 percent of land use in the City is transportation facilities, greater than any other land use category. According to the Chippewa-Eau Claire Metropolitan Transportation Plan, 89 percent of vehicle lane miles in the region are local roads. Shifting transportation choices from automobiles to bicycling, walking and transit may not only reduce carbon emissions, but also enable more land to be utilized for green spaces, homes, businesses, and other uses.



Source: US EPA Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks



Source: US EPA Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks, 2018

Public Health

The relationship between public health and community design has regained paramount interest of researchers, practitioners, and policy makers. Parks have a long history backed by scientific evidence of having positive impacts on mental and physical health. Every major health organization recognizes the connection between the characteristics of the built environment and population health (environmental determinates of health), principally how the environment greatly impacts daily habits and routines, from active living to diet, that are closely aligned with chronic disease. Evidence includes how the character of the built environment impacts quality social interaction, physical activity, mental health, and exposure to nature.

Decades of medical & public health research attest to the preventive and curative effects of increased fitness, particularly outdoor exercise and walking-oriented lifestyles, on people of all ages. Thus, the design and management of public spaces, including parks and streetscapes, play a central role in facilitating healthier lifestyles. In addition, inviting public places enable social interaction and relationships that are critical in maintaining community cohesion, pride, and social capital, which are also strongly associated with overall health and wellness. Public spaces function in a convening role in that they may increase social capital as well as mental health by providing safe and desirable places for intentional as well as accidental meetings where people can develop social ties. These places also provide a setting where healthy behavior, physical and social, are modeled.

> "The built environment is a term for the human-made landscape that we all live and work in. It includes parks, sidewalks, and a lot more – from buildings to boulevards, canopy trees to parking lots. A healthy community is one that enables people to make healthy choices as part of their day-to-day tasks."
>
> - Dee Merriam, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Fortunately, the best practices advocated by public health experts for designing places and communities for public health overlap significantly with those recognized by the planning profession for creating high performing spaces that advance social, environmental and financial sustainability. The evidence for improving public health outcomes through consciously incorporating best practices into place and community design is compelling.

Scientifically Supported Policies Directly Related to Public Health, Parks, Recreation and the Public Realm

Activity programs for older adults: Offer group educational, social or physical activities that promote social interaction, regular attendance, and community involvement among older adults.

Community-based social support for physical activity: Build, strengthen, and maintain social networks that provide supportive relationships for behavior change through walking groups or other community-based interventions.

Complete streets and streetscape design initiatives: Enhance streetscapes with greater sidewalk coverage and walkway connectivity, street crossing safety features, traffic calming measure, and other design elements.

Exercise prescriptions: Provide patients with prescriptions for exercise plans, often accompanied by progress checks at office visits, counseling, activity logs, and exercise testing.

Extracurricular activities for social engagement: Support organized social, art, or physical activities for school-age youth outside of the school day.

Mixed-use development: Support combination of land uses (e.g. residential, commercial, recreational) in development initiatives often through zoning regulations or Smart Growth initiatives.

Outdoor experiential education and wilderness therapy: Support outdoor pursuits that emphasize inter-and intra-personal growth through overcoming obstacles (e.g., challenge courses, wilderness excursions, etc.)

Places for physical activity: Modify local environments (e.g., parks, trails, sidewalks) to support physical activity, increase access to new or existing facilities for physical activity, or build new facilities.

Public transportation systems: Introduce or expand transportation options that are available to the public and run on a scheduled timetable (e.g. buses, trains, etc.)

Rain gardens and other bioretention systems: Establish bioretention systems (e.g., rain gardens, bioretention cells, green roofs, planter boxes, bioswales, etc.) to make city landscapes more permeable).

Safe routes to schools: Promote walking and biking to school through education, incentives, and environmental changes.

Traffic calming: Modify the built environment to affect traffic speed and patterns via speed bumps, pedestrian center crossing islands, curb extensions, roundabouts, etc.

Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, "Policies and Programs That Can Improve Health", 2018. As summarized in Parks and Recreation System Planning, Barth, 2020.

Social Equity and Cohesion

Equity is a multi-dimensional concept, the complexity of which is undergoing increased recognition and study by practitioners to better understand how the built environment is deterministic of uneven racial and economic equity. As illustrated in elsewhere in this Introduction, quality public spaces positively contribute to public health and economic vitality, as well as safety, youth development, opportunity, mobility, and general quality of life. Therefore, in order to pursue this vision and operationalize values, communities must affirmatively orient public realm priorities to ensure all residents have equal access, and indeed focus additional resources into areas of the community where historically marginalized peoples reside to eliminate inequities, achieve social justice and equitable outcomes.

Great public spaces are where celebrations are held, social and economic exchanges take place, friends and neighbors run into each other, and cultures mix. When the spaces work well, they serve as a stage for our personal and common public lives. They are the "front porches" of our neighborhoods and public institutions, where we interact with each other and with government.

The *process* of placemaking and place governance, when implemented well, brings people together to create a sense of shared ownership in the community and its public spaces. By meaningfully engaging and incorporating diverse and representative members of the community, these places become "bridge building places" more active and useful for the people who help to create them as well as be more welcoming to people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. This facilitates and encourages exposure, familiarity, and connection between people of all ages and backgrounds who may otherwise not know one another. When neighbors come together to improve their shared spaces, they come to know one another and empower inclusion, equity, and cohesion. In order for public spaces and systems, including transportation, to be reflective of the community, planning processes must be affirmatively inclusive. Involvement of all residents is vital for creating great places and communities and reflect the values and desires of residents.

Shared places work toward creating a community narrative and inclusive identity. When public spaces become a part of daily life, they are forever linked with personal and collective milestones, for example: meeting new friends, experiencing cultural events, and celebrating accomplishment. By facilitating emotional links to places, sharing these links helps to strengthen common purpose and vision, dedication to community enterprise, and participation in civil democratic process. These places are incredibly meaningful in the social function and vibrancy of the community as well as in individual lives.

> "Everyone has the right to live in a great place. More importantly, everyone has the right to contribute to making the place where they live great."
> - Fred Kent, Project for Public Spaces

Elements that encourage and nurture social interaction include:

- Plentiful seating, ideally of a variety of types, including moveable
- Opportunities to linger in the shade or sun
- Sight lines to improve sense of safety and enable watching of people coming and going
- Arranged in corridors connecting places and destinations, interesting and enjoyable for walking and strolling for pleasure and mobility
- Nodes for people to linger alone or in groups, intimate for conversation but open for watching
- Pedestrian-scale lighting and signage
- Integrated and interesting landscaping

By prioritizing bicycle and pedestrian considerations, spaces are not only by nature more accessible and welcoming to people, but also democratize access and increase chance meetings that, over time, build recognition, attachment, and cohesion.

The quality of public places is strongly associated with direct and indirect economic benefits for households, businesses, and communities broadly. This dynamic has been measured empirically for decades through study of the proximity and access to amenities such as lakefront property, viewsheds, trails, tree-lined streets and notable park spaces, as observed through impacts of property values, rents, and new investment. Research in recent years have connected economic benefit to many other aspects of public space, such as neighborhood walkability, bicycle access, and the quality and proximity to both public and private "third places" that invite people to gather.

One of the great shifts in economic development thinking and practice in recent years is that quality of life and quality of place now occupy a central position in attracting and retaining talent. Places are recognized as venues to nurture the mixing of ideas and entrepreneurial spirit. Economic development practice is shifting from attracting firms to create local employment to creating communities where people desire to locate.

To realize this place strategy begins with an asset-based approach to identify, accentuate, and build upon distinctive cultural or natural features. Second, to employ best practices and research in complementary mix of uses, activities and features to create an engaging district at the granular and neighborhood scale. Fortunately, many of these tenants further other desirable objectives and functions of high performance places.

> "Creative placemaking, done well, can deliver high value to its stakeholders, including community, developers, and public and private partners."
> - Urban Land Institute
>
> "No longer is it sufficient to build places that are merely functional and safe. Our placemaking aspirations must be as high and as grand as our economic goals because they are bound together."
> – Peter Kageyama

Similar to public health, evidence is accumulating at the personal and community scale for the economic benefits of bicycle and pedestrian oriented transportation and development. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are far less infrastructure intensive to build and maintain and require less space. A greater portion of the infrastructure cost is labor rather than material, keeping a greater portion of the expenditures circulating in the local economy.

In addition to nurturing improvements for today's citizens, in order to compete for future investment Altoona has to make investments in health and quality of life that allow us to continue to be regarded as a place of choice. These investments are win-win opportunities.

Equity & Inclusion

All people, regardless of income, ethnicity, heritage, gender, ability, or age should have equal access to quality public space. It is a right, not a privilege, to have safe, healthful access. Public spaces should be welcoming, inclusive, and representative of the entire community. The design, programming, and investment decisions regarding public spaces such as parks must be part of a *proactive equity mission* to improve quality of life for all people. This mission may include an affirmative focus to improve access and quality of public spaces in areas of the community where access to resources is, or has been, disproportionately less, or in areas where residents are most likely to benefit from the investment. This mission requires diligence, intention and focus.

Equity is a multi-dimensional. Equity and inclusion are multi-scalar, society-wide dynamics. This Plan will not summarize all the various aspects of equity and inclusion and how they are shaped or impacted by the physical design of public space. The approach in the construction of this Plan is in recognition that practices to improve equity and inclusion through space design are not made in a vacuum, and are parts of a larger physical, social and cultural ecosystem. This Plan will briefly summarize and affirm the city and community's vision, values, and commitment to advance equity and inclusion through space design and management.

> ***What is Equity?***
>
> Equity connects all people to opportunity-across race, ethnicity, heritage, income, age, and ability. Equity expands options and choice for housing, employment, transportation, recreation, and pursuing a healthy, fulfilling life. For the city and its residents to reach its full potential, all residents need to be able to access opportunity, and benefit from shared prosperity.

Planners and policymakers will utilize an equity lens and approach in the location, design, and programming of public space to ensure equitable access to and use of public spaces by all residents. Current best practice in planning for equity are intended to be incorporated throughout this process, document, and recommendations. The National Recreation and Parks Association includes social equity as one of its three pillars, and equity is advanced through the American Institute of Certified Planners code of ethics and policy guides.

Equity is widely understood as a core component of just city-building and governance practices. The case for community parks, trails, and walkability as drivers of economic growth and enabling accessibility has been repeatedly and effectively made from multiple disciplines. The essential role of parks and trails in creating conditions that advance health and well-being is similarly well documented. Unfortunately, throughout history city building practices have been intentionally used to advance agendas of racial and wealth segregation. Due to the permanence of these decisions, many of these impacts persist.

Public space policies and decision will be aware of both equity of opportunity as well as equity of outcome. There is general agreement that everybody deserves "equity of opportunity," meaning that disadvantaged people have adequate access to public space, education, and employment opportunities. In public space, this may mean that all neighborhoods have parks, adequate parks, and access to other public spaces. However, similar to those other issues, "equity of outcome," meaning that society ensures that disadvantaged people actually succeed in these activities, means something different and therefore requires specific recognition and focus. Public spaces must reflect the diversity in the communities they serve, be inclusive and welcoming, resulting in use and participation.

The character of public spaces, from the amenities and features to arts and events, will respect and highlight the historic peoples of the region, current populations and increasingly diverse community in the city and region. All areas of the City will have proximity and access to quality public spaces. Public spaces build community.

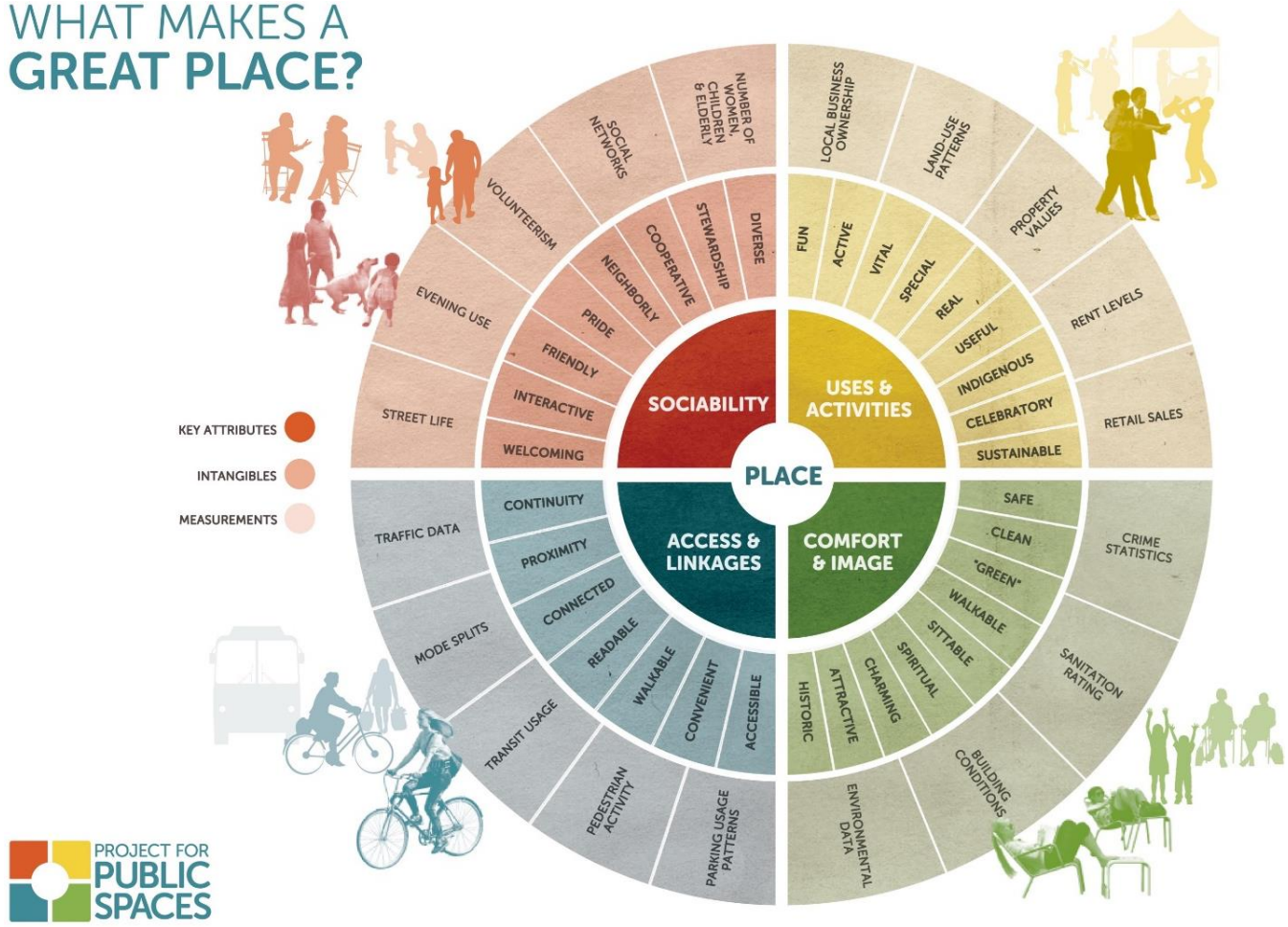
Placemaking Principles as a Holistic Approach for Public Space

Placemaking is a term popularized and advocated by the Project for Public Spaces (among many others), building from decades of design and social science research by pioneers such as Ian McHarg, William Whyte, Jan Gehl, Jane Jacobs, and many others. This term applies to any place design or governance activity, and insights from these principles inform the holistic approach to public space described in this plan. General placemaking concepts include the "Power of 10[2]", with the premise that at each scale, places thrive when people have a range of reasons (ten) to go and be there.

Still other practitioners refine this placemaking philosophy to include additional principles of good design and programming to enrich people's everyday experiences in public space. This practice continues to evolve with new research and evaluation, innovation, and applications. These insights include the degree to which space design and design process reflect community equity and inclusion. Specific approaches reflect use of nature and relationship of space design to our human biophilic response to living things and natural systems. Reflecting the practice of public space design in general, there are many layers within placemaking that require attention.

> "[Successful place planning] addresses both the internal conditions of parks and the connections of parks to neighborhoods, based on the understanding that the realm of parks begins at each resident's door and extends through the connective fabric of the city and its parks and open spaces." (Lombard, 2016)
>
> "The mark of a great city isn't how it treats its special places – but how it treats its ordinary ones" – Aaron M. Renn

[2] Project for Public Spaces. www.pps.org/article/the-power-of-10



Placemaking concepts serve as guides and reminders that successful places must be much be more than afterthoughts. Each destination should be carefully and intentionally designed and managed for multiple uses. Maximum coordination and complete integration of all pertinent subsystems of public space should be considered whenever planning a project, public works, policy or private development review as a matter of both culture and procedure. Further, institutionalize the thorough implementation of the pursuit of an *excellence in public space* in letter and spirit.

Many parks are designed for limited recreation uses and do not attract seniors, teens, or people simply looking to socialize, or for a place to sit or walk. These are often single-use places, exemplified by a patch of lawn with a small playground. While reserving unprogrammed natural areas for quiet enjoyment, Altoona envisions parks of all sizes as multi-functional public destinations that are lively, secure, and distinct in character. Specialized use facilities should be integrated into larger spaces that make shared use of facility and space resources and encourage broader uses. The best parks are flexible multi-use destinations and catalysts for community development.

Altoona recognizes that public space and social activity does not begin and end at the boundaries of a park. In reality, distinct public spaces such as parks are nodes of amenities and platforms for activity that invite and facilitate positive interaction and enjoyment throughout their neighborhood. However, most of our community experience is dictated by the streets, sidewalks, bikeways, and trails that connect places. Streets and sidewalks are in fact quintessential public spaces – they are ubiquitous connectors of the public and private realm, the stage where life unfolds.

Placemaking is in central tenant of neighborhood and city design as well. Space designers recognize that neighborhoods are places to live in, not drive through. The incorporation of transportation and mobility into this holistic approach of public space is a crucial one- each scale of the community, and its intimately related systems, must be taken into account to in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

> "Placemaking is about turning a neighborhood or city from place you can't wait to get through into one you never want to leave"
> – Fred Kent

This goes too for the quasi-public realm of private property observed from the public street, or passed through to arrive at the destination, which greatly impacts the overall experience and identify of the community. Existing City ordinances include many elements intended to directly influence the use, arrangement, accessibility, aesthetics, and performance of property, from building setbacks and height to landscaping, stormwater, and minimum upkeep. In recognition of the dynamic, this plan also recommends policies and strategies for nurturing engaging and welcoming places in the public-facing private realm.

Winter City and Seasonality

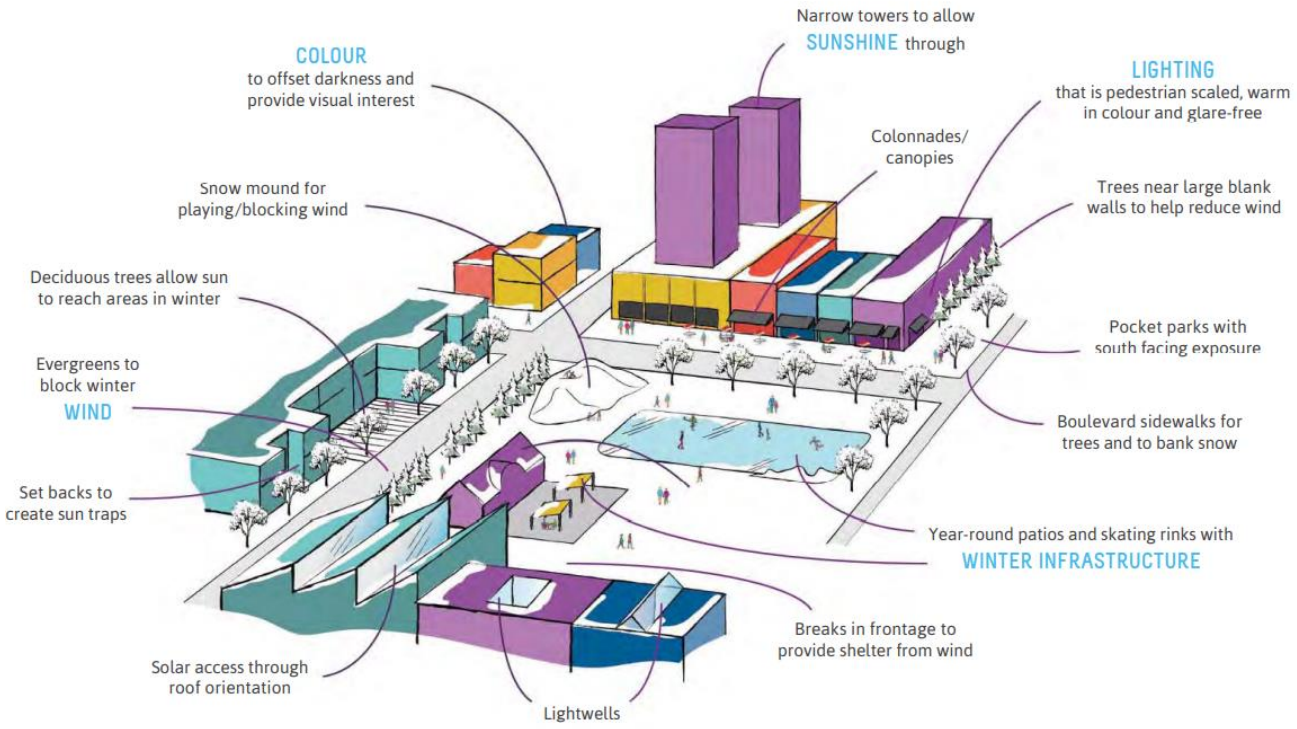
The City of Altoona pursued a competitive Wintermission program in 2019 to gain technical assistance and participation in an international effort to improve public health and social wellbeing through a focus on encouraging people to maintain activity and use of public space throughout the winter. Winter weather in northern climates such as the Chippewa Valley create specific challenges and considerations in space design and programing to be successful in this mission. Although the city was not selected to participate in the program, the City of Eau Claire was selected and has graciously included Altoona as a broader regional cooperative effort. Since 2019 Altoona has elevated focus on winter events and programming.

Winter Design in a Nutshell

The Winter Design Guidelines are comprehensive. For the sake of simplicity, however, the five main principles of winter city design are:

1. Incorporate design strategies to block wind, particularly prevailing winds and downdrafts.
2. Maximize exposure to sunshine through orientation and design.
3. Use color to enliven the winterscape.
4. Create visual interest with light, while being mindful of intensity, spread, contrast and color.
5. Design and provide infrastructure that supports desired winter life and improves comfort and access in cold weather

Source: City of Edmonton, Winter City Design Guide



Above: Principles of Winter Design, City of Edmonton Winter City Design Guide, 2020.

Winter conditions may persist for up to six months in the Chippewa Valley, bringing cold, wind, ice, and snow that impacts how people use all outdoor spaces, especially for mobility. Many cold climate cities show success in maintaining and growing pedestrian activity for transportation and leisure. Many of these are more compact cities or parts of cities were trips are relatively short and pedestrian infrastructure is well developed. However, cities such as Minneapolis, Boston and Eau Claire, and regions such as northern Europe with similar winter conditions to Wisconsin, reflect examples for continuing to expand walking and bicycling throughout the winter through careful attention to infrastructure design, snow and ice management, supportive programs, and end-of-trip solutions.

Maintaining and enhancing community livability throughout the winter not only requires careful design, but also space programming and maintenance. In a region with abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation, many of our residents already enjoy getting outside in the winter. However, we can plan events, curate programs, and ensure our public spaces are functional for mobility and recreation through winter.

The City of Eau Claire designated a trail loop through the Randall Park Neighborhood and downtown where priority snow clearing activities take place. As part of their wintermission strategy, the increased attention facilitated increased physical activity and recreation throughout the winter, and this activity was matched with complementary signage and social media marketing.

Altoona city staff conduct snow clearing activities of many of the bicycle facilities through the City. The River Prairie Trail is currently designated as a priority loop and has resulted in a large increase in use through the winter.

Ice and snow clearing activities are typically focused on maintaining automobile mobility. This focus reinforces our existing arrangement to prioritize automobile mobility over other options, creating widespread impacts that is

discussed throughout this Plan. In order to shift culture and behavior toward a more balanced, health and efficient transportation system, design thinking and space management must proactively account for winter conditions to ensure safe, functional and enjoyable walking and bicycling.

Specific resources, examples and references for Winter City seasonality include:

8 80 Cities – Winter City Toolkit	www.wintercitiestoolkit.com/	Clearinghouse of winter strategies
City of Edmonton – Winter City Design Guide	www.edmonton.ca/city_government/initiatives_innovation/winter-design-guidelines.aspx	
City of Edmonton – Winter City Edmonton	www.wintercityedmonton.ca/	Interactive public-facing portal for winter activities and lifestyle
Winter Cities Institute	https://wintercities.com/	

Tactical Urbanism

Many components of the built environment are resource intensive to plan and construct, and despite best intentions, may not achieve its intended purpose of objectives. "Tactical Urbanism" is a practice of utilizing flexible, short-term and inexpensive interventions to experiment with measures to advance objectives related to active transportation, open space programming, safety, and more.

Resources such as the Tactical Urbanism Guide illustrate examples from around the world where cities, organizations, residents and others have created temporary parks out of parking spaces, created protected bicycle lanes with planters and other DYI barriers, and deployed pop-up activities on parks, sidewalks and parking lots to create engaging space. Some of these measures may be temporary, while others, such as pedestrian and cyclist safety experiments, could become permanent.

Summary of Existing Plans

The City of Altoona has a variety of existing plans, policies, studies and ordinances in place which guide the development and management of public spaces and facilities. This section of the Plan briefly summarizes these existing documents. A more comprehensive summary is provided in Appendix A: Summary of Current Plans. These include:

- Comprehensive Plan (2009)
- Parks & Open Space Plan (2015)
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Feasibility Study (2005)
- Safe Routes to School Plan (2008)
- Safe Routes to School Plan (2017)
- Chippewa Valley Future Regions (2018)
- Chippewa Valley Housing Task Force: Findings & Recommendations (2019)
- City Ordinances, including but not limited to:
    - Trees (Ch. 8.04)

- Streets and Sidewalks (Ch. 12)
- Subdivisions and Land Divisions (Ch. 18)
- Zoning (Ch. 19)

Additional plans and ordinances guide private development in ways that significantly impact the public realm are addressed elsewhere in this Plan.

Comprehensive Plan (2009)

Completed between 2006 and 2009, the City of Altoona Comprehensive Plan is, by State Statue, the principal policy document directing land and development activities in the City. This Place Plan advances the policy statements and priorities included in the Comprehensive Plan by creating a specific vision for public spaces with greater focus and specificity in recommended policies and projects. Parks, open spaces, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and other public works touch on a diversity of general planning themes, from land use to transportation.

To summarize, these policy requirements and guides in the Comprehensive Plan include:

- Preserve sensitive natural resources within the area, with a particular emphasis on protection and enhancement of Lake Altoona.
- Provide a safe, efficient, multi-modal and well-maintained transportation network, including incorporation of pedestrian and bicycle planning, complete sidewalk network, use of grid-like street patterns, use of transportation calming devices and alternative designs.
- Encourages the (re)development of neighborhoods that are oriented towards pedestrians and well-served by sidewalks, bicycle routes, and other non-motorized transportation facilities.
- Reinforce traditional neighborhood design principles, including mixed-use, compact, efficient and appealing use of land, including design guidelines.
- Utilize Official Mapping tools to coordinate long-term facility planning, including in the extraterritorial area.
- Ensure that public facilities are well maintained and meet the needs of the public.
- Encourages the connectivity of local park and recreational facilities with regional facilities, via bicycle trials or marked routes on existing roads.
- Avoid detrimental impact of development on natural resources, environmental corridors, habitat areas, historic and cultural resources, including fragmentation of natural areas.

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (2015)

This plan was prepared for incorporation into the 2015-2020 Eau Claire County Parks & Open Space Plan and is required for eligibility for many State grant funding mechanisms. This document summarizes the existing park facilities in Altoona and includes a prioritized action plan. Many of the highest and secondary priority projects have been completed.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Feasibility Study (2005)

The City of Altoona contracted with the consulting firm SEH to complete a feasibility study for a network of bicycle and pedestrian trails. The plan includes 23 trail segments totaling 11.3 miles. This study has served as the de facto bicycle and pedestrian plan for the City, with several segments since completed. Many of the remaining segments are incorporated in this Plan.

Safe Routes to School Plan (2008)
Conducted by the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, this study examined student travel patterns around the Altoona School District campus and identified opportunities to improve the safety and convenience of students to walk and bike. This plan resulted in improvements along Bartlett Avenue adjacent to the schools, including improved crosswalks, bump-outs, and signage. The plan also recommended discontinuing curb-side bus drop-off, which was accomplished with the 2016/17 construction of the Administration building.

Safe Routes to School Plan (2017)
Conducted by the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission with support by City and District staff, this study examined progress since the 2008 plan and updated for contemporary conditions including the addition of the Altoona Elementary School at its new peripheral location. Similar to municipal bicycle and pedestrian plans, Safe Routes to School utilizes the six E's: Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Equity and Evaluation, applied to schools as the principal destinations by identifying key corridors and constraints for engineering and evaluation, and directing education and encouragement toward students and their parents. The City of Altoona is an active partner in contributing to this planning process with the Altoona School District, and will be proactive in implementing the recommendations. Since adoption, WCWRPC has convened quarterly regional coordination meetings to facilitate implementation.

Chippewa Valley Future Region (2018)
The Local Government Institute of Wisconsin selected the Chippewa Valley collaboration of Eau Claire, Eau Claire County and Altoona for a *strategic foresight* community futuring process focused on the creative economy. This collective arrived at a vision of "A regional where creativity thrives and drives innovation in commerce, culture, education and government." Over the course of six months and four workshops, over 150 people contributed to creating a vision for a future region built upon the creative economy. Perhaps more importantly, these face-to-face gatherings created new relationships, collaborations and projects, and reinforced regional capacity for aligned and collective action.

Chippewa Valley Housing Task Force (2019)
Created in 2018 with increased awareness of rising affordability and supply challenges in the regional housing market, Altoona, area communities and stakeholders came together in this task force to study the situation and instigate a coordinated response. The work of the Task Force is ongoing. Results include a Summary of Recommendations generated by the over 100 contributors, Housing Action Plans adopted by Altoona and Eau Claire, and many others. Most relevant to the Place Plan effort is the increased recognition of affordability challenges in our neighborhoods and region, and the unequal and inequitable experience of many of our residents. Awareness of access and equity considerations in public space design and programming is raised, and the importance of compact communities with quality public amenities as integral to affordable housing strategies was emphasized.

Summary of Planning Process

City of Altoona Planning Department played the lead role in managing the development of this *Place Plan*, with indispensable collaboration with Public Works and Parks & Recreation Department, and contributions from all areas of municipal government. Recommendations are strongly dictated by significant input from City Council, Parks & Recreation Committee, Plan Commission, *Place Plan* Advisory Committee, and citizen participation. Invaluable insight and assistance were provided by several community partners and interest groups, including

West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, Eau Claire County, City of Eau Claire, Chippewa Off Road Bike Association, and the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin.

City staff spent hundreds of hours studying existing conditions, touring and observing use of existing facilities, facilitating cross-departmental discussions regarding infrastructure, management, needs and priorities, and engaging with the public. Contemporary best practices, third-party standards, case studies, expert interviews, and example places and plans were thoroughly studied and considered with respect to Altoona's context.

Principal Planning Direction

The following priorities and directives where provided by City Council, Parks Board and Plan Commission to guide the planning process.

(1) Maintain and improve existing City Parks by addressing existing needs

(2) Improve safety and connectively for bicyclists and pedestrians

(3) Improve active use of existing parks, especially underutilized spaces and facilities

(4) Identify an ambitious, implementation-focused framework & long-term vision for public space

(5) Ensure future development exemplifies excellence in public realm

Public Engagement

Public engagement and citizen contribution serves as the central component informing desired uses and priorities for open spaces in Altoona. Extensive input was received from the public in the form of online surveys in 2016 and 2021, park meet-ups, focus groups, interviews, open houses, committee meetings, and recreation department program reviews.

In addition to gaining support for open space programs, citizen participation is crucial if the open space facilities and programs are to match community needs. The best source of information about Altoona open space needs are the citizens, employees and visitors who will use and benefit from this system. Combined with technical analysis, best practices and standards, citizen input directly informs the recommendation in this plan.

A detailed accounting of the public participation process and results are illustrated in Chapter 4: Needs Assessment.

Implementation

The final chapter of this plan is a recommended implementation strategy that summarizes tools, timelines, and considerations for completing projects and changes in policy. Recommendations include direct and functional projects, while others, especially those highly aspirational, visionary, or long-term and nature, will require significant additional study, preparation, and time to design and implement. This vision will be achieved through a series of strategic short, medium, and long-term actions that will guide the City toward achieving the type of community it wants to be.

Since the initiation of this planning process in 2016, many of the initial recommendations have been successfully implemented. This is a testament to the commitment by the City Council, and collaboration between city departments to utilize best information and recommendations to continue to improve quality of life through

public spaces. The long timeline of this planning effort also allowed for extended dialogue, space observation and experimentation, and learning to assemble and summarize a strategy for high performing public spaces in Altoona.

As the population grows, and contemporary trends and best practices in the design and management of public space, including recreation and transportation, continue to change and evolve, the City must regularly evaluate the adequacy of existing facilities and policies to meet the needs and wants of residents and develop an achievable plan.

Regional Context

The City of Altoona exists in a regional social ecosystem of facilities and programs within the Chippewa Valley, and recognizes that people enjoy parks and programs throughout the area. Further, Altoona is contiguous with the City of Eau Claire and hosts Altoona Lake County Park within City limits. As briefly illustrated earlier in this chapter, the City is active in collaborating to advance arts, culture, economic development and other efforts that relate to public space.

Generally, Altoona and Eau Claire have well developed trail connections along River Prairie Drive and Spooner Avenue. A multi-use trail segment connects the cities along Highway 12, although improvements are recommended for this route to improve intersections and continuity. Connections along the southern half of the mutual boundary is presently impeded by Otter Creek. Future trail connections are envisioned at Gateway Drive and Prill Road.

The City of Eau Claire has completed several planning activities in recent years that inform the City of Altoona context, including:

- 2018 – Park and Recreation System Master Plan (2018-2022)
- 2018 – Park, Open Space & Recreational Facilities Plan (2018-2022)
- 2018 – Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update
- 2015 – Comprehensive Plan: Parks, Greenways and Trails System Plan
- 2013 – Park & Open Space Plan (2013-2017)
- 2011 – Department of Parks, Recreation & Forestry Strategic Plan
- 2010 – Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Eau Claire County

- Eau Claire County 2016-2020 Outdoor Recreation Plan.
- Eau Claire County owns and manages Lake Altoona County Park, a 13-acre property which is within the City of Altoona boundary and just east of the City's Lake Altoona Park. The County completed a new master plan for the facility in 2017 envisioning future use and expansion of existing amenities.
- City of Altoona Parks & Recreation Department completed a five-year plan and facilities inventory in 2015 which is included in the Eau Claire County plan.
- Four County Highways, A, KB, SS and AA travel through or are adjacent to Altoona[3], requiring an additional level of cooperation, standards, and governance.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the Metropolitan Planning Area, 2017 – 2027

West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC) led a year-long process to produce a new Metropolitan Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the urbanized portion of the Chippewa Valley, as defined by the

[3] County Highway A: Spooner Road and 3rd Street East; County Highway KB: Bartlett Avenue from 3rd Street East to 9 Mile Creek Road, and Beach Road. County Highway SS (9 Mile Creek Road) lies just to the East of present City boundary). County Highway AA (Meyer Road and Prill Road) form current southeast boundary.

Metropolitan Planning Organization boundary. This area includes Altoona, Chippewa Halls, Eau Claire, Lake Hallie, and developed areas of adjacent townships. Altoona City staff actively engaged and contributed throughout the planning process utilizing this opportunity to advance common goals, priorities and standards, as well as examine regional corridors. This planning effort provided an excellent opportunity for multi-jurisdiction and multi-scale synergies.

Eau Claire County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2019)
WCWRPC completed coordinated bicycle and pedestrian plans for Eau Claire, Chippewa and Dunn Counties, supported by the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) in 2017-18. This process built upon the metropolitan planning area plan by incorporating practices and expanding regional routes through the rural areas of the three-county region. These routes include County Highways KB and SS through and beyond the City of Altoona, as well as Prill Road along Altoona's current southern boundary.

Wisconsin State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2019 – 2023
The SCORP identifies state-wide and regional recreational needs and establishes overall goals to develop an improved supply of recreation amenities within the State, while also protecting Wisconsin's natural environment for the enjoyment of residents and visitors. This plan also includes useful survey information that provides insight into recreational preferences and trends that may be utilized in local planning efforts.
http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/planning/scorp/.

Additional Elements & Efforts

Throughout the planning process, additional elements, opportunities, and areas for further refinement were identified to enrich and deepen Altoona's public space strategies. However, given resource constraints and the need to achieve a finished document, these areas were not thoroughly explored but are noted herein for future study.

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) launched its Livable Communities program in recent years to support efforts of communities to be great places for people of **all ages and abilities** through research and advocacy for community design and planning best practices. These elements include safe, walkable streets; age-friendly housing and transportation options; access to needed services; and opportunities for residents of all ages to participate in community life. A particular focus and lens is on accessibility and interconnectedness of public space, and how people interact with their environment. These practices and efforts are mutually supportive of those advanced by this Plan. A parallel AARP program is the Age-Friend Community designation, which the City may consider participating.

Public Art is recognized as strengthening cultural values and preserving heritage, build community character and sense of place, enhance community engagement and participation, and contribute to economic vitality. Public art has been a priority in the development of River Prairie, and while some specific opportunities are identified in a few existing parks, implementation of a thoughtful and thorough plan for public art may need to be completed separately.

Forestry is a specialized discipline that is often integrated into parks, streetscapes, and natural areas, but not always integrated and incorporated as a priority. The value of a vibrant urban forest and health natural areas is well recognized by a diversity of research that reflects the ecosystem value as well as economic benefits of trees. Components of the *Place Plan* are intended to elevate forestry efforts but are not a replacement for a focused

effort. The City is currently pursuing opportunities to study current conditions and prepare for a focused plan and strategy for its urban forest.

Public spaces are often utilized for **local food** production through measures ranging from organized community gardens and orchards to fruit tree plantings and landscaping in parks, to resident curation of street terraces. Food plays a central role in culture, and interest in growing more edibles in urban and suburban areas expanded along with the local food movements in the early 2000s, and community development programs that showed the potential positive community-building role gardening and related programing. The *Place Plan* is broadly supportive of incorporating local food production into public spaces and includes some specific recommendations. However, more detailed study may reveal additional opportunities.

Land Stewardship and **Habitat Restoration** practices are specific strategies to reduce human impact on natural ecological systems by restoring deteriorated natural communities, steps to eliminate or manage negative factors such as pollution and land fragmentation, protect existing sensitive landscapes and species, and utilize strategies that ensure native plant and animal communities may co-exist with human settlements and uses of the land. Practices include preserving habitat corridors, shoreline and wetland areas, utilize native landscaping and tree species, and setting aside sufficiently sized areas for native communities to function. Altoona's location bounded by the Eau Claire River and Otter Creek Corridor are prime regional examples of landscapes requiring stewardship and restoration practices.

Birding is among the most popular outdoor hobbies and recreational activities[4]. Birding is an activity that is enhanced by land stewardship and restoration practices, landscaping on public and private lands, as well as other low-impact curation activities that can support native and migrating bird species. Birding is also an educational opportunity to spend time outdoors, engage a broad range of people, learn about the natural world, improve observation of our community and be active. Practices in land management and curation of public spaces can intentionally enhance birding through supporting species as well as create points or areas of interest for observation. *Place Plan* recommendations include board strategies to improve habitat as well as specific opportunities to utilize bird houses in areas to encourage outdoor activity.

Biophilia (bio = life, living things; philia = love for) describes the innate human desire to connect with the natural environment and other living things. Multiple studies suggest that the connection to nature has many positive impacts on physical and mental health. However, people have become increasingly disconnected from nature due to our approach to the built environment and sedentary lifestyles; we spend most of the day sitting indoors without easy access to green space or natural environments. For successful integration of biophilia into public spaces, three factors are key: proximity, accessibility, and comfort. The approach to space design and management summarized in the *Place Plan* is intended to reflect the emerging research and lessons of biophilic concepts. However, additional examination may be needed to ensure thorough and effective integration.

Integration of **school** and **library** programs and activities to advance excellence in public realm should be further explored and expanded. As core educational institutions in the community, each provide opportunities to engage people in the design and management of public space, as well educate our peoples regarding the multiple facets of the natural and built environment.

[4] See Wisconsin Birds www.wisconsinbirds.org/iba/ and cross references in the Wisconsin SCORP.

Planning Timeline

City staff began working on this Plan in early 2016. Planning activities proceeded in spurts as time and resources allowed, challenged given the pace of growth in the City and region. The process and document became a living, iterative policy guide, utilized to inform the Capital Improvement Plan in each budget cycle, as well as amend certain City ordinances.

Scope of Work Design	February – March, 2016
Online & Paper Survey	April – October, 2016
Needs Assessment	May – July, 2016; May – August, 2017; Spring 2021
Park Meet-ups & Open Houses	August – September, 2016
Recommendations and Action Plans	August 2016 – April, 2017; Fall 2020; Spring 2021
Plan Preparation (cyclical)	October 2016 – November 2019; Spring 2021
Needs Assessment Revised	August - September 2019; March – April 2020; December – January, 2021
Public Open Houses & Comment Period	March – April, 2021
Online Survey	March – April, 2021
Plan Adoption	April 2021

Amending the Plan

Altoona Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2021)

The City of Altoona has commenced the creation of a focused bicycle and pedestrian plan with assistance by the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. That effort is expected to provide greater focus and technical application of the more general strategies included in this Plan. The bicycle and pedestrian planning effort is expected to result in refined action planning that may be incorporated into future revisions to the Place Plan.

Altoona Comprehensive Plan (2022)

The City is preparing to undertake the creation of a new Comprehensive Plan. The planning process is expected to begin in April 2021 and integrate the full range of planning and governance elements, including the incorporation of the content of the Place Plan as the community and elected officials determine. A robust and inclusive public engagement process may result in new insights and refinement to the Place Plan.

As described, the *Place Plan* serves as a philosophical and cultural guide to public space that is intended to be a living document that is periodically revisited and refined. Practically, a **five- to ten-year implementation period** is intended for most recommended policies and actions, although some of the more ambitious objectives and projects may require generations of concerted effort to achieve. As with the City, the public realm is never "done".

Amendments to this plan must follow the same general process as the original document with regard to updating the social and physical context, needs assessment, public participation, review and consideration. Amendments are intended to build upon the vision and philosophy of the original plan while also incorporating latest best practices and innovations.

CHAPTER 3: PLAN VISION AND GOALS

The premise of designing and managing all public spaces as an integrated, multi-functional system is that this strategy advances the creation and management of high-performance public spaces and broader community prosperity. This chapter illustrates the **vision** and **guiding principles**, as well as more specific **goals**, objectives and policies of public space design and governance, and is organized to implementation-focused statements.

The vision, value statements, and strategic priorities are the "big picture" guiding content relating to public space design and management. The goals, objectives and policies are framed as more discrete and granular direction for implementation.

Vision Statement

A vision statement describes an ideal future scenario that can be realized if the proper actions are effectively implemented. The following vision statement has been developed to provide focus to the City staff and officials, partnering organizations, organizations and individuals working to enhance the health, safety, welfare, and quality of life in Altoona and the Chippewa Valley over the next five to twenty-five years.

> Quality of life for all is recognized as a central purpose of public governance. Altoona will be a memorable community regarded as a leader in quality of life resulting in part from its high performing public spaces and active transportation network. Public spaces in the City will be high-quality, multi-functional, actively used, well-maintained, accessible and welcoming to all people.
>
> The City of Altoona will be a community in which each park, neighborhood and major destination are seamlessly connected via low-stress multi-use trails, bikeways, and sidewalks. The balanced and efficient transportation system will place people first and foster a culture of health, safety, and mutual respect, in which biking and walking are viable, desirable and enjoyable options for people of all ages, heritage, abilities, and financial capacity.

Foundational Public Realm Planning Objectives:

- Maintain and Improve **Public Health** and **Quality of Life** for *all* residents
- Improve **Environmental Stewardship**, Natural Systems, Aesthetics, Climate Mitigation and Resiliency
- Improve municipal **Fiscal and Structural Performance**
- Provide active and passive **Recreational Opportunities** in all seasons
- Facilitate **Economic Development**

Public Space Strategic Framework:

1. Integrate with Land Use – Strategically develop accessible, seamless, well-connected networks of parks and open spaces, walking and cycling facilities, natural areas and green infrastructure supporting the goal of complete communities.
2. Active, Accessible & Healthy – Ensure access to public space is part of regular active and passive recreational activities that support healthy lifestyles and vibrant social connections. Make daily

walking and cycling convenient, accessible, comfortable, healthy travel choices for people of all ages and abilities.

3. Safe, Equitable & Efficient – The design and investment in public space will affirmatively further racial, social, and economic equity through strategic decisions in the location and character of public spaces. Altoona's parks, public spaces, pedestrian and cycling networks will be designed, maintained and developed to ensure accessible, safe, and enjoyable use for all users.
4. Design Excellence – Provide a high-quality network of public spaces, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities, to ensure appealing, high-performing, multi-functional spaces for actively programmed as well as passive and natural uses. Design strategies will incorporate best practices in placemaking, accessibility, seasonality, cultural inclusion, and utilize both timeless and contemporary design principles.
5. Vibrant Social Life – Public spaces will encourage and welcome inclusion of the diversity of members of the community. Public spaces will enhance social vibrancy and civic engagement through organized sports and active recreation, social and cultural programs, integration of music and the arts, passive use and enjoyment, and the frequency and quality of daily social interaction.
6. Financially Sustainable – Plan and implement cost-effective, financially sustainable parks, walking and cycling facilities and networks, with due consideration for economic, health, environmental cost benefits, and long-term maintenance.
7. Environmentally Sustainable, Resilient & Restorative – Public spaces will be located and designed with nature to preserve, enhance, and restore sensitive and natural systems. Investments in walking and bicycling are resource efficient and environmentally friendly modes of transportation that contribute to the City and its residents to meet and surpass environment and climate goals.
8. Inclusive & Transparent Process – Continuously engage with the community as part of an inclusive and transparent process to develop policies, strategies, programs, and infrastructure. Pursue place governance practices that engage and partner with citizens and user groups in programming, evaluation, and stewardship of public areas.
9. Maintenance – Public spaces and facilities will be well maintained to ensure maximum use and enjoyment year-around, sensitive of the techniques and manner of maintenance to minimize disruption of plant and animal communities and other natural systems.

Guiding Values Statements and Planning Concepts

- Central role of parks and public spaces in quality of life, community identity, public health, economic vitality
- Recognize public spaces, recreation programs, and bicycle/walkability conditions as *force multipliers* that further enhance and serve multiple purposes with value beyond a single use, with community-wide impacts.
- Accentuate Altoona's assets and attributes, including natural areas, multi-use trails, waterways, and vistas.
- "Placemaking for Parks" – multi-use destinations that catalyze community development & quality of life
- Ensure all existing and future neighborhoods are well served by public spaces

- Ensure appropriate placement, size and composition of existing and new public space system elements to derive maximum synergy and public benefit.
- Public spaces improve ecological health and climate resiliency of City and its residents
- Efficient, functional and flexible places that are cost-effective to maintain
- Integrate current and future best practices & standards in parks, natural areas, trails, bicycle & pedestrian planning
- Remove and reasonably prevent physical barriers to accessing public facilities for all users
- Align City ordinances and policies that impact the character of private development to complement, enhance, and perpetuate public welfare, specifically well-designed public space and built environment.
- Preserve sensitive habitats, and improve threatened or impaired sites
- Ambitious in scope, bold in implementation

City of Altoona Strategic Priorities

The City of Altoona conducts a **strategic planning** exercise periodically to engage the City Council and staff together to discuss and reach some consensus on the most pressing opportunities and challenges in the City. The following priorities are the result of the June 2016 strategic planning exercise facilitated by Jerry Deschane, Executive Director of the Wisconsin League of Municipalities. Many of these priorities apply directly or indirectly to how public spaces are designed and managed.

1. Repairing or replacing aging infrastructure
2. Hiring additional personnel to keep pace with growth
3. Identifying the next opportunity for economic growth & implementing economic development plan
4. Updating the City's incident management / emergency response plan & training
5. Investing in quality of life amenities and opportunities
6. Finishing River Prairie the "right way"
7. Assuring "financial house is in order" (long range financial plan, TIDs, bonding, staff plan)
8. Implementing an active Forestry program (Emerald Ash Borer, street trees, oak wilt, etc.)
9. Focusing on staff development and accountability to foster a high-performing work environment (evaluation system, pay-for-performance, etc.)
10. Maximize cooperation with other agencies and private entities
11. Evaluating technological needs and implementing solutions as identified
12. Focusing efforts on long range planning
13. Evaluating space and facility needs and identifying projects to assure growth capacity
14. Improving public outreach and city communications

Goals, Objectives and Policies

The following section contains goals, objectives, policies, and actions developed throughout this planning process. These are derived from contemporary best practices and recent innovations, assessment of current conditions, input from citizens, and refinement of existing plans. These goals, objectives and policies are not listed in any particular priority arrangement. This section is consistent with the structure of the Comprehensive Plan (2009) defining goals, objectives, policies, and actions as follows:

Goal: A goal is a long-term target that states what the community wants to accomplish. Written in general terms, the statement offers a desired condition.

Objective: An objective is a statement that identifies a course of action to achieve a goal. They are more specific than goals and are usually attainable through planning and implementation activities.

Policy: A policy is a general course of action or rule of conduct that should be followed in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the plan. Policies are written as actions that can be implemented, or as general rules to be followed by decision-makers. Polices that direct action using the words "shall" or "will" are mandatory aspects of the implementation of this plan. Those policies using the words "should," "encourage," "discourage," or "may" are advisory and intended to serve as a guide.

Action: Actions are discrete activities, tactics, or actions that are intended to contribute toward pursuit of the identified goals, objectives and policies of this plan.

Goal 1: Excellence in public space is valued and pursued as a holistic responsibility of local government furthering social, economic, and environmental responsibilities and collective aspiration.

Objectives

1. Thoroughly and thoughtfully integrate and implement the vision, goals, objectives, and policies of this plan in the City's Comprehensive Plan, annual and long-range budgeting, capital improvement plan, and other future activities.
2. Proactively update municipal ordinances, especially those impacting the built environment, to integrate and implement the vision, goals, and objectives of this plan.
3. Complete detailed studies and plans for existing and future parks and open spaces.
4. Determine evaluation and tracking methodologies to ensure the City's approach to public space advances the city's vision and values pertaining to racial, social, and economic equity and inclusion.

Policies

1. The City Council, Parks Board, and Plan Commission should be regularly updated and engaged regarding the condition, planning, and implementation status of this vision.
2. Regularly evaluate operational activities from space programming to maintenance to ensure consistency and advancement of vision and goals.
3. Maintain highly active presence on social media and future communication platforms to disseminate and market positive image, information and activities in City parks and public features.

Goal 2: Provide quality park and open spaces facilities and varied recreational opportunities and experiences to meet the needs of all residents, both now and in the future.

Objectives

1. Parks are provided within a 10-minute walk, approximately ½ mile, of all homes.
2. Achieve or exceed the National Recreation and Parks Association benchmark of 10 acres of "active" parkland for every 1,000 people.
3. Ensure existing public infrastructure, including parks, trails, and facilities, are maintained in good state of repair and function.
4. Improve existing parks and natural areas to meet the recreational needs of the entire community.
5. Maximize the capacity and use of each public facility by designing for multiple complementary uses, flexible spaces, appropriate support amenities, and minimization of other non-activity space.
6. Coordinate the development of public parks and natural areas with other land uses to ensure maximum compatibility and synergy.
7. Identify and acquire parkland need to serve future residents and preserve natural areas prior to development occurring in these areas.
8. Ensure maximum implementation of public space objectives through coordination and regular view of City plans, policies, and ordinances; and ensure all future plans and policies consider and further the content of this plan.
9. Seek and regularly evaluate the balance of active and passive uses of each City park to maximize use and enjoyment.
10. Proactively cooperate with the Town of Washington and Eau Claire County on planning in the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction to preserve natural areas, identify future parks, and trail routes.
11. Incorporate linear corridors as integral parts of the public space system to connect parks and natural areas, which may provide a variety of passive and active recreational uses and habitat protection.
12. Utilize winter city design and programming guides to enhance use and enjoyment of all public spaces throughout the winter season.
13. Continue to support and refine a robust city events program to deliver city- and privately-organized arts, culture and recreational events throughout the year.

Policies

1. Public space design will affirmatively welcome and serve all people regardless of age, income, or background, and be sensitive to people experiencing limited mobility through ADA compliance.
2. Exercise the City's Official Mapping authority to strategically identify and plan for future public lands and trails in undeveloped areas of the urban fringe and extraterritorial jurisdiction.
3. Ensure future land use planning and development proposals implement City's vision, goals and objectives contained in this plan, as well as other supportive ordinances and Official Map regarding public facilities.
4. Regularly evaluate recreational program activities for improvement, including careful consideration of new trends in programming.
5. Coordinate efforts with neighboring jurisdictions, Eau Claire County, State and Federal governments.

6. Actively police public spaces, most notably parks and heavily used multi-use trails, to reduce instances that concern public safety.
7. Support adequate training and resources for City staff to maintain awareness and expertise regarding contemporary trends and best practices in recreational programing, space design and management.
8. Continue to integrate pet-friendly amenities in public spaces.

Actions

1. Public properties intended for active use should be clearly marked.

Goal 3: Encourage and enable citizen involvement and contribution in public space planning, design, and programming to promote place governance, greater utilization of public spaces, and represent the diversity of peoples of the region.

Objectives

1. Advance inclusive place governance by considering providing support for citizen interest groups, such as cycling organizations, friends of the parks groups, Master Gardeners, recreational activity clubs, and other similar groups as one method for citizen engagement, feedback, volunteerism and fundraising to further active use and maintenance of public spaces.
2. Intentionally include citizens and user groups in the design and programming of public spaces, with a neighborhood focus.
3. Ensure that public spaces include characteristics, amenities, and programming that celebrate cultural diversity as well as the historic peoples of the region.
4. Incorporate educational signage and features that highlight natural animal and plant communities, environmental features, and regional history.

Policies

1. Continue to monitor attendance and use of parks, programs, and events to assist in determining design of recreation activities.

Actions

1. Conduct periodic surveys and utilization studies in order to assess needs, deficiencies, and identify trends in use and desires.
2. Conduct ongoing cohesive public space imaging, branding, and marketing efforts.

Goal 4: Preserve, protect, and restore natural and cultural resources within and nearby the City.

Objectives

1. Recognize local actions with respect to regional and global citizenship.
2. Enhance and protect the surface water features of the region for public recreational uses.
3. Combine natural resource protection and restoration with public space development whenever feasible.
4. Identify and preserve sites having ecological, aesthetic, educational, scientific, historical, or archaeological significance.

Policies

1. The City will use all available mechanisms, including Official Mapping and subdivision regulations, to ensure maximum continuity and preservation of natural areas and corridors for ecological processes, hydrological importance, aesthetic and recreational uses; and prevent development in resource preservation areas and fragmentation of agricultural areas.
2. Use all available approaches to resource protection, including but not limited to acquisition, easements, zoning, education, and policy.
3. Continue to work with the Wisconsin DNR and other entities in the acquisition, preservation, management, and restoration of sensitive areas such as Lake Altoona and Eau Claire River shoreline, and Otter Creek.
4. The City will ensure private development protects natural and cultural resources utilizing all approaches available.
5. The City will prioritize site planning best practices regarding stormwater management, native and low impact landscaping practices.
6. The City shall reserve significant vegetated buffers along all water bodies and drainage ways to limit the impact of human activity on surface and ground water quality.
7. The City should utilize and encourage vegetated swales, rain gardens, wetlands, and other aesthetic, ecological, and resilient green features to manage site and area stormwater whenever possible.
8. The City shall utilize planning tools and land use controls to identify and preserve the Otter Creek Greenway for native plant and animal communities, area hydrologic processes, and passive recreation.
9. The City should pursue projects and strategies that improve water and habitat quality of Lake Altoona, Eau Claire River, Otter Creek, and associated shoreline and natural areas.
10. The City will discourage fragmentation of rural areas by housing and non-agricultural commercial development.
11. The City should encourage and utilize all appropriate tools to ensure peripheral areas remain rural and utilized for agriculture and open space until urban development occurs.
12. Develop and implement programs and strategies to prevent and address threats of invasive and nuisance species.
13. Identify opportunities to enhance parkland with features and conditions that support local and migrating animal and plant communities, including butterfly gardens, bird-supportive forestry practices, and other techniques.

Actions

1. Pursue Important Bird Area[1] (IBA) designation from the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative and identify implementation strategies throughout public spaces.
2. Continue Bird City Wisconsin designation.

[1] www.wisconsinbirds.org/iba/

Goal 5: Pedestrian and bicycle travel and recreation choices are convenient, safe, accessible, viable, and enjoyable for all people in all areas of the City.

Objectives

1. City transportation and land use planning, zoning ordinances, and site plan review will prioritize pedestrian and bicyclist access, convenience, and safety.
2. Provide convenient and safe non-motorized connections between destinations.
3. Utilize best practices in design of all facilities, including intersections and trails, prioritizing key corridors and conflict points.

Policies

1. Regularly review plans, ordinances, design standards and policies to incorporate the most contemporary best practices.
2. Ensure crosswalks, lane and street markings are maintained in good condition.
3. Evaluate the condition of existing sidewalks and street intersections to ensure adequate condition for safe use for people of all ability levels.
4. Develop and support programs and events to cultivate and celebrate walkability, bikeability, and active transportation.
5. Contribute to regional efforts to plan for and improve walking and biking, including coordination with area jurisdictions to maximize regional connectivity of active transportation facilities.
6. Consider "green complete streets" or similar design approach contextually utilized to local policies and projects.

Actions

1. Complete missing sidewalk and bicycle infrastructure connections in existing developed areas.
2. Prioritize implementation of intersection improvements and completion of "missing link" multi-use trail connections to improve use of existing facilities.
3. Regularly meet and coordinate with the Altoona School District, West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, and other partners to implement and regularly update the Safe Routes to School Plan.
4. Add strategically placed wayfinding signage along City roadways and multi-use trails directing users to public features, such as parks, schools, business districts, and other points of interest.
5. Consider pursuing "Bicycle Friendly Community" designation.
6. Consider joining the "Vision Zero" network and utilizing organization resources to improve safety.

GOAL 6: Manage Altoona's public space system in an efficient manner that optimizes benefit, controls cost, provides for public safety and enjoyment, and enhances functions of natural systems.

Objectives

1. Utilize *Community Policing Through Environmental Design* principles and strategies to design and manage public spaces to reduce unwanted or unsafe activities.
2. Public spaces will be designed and managed to be flexible, multi-use and resilient, to avoid costly reprogramming in the future.

Policies

1. Consider adoption of land management guides to reduce environmental impact of management activities, encouragement of natural systems, and control cost.
2. The City will prioritize compact, mixed-use development in current and future neighborhoods to enable proximity, access, and financial resources to support public spaces.
3. Utilize the location and programming of public spaces to improve area land value and investment.

GOAL 7: Public spaces will be strategically located, designed, and managed to improve climate change mitigation and resilience of the City as a whole.

Objectives

1. Utilize public property and guide development patterns to reserve areas for natural hydrological process, native plant and animal communities.
2. Regularly review and adopt ordinances and policies that further the resilience and function of natural and human systems.
3. Collaborate with adjacent and area jurisdictions to preserve natural corridors and waterways, as well as collaborative efforts to collectively address climate change mitigation and resilience.

Policies

1. Utilize City ordinances, policies, and communication to encourage use of native plants and trees in landscaping.
2. Reserve significant natural areas for native plant and animal communities, allowing passive human enjoyment such as trails, hiking, observation areas and bird watching.
3. The City should thoughtfully integrate site and regional stormwater facilities as assets and features of public property.
4. The City should design and encourage area stormwater features located on public and private property as aesthetic features rather than undesirable, required afterthoughts.

Actions

1. Identify underutilized or remnant properties that may be utilized in stormwater management or habitat enhancement.

GOAL 8: Integrate food production as a coordinated and meaningful use of public space.

Policies

1. Consider completing a study on effective integration of food production as features of public space, and policies regarding local food production and processing.
2. Encourage location of community gardens on specific public properties.
3. Evaluate existing and future policies and ordinances within the context of enabling local food cultivation and preparation.

Goal 9: Strategically grow the City's forestry programs to advance the central role trees play in quality of place, aesthetics, economic value, and ecological functioning.

Objectives

1. Consider completing a detailed forestry assessment and urban forestry plan.
2. Strive to achieve a thriving and complete boulevard tree system lining the city's streets.

Policies

1. Inventory and monitor boulevard trees and forests on public properties for trimming, pruning, and removing selected individuals.
2. Continue to monitor and manage the Emerald Ash Borer program.
3. Continue to develop and refine fiscally prudent and ecologically sound management of the city forest.

Actions

1. Continue to achieve "Tree City" and similar designations.
2. Pursue Wisconsin DNR Urban Forestry Grants and other funding opportunities to further sustainable urban and community forestry activities.
3. Identify gaps in tree canopy in boulevards, right-of-ways, and other public properties and plan for increasing planting and canopy cover.
4. "Remnant" right-of-way and other small or isolated public lands are inventoried and evaluated for use as green infrastructure, forestry, and/or habitat enhancement opportunities.

GOAL 10: Public spaces will feature and facilitate location of public art.

Objectives

1. Consider completing a detailed plan and strategy for public art.
2. Encourage and incorporate public art into public and private projects whenever possible.

Policies

1. Public art, broadly defined, will be proactively considered in the design and funding of public spaces and public facilities.

Actions

1. Expand the Sculpture Tour Eau Claire to spaces in Altoona.

GOAL 11: Proactive and Purposeful Implementation

Objectives

1. This Plan will be incorporated and improved throughout the next update to the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Annually review conditions of all major facilities and sites, reflect on the recommendations of this Plan, and coordinate operational and capital improvement budgets.

"The truth about a city's aspirations isn't found in its vision. It's found in its budget."

- Brent Toderian, former Chief Planner, Vancouver BC

3. The City shall complete 5-year inventory and action plan updates to ensure regular study and improvement of planning and policy directives and maintain eligibility for State and Federal funding opportunities.
4. Maintain a 20-year capital improvement project outlook to support regular progress toward the long-range ambitions of public space, adequately prepare for equipment replacement, and amenity refurbishment schedules. Long-term budgeting improves awareness beyond immediate need and improves predictability and timing of investments.
5. Acquire land in fee, by dedication, or by easement for future open space needs.
6. Create detailed plans for each existing, planned and envisioned public space; including but not limited to: Library Park, Tower Park, Windsor Park, South Neighborhood Park, and Otter Creek Greenway.

Policies

1. Continuously evaluate staffing levels and collaboration between departments to efficiently address and improve public spaces and services.
2. Pursue funding opportunities that enable or accelerate implementation of projects or policies contained in this plan.
3. Strengthen partnerships with other governmental entities that own or manage outdoor recreation land or facilities, or that provide services that potentially enhance or expand city capacity to effectively program or manage public space.
4. Consider utilizing recognized third-party assessment, certification and evaluation tools for designing and maintaining public spaces.
5. Achieve cost recovery targets for park and recreation facilities and services and adjust as needed.

Actions

1. Complete a Parkland Dedication Study to inform revisions to the parkland dedication and impact fee ordinance.

GOAL 12: Private development will enhance the overall vision of creating *excellence in public space*.

Objectives

1. Prioritize effective implementation of the *Community Design Principles* in the Comprehensive Plan through consistency with zoning and other land use controls. Consider incorporating the latest best practices in neighborhood design, new urbanism, and placemaking that implements the Comprehensive Plan and the Place Plan in letter and spirit.
2. Evaluate the City Zoning Ordinances, Subdivision Ordinances, and Building Code to maximumly implement City vision, goals and objectives contained in this Plan.

Policies

1. Ensure developers and the public are maximally appraised of vision, goals and regulations to implement *excellence in public space*. Developers should be viewed as partners is achieving this vision in pragmatic and effective ways.
2. Arrangement and character of private development will prioritize pedestrian and bicyclist access, convenience, and safety.

CHAPTER 4 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The City of Altoona completed a multi-phase facility and programming needs assessment, utilizing staff study and observations, public survey, public meetings and activities in parks, creation of an advisory committee, and consultation with partnering agencies. Public input serves as the central component informing desired uses and priorities for open spaces in Altoona. Due the prolonged timeline to complete this planning process, facility assessments were revised annually to incorporate new projects, new public engagement, and additional analysis.

Transparency and Neighborhood-level Engagement

Public consultation, design and construction of public spaces and pedestrian and cycling infrastructure can only be done effectively over several years. Further, it is important that processes be found that are effective in getting neighborhood participation in the planning and design of public space. This is likely to be an evolving arrangement as the community changes, technology and conditions change, and evaluation is conducted to determine inclusivity and effectiveness.

The process is intended to be much more effective in getting neighborhood participation in the planning and decision-making process and is modeled after the research and teachings of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).

Public Participation is defined by IAP2 as any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision making and uses public input to make decisions. This includes all aspects of identifying problems and opportunities, developing alternatives and making decisions.

The best way to describe this process is to list the following core values which are intended to be followed:

- The public should have a say in decisions about actions that could affect their lives and neighborhoods.
- Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
- Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

<u>Survey</u>

City staff created a public opinion survey in 2016 utilizing Google Forms for electronic distribution, as well as distributed hard copies at City Hall, City Library, and local institutions.

Due to the long preparation timeline of this Plan, the 2016 survey was updated and recirculated in March and April 2021. The complete survey instruments and results are contained in Appendix D.

Focus Groups

August 16, 11:00am – 12:30pm	Altoona City Hall
August 19, 12:00pm – 1:30pm	Altoona City Hall
August 22, 4:00pm – 6:00pm	Altoona Parks & Rec Offices, 2300 Spooner Ave
September 8, 4:00pm – 6:30pm	City of Altoona & Chippewa Valley Metro Bike Plan Open House

Park Meet-up (2016)

August 17, 11:00am – 1:00pm	Devney Park
August 22, 11:00am – 1:00pm	Highland Park
August 23, 11:00am – 1:00pm	Centennial Park
August 23, 4:00pm – 7:00pm	Highland Park
August 24, 5:00pm – 7:00pm	Centennial Park
August 25, 8:00am – 11:00am	Altoona City Park Pavilion
August 29, 10:00am – 12:00pm	Fairway Park
August 30, 4:00pm – 6:00pm	Altoona Landfill, 624 Saxonwood Rd
August 31, 11:00am – 1:00pm	Altoona Lake Park
August 31, 3:00pm – 6:00pm	Altoona City Park Pavilion
September 1, 5:00pm – 6:30pm	Devney Park

Advisory Committee

City of Altoona staff created an Advisory Committee comprised of engaged citizens, neighboring jurisdictions, and interest groups, including Altoona Community School District. The Committee assisted in providing deeper and sustained engagement to examine existing conditions and recommend policy, program and engineering solutions. This Committee also serves to continue building positive working relationships to collaborators. The work of the Committee was primarily conducted in 2016 and 2017, creating the vision, approach, scope, and much of the evaluative activities.

Park, Open Space, and Recreation System –Assessment

The City of Altoona utilizes a blended approach to determine quantitative and qualitative benchmarks for evaluating the provision of public space. General standards and classifications developed by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), adjusted to reflect the community size, context, and level of services existing and envisioned in the City, are a major component. The NRPA standards are based on size, function, and demographics to create a method of assessing the needs and deficiencies of a park system, and to evaluate attainment of goals and objectives with respect to quantity and quality of parks. These standards are generalized to be utilized by communities of all sizes, and are a starting point and method of planning and comparison.

The City of Altoona strives to recognize all public space as a *system*, regardless of specific purpose or function. The City does utilize traditional parks and recreational assessment and element classification frameworks as one tool to describe, evaluate, and integrate into a complete system. Yet, each space is evaluated to ensure engaging multi-functionality, regardless of "type".

Altoona is dedicated to providing a comprehensive open space system to a diverse variety of users. The City system is comprised of various park types, as well as natural areas, special-use areas and civic spaces, undeveloped areas, trails/paths, and lands that provide for general ecosystem management (stormwater facilities and wetland buffers). Spaces are intended to be designed perform multiple recreation, environmental, and utility functions, and as such properties may be classified and managed in complex ways. Each place and component thereof are viewed as unique. No national standard classification or level of service system exists for many of these categories.

Following the NRPA guide, Altoona classifies its parks as either community, neighborhood, or mini-park, and utilizes a standard for desired uses and facilities for each classification category. Altoona also utilizes a service area standard to ensure equitable distribution of parks, by the aforementioned classification categories. This standard is intended to be a starting point and assist in guiding decisions about future park locations in new developments, as well as determining if existing residential areas are deficient in parkland.

> "Parks and recreation system planning has historically been more art than science. Unlike other elements of the public realm, there are no nationally accepted standards for determining ideal levels of service for parks, indoor recreation centers, athletic fields, trails, and other recreation facilities"
> - David Barth, APA PAS Report, 2016.
>
> "A major problem for [park] advocates and managers is that parks seem relatively simple and straight forward. People frequently say, "It's not rocket science, it's just a park." No! For rockets… you need to be good at math. Parks require math plus horticulture, hydrology, psychology, sociology and communication. They are immensely complicated."
> - Peter Harnik, *Urban Green* (2010)

The City identifies a quarter-mile and half-mile proximity to certain amenities such as playground and trails as a basic location criterion to ensure basic access. The inclusive approach to public space in this plan further includes the routes and access to amenities at the neighborhood, block, and granular level to ensure safe, convenient, and enjoyable use by all.

This plan balances goals to acquire larger land areas and corridors to preserve natural features and provide certain specialized facilities or desirable qualities, with the need to provide proximity to smaller neighborhood-level open spaces. Examples include continuity of shorelines and watercourses, hillsides, forestland or prairie; locate clusters of sports facilities; or achieve an area sufficient for the viability of natural systems and their enjoyment.

NRPA Park Classifications

Component	Use	Service Area	Site	Acres / 1,000 People	Site Location
Mini-Park	Compact recreational activities, playgrounds, gathering spaces.	0.25 – 0.5 mile radius	0.5 – 1 acres	0.5 – 1 acre	Central, walkable location
Neighborhood Park	Recreational activities, playgrounds, picnic areas, gathering spaces, ball fields and courts; primarily serves immediate neighborhood	0.5-mile radius	1 – 5 acres	2 – 4 acres	Neighborhood center, with walking and biking access
Community Park	Community-wide recreational amenities and facilities, specialized features, event spaces, parking, restrooms	2-mile radius	10 - 40 acres	5 – 8 acres	Good transportation access
Total Active Parkland	Includes Mini-Parks, Neighborhood, and Community Parks			**10 acres**	
Conservancy Area	Limited activities, such as hiking, wildlife viewing	Varies	Varies	N/A	Encompass natural resource areas
Special Use Park	Single-purpose or specialized recreational facilities, such as community center, athletic complex, historic sites	Entire community or region	Varies	N/A	Varies
County Park	Nature oriented outdoor recreation, including camping, sledding, picnicking, fishing, swimming, hiking		200 – 500 acres		Adjacent or containing natural resources, recreation amenities
School Park	Serves the recreational and educational needs of the school, sometimes immediate neighborhood	Varies	Varies		Adjacent to school building
Private Recreation Facility	Recreational activities such as golf courses, sport complex	Varies, possible fee- or membership-based entry	Varies		Varies

Community Park

Community parks are intended to serve persons within a larger area (2 miles) and provide facilities in addition to those provided in area and neighborhood parks. Community parks can serve as neighborhood and area parks if they are located within walking or bicycling distance of a residence. Community parks often feature special use "destination amenities" such as sports fields and facilities, cultural features, or natural features that attract recreational uses. They are typically destination spots for the residents of the entire City because of either the natural amenities of the park or the specialized facilitates provided.

Community parks should be designed to facilitate events such as sports tournaments, festivals, and other curated events. As such, the site and vicinity should be well connected to automobile, bicycle and pedestrian network, and safety accommodate event traffic with managed impacts on residential neighborhoods.

Community parks should be dispersed regionally throughout the community. However, location is highly dependent on the ability to secure a suitable and large enough site to accommodate the natural or physical amenities.

In many cities, these parks can consist of 50 acres or more, such as Bollinger Fields and Carson Park nearby in Eau Claire. However, some may be smaller, such as River Prairie and Cinder City Park in Altoona. Community parks are

also defined by function and amenities, thus defining amenity-dense River Prairie and specialized Cinder City in this classification. Community parks should range in size from 10 to 40 acres, with a NPRA standard of 5 to 8 acres for every 1,000 people.

Development Guidelines:
Community or citywide input should be used to determine the development program for a community park, as they are intended to feature amenities and facilities that serve a larger area. The surrounding neighborhood context should be considered. In general, development should provide a balance between active and passive recreation uses. Where active recreation is provided, it is generally intended for larger programmed activities such as sports league practices, games and/or tournaments. Active recreation, such as sports fields, in community parks may have additional support facilities not found at a neighborhood level, such as bleachers, fencing, dugouts, concessions, synthetic turf and/or lighting. The following activities are in addition to neighborhood park guidelines and are intended to serve as a general guideline only:

a. Parking – generally larger in size to support more organized activities and larger group events. May be anywhere from 20 – 80 or more stalls depending on the intended uses.
b. Restrooms – should generally be provided and should provide permanent facilities where feasible. Additional portable facilities may be needed during peak season or for special organized events.
c. Picnic – larger group shelters that can be programmed and/or rented out for special events.
d. Specialized Uses – that may not be feasible to provide in every neighborhood park. These may include:
    - Water features, such as splash pad
    - Skateboard park
    - Off leash area
    - Fishing docks or piers
    - Waterfront access
    - Regional trail connections or trailhead facilities
    - Education/demonstration areas
    - Outdoor stage/amphitheater
    - Concessions/vendors as demand allows

<u>Neighborhood Park</u>
Neighborhood parks are the “backbone” of a municipal park system and intended to serve persons within short walking distance (0.25 – 0.5 miles) and provide facilities for both young and adult users. These parks provide a “walk-to” away-from-home play area and serve as a gathering location for persons of all ages and abilities. Neighborhood parks may often adjoin and complement school facilities or community parks or be co-located and connected by natural areas and multi-use trails, wherever feasible. Neighborhood parks should range in size from 1 to 5 acres, with a NPRA standard of 3 acres for every 1,000 people.

The neighborhood park generally incorporates spaces for both active and passive recreation, such as field areas, basketball or hard surface courts, seating areas, small shelters, play equipment, and lighting. On- or off-street parking may be provided depending upon the context. Play equipment is generally designed for the 6 to 14-year-old children, with a goal of having many or most parks also providing equipment for smaller children.

Neighborhood parks are typically identified and dedicated through the neighborhood development and land subdivision process. Site identification and selection should prioritize centrally located and well-accessible sites without major barriers for pedestrians and cyclists.

Development Guidelines:
Since each neighborhood is unique, neighborhood input should be used to determine the development program for the park. Some neighborhood parks may have additional amenities or may not have all the normal amenities based on the size of the park, character of the area neighborhoods, or proximity to other amenities. In general, development should provide a balance between active and passive recreation uses and should represent the characteristics and context of the neighborhood in which it is located. Where active recreation is provided, it should be intended for primarily informal, unstructured activities, or smaller programmed activities that will not overburden the supporting infrastructure (parking, restroom, etc.). The following activities are intended to serve as a general guideline only:

a. Play Area – with climbing structures, swings, or other similar elements, designed for a variety of ages and abilities.
b. Parking – generally limited to around 2 – 10 stalls. While the intent is for neighborhood parks to be walkable to most residences in the area it serves, parking may still be needed to support those uses that need greater assistance, such as seniors or those with disabilities. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements should be met in all cases. On street parking may be used to meet these criteria.
c. Site Furnishings –bike racks, benches, trash receptacles, park signage, picnic tables and drinking fountains.
d. Restrooms – may be provided where space and funding allow. This could include permanent, semi-permanent or portable facilities.
e. Picnic – tables, barbeque and/or small group shelters.
f. Open grass lawn areas.
g. Sport facilities – focus informal and walk-up activities compatible with neighborhood setting and park site constraints, such as:
    - Basketball: half court or full court
    - Volleyball, tennis, bocce ball, pickleball
    - Softball/baseball field (informal or youth)
    - Soccer field (informal or youth)

Additional amenities are recommended:

- Stormwater features with aesthetic enhancements such as rain gardens
- Groomed shade and/or flowering trees
- Public art, monuments, historical or cultural markers
- Free Little Libraries
- Educational signage
- Flower and/or food gardens

Mini-Park
Mini-Park, play lot, or pocket park are the smallest unit of open space actively programmed for recreational use and generally serves as a substitute for a private back yard or public space for children (play lot) or general social gatherings (pocket park). The primary function of a play lot is generally intended to serve school aged children in areas of higher density housing. Play Lots may be provided by a developer as an amenity for the particular project. A pocket park is a term used for small public or quasi-public spaces as a common gather space in areas of higher intensity development where private open space is limited. Mini-parks may also be small public use areas such as community gardens, remnant properties, or small areas incorporated into other uses. NPRA recommends 0.5 to 1.0 acres per 1,000 residents.

Natural Areas

Natural areas contain plant and wildlife habitat or have significant and unique features worthy of protection and preservation. In some instances, these areas can be used for passive recreation such as hiking, biking, cross country skiing, sledding, birding, and nature study. The City does not have size, use/facilities, or location/distribution standards for natural areas. The physical extent of these areas should be maximized whenever possible.

Special-Use Areas and Civic Spaces

Special-use areas include lands and facilities designed to provide for unique recreation opportunities not normally accommodated in natural areas or neighborhood parks. These facilities play an important role in fulfilling the community's needs. These include event or recreation centers, pools, botanical gardens, dog parks, and other specialized facilities. Generally, these facilities are designed to provide one major activity, and are located in or adjacent to a typical park property. There is typically no national standard for the number or type of these facilities in a community. In Altoona these include the Prairie Event Center and Hobbs-Altoona Sports Center.

Multi-use Trails

Multi-use Trails provide for outdoor recreational opportunities as well as transportation. The City does not have standards for miles or distribution of trails, but it has made a concerted effort in recent plans and developments to implement a comprehensive trail system. Generally, all development should be served by a complete, uninterrupted and low-stress multi-use trail system, and all areas within 0.25 miles of access.

Linear Parkland

Linear parks and parkland take a variety of forms and are typically relatively long and narrow stretches of public land that preserve waterfront, hillsides, drainageways, and dedicated multi-use trail corridors. These areas may also be referred to as parkways or greenways. The width of these areas varies depending upon the characteristics of the feature.

Linear parkland may be landscaped and developed with improved trails or access points or be kept in natural state depending upon the context. The City does not have specific standards for linear parkland or their features. It should be the policy of the City to acquire and preserve natural areas, including water drainage routes, as linear corridors whenever possible.

Ecosystem Management Features

Stormwater facilities (consisting primarily of detention ponds and drainageways) and wetland buffers, collectively termed herein as ecosystem management features, are also included in the City's system. Occasionally, stormwater facilities also contain recreation elements such as trails/paths. The City's Public Works Department utilizes various regulatory mechanisms and standards to ensure sufficient stormwater facilities in the City.

The City's Comprehensive Plan (2009) sets forth 300-foot wetland buffers to better protect and enhance biological and water quality components of wetlands.

Total Parkland

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) has long recognized 10 acres of outdoor recreational open space per 1,000 residents of population as an ideal standard for communities to use in assessing whether or not the community has adequate open space to serve its residents.

The following table illustrates the total area of City parkland by NRPA classification. Parks with significant areas designated to natural areas are separated to reflect the use of the land. Some natural areas are completely undeveloped, while some include recreational trails.

Table 4-1: Existing and Future City of Altoona Parkland by Classification (2020)

Parkland	Classification	Area (Acres)	Mini Park	Neighborhood	Community	Natural Area
River Prairie Park	Community	21.7			21.7	
Altoona City Park	Community	6			6	
Cinder City Park	Community	25.7			25.7	
Highland Park	Neighborhood	1.7		1.7		
Devney Park	Neighborhood	3.9		3.9		
Lakefront Park	Neighborhood	3.9		3.9		
Centennial Park	Neighborhood*	13.4		2.1		11.3
Fairway Park	Neighborhood*	55.4		3		52.4
Jellybean Hill	Neighborhood	7.4		7.4		
Perseverance Park	Neighborhood	1.02		1.02		
Library Park	Mini-Park	0.2	0.2			
Tower Park	Natural Area	12.67	*			12.67
River Prairie Conservancy	Natural Area	6.15				6.15
Rivers Edge Conservancy	Natural Area	16				16
Clubview Park	Natural Area	3.8				3.8
Total		**178.94**	**0.2**	**23.02**	**53.4**	**102.32**
Acres / 1,000		22.09	0.02	2.84	6.59	12.63
Undeveloped						
Woodington Park		1	1			
Windsor Park		13.7		13.7		

Table 4-2 indicates the current acreage of outdoor open space, the amount recommended based upon the NRPA classification guides, and the surplus or deficit that exists in Altoona. The current acreage figure does not include the school district or county facilities. Projected acreage requirements are not always the most accurate means of realistically assessing community recreation needs, but they are indicators. This is an indicator of volume, but not of quality, location, accessibility, features or use. “Active parkland” means mini-, neighborhood and community parks, as those area typically programmed and managed for active or passive recreation.

Park Acreage Surplus / Deficit by Type							
	Current Area	Current Ratio	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Population (Est.)			8,099	8,725	9,399	10,126	10,908
Mini-Park	0.2	0.02					
Low Standard (0.5 acres/1,000)			-3.8	-4.2	-4.5	-4.9	-5.3
High Standard (1.0 acres/1,000)			-7.9	-8.5	-9.2	-9.9	-10.7
Neighborhood Parks	23.02	2.84					
Low Standard (2.0 acres/1,000)			6.8	5.6	4.2	2.8	1.2
High Standard (4.0 acres/1,000)			-9.4	-11.9	-14.6	-17.5	-20.6
Community Parks	53.4	6.59					
Low Standard (5.0 acres/1,000)			12.9	9.8	6.4	2.8	-1.1
High Standard (8.0 acres/1,000)			-11.4	-16.4	-21.8	-27.6	-33.9
Special Purpose Park			No Standard Applicable				
Natural Area / Nature Preserve	102.32	12.63	No Standard Applicable				
Total Active Parkland (10.0 acres/1,000)	76.62	9.46	-4.4	-10.6	-17.4	-24.6	-32.5

This table indicates that the City is experiencing a deficit of 4.4 acres of active parkland. However, not included in this area calculation are undeveloped parkland such as the envisioned Windsor Park, which is 13.7 acres. Additionally, as noted above, many of the natural areas in the City include walking and cycling trails, which, in addition to bicycle facilities generally, are not included in these area calculations.

The population figures utilize a linear 1.5 percent annual population growth, as further described in Chapter 2.

Mobility & Recreation Trails

The City of Altoona does not currently recognize separate classifications or designations of bicycle facilities. Trails are considered as multi-purpose transportation and recreation facilities, although the location and nearby land uses impact how the facilities are utilized. The City has approximately 14.04 miles of paved multi-use trails existing or under construction.

The description of the existing segments is included in Chapter 6: Bicycle and Pedestrian Strategy.

Segment	Length (mi)
Lake Road Trail	**1.85**
River Prairie	**3.75**
NW Quadrant	0.55
SW Quardant	1.0
NE Quadrant	1.2
SE Quardant	0.45
River Prairie Drive	0.55
Hillcrest Greens / Fairway Park	**2.4**
Fairway Park - Paved	0.2
Fairway Park - Unpaved	0.7
Hillcrest Trail West	0.5
Hillcrest Trail East	0.8
The Clubhouse Loop	0.2
Spooner Avenue	**1**
3rd Street E	**0.6**
N. Hillcrest Parkway	**0.6**
Clubview Estates	**1.2**
N. Willson	**0.23**
Autumn Drive	**0.28**
Park Road	**0.2**
Barlett Avenue	**1.1**
Baumbach Way*	**0.65**
Hong Drive*	**0.18**
TOTAL (4/1/2021)	**14.04**

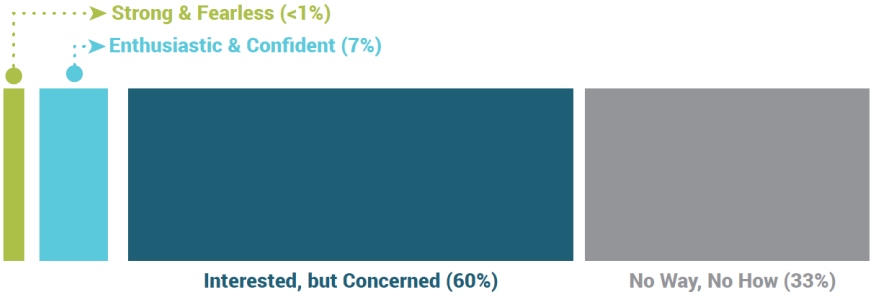
Assessment of Current Bicycle and Pedestrian Friendliness

Bicycling in America suffers from a lack of connected, low-stress routes that appeal to the mainstream, traffic-intolerant population. A method for measuring the ability of a bicycling network to meet that need is a vital tool for network evaluation and development. Therefore, in order for bicycle network connectivity to be measured meaningfully from a user perspective, those elements that deter use must be understood and resolved.

Similar to motor vehicles, bicyclists and their bicycles come in a variety of sizes and configurations. This variation ranges from the type of bicycle a bicyclist chooses to ride to the behavioral characteristics and comfort level of the bicyclist. Bicyclists by nature are much more sensitive to poor facility design, construction, and maintenance than motor vehicle drivers.

Bicyclist skill level also leads to a dramatic variance in expected speeds, traffic tolerance, and behavior. Several methodologies for classifying bicyclists are currently in use within the bicycle planning and engineering professions. These classifications can be helpful in understanding the characteristics and preferences of different bicyclists. Historically, the most conventional framework classified the "design bicyclist" as advanced, basic, or child.

In order to determine what street configurations are best for bicycling, it is instructive to use and analyze general categories of people relative to riding comfort and skill. This is based on the amount of street traffic street riders are willing to endure versus how much they are concerned by the prospect of being hit by a vehicle. For example, the Portland, Oregon Bureau of Transportation survived citizens and constructed the following chart by proportion of the population. Rodger Geller, Portland's Bicycle Coordinator developed this metric as one tool to understand how people may approach various types of bicycle facilities.



Source: Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide, Federal Highway Administration (2015); Geller (2006)

Strong and Fearless: These users will typically ride anywhere regardless of roadway conditions or weather. These bicyclists can ride faster than other user types, prefer direct routes, and will typically choose roadway connections.

Enthused and Confident: This user group encompasses "intermediate" bicyclists who are fairly comfortable riding on all types of bicycle facilities, but usually choose lower-volume streets or shared-use paths when available. These users may choose a longer route to ride on a preferred facility.

Interested but Concerned: This user type comprises the bulk of the cycling population and represents bicyclists who typically only ride a bicycle on low traffic streets or shared-use paths under favorable weather

conditions, and for short trips or recreation. These bicyclists perceive significant barriers to their increased use of cycling.

No Way, No How: Persons in this category do not bicycle, either because of general lack of interest or perception of severe safety issues with riding in traffic.

Geller also estimates the fraction of the population belonging to each class, as shown in the figure. The "strong and fearless" respond well to riding in almost any traffic conditions or facility types (or lack of bicycle facility). The "enthused and confident" don't show that same tolerance for mixing with fast, turbulent traffic, but respond well to riding in bike lanes along arterial streets and to sharing smaller roads with traffic. The "interested but concerned" find situations in which they have to negotiate with traffic streams uncomfortable, but respond well to standalone paths and streets with little and slow traffic. The "No Way No How" group is not interested in riding a bicycle at all.

As reflected in Geller's study and replicated with similar results in many areas, approximately two in three people are interested in bicycling, but most have concerns or barriers. The goal therefore is to reasonably reduce these concerns and barriers through infrastructure design, land use, education, and other programs. Through continually improving facilities and conditions, there is a large segment of the population that regularly reports desiring to travel by bicycle. The *Place Plan* targets not only yielding more people shifting from "interested, but concerned" to "enthusiastic and confident" but to ensure that conditions welcome those with concerns.

The Altoona Parks & Trails Survey, combined with research on bicycle stress level, suggest that there is a significant untapped market for walking and bicycling in Altoona, and that a significant number of people would be interested in walking and bicycling more in conditions that create improved sense of safety and comfort.

In order to make walking and bicycling a more convenient and attractive option, particularly to the "interested but concerned" population, it is important to understand what deters people from walking and bicycling. Strategies to enable walking and bicycling can then focus on addressing the key barriers to walking and bicycling among different types of people. While many studies suggest people report long distances, personal abilities, and time limitations can be deterrents to walking and bicycling, most say **the absence of dedicated or well-connected facilities** are primarily what discourages people from walking and bicycling more.

This classification by level of tolerance for traffic stress is consistent with studies that show people's increasing affinity for lower-stress bicycling environments and indicate that traffic danger is the chief impediment to bicycling. This is further consistent with dramatic increases in bicycling observed in areas were networks of separated facilities are more complete, and where new networks are constructed. In areas were separated facilities do not exist, or the network is fragmented, few people cycle. Many potential cyclists, including children and the elderly, may avoid cycling if no physical separation from vehicle traffic is provided, and this separation is important to improve safety wherever possible.

Other stressors beyond vehicle traffic and facility type impose stress on cyclists (as well as pedestrians). These include steep hills, pavement quality, real or perceived crime danger, noise, aesthetics of the surroundings, and absence of lighting or snow removal, which can affect seasonal or time-of-day use. Facility design and operational considerations should be incorporated and taken into account to limit stress and maximize use. For example, most

users are likely to avoid busy intersections or steep climbs, and thus create a "weak link" conflict that reduces overall bicycle network use.

This stress methodology focuses on the overwhelming effect of automobile traffic on deterring cycling. However, design considerations should incorporate important details regarding accompanying landscaping, pedestrian scale lighting, wayfinding signage. This is in addition to system-wide considerations such as travel distance, network completeness, and end-of-trip accommodations.

Walking

Walking is the simplest and most common form of transportation. For those who are able to walk, every trip begins and ends on foot, whether that trip is made by car, transit, or bicycle. If suitable conditions exist within a community – such as having a complete, connected sidewalk network, safe crossings and major destinations nearby to where people live – walking can also be a convenient alternative to the automobile for almost all short trips. Walking is a year-round activity and is possible during the winter season with appropriate support. The City of Altoona is committed to improving pedestrian safety, creating walkable neighborhoods, and enabling a culture of walking.

The variety of types of pedestrians range from individuals who walk for recreation or utilitarian purposes, and includes joggers, individuals that depend on a guide dog, a cane, a walker or a stroller or small wheels to travel. To accommodate all types of pedestrians, including those with mobility challenges, it is important to recognize and enable the breadth of pedestrian needs and trip purposes. All pubic facilities must seek to meet or exceed Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility standards.

The needs of pedestrians vary depending on age group. Young pedestrians often require adult supervision and education to increase their awareness of the dangers of the road and safety measures in place to help them. Older pedestrians have different needs based on their physical abilities. For example, some older pedestrians may require physical aids, such as hand rails and ramps.

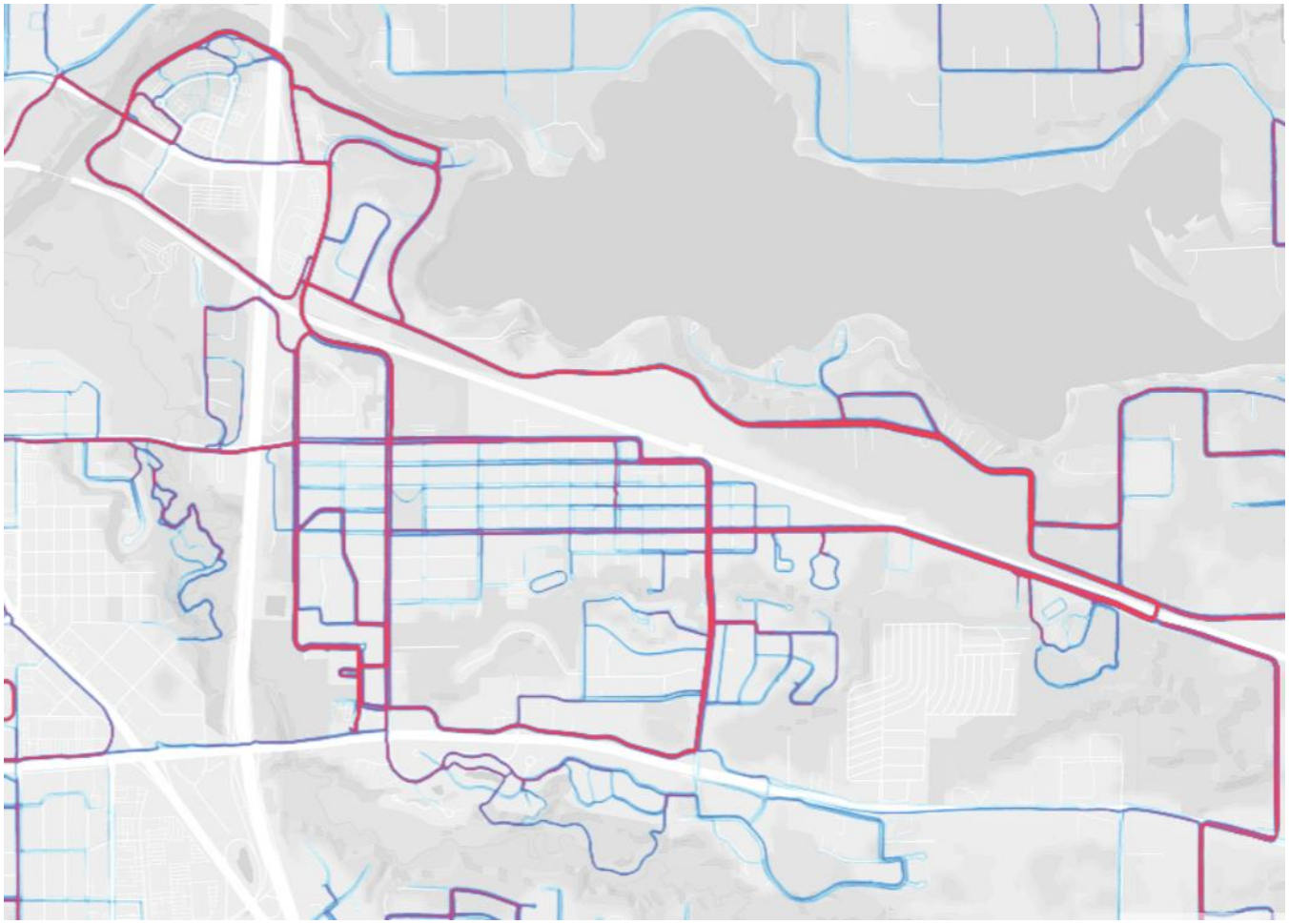
At this time, the City's sidewalk map is incomplete, and some areas of the City have not been recently audited for condition or accessibility of existing facilities. The next update of the Place Plan should seek to include these analysis.

A variety of factors influence an individuals' decision to walk or cycle, such as neighborhood characteristics, the quality of the facilities, distance between destinations, and personal preference. The walkability and bikeability of a neighborhood and city is influenced by a variety of built environment features such as network facilities, transportation infrastructure, land-use mix, connectivity, and traffic volume. Identifying areas of the city with a high mode share of walking and cycling can help the City understand how to prioritize investments in planning and design to support cycling activity. Commonly used descriptive terms used to distinguish between different types of walkers and cyclists and the types of trip are utilitarian (purpose based/ work commute) and recreation (leisure, pleasure).

Walking and Cycling Behavior

The City of Altoona does not presently utilize technology or human tools to track the use of sidewalks or trails. However, the consumer application Strava publishes a heat map from their users who use the application to track their walking and cycling activities. The map reflects voluntary data over the past two years. Although the map reflects an unknown percentage of walkers, runners and cyclists, and likely those who are utilizing the application for exercise instead of utilitarian tips, the map is an interesting and potentially useful tool to add to the remote observation of how existing facilities are used. This information may indicate where investments may be made in the future. For example, some areas that reflect use do not presently have dedicated walking or biking facilities, such as the western portion of North Hillcrest Parkway, Beach Road, Moonlight Bay Drive, and other areas. The map features sufficient precision to indicate which side of the street the user has traveled.

The map is available online at www.strava.com/heatmap, and users with a log-in can access higher resolution maps such as those included below.



Above: Walking/running routes, Strava Heat Map. Collected April 1, 2021.

Conditions and Trends

This plan is based on a number of general assumptions that relate to existing conditions and trends that are expected through short-, medium- and long-term planning timeframe of this plan.

The following is a brief list of general qualitative and quantitative trends that will serve as one basis for considering public space needs, desires, availability of resources, and timing of opportunities over the next five-to-ten years.

1. The demand for quality public spaces for sports, family activities, and quiet enjoyment will increase.

2. Competition for public resources between various City functions will continue to increase as levy limits and other demands on public services create scarcity. The need for strategic planning for public spaces for long-term cost, and the importance of interagency cooperation and partnerships in providing and maintaining public spaces will need to increase.

3. Over the next five-year period, Altoona's population will continue to grow between one and two percent per year (1.5 percent annual average projected).

4. Growth will continue along Highway 12 corridor as well as southeast of the City, including annexations.

5. The City will experience increased investment in existing neighborhoods, increasing emphasis on continuing to improve public spaces in existing developed areas.

6. The City and regional will become increasingly diverse, creating new opportunities and expected amenities in public spaces.

7. Interest in walking and bicycling for recreation and transportation will continue to increase.

8. The "eventization" and "festivalization" of leisure and recreation activities will continue as the number, variety and size of events ranging from organized sports, music, and culture gatherings influence the design and programming of public spaces.

9. The senior citizen (age 65+ and 75+) will continue to increase, creating greater demand for facilities and activities for this segment of the population. In addition, senior citizens are more active than in past generations, creating future demands on programs and facilities.

10. Climate change trends will continue to challenge existing natural ecosystems, including larger precipitation events and periods of drought, hotter summers, and invasive species, will create challenges for management of public lands and facilities.

11. The number of people with the ability and willingness to pay for services and facilities will increase, at the same time the number of people having limited ability to pay will also increase. Facilities and programming will need to account for this disparity.

12. Covid-19 created a dramatic increase in walking, cycling, and other outdoor activities. Estimates of this increase vary, but observations in Altoona and the Chippewa Valley suggest this increase is significant. Followers of recreational activities, transportation, and consumer surveys suggest that this activity is likely to dwindle as the effects of Covid-19 are increasingly behind us, yet interest in outdoor activity is likely to remain higher than pre-pandemic.

CHAPTER 5 – OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

This Chapter briefly describes the existing public open space inventory organized by space classification, features, and function. Most open spaces traditionally identified as existing or future parks. Some parks are identified as multiple classifications or functions due to the variety of facilities, size, and location of the space. This inventory highlights parks and other defined public natural areas, but not include facilities directly associated with streetscapes, such as sidewalks, boulevards, or bicycle facilities. Those types of spaces are identified in other areas of the Plan.

A brief profile is provided of each major park and natural area, identifying short-, medium- and long-term recommended projects and programming for each space. Conceptual ideas regarding the location and features of future park areas are also described.

Existing Parks & Open Spaces

River Prairie Park	21.7 acres
Altoona City Park	6.0 acres
Cinder City Park	25.7 acres
Highland Park	1.7 acres
Devney Park	3.9 acres
Lake Front Park	3.9 acres
Centennial Park	13.4 acres
Fairway Park	55.4 acres
Tower Park	12.7 acres
Jellybean Hill	7.4 acres
River Prairie Conservancy	24.7 acres
Clubview Park	3.9 acres
Perseverance Park	1.02 acres
Library Park	0.2 acres
Total	**181.6 acres**

Total City Area

3,027 acres
4.73 mi^2

Future South Neighborhood
243 acres
0.4 mi^2

Future Parks & Open Spaces

Windsor Park	13.7 acres
Woodington Garden	1.0 acres
South Neighborhood Park *	37 acres
East Neighborhood Park	8 acres
Otter Creek Greenway	

* Lands that are not currently controlled by the City

Altoona School District

Central Campus	8.3 acres
Elementary Campus	2.7 acres

Eau Claire County

Lake Altoona County Park	13 acres

Following this inventory of existing and envisioned parks with accompanying opportunities are a summary of additional opportunities for which a specific location has not yet been identified.

River Prairie Park

Classification(s): Community Park 21.7 acres

River Prairie Park is a high amenity destination for Altoona residents and visitors from throughout the region. Located in the River Prairie development, phase one of the park, including the utility infrastructure, canoe and kayak launch, large open air pavilion (1,700 sf^2), regional stormwater features, and paved multi-use trail along the Eau Claire River, were completed in 2017. The remaining portions of the park were completed in by spring 2018. The City completed a dedicated restroom and parks maintenance building as well as final segments of the multi-use trail system were completed in 2019. The Park contains the **River Prairie Center**, Prevea Amphitheater, connected by regional multi-use trails, and boarded by the River Prairie Conservancy areas along the Eau Claire River.

River Prairie Park	**21.7** acres
Central Area	**4.4**
Total Green Space	3.2
Parking	1.2
River Area	**15.8**
Total Green Space	13.5
Large Performance Area	1.2
Pond Area	1.5
Large Pavilion Area	0.4
Plaza (North Side)	0.5
Lower Falls Area	0.5
Veterans Tribute Plaza	0.1
Trail, Walkways & Woodland	9.3
Large Parking Area	1.8
Pavilion Parking Area	0.5
Canoe & Kayak Launch*	**1.5**

* Launch area is in WI DOT right-of-way.
Area measurements are approximated and rounded

Designed by Ayres Associates under creative direction from City staff, River Prairie Park is both an anchor of the mixed-use development with high-use urban characteristics, as well as natural wooded areas along the hillside and Eau Claire River. This space design intentionally embodied the *excellence in place* integrative design and management approach, and the success of that design process and use experience has served as one of the inspirations for this plan.

The main event area is the Prevea Amphitheater, designed to accommodate up to 5,000 people for large events, as well as be an intimate setting for small events, weddings, and passive users. The open stage allows larger event productions to deploy a mobile stage, sound, and lighting structure overtop of the permanent stage with intentionally placed utilities, anchors, and access. The amphitheater hosts the weekly "Rock'n on the River" and "Kicking it County" music series throughout the summer.

The Four Seasons area of the park includes the Four Seasons Stage, which is arranged for smaller performances and passive use. Several intentionally-designed wedding or similar event spaces, including the Forever Gardens, are carefully incorporated throughout the park.

The Front Porch Plaza is an event space that is arranged to host vendors and food trucks during events such as concerts and farmers markets, as well as seating for daily use. This area is intended to a multi-purpose gathering area featuring festoon lighting, sixteen Rail Tree sculptures, and integrated landscaping. The City purchased a 1,800 sf^2 canvass tent structure for use during the summer for events.

Winding through the park is Prairie Creek, a constructed 700-foot-long recirculating waterway that serves as a play feature and soothing feature for lingering throughout the warm months. The creek begins at the Headwaters feature, designed to embody natural springs and wetlands, and is boarded by natural gardens, rock seating areas,

play spaces, and spanned by walking bridges. While the creek was designed for play, it has proven to be the most popular area destination for small kids throughout the summer.

River Prairie is designed to feature multiple opportunities for public art. The Nexus Sculpture raises from the gardens near the Headwaters of Prairie Creek and spans a boardwalk and the waterway as a place of inspiration and contemplation. Utilizing materials reflective of our railroad past and mimicking the shape of wind-bent prairie grasses, the sculpture is the creative gateway to the Park. The Headwaters also features sculpture platforms and lighting for future installations.

Above: Nexus Sculpture (2019, Ayres Associates)

The park landscaping utilizes native prairie planting areas intended to be aesthetically attractive, low maintenance, and resist colonization by weeds and invasive species. A hallmark of the park design is that many of the existing mature oak trees remain and are incorporated into each space. Additional oaks as well as other native species have been replanted in areas were trees were unable to be preserved. Fruit trees populate the hillside near the pond area. Utility amenities include electrical access in all gathering spaces, high-speed wireless internet access, and strategically located security cameras.

The primary stormwater pond for the development is utilized as a feature with a walking trail around the perimeter, proximity to large pavilion space, and attractive landscaping. There is a large, lighted aeration fountain to ensure the pond does not become stagnant, and make-up water system in place so that the pond does not dry out. A dock provides a place for people to linger, fish, or observe birds and other organisms on or in the water. In the winter, a portion of the pond may be prepared for ice skating.

Parking is available in five public lots, street spaces, and nearby business lots. The upper or central park area is straddled by two public parking lots totaling 157 spaces. The large lot north of Front Porch Place contains approximately 222 spaces. The lot near the Large Pavilion contains approximately 40 spaces and the lot under Highway 53 at the canoe/kayak launch can serve approximately 30 vehicles. The River Prairie area has a total of 544 off-street parking spaces in public lots, 234 on-street spaces, and approximately 440 spaces in private lots.

River Prairie Conservancy

The portion of River Prairie Park located along the Eau Claire River is regarded as the River Prairie Conservancy – Central Segment. This area is approximately 15.8 acres and extends between the River Prairie Drive bridge and Highway 53, including approximately 2,900 lineal feet (0.55 miles) of Eau Claire River shoreline.

The Central Segment of the River Prairie Conservancy includes wooded hillsides, the pond area, interpretive displays, birdhouses, and the River Prairie Trail. Specific features include an osprey platform funded in part by Xcel Energy, Purple Martin houses, a wild turkey feeding platform, and butterfly gardens planted in disturbed areas supported by Pheasants Forever. This portion of the park is excellent for nature viewing, including many species of native and migrating birds, toads, butterflies, otter and muskrat, and many others. The oppose side of the river, the north shore, in the City of Eau Claire, is relatively undisturbed, and features sandstone ledges, and a nesting pair of Bald Eagles located in a mature white pine across from Cowboy Jack's restaurant patio.

Veterans Tribute Memorial

Planning and design are currently underway to incorporate the Veterans Tribute Memorial and Tribute Trail into River Prairie, honoring military veterans from Eau Claire County and their service. The Veterans Tribute Plaza features a hardscape memorial display at the precipice of the hill overlooking the Eau Claire River above the pond. The Plaza is planned to display flags from each branch of the military for ceremonies as well as memorial stones dedicated to veterans from Eau Claire County. The Plaza will be connected to the river trail by new paved and accessible walking trails. The Tribute Trail will add thirteen life size bronze statues reflecting each major military conflict at bumpout features along the existing River Prairie Trail. The Tribute includes installation of a 120-foot-tall flagpole, flying a 1,200 ft^2 U.S. flag, which was competed in fall 2020. The design for Phase I of the tribute was approved on August 27th 2020, and Phase II on February 25th, 2021.

River Prairie Park and the Ayres design team have won multiple awards in its first two years of completion, including:

- Economic Development Initiative of the Year (2019), Wisconsin Economic Development Association
- 2019 Engineering Excellent Best of State Award, American Council of Engineering Companies of Wisconsin
- 2019 Engineering Achievement Award, Wisconsin Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers
- 2018 Project/Development of the Year, Momentum West

Features and amenities:

- Prevea Amphitheater, with design capacity for 5,000 attendees at large events, and suitable comfort for smaller events and passive use.
- Four Seasons event area and performance stage, with rail art backdrop, mature oak trees, and timber seating.
- Three outdoor wedding/event sites, in addition to the two stages.
- River feature, including constructed fen headwaters, wading and play area, and falls features as the feature grades down toward the Eau Claire River and the recirculating vault.
- Public restrooms in two locations (River Prairie Center, and restroom building near the Four Seasons area).
- The Plaza is an approximately 30,000 ft^2 event space located on opposing sides of Front Porch Place and adjacent to the Prairie Event Center, large performance area, and primary wedding/event site. This hardscaped area includes “rail tree” art features, trees, festoon lighting, movable outdoor furniture, and power access for food trucks and events.
- Eau Claire County Veterans Memorial and Tribute Trail
- Riverside Pavilion located between the pond and Eau Claire River, with approximately 1,700 ft^2 under roof area.
- Two small stone and steel pavilions, one 320 ft^2 and the other 256 ft^2.
- 700 ft^2 splash pad.
- Natural playground area with wood structures.
- Grass playing field.
- Two outdoor natural gas fire features and seating area.
- Nexus public art feature.
- Four platforms for public art in the fen area.
- Bicycle maintenance station


Above left: Prairie Creek & Natural Play Area (July 2018, JC); right: Riverside Pavilion (June 2018)


Left: Rock'n on the River (June 2018, Volume One); Right: Prairie Creek (June 2018)


Left: Frosty Tuna Fat Tire Bike Race, February 2020; Right: First U.S. Crokicurl Rink, February 2021.

Above: Prairie Creek, playground (right), restroom facility (center background), Four Seasons State (left background). Below: Prairie Creek, perspective north toward Four Seasons area. June, 2020.

Above: River Prairie Farmer's Market, 2019

Events

River Prairie was designed to be a premier four-season event area for residents and visitors alike. The City hosted Rockin' on the River and Kickin' it County weekly concert series on Monday and Wednesdays, respectively, in summer 2018 and 2020. The park hosts a variety of other events including the River Prairie Festival, Ginormous Pumpkin Festival, Summer Fiesta, weekly Farmer's Market, Frosty Tuna Winter Fun Series, kubb tournaments, and the U.S. Corkicurl Championship in February 2021. The park hosts dozens of weddings and other family events throughout the year.

Public Art

River Prairie is a hub for public art from a diverse array of types and sizes. The Nexus Sculpture spanning a bridge across Prairie Creek comprised of twisted corten steel invoking both industrial imagery and bent prairie grasses has become a focal point of the park. The River Prairie Trolls, designed by Karl Johan Ekroth of PinPin Studies in Gutenburg, Sweden, captivates people of all ages with engineering and fabrication by Eau Claire's own Artisan Forge Metalworks and Solar Forma. Art is already throughout the park expressed through colorful bird houses, toad houses, artistic bike racks, mural installations, small sculptures, and more.

Issues and Opportunities

Maintenance – River Prairie Park and surrounding boulevards are intentionally designed to feature native plants. This is a departure from other existing public areas in Altoona, creating a learning curve for staff and increased maintenance attention.

Disruption – River Prairie was designed and is intended as an active, mixed-use district. Several development sites adjacent to the park are not yet completed, and it may be a few years before all major construction activity is complete. These disruptions are anticipated to create management challenges to ensure park functions and programs continue with minimal impact.

Event Space – River Prairie Park was designed very intentionally to integrate several programmed event spaces. This is a new operational perspective for the City of Altoona, and will create new operational, maintenance, policy and facilities conditions that will require City Staff to adapt to. This is a significant opportunity to engage the community in collective events, including music and other performances, festivals, markets, and more.

Trail Hub – River Prairie Park is the center of nearly four miles of dedicated multi-use trails, many of which are along the Eau Claire River, and create connections in nearly every direction. This network creates opportunity for active walking, running, cycling, birding and other activities to pass around and converge upon the Park to create exciting daily and event-based uses.

Parking – With the Park designed for events and within a growing mixed-use district, parking is expected to be a constant balancing act. While each site and the district as a whole was designed carefully to not 'over park' through surplus of automobile infrastructure, active uses of the Park, businesses and events will stress this balance. For large events it is expected that nearby automobile parking will be at capacity, and that the City or event organizers may coordinate shuttles from off-site locations.

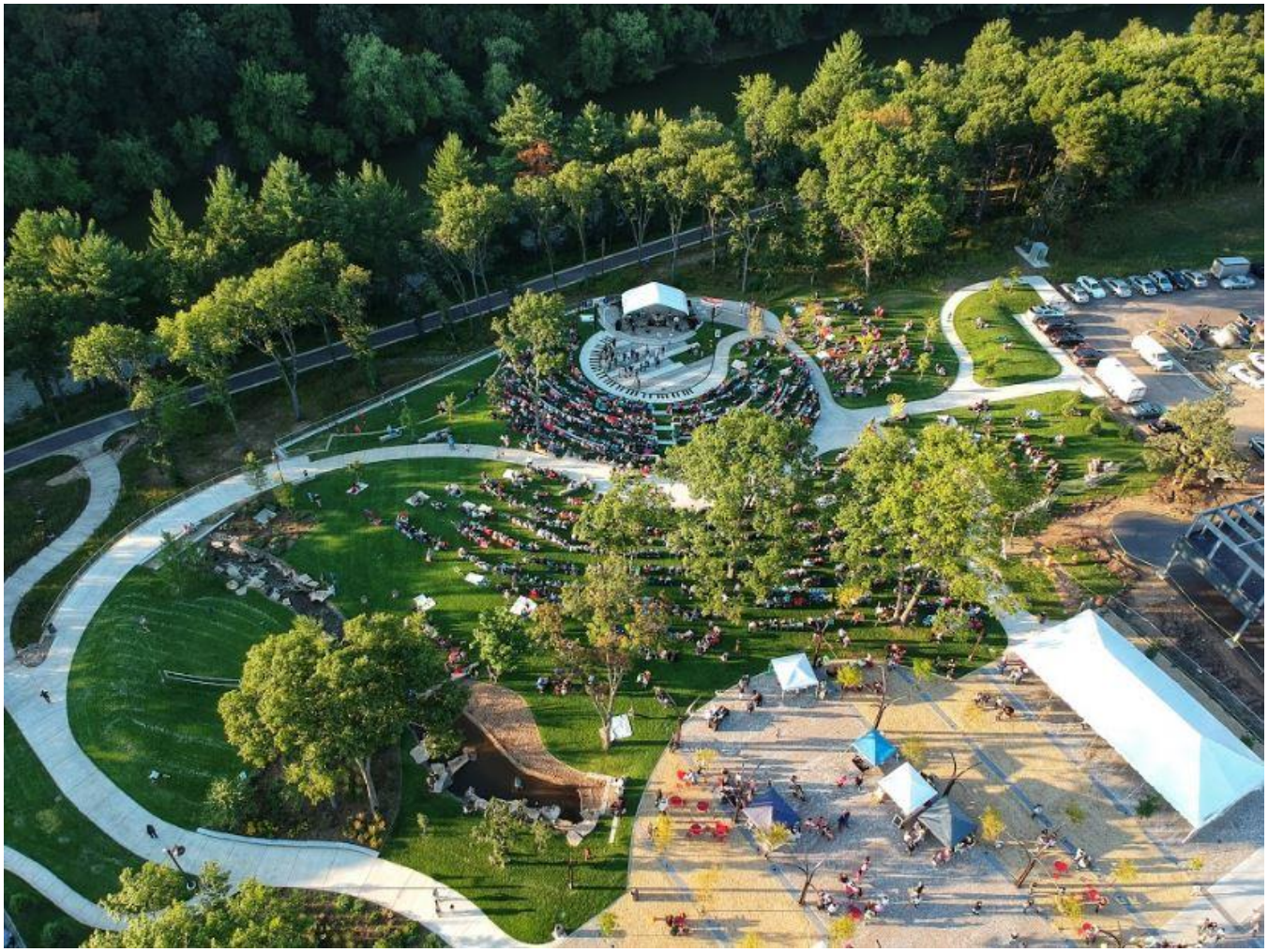
Short-Term (1-3 years)

- Evaluate ongoing maintenance requirements.
- Identify opportunities to add additional bicycle parking.
- Identify opportunities to add public art and other recreational, cultural, and aesthetic features.
- Continue to build relationships with area event planners to attract and coordinate opportunities in River Prairie Park.
- Continue to work with the Eau Claire County Veterans organizations regarding development of the Veterans Memorial and associated features.
- Continue to identify areas and opportunities for public art.
- Continue to develop events in River Prairie, especially those arts and culture opportunities open to the public.

Medium Term (3-5 years)

- Stay on top of maintenance and facility conditions at and beyond the normal replacement and refurbishment cycle.
- Ensure all facilities are in excellent condition prior to closure of the Tax Increment District.

Above: Yoga in the Park, 2019. Below, Prevea Amphitheater, 2019



River Prairie Center

Classification(s) Event Center, Parks Offices

Designed by River Valley Architects in the Prairie School design approach, the River Prairie Center was completed in July 2017 and holds a strategic and highly visible location in River Prairie Park. The 9,100 sf^2 public building serves as the main offices for the Parks & Recreation Department and contains restrooms for the facility as well as exterior access for the park. The Center is a premier event space for small and medium gatherings, including weddings, family gatherings, corporate and private events, Altoona Parks & Recreation and Library programs. The event space can accommodate 250 people in a round-table format or 400 for a meeting or lecture, and the space can be subdivided to host smaller groups. The Center is also intended to serve as the base of operations for larger events that take place in River Prairie Park, such as festivals, concerts, outdoor markets, and more. The Center also includes a catering kitchen and small meeting room.

Additional features include a bar that serves the indoor event space as well as outdoor plaza. The bar utilizes local wood harvested from a farm near Augusta and crafted by a local artisan. This same artisan utilized a selected piece that serves as the fireplace mantle. The Event Center includes restrooms that are accessible from the exterior to serve River Prairie Park, and a 1,200 sf^2 outdoor plaza with grill and access to the bar, which can be access-controlled for certain events.

Parking is providing by an adjacent 85-space public lot to the south of the building, which includes a drop-off area, as well as area street parking.

The success of the venue has already resulted in displacing otherwise intended Parks & Rec programs and to turn away events. The City is exploring opportunities to add space elsewhere in the City to accommodate programs.


Above: River Prairie Center event space (2018, Kingpin Management)

Issues and Opportunities

Management – Operation of the River Prairie Center poses a challenge in a small city that does not have in-house capacity and scale for specialized staff for event planning and staffing. The City has partnered with a private vendor to manage events at the building and park spaces, a relationship that will require continual monitoring and evaluation. This relationship will need to be beneficial for the City, its partners, and area businesses for long term success and sustainability, as well as citizen enjoyment.

Operating Resources – The cost to construct the River Prairie Center was approximately $2.1 million. While the Event Center is not intended to directly generate revenue to the City for other uses, the operational model is one where most events will be at "market rate", including weddings and other events, in order to provide dedicated resources to maintain the facility and adjacent park areas.

Balance – Designed to operate as a higher amenity and revenue-generating event venue, rather than a community center with relatively free access, there is a balancing act to be struck between scheduling revenue-producing events, Parks & Recreation programs, and community groups and family functions. This is an active management challenge that will be dynamically monitored and adjusted as needed.

Short-Term (1-3 years)

- Continue to develop signature events and balance public programming with revenue-generating opportunities.

Medium Term (3-5 years)

- Ensure a sustainable operations and maintenance schedule, and associated revenue, to keep the Event Center and its furnishings in excellent condition.

Altoona City Park (10th Street Park)

Classification(s) Community Park 6.0 acres

Also known as 10th Street Park, Altoona City Park is an active area park which accommodates a variety of activities that serve the adjacent neighborhoods as well as recreation sports (baseball and tennis), school sports, and group gatherings. Facilities include a youth grass infield baseball field, two separate playgrounds for youth and toddlers, community recreation building with restrooms, basketball half-court, six tennis courts (two of which are lighted), pavilion, gazebo, batting cages, picnic tables, grills and benches. The new community building was constructed in 2021 for flexible event space, and an older facility remains. Street parking is the only vehicle storage area near the park.

Altoona City Park	**6.0** acres
General Parkland	**3.4**
Playground Areas	0.4
Pavilion	0.1
Baseball Field	**1.0**
Tennis Courts	**1.1**
Community Building	0.25
Parkland Fringe	0.25

Area measurements are approximated and rounded

Altoona City Park is bounded by 10th Street to the west, 9th Street to the east, Hayden Avenue on the North and Bartlett Avenue to the South. Approximately 40 pull-in parking is available along Bartlett Avenue and parallel parking area along 9th Street. During events and other gatherings, street parking is utilized around the perimeter of the park. During peak use periods, this causes moderate congestion along 10th Street and Bartlett Avenue.

The six tournament-grade tennis courts are utilized by Altoona School District for practices and events under agreement with the City. Altoona City Park hosts Christmas holiday decorations and light display produced by the Altoona Lions Club, as well as a handful of moderate sized events through the summer.

In 2020, the City added a 4,000 ft^2 Community Building to the east side of the park. The building includes spaces for parks and recreation programs as well as community events with built-in audio-visual, event kitchen, outdoor accessible restrooms, and public art opportunities. The old 1,600 ft^2 building remains and is leased to the Altoona Historical Society for potential exhibit space. The new community building has inherited the name Fish House, from the original location.

The Altoona Historical Society donated the park gazebo in 2014 at the intersection of Garfield and 10th Street. The first Little Free Library on city property was donated and curated by the family of Arlene Flohr, a teacher at Altoona School District, which is very actively visited. The City added a drinking fountain, as well as lawn irrigation around the gazebo in 2014.

Altoona City Park first appears as a dedicated park in municipal maps and records in the 1940s as two properties straddling Garfield Avenue. Although the section of Garfield bisecting the park is long since abandoned for park space, underground utilities persist and the gazebo is the only park feature to occupy that corridor.

In 2017, the United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley awarded a Born Learning Trail installation in the park, which was installed in Spring 2017 by volunteers.

In fall 2018, approximately 16 mature (40 – 60-year-old) green ash trees were removed from the park as part of the City's ongoing emerald ash borer mitigation program. These trees comprised a substantial portion of the shade trees in the park, including those located near the tennis courts. The trees were replaced in 2019 with a variety of native species, but it will take a generation for new shade trees to mature.

Bartlett Avenue was reconstructed in 2019 along the southern edge of the park. This project included reconstructing the angled street parking and added curb extensions to improve pedestrian safety.

Above: 10th Street Park pavilion (August 2016, JC)

Above: 10th Street Park ballfield. Below: 10th Street tennis courts (July 2016, JC)

Issues and Opportunities

Placemaking – Altoona City Park has several facilities in place that are well used, and/or may improve use through additional enhancements. Many of the recommended projects entail improving or extending the usability of existing amenities, such as the community building, ball field, and lawn areas. Building on the *Power of Ten* principle, strategically adding and refining opportunities for passive and active activities may improve overall use of existing amenities and spaces.

Enliven Use – Altoona City Park is a "mature" space with significant space dedicated to active specialized uses, such as the baseball field, tennis courts and community building, as well as passive areas that include the pavilion, playground, and basketball court. The challenge is to determine context sensitive improvements in amenities and/or programming would yield improved or expanded use and enjoyment of a park that is perhaps the most actively used public outdoor space in Altoona at this time.

Community Building – The new 4,000 ft^2 Fish House creates a new opportunity for year-round programming of the park, potentially becoming the primary site for many parks and recreation programs. The new restroom and water fountain may also extend use of the park by families and other functions.

Old Building – The old community building is approximately 1,600 sf^2 and has not been well used in recent years. With construction of the new building, this facility has been rented to the Altoona Historical Society for exhibit and storage space. Removal of the building had been contemplated to enable expansion of the tennis courts. Active use and upkeep of this building is likely to remain an issue of concern.

Playground - The existing playground equipment was installed in 2002 and is budgeted for replacement in 2021. The toddler playground was removed and replaced with expanded equipment in 2020 to a location closer to the primary play area. With re-envisioning and reinvestment in the Altoona's parks, the central location provides an opportunity for a larger play area that provides a great opportunity for nearby neighborhoods as well as from across the city.

Winter Play – As Altoona's traditional park, it is an active space from summer through fall. However, other than holiday lights, this park is little used for nearly half of the year. There is no topography in this park for sledding, but bringing in relatively clean snow from area streets, and perhaps the nearby church, would provide a play feature for children.

Short-Term (1-3 years)

- Begin programming the new Community Building.
- Replace playground equipment and related amenities (2021).
- Expand and resurface basketball court into full-court size.
- Repair electrical service at the pavilion.
- Consider adding a soccer goal on the lawn north of the tennis courts for seasonal community use.
- Explore opportunities to host activation events in the park, such as live music, art, or outdoor exercise.
- Extend public WiFi and security cameras to Altoona City Park by extending a fiber spur from the regional backbone line under Spooner Avenue.
- Consider adding a small vegetable garden curated by a Master Gardener or other volunteer group.
- Consider a "painted intersection" public art opportunity at Garfield and 9th Street.
- Paint/Repaint crosswalks at each corner, including mid-block crossing at Garfield and 10th Street.

Medium Term (3-5 years)

- Consider expansion of the tennis courts from 6 to 8, if the old community building is removed. Refresh/resurface existing courts.
- Identify locations for public art opportunities, such as murals on the new community building, pedestals for sculpture, etc.
- Consider replacing the existing restroom and concessions building at the ballfield.

Long Term (5+ years)

- Replace hardscape around ballfield area at the corner of Bartlett and 10th Street
- Add curb extensions, bump-outs, and/or raised crosswalks at each intersection and street crossing.

Other Considerations

- Add pedestrian lighting along walking path. Cost estimates (2018) range from $6,000 - $7,500 depending upon number and style of fixtures.
- Install field lights to the ball field. Cost estimates (2018) are approximately $60,000 for four poles.
- Develop mini-grandstand seating with integrated restrooms and concessions at the ballfield.

Cinder City Park

Classification(s) Community Park 25.7 acres 2300 Spooner Avenue

Cinder City Park is an active community park that utilized primarily by organized recreational sports and school sports programs. The park features three lighted softball fields, one lighted baseball field, the Hobbs-Altoona Sports Center, and significant parking area. Other amenities include restrooms, bleachers, concession stand with walk-in cooler, pavilions, scoreboards, and a small playground.

Cinder City Park	**25.7 acres**
Softball & Baseball Fields	10.0
Pavilion Picnic Area	0.7
Playground Area	0.2
"Front Yard"	0.5
Parking	1.8
Hobbes-Altoona Sports Center	1.2
Parks System Maintenance	1.3
Carnival Area	6.5
Undeveloped / Pine Plantation	3.5

The **Hobbs-Altoona Sports Center** ("The Hobbs") was constructed by the City of Altoona and is leased to the Altoona Youth Hockey Association. The Hobbs is approximately 32,000 square feet and is a special-use space which has limited availability to the general public. It is utilized occasionally by select events, including Cinder City Days festival.

The Parks Department maintenance garage and operations base is located in Cinder City Park, which serves as the center of the park and trail system maintenance staff and equipment. The Parks & Recreation Department offices were housed in a small meeting facility adjacent to the Hobbs until the River Prairie Center was completed in 2017. This building is now used for recreational equipment storage and restrooms for the park. Other facilities include the 120' x 20' concessions stand and recreational program storage building.

Cinder City Park was acquired in 1973 from the Chicago and North Western Transportation Company. The Park is bordered on west side by the 10th Street, to the north by the Union Pacific Railroad, which is depressed below the ground level of the park, to the east by the Eau Claire County Highway Department, and to the south by Spooner Avenue. The parking lot accommodates approximately 178 spaces, covering about 1.7 acres.

The City entered into an agreement with the Altoona Youth Softball League (AYSB) in November 2019 to allow the organization to develop an indoor batting facility near the parks maintenance garage. AYSB and allied organizations are currently examining the possibility of placing the playing surface at the ball fields to artificial field turf, which would allow greatly expanded use.

The primary parking lot and drive areas around Hobbs were reconstructed in 2020, including improvements to the stormwater and drainage systems.

The City installed a new Cinder City Park sign in 2016, including the City's first municipal electronic message display.

Issues and Opportunities

Cinder City Days Festival – The Altoona Lions Club has held an annual carnival called Cinder City Days in Cinder City Park since the 1970s. In 2011, due to parking concerns and operations transforming turf areas to mud, the City prepared and relocated the festival to the "Carinal Area".

Carnival Area – In 2011 the City logged a three-acre area in the undeveloped north portion of the park to relocate the Cinder City Days annual festival from the parking lot and "front yard" area. The area is otherwise not currently used for any other purpose. The City brought in top soil and seeded the cleared area in 2016, installed irrigation to support turf, and extended electric service to the area. The dimensions of the area may allow for a youth soccer field or small 200' ballfield. Continued use of this space by the Carnival may pose a significant challenge for maintaining an adequate playing surface, and reasonably prevents any other recreational use of the area. City staff have discussed adding a fence and gate system to create a dog park, however more investigation is needed to determine feasibility.

Specialized Facility - Cinder City Park is an intensely used space during softball and baseball leagues and tournaments during the summer, and for hockey at the Hobbes. This occasionally yields overflow parking onto adjacent streets. Cinder City Park is sparsely used aside from these organized recreational programs and the annual Cinder City Days festival. Given the size of the park, central location on two major arterials (Spooner Avenue & 10th Street), and proximity to moderate density housing between 10th Street and North Willson Drive, there is ample opportunity and perhaps need to improve usability for other activities.

Trees – The trees in the undeveloped portions of Cinder City Park as well as lining the outfield fences of three ballfields are mature red pine. In 2016, three red pines were blown down in a wind storm during the Cinder City Days festival, landing on equipment but otherwise not causing injury. An evaluation by a Wisconsin DNR forester suggests one of three common red pine root fungus is the likely cause. The City removed mature red pines along the outfield of the west field, replacing with broad-leaf species, and will continue to monitor the balance of the stand. Since the plantation area is not otherwise maintained, the understory growth is thick brush, including poison ivy.

Destination Facility – Cinder City Park hosts several youth baseball and softball leagues and tournaments throughout the spring and summer. Investments in this area continue as AYSB plans to locate an indoor batting facility in the park, and potential installation of field turf playing surface at the ball fields which would allow a longer season, more frequent and intensive use. This may provide opportunities for further development of recreational facilities in the park, but also create increased use specialization.

Short-Term (1-3 years)

- Study placement of a dog park. One location may be to utilize the Carnival Area to create a two-section dog park utilizing placement of fencing to maximize off-leash dog run area while enabling annual carnival use. A two-area dog park includes one larger run for larger breed dogs, and a smaller area for small breed dogs. Depending upon ultimate design, between two and four acres may be available for this use, with primary access from 10th Street. Specific design would utilize latest best practices and innovations in dog park design.
- Investigate adding public art installations in the park, with ideas including murals on the south and west faces of the Hobbs, and one or more platforms for permanent or temporary sculpture.
- Continue to monitor and manage the mature pine plantation, as the grove may require thinning and/or cutting over time. Add new trees as the existing individuals are removed to generally maintain a vibrant forest canopy.

- Extend public WiFi and security cameras to Cinder City Park by extending a fiber spur from the regional backbone line in under Spooner Avenue.
- Identify opportunities to host events in the park and Hobbs to increase use as well as opportunities for revenue to support park maintenance.

Medium Term (3-5 years)

- Consider adding a segment of multi-use trail along the north and east sides of the park, connecting to the existing trail along 10th street near the bend in the road, and connecting to Spooner Avenue near the Eau Claire County Highway Department.
- Consider adding a playground near the existing pavilion to provide a neighborhood playground area for children who reside in the moderate density neighborhood bounded by 10th Street, Spooner and North Willson. This area includes the Altoona Housing Corporation primary facilities across the street from the pavilion.
- Replace existing playground equipment located between the ballfields (2024).
- Eau Claire County plans to relocate their Highway Department operations from the 10.6-acre site to the east of the park. This may provide opportunities to expand park uses such as adding ball fields and secondary parking areas, in addition to use of existing county buildings for City public works and parks maintenance operations.

Long Term (5+ years)

- Altoona-Hobbs Sports Center will require renovation and/or refurbishment.

Highland Park

Classification(s) Neighborhood Park 1.7 acres

Highland Park is a neighborhood park located in the Sherman-Highland neighborhood in the western area of the City. This neighborhood park is designed primarily for passive activities, with amenities including a basketball/tennis court, playground equipment, and small open-air pavilion. Most of the park area is lawn punctuated by mature trees. The playground equipment was installed in 2007.

The western boundary of the park adjoins a UPS distribution facility, boarded by chain link fence and partially screened by mature fir trees. The remaining sides of the park is bounded by Vernon, Gloede, and Hamilton Avenue. The neighborhood context is that this park is bordered by industrial property to the south and west, multi-family housing to the east, and predominately small-lot single-family homes to the north. There are no

sidewalks in the area, although recent projects in the neighborhood have begun adding sidewalks to east-west roadways.

The adjacent Sherman-Highland neighborhood is composed of approximately 245 households. Surveys of the neighborhood conducted in 2016 classified associated with a Community Development Block Grant application identified over 50% of households as experiencing low- to-moderate income. Given the proximity of the neighborhood to significant commercial and employment areas along Hastings Way, combined with the age of the existing housing and scattered undeveloped lots, additional housing development is anticipated in the neighborhood. Highland Park is the primary open space in the neighborhood, as pedestrian access to nearby Centennial Park is difficult due to topography and indirect road connections.

Issues and Opportunities

Activate Space – As the primary open space in a neighborhood comprised disproportionally of households experiencing low- to moderate-income, the importance of providing high-quality open spaces for people to gather is of elevated importance. The current form of the park is passive and can be described as a typical suburban park: a basketball court, a small playground, some picnic tables and a lot of grass. Access is impaired by lack of sidewalks. Despite the moderate population density of the neighborhood, observed use of the park is relatively low, and few programs or gatherings take place there.

Connectivity – Although the Sherman-Highland addition features small lots and block sizes in a traditional urban grid, the neighborhood lacks sidewalks. Most roads in the neighborhood are low traffic, yet pedestrian circulation conditions throughout most of the neighborhood are not safe. As the roads are rebuilt in the neighborhood, sidewalks are being added, beginning on the north side and proceeding south toward the park. This neighborhood is adjacent to significant commercial retail, employment, and services, and improved safe connectivity would greatly improve neighborhood conditions.

Short-Term (1-3 years)

- Add swings to the playground area.
- Resurface the playing courts and transition tennis area to basketball, add benches for improved use.
- Deploy soccer nets to create a small field (approximately 70 x 120) with flagged corners to provide recreation opportunity.
- Trim low branches on existing trees to free up clear sight lines throughout the park, especially to playground area.
- Add recreation program programming at the park, with targeted outreach to improve activation of the space.
- Paint crosswalks on intersections near and adjacent to the park as in interim solution until sidewalks are added to area streets.

Medium Term (3-5 years)

- Ensure that sidewalks are added to adjacent and area streets through reconstruction, utilize “safe routes to parks” principles, including curb extensions wherever possible.
- Extend power and lighting to the pavilion.
- Consider adding a port-a-potty shell as an inexpensive option for an on-site restroom.
- The playground equipment will require replacement in approximately 2022/2023. This will be an opportunity to add increased investment and accessibility, like recent improvements to Devney Park in 2018.

Long Term (5+ years)

- Monitor screening conditions along the west side of the park as the existing trees age to ensure visual separation from adjacent logistics facilities.
- Refurbish/refresh pavilion structure.

Devney Park

Classification(s) Neighborhood Park 3.9 acres

Devney Park is a neighborhood park located within the Knollwood Subdivision on Devney Drive. The park was developed in 1991. The Park includes one lighted youth baseball field, picnic tables, grill, bleachers, tennis court and a basketball court. The baseball field received covered dugouts from a local Eagle Scout project in 2016. The field also features an analog scoreboard.

A small pavilion and recreation facility with restrooms are also located in the park. This facility includes a small room which can host recreation programs or meetings. The pavilion portion is an open-air seating area to the rear of the building of approximately 450 square feet. The shingles of this facility was replaced in fall 2017.

Devney Park serves as the primary open space for three or four small neighborhoods. Nearby neighborhoods include a mix of housing types, including eight- and twelve-unit apartment buildings, developments of duplexes and twin homes, and median-sized single-family homes. Many of the approximately 400 dwellings within 0.25 miles of the park are generally thought to be home to families experiencing low-to-moderate income. The second ring, 0.25 to 0.5 miles to the west, north and east, are predominately homes in the middle to higher end in valuation, as compared to the City. Deveny Park is also the nearest existing park to the Hillcrest Estates Manufactured Home Park, located 0.75 miles to the east.

While there are sidewalks through the neighborhood to the west and north, most of the neighborhood east of 3rd Street lacks sidewalks. Streetscapes without sidewalks include areas of relatively high concentration of rental housing. Improving connectivity and safety through this subarea is a priority. The multi-use trail along 3rd Street is a short distance from the park and provides good access north and south.

The City installed new playground equipment in 2018, with a combination of rubber pour-in-place safety surface in high-traffic and access points, and engineered wood fiber making up the balance of the play surface. The total project cost was approximately $150,000. The previous playground equipment was located behind the pavilion and was removed in 2017. The new playground was relocated next to the pavilion due to larger footprint and improved sightlines for policing. Additional lighting and a security camera system was also added.

Above left: Devney Park Pavilion (2016).

Above: Tennis Courts. Below: Youth baseball field (2016)

Issues and Opportunities

Rear Yard – To the south of the ball field is a 0.5-acre area that is maintained as grass and has a perceptible slope from east to west (approx. 6%). This area is bounded by private property on three sides, and mature pine trees to the south and west. The lot is not actively used, suffers from lack of visibility from the street or parking lot, and the slope renders use as a playing or practice field difficult. The existing mature trees render use as a community orchard or garden difficult due to persistent shade through most of the year.

Short-Term (1-3 years)

- Trim low branches from the trees that form the southern boundary of the park. There is a well-worn foot path through this depression and drainage, and garbage and other materials are frequently found there. Trimming low branches from the park-side of the screening area may reduce littering and other suspected vagrancy in the park.
- Repair and resurface tennis and basketball court as part of regular maintenance.
- Improve pedestrian connectivity and safety along Devney Drive. Recommended treatments include: adding fog lines along Devney Drive with 11-foot travel lanes; adding a mid-block crossing at Glades Drive and Devney Drive with bump-out and crosswalk; and adding or refreshing crosswalks at Thompson Drive and at 3rd Street East.
- Continue to add boulevard trees along Devney Drive. Mature trees exist in the single block between 3rd Street East and Glades Avenue, and some trees were added in the vicinity of Thompson Drive in 2019. A gap of about 1,200 feet exists without boulevard trees.
- Identify public art opportunities in the park, such as adding mural space on the north face of the restroom building.

Medium Term (3-5 years)

- Examine opportunities to improve stormwater performance of the area through adding a rain garden or other feature. The vicinity is an area with known drainage issues.

Long Term (5+ years)

- Improve/refresh/replace bleachers and scoreboard at the ballfield.

Above: Devney Park Playground, March 2020

Lakefront Park

Classification(s) Neighborhood Park 3.9 acres

Lake Front Park is located on the south shore of Lake Altoona at the west end of Kewin Street. This park has the following amenities: handicapped accessible fishing dock, portable restroom, swing benches along the banks of Lake Altoona, picnic tables and parking lot.

Lakefront Park	**3.9 acres**
Lawn Area	0.5
Shoreline Area	0.3
Woodland Area	3.1

Lake Front Park has over 900 linear feet of shoreline on Lake Altoona, with some areas accessible to shore fishing. Lakefront Park is only one of two public properties on Lake Altoona, the other being Lake Altoona County Park approximately 1,000 feet to the east. The handicap accessible fishing dock was replaced in fall 2017. The dock is removed from the lake each fall and returned in the spring.

The park features approximately 0.5 acres maintained as a flat lawn boarded by mature oak trees. The remaining public space is a mature woodlot that slopes toward the lake, shoreline, and the parking lot. There are some fixed swing seats and picnic tables.

The park is relatively isolated from the rest of the City due to topography and the Union Pacific Railroad. A multi-use trail spur from the Lake Road Trail connects to the County Park. The trail requires design improvements due to steep grades to improve safety and visibility.

Issues and Opportunities

Jewel Waiting to Happen – Waterfront parks are often the prized properties of park systems. The challenge with Lakefront Park is that it is relatively small, with just over 0.5 acres available for active use, limited parking and limited access, and proximity to the larger and more developed Lake Altoona County Park. The task is to determine how to effectively add programs and amenities to this space to encourage and improve use, taking advantage of the shoreline environment and the well-used neighboring County Park. This remains elusive.

Parking – Lake Front Park has a relatively small parking lot that, along with limited street parking, can accommodate approximately 25 vehicles. This makes simultaneous use by the general public and small groups difficult.

County Park – Lake Front Park is a little over 1,000 feet from Lake Altoona County Park, a popular 12-acre facility that includes a public boat launch, enclosed pavilion, sand swimming beach, restrooms, among other amenities. The County adopted a new master plan for the park in 2017 that proposes a new event space, pavilions, beaches stabilization, and other improvements.

Lake Access – The County Park includes a public boat launch, but the ADA accessible dock at Lakefront Park remains popular. To improve and expand use, recommendations include exploring installation of an ADA accessible canoe and kayak lift, and improving on-shore fishing opportunities.

Expansion. The existing property boarders a 1.5 acre parcel owned by Union Pacific Railroad. This parcel is wooded, mostly hillside, and boundaries are not marked.

Short-Term (1-3 years)

- Place one or more fire circles of nonflammable materials for small gatherings to enjoy the ambiance of open flame in a semi-controlled environment with seating.

- Place flat stones to create seating near water level to enable greater use of the shoreline for fishing and lounging.
- Explore feasibility of adding an ADA accessible canoe & kayak lift to the existing dock or as a separate amenity.

Medium Term (3-5 years)

- Improve multi-use trail along North Beach Road.
- Utilize stones, pavers, or other durable materials to create a walking labyrinth pattern or meditation garden.
- Design and construct a small adventure playground incorporating the existing tiered hillside. Ideas include:
  - Installing multiple slides that utilize the hillside to safely create large slide runs without the challenge of mitigating associated fall heights.
  - Add multiple routes, methods and materials to climb the hill to access the slide entrance, such as steps, ramps, climbing rocks, and/or cargo nets.
  - Hillside could be designed such to appear as the side of a ship, half buried in the hill, with various levels and methods to go up and down. Consider a “look out” structure at the top of the hill.

Long Term (5+ years)

- Improve stormwater runoff management from parking area through “green” landscape feature(s), intercepting the existing stormwater grate that conveys water from the parking lot directly into the lake.

Above: Lakefront Park, 2017

Centennial Park

Classification(s) Neighborhood Park • Natural Area 13.4 acres

Centennial Park	**13.4** acres
Developed Area	**2.1**
Playground & Lawn	1.0
Parking & Drive	0.5
Pond & Roadway Buffer	0.6
Natural Area	**11.3**
DOT Right-of-Way Natural Area*	**16.5 acres**
Otter Creek	**~ 7,000 ft**
Single-Track Trails	**2.5 miles**

* Not included in City-wide Inventory
Area measurements are approximated and rounded

Centennial Park is a neighborhood park with primary access from Spooner Avenue. The Spooner Avenue Multi-Use Path parallels the roadway between Centennial Park and Spooner Avenue, providing good access by bicycle, walking, and running routes. In 2014 the City of Altoona worked with the design firm CBS[2] to create an improvement plan for the Park. The park improvements, except the mountain bike / hiking trails, are the result of that plan.

Features of the park include a small playground, picnic area, playing field, walking trails, and sledding hill. A climbing hill with boulders highlights the playing field area. The Otter Creek Christian Academy and Altoona Lions Club donated a set of outdoor musical instruments, installed in 2017. The lawn areas are irrigated to support durable turf throughout the summer.

Chippewa Off Road Bike Association (CORBA) maintains 2.5 miles of single-track mountain bike trails through the park natural area. The City is working with CORBA to extend the existing trails through the adjoining DOT right-of-way, eventually under the Highway 53 bridge spanning Otter Creek and connecting to South Willson Drive. The trails are open to fat tire biking, snowshoeing, and walking throughout the winter. CORBA donated and maintains trailhead signage and park map directing users though the trail system.

The park natural area is approximately 12 acres of City property, with access to an additional 16 acres of wooded Department of Transportation right-of-way along Highway 53. This combined area features approximately 7,000 feet (1.3 miles) of the meandering Otter Creek.

Centennial Park is so named due to its dedication and initial planning during Altoona's centennial in 1987. Historically, the property that became Centennial Park was a wastewater treatment facility. The existing stormwater pond and pump station are all the remains from this past use. There is driveway access to Woodside Terrace to the south, which is closed by gate to prohibit automobile through-traffic.

<u>Issues and Opportunities</u>

Short-Term (1-3 years)

- Add drinking water access from the pump station.
- Add shade trees near around the playground area and parking lot.
- Expand existing single-track mountain bike / hiking trails into the adjoining DOT right-of-way.
- Formalize and improve the easement-access to the park trail system from Valmont Avenue.
- Continue to strengthen and support the partnership with CORBA.
- Evaluate improvements to the park area adjoining Gloede Avenue, which functions as an access point for the trail system.

Medium Term (3-5 years)

- Work with the Department of Natural Resources to investigate opportunities to improve trout habitat in Otter Creek.
- Reconsider the 2014 plan elements regarding natural play structures and activities integrated into the forest fringe.

Long Term (5+ years)

- Extend the trail system southeast under Highway 53 to S. Willson Drive (medium-term) and south along the Otter Creek Greenway (long-term).

Fairway Park

Classification(s) Neighborhood Park • Natural Area 55.4 acres

Fairway Park occupies over 55 acres of beautiful natural areas along Otter Creek in the Hillcrest Greens neighborhood. In addition to wooded hillsides and river bottomland, the park includes three fairways from the former Hillcrest Country Club. While remnants of the golf course landscaping persist, most of these areas are naturally transitioning to into prairie and woodland fringe.

The developed park amenities occupy approximately 0.75 acres and are accessed from a relatively steep paved trail that intercepts Whistling Straits Drive. Park features include a parking area, small playground, pickleball/basketball courts, and a pavilion. In 2017 the City constructed a parking lot at the top of this hill at the road. The trail continues through the neighborhood, wrapping around the pond and proceeding west approximately 0.5 miles to Highway 12 at 10th Street West, and east approximately 0.6 miles to Third Street East. The Clubhouse, a three-building multi-family housing development, includes public walkways that also traverse down the hill to the park.

Fairway Park	**55.4** acres
West Section	
Woodland & Creek Bottom	21.6
Central Section	
Woodland & Creek Bottom	13.4
Fairway / Prairie	1.5
Playground, Pavilion & Courts	0.8
Parking Lot	0.5
East Section	
Woodland & Creek Bottom	11.3
Fairway / Prairie	5.5
Pond	0.8
Otter Creek	**~ 8,275 ft**
Maintained Trails	**0.75 miles**

Measurements are approximated and rounded

Along Otter Creek to the east of the playground is a 0.75-mile golf cart path that has become a multi-use trail, connecting up to St. Andrews Drive. This trail consists primarily of packed earth as it skirts the former fairways. The vision for this area is that the Otter Creek Corridor will become integrated into a regional Otter Creek Greenway, a natural corridor from the Eau Claire River to Prill Road and beyond. As part of this vision, the existing trail along Otter Creek will eventually be extended in both directions, to Centennial Park to the west and Prill Road to the southeast.

Fairway Park was dedicated to the City as part of the Hillcrest Greens neighborhood development process in 2013. The initial pavilion, playground, and access trail were provided by the Developer.

The prairie, woodland fringe, watercourse, pond, and mature trees make Fairway Park an excellent area for bird watching, hiking, and wildlife viewing year-round. The Otter Creek Greenway serves as a corridor for wildlife including birds, deer, and black bear. The park includes over 8,275 lineal feet of Otter Creek.

Issues and Opportunities

Short-Term (1-3 years)

- Address and monitor erosion along steep slopes abutting existing trails.
- Stabilize Otter Creek shoreline and areas of former fairway that have eroded in recent flooding.
- Improve and repair the existing cart trail. The paved switch-back portion is beginning to deteriorate, and edges are slumping. The packed earth segment is in generally good condition but could be improved with minor investment.

Medium Term (3-5 years)

- Continue the existing trail to the west, from the playground to property owned by Cedar Creek Community Church.
- Playground equipment will require significant rehabilitation or replacement in approximately 2025.

Long Term (5+ years)

- Continue the existing trail to the east beyond the existing boundaries of the park.
- Complete trail segment through lands owned by Cedar Creek Community Church, past Highway 12 to S.Willson Drive and Centennial Park.
- Explore trail connections south from the park to Gateway Drive in Eau Claire.

Tower Park

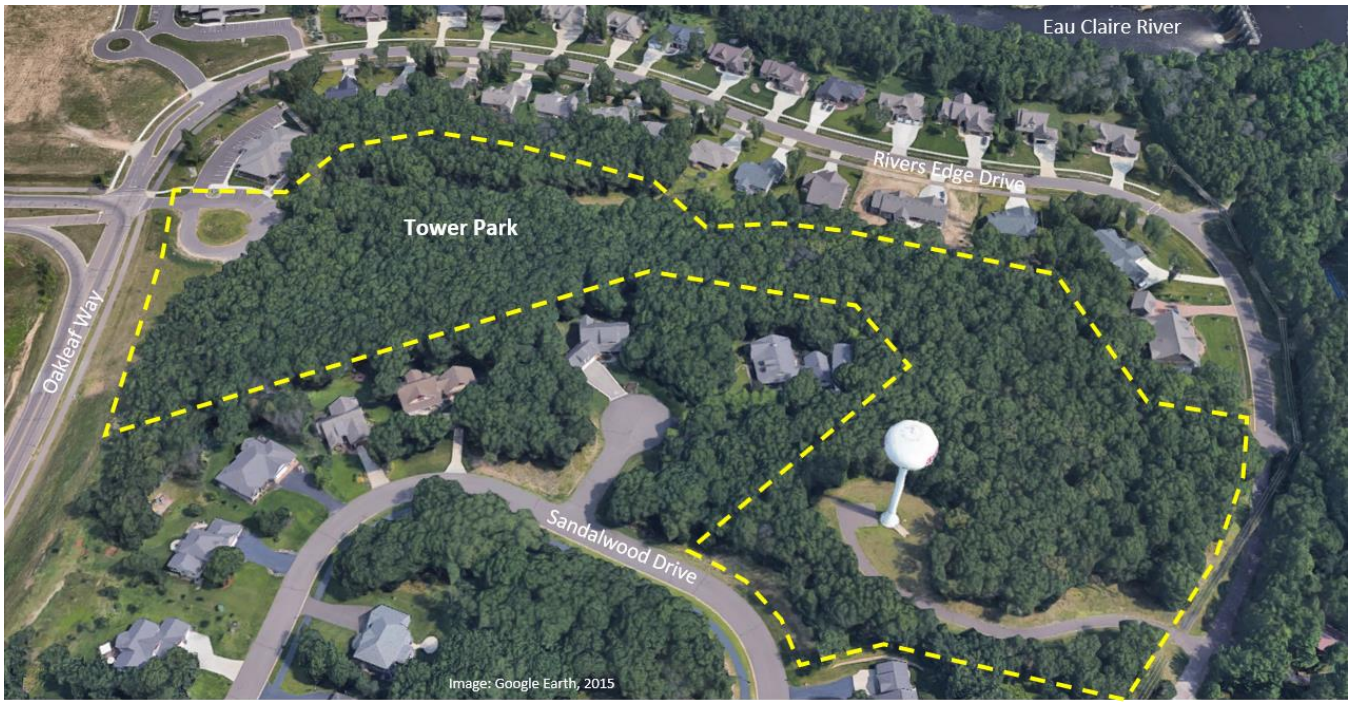
Classification(s) Neighborhood Park / Conservation Park 12.7 acres

Tower Park is a predominately unimproved parkland located between the Estates at River Prairie and Rivers Edge Subdivision. Access is primarily provided by a parking lot at the intersection of Oakleaf Way, Rivers Edge Drive, and River Prairie Drive. The park includes a prominent City of Altoona water tower and associated improvements accessed from Moonlight Bay Drive. Pedestrian access is available at various points, and vehicles may also access the parkland from the water tower located within the park. The park is wooded, except for the abandoned right-of-way of East Willson Drive and the area immediately adjacent to the parking lot and Oakleaf Way.

Tower Park is intended to serve as a neighborhood park with passive uses, in addition to valuable plant and animal ecosystem benefits. The park is comprised of two parcels which were dedicated as part of development of the Estates at River Prairie (water tower), and the Rivers Edge Drive Subdivision. The adopted plan for Rivers Edge identifies the land as a "treed natural park with parking / picnic area". The park is currently classified as a natural area in its existing condition.

The concept for Tower Park is for walking trails and bird watching. The nearby Eau Claire River corridor is active with native and migrating birds throughout the year, and Tower Park provides an additional woodland destination. This design includes development of a walking trail through the park and adding clusters of bird amenities such as feeding stations, brightly colored bird houses of a variety of sizes, and other complementary people and bird features. The parking area should be finished, park sign added, and potentially a public art installation highlighting the designation as a birding park.

There is a sledding hill that occupies the southwest corner of the park and adjoining right-of-way. The hill has about 20-25 feet of drop and is convenient for nearby residents to use throughout the winter when conditions permit.



Above: Aerial view of Tower Park (Google Earth, 2015)

Above: Context of public land near the Eau Claire River.

Issues and Opportunities

Passive Use – Tower Park may serve as a neighborhood park for the Estates at River Prairie, Rivers Edge Drive, River Prairie Twinhomes, and other nearby residents. The park is linear, lined by the rear yards of homes, and understood to be intended as a passive use parkland. The mature trees, linear shape of the property, and connectivity to existing multi-use trails would lend this park to be used as a walking area for quiet contemplation or observation of birds.

Short-Term (1-3 years)

- Create a detailed master plan for the park with budget to implement while the River Prairie TIF District is available.
- Create walking path through the park beginning at parking lot and proceeding through property to Moonlight Bay Drive and the water tower, utilizing crushed stone and edging. This would formalize public use of the park for quiet activities.
- Clear brush and volunteer trees from former right-of-way area, remove any significant dead branches or trees which may imperil enjoyment of the trails.
- Consider developing “birding park” with collections of brightly colored bird houses and supportive amenities.
- Develop a trailhead facility with a park map, area map of multi-use trails, and picnic area with seating.
- Complete the existing parking lot to add capacity, extend life of the pavement, and improve stormwater drainage.
- Plan and complete property boundary marker arrangement to subtly but clearly demarcate the boundaries of the parkland.

Medium Term (3-5 years)

- Remain vigilant regarding possible intrusion of oak wilt.

Jellybean Hill

Classification(s) Neighborhood Park 7.6 acres

Jellybean Hill is a south-facing hillside between High Point Estates and the Altoona Business Park that is utilized for sledding throughout the winter, as walking connection to the Altoona School campus, and as a vantage point for viewsheds to the south. The average drop is approximately 50 feet, with a run of approximately 525 feet. The space is classified as an neighborhood park due its principal use as an undeveloped open space with active use primarily for sledding. The property was officially dedicated as a City Park on April 9, 2020.

Jellybean Hill is comprised of two parcels, a 5.6-acre outlot dedicated with High Point Estates, and Lot 2 of the Altoona Business Park. The property is suitable for sledding without further improvements. When commercial development occurs on adjacent lots, the addition of berms may be necessary to ensure safety and routing of sledders.

Portions of Jellybean Hill are within tax increment district two. If improvements are pursued, there is a dedicated funding mechanism during while the district is open.

Above: Aerial of Jellybean Hill (Google Earth, 2015)

Issues and Opportunities

Access – While Jellybean Hill serves as a pedestrian connection from Devney Drive to the Altoona School campus, the sidewalk system in the Altoona Business Park is incomplete. Sidewalks were added along the south side of Devney Drive and east side of McCann Drive in 2019, but the north and west sides remain without pedestrian accommodation.

Wintermission – Storytelling suggests that Jellybean Hill has been utilized for sledding for several generations. It is also the only good location for "destination sledding" in the City. While the multi-use potential of the parkland is limited due to topography, highlighting the use of the park for sledding would advance City-wide efforts to improve activities during winter months.

Short-Term (1-3 years)

- Discuss shared parking agreements with future commercial development to provide off-street parking for sledders in the winter.
- Complete sidewalk network throughout the Business Park to improve pedestrian safety and access.

Median-Term (3-5 years)

- Consider adding a simple warming structure, or temporary enclosure, to enable greater sledding use during the winter.

Windsor Park

Future Park

Classification(s) Neighborhood Park 13.7 acres

The property identified as Windsor Park encompasses the closed landfill managed jointly by the City of Altoona and Town of Washington and surrounded by the Windsor Forest subdivision. The entire property is approximately 13.7 acres, of which 6.9 acres is field and 6.8 acres is woodland. The area features landfill monitoring wells and vents and is reasonably prohibited from development. The City actively mows most of the field once or twice per year to ensure management access to the monitoring wells. The active vent and well circulation system was shut down in 2018 due to decreased concentration of offgas.

The property is used by citizens to walk dogs, snowshoe, and by children for unstructured play. Most of the property is prohibited from development without relocation of the underlying waste, lending itself to potential use as a dog park, as has been successfully accomplished in many communities. This might provide dogs and their owners up to 5 acres in a fence and gate system. Space would remain for complementary amenities, such as signage, walking trail, and potentially a playground. The woodland includes some older tree specimens and is otherwise a mix of intermediate growth estimated to be 40 to 60 years old.

The development of a dog park was rated as a medium interest and priority by respondents to the 2016 citizen survey. Additionally, interest in dog parks and pet related amenities is a frequent comment to the survey and has been identified in variety of national park and amenity surveys as a trending use. Pet owners are a dedicated user group, which may also lend to partnerships to fund and maintain the features.

A portion of the property may also serve to expand and improve trail connectivity through the neighborhood, by connecting Saxsonwood through the property to Nottingham Way, and potentially a walkway from Windsor Forest Drive to Saxsonwood. The City retains a right-of-way connection from Windsor Forest Drive southwest to Otter Creek, which may serve as a future recreational trail connection to a future trail through Otter Creek Greenway.

The size of the property as well as proximity to Otter Creek may also provide opportunities for bird supportive improvements. If the dog park concept does not materialize, the open area of the property, ringed with trees, may provide secondary opportunities for bird habitat improvement.

The area identified as Windsor Park and approximately 6.5 acres of adjoining property to the north are included in a UW-Madison landscape architecture senior capstone project entitled "Windsor Forest Place". The purpose of that exploration was to engage a design student to envision potential park improvements as well as future housing opportunities. The planning process included distribution of a survey to the approximately 175 households in the neighborhood, holding three virtual meetings, and three site tours during January 2021.

Issues and Opportunities

Feasibility – Determine feasibility of utilizing the landfill surface for intentional recreational use. The City may need to bring in fill to level the surface and perform maintenance on the monitoring structures.

Complementary Development – Development of adjoining property has been discussed at multiple points in recent years. The student phase of the Windsor Forest Place exploration will be completed in May 2021. This design is anticipated to include complementary housing opportunities, creating new pedestrian connections, and envision park uses for the property.

Cooperation – The landfill is of joint custody and maintenance between the City of Altoona and Town of Washington. Cooperation from the Town will need to be continue for park development to occur.

Short-Term (1-3 years)

- Complete detailed study of landfill maintenance conditions for recreational use.
- Complete visioning, planning and design of adjacent development.
- Complete detailed conceptual plan for the park, trails, and cost estimates.
- Begin fundraising campaign for dog park.

Medium Term (3-5 years)

- Officially dedicate property as a City Park.

- Begin implementing park plan.
- Develop maintenance plan for the park.

Medium Term (3-5 years)

- Evaluate implementation of park plan and examine potential of additional improvements or phases.

Above: Windsor Park (July 2016. Credit: Joshua Clements)

Woodington Garden

Future Park Mini Park 1.0 acre

Woodington Garden is the property on bounded by James Avenue, 7th Street West, and Bradwood Avenue across from the Altoona High School that features City Well Site #3. The property was dedicated to the City of Altoona in 1958 by Clyde and Grace Woodington for the citing of a city well. Mr. Woodington is a former Altoona teacher. The property is one acre, currently maintained as lawn, and screened from adjacent residences by mature trees.

The property is in relatively close proximity to Altoona City Park and the Altoona Intermediate School playground. This property provides an opportunity for a public use that complements the adjoining school facilities, given that the City already owns and maintains the property as lawn. In the past, a group of teachers inquired about locating a community garden at this location that might serve, in part, as an educational opportunity.

With the location and arrangement of the well, there would be water available for garden use, and with some improvement, off street parking and complementary amenities could be provided. The garden could include butterfly garden, garden equipment storage, limited scope garden compost, and outdoor classroom and seating with shade.

Area examples of successful community gardens include Demmler Park, Lakeshore Park, and Forest Street Park in Eau Claire. Demmler and Lakeshore each have an 8' wire fence with locking gate. Forest Street does not have significant fencing but features a significant garden pavilion and storage building. Each are managed by community groups and have water available.

Issues and Opportunities

Clarify Uses – The indenture transferring property ownership to the City describes use restrictions as City well and related purposes and maintained attractively. To avoid future conflict, the City will need to determine what uses would be permissible.

Short-Term (1-3 years)

- Determine interest for a community garden or other public use of the property.
- Determine organizational structure for maintaining a garden or other educational amenity
- Develop garden property with phased plan to incorporate additional amenities and features as use and support grows.

Medium Term (3-5 years)

- Phase two of garden amenities.

Above: Municipal Well #3 (June 2016. Credit: Joshua Clements)

Below: Demmler Gardens, Demmler Park, Eau Claire (July 2016. Credit: Joshua Clements)

Library Park
Future Park

Classification(s) Mini Park 0.2 acres

Altoona City Hall and Library occupies half of its City block. The City owns two parcels adjacent to City Hall totaling 0.4 acres. One half of this area is maintained as lawn and the Library recently installed a series of raised beds for flower gardens. Part of the property is also utilized for snow storage from the adjoining City Hall parking lot. The other half is a small house owned by the City which is actively rented. The City acquired adjacent properties for

potential expansion of City Hall. The remaining balance of the block (0.4 acres) is occupied by three houses. Given recent growth in the City, expansion of City facilities at some point is a very real possibility.

Altoona does not maintain public open space in the eastern half of the "old" (pre-1970) City. Between 5th Street West and 5th Street East there is over 130 acres and over 400 dwelling units without a City Park. This area does adjoin the Altoona Intermediate School playground, which is approximately 1.4 acres, but is approximately 0.5 miles from the eastern end of the neighborhood. Creating a public open space adjacent to City Hall would provide a relatively central neighborhood park and opportunity for outdoor programming at City Hall and Library.

The presence of a public park near the old commercial district may provide contribute to overall reinvestment in the area. New successful business has been established in recent years, and there is general interest in creating a downtown plan to facilitate additional commercial and residential development. Being adjacent to City Hall and Library provide opportunities for specialized amenities and programming, such as outdoor reading area, community garden, public art, and others.

Issues and Opportunities

Space Needs – The City conducted a space needs study for municipal departments to estimate facility demands over the next ten years. This analysis reflected that City Hall and the Library each face space constraints, and expansion is recommended. Among these expansion scenarios include utilizing this potential park area for parking. The current land use could be actively programmed as an interim use until the ultimate facility plan is completed.

Ownership – Three parcels would need to be acquired to obtain ownership of the entire block. This would improve opportunity for creating an outdoor space to serve the neighborhood as well as an opportunity for programming and events complementing City Hall and the Library.

Short-Term (1-3 years)

- Determine future City facility scenarios.
- Determine opportunities for interim recreational uses of the space.

Medium Term (3-5 years)

- Proceed with park design and use dependent upon future facility plans.

Clubview Conservation Park

Classification(s) Natural Area 3.8 acres

Clubview Conservation Park is comprised of property dedicated as parkland during the development of the Club View Estates and Fairway Drive Townhomes subdivision. The property includes a 2.8-acre wooded remnant as well as 1-acre retention pond area. Approximately 2.4 acres is a wooded knoll featuring mature oaks, some individuals may be more than 100 years in age.

The property has limited street access on Fairway Drive. Most of the property abuts the Union Pacific Railroad to the North, and the rear yards of homes on the west and south. The multi-use trail along Fairway Drive provides walker and cyclist access.

Clubview Park is in tax increment district 3 (River Prairie), and thus there is an existing funding mechanism for park improvements as long as the district is active.

Above: Clubview Conservation Park, July 2016, viewing west over the stormwater pond toward the remnant woodland (credit: Joshua Clements)

Issues and Opportunities

Conservation Recreation – Due to the limited accessibility, size and character of the existing property, the best use may be as a conservation area with a walking trail, bird houses, and other passive uses. There may be space for a small playground on the eastern end of the property, but this may not be desirable due to limited access and very close proximity to Highway 53. To preserve the existing mature oak trees as well as trees on area properties, evaluation for oak wilt is strongly recommended.

Short-Term (1-3 years)

- Evaluation for oak wilt. If Oak wilt is detected, the City will need to evaluate options.
- Place property boundary markers strategically along the perimeter to clearly identify relationship to adjoining homes.
- Tree planting and urban forestry operations

Medium Term (3-5 years)

- Determine walking trail design and curation opportunities. The property lends itself to an approximately 0.25-mile trail loop, respecting distances from adjoining property. Site investigation suggests occasional use by exploring kids and/or walkers from adjoining neighborhoods.

Above: Aerial of Clubview Conservation Park (Google Earth, 2015)

Perseverance Park

Classification(s) Neighborhood Park 1.02 acres

Perseverance Park was acquired in 2020 with the development of the Prairie View Ridge neighborhood. The park is comprised of an approximately 0.75-acre parkland for recreational amenities and a 0.27-acre area encircling the adjacent stormwater pond. The latter portion is committed to include a paved multi-use trail completed by the developer in conjunction with Prairie View Ridge. The parkland area is sufficient for a small playground, seating and complementary landscaping to create an attractive small neighborhood park for nearby residents to gather.

Perseverance Park was dedicated by Resolution 3A-21 of the City Council on March 11th, 2021 upon the one-year anniversary of the World Health Organization's declaration of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) successfully landed the Perseverance Rover on the planet Mars on February 18th, 2021, a historic mission marking the next progression in human exploration of our solar system. The name Perseverance Park was selected by the Parks Board to as a testament and permanent reminder of the historic period. The resolution of dedication includes a provision that a marker be installed to simulate remembrance and reflection.

The Prairie View Ridge neighborhood is planned for 234 dwellings, with most of those (80%) being in buildings with four dwellings or greater. Thus, this park is likely to serve as the primary outdoor space for many nearby residents. The park will be accessible by the multi-use trail along Baumbach Way, and by the recreation trail along the pond from the south that connects to Hong Street.

Short-Term (1-3 years)

- Create a site plan for the park.
- Implement the site plan.
- Install a prominent and durable marker describing the purpose of the given name for Perseverance Park consistent with Resolution 3A-21.

River Prairie Conservancy – West Segment

Classification(s) Natural Area 6.15 acres

In addition to River Prairie, the City of Altoona maintains ownership of approximately 24 acres along the Eau Claire River in two distinct areas. These areas are relatively undeveloped, hosting mature second-growth woodland, and connected by the River Prairie Trail Loop. In total, the City owns and manages approximately 7,000 lineal feet (1.31 miles) of Eau Claire River shoreline (inclusive of the portion within the Highway 53 right-of-way) from the Lake Altoona dam to the Eau Claire Country Club.

The River Prairie Conservancy, western segment, is the approximately 6.15 acre in the Southwest Quadrant of River Prairie. This area stretches west from the River Prairie Drive Bridge to the Union Pacific Railroad. This area includes the City of Eau Claire wastewater pump station.

The River Prairie Trail project of 2018-19 completed the segment that runs through the conservancy along the Eau Claire River. The Place Plan includes a vision of working with the Eau Claire County Club and City of Eau Claire to continue the trail along the Eau Claire River southwest, bridging the confluence of Otter Creek and the River, and connecting to Archery Park.

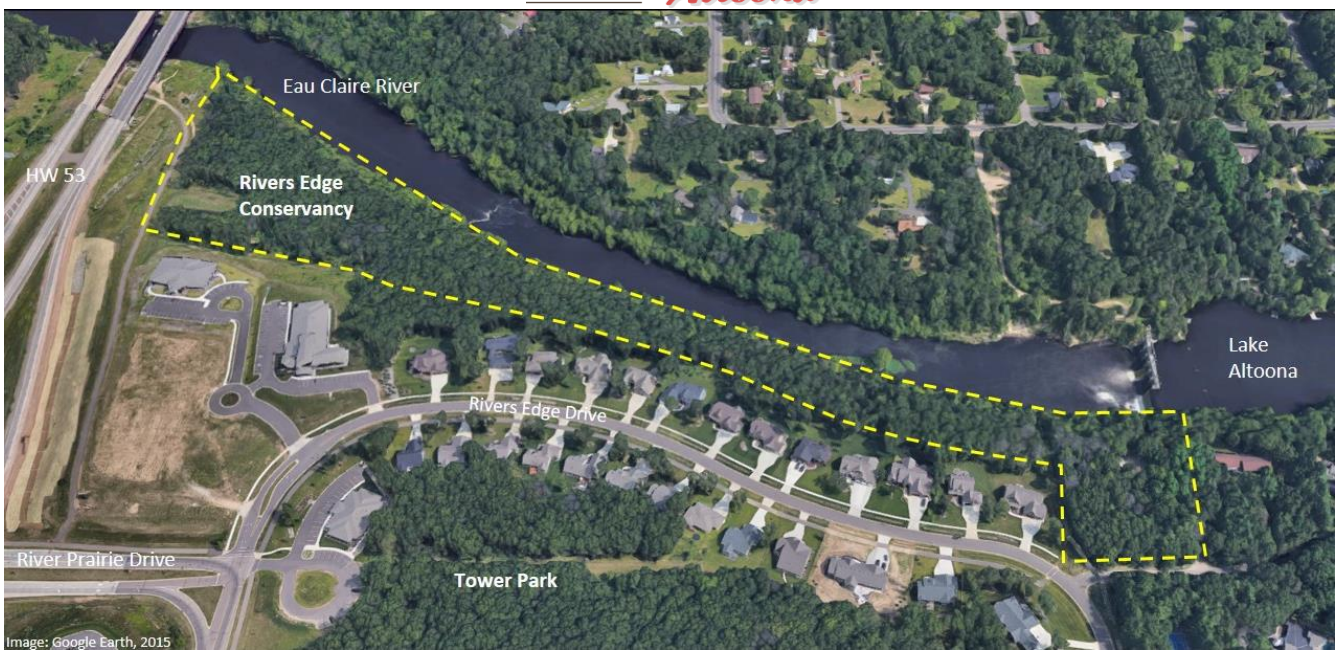
Rivers Edge Conservancy

Classification(s) Natural Area 16 acres

The Rivers Edge Conservancy is comprised of three parcels that comprise the southern bank of the Eau Claire River between the Lake Altoona Dam and Highway 53. The primary area is a linear 12-acre segment owned by the City of Altoona. The second portion is a 3-acre parcel owned by Eau Claire County on which the City maintains a parking area accessed from East Willson Drive.

The River Prairie Trail project of 2018-19 completed a 0.5-mile segment that connects the Canoe & Kayak launch in River Prairie, located under the Highway 53 bridge, through the Conservancy along the Eau Claire River to the dam parking lot, and meeting the trail that parallels Rivers Edge Drive near East Willson Drive.

The City may examine improvements to the parking area. In addition, there is a well-traveled foot path down a steep slope to a series of rocks below the Lake Altoona Dam that is popular with fisherman. The City may investigate options to improve safety and reduce erosion in this area.



Above: Aerial view of Rivers Edge Conservancy (Google Earth, 2015)

Above: Eau Claire River along the Rivers Edge Conservancy (Sept. 2017. Credit: Joshua Clements)

OTTER CREEK GREENWAY

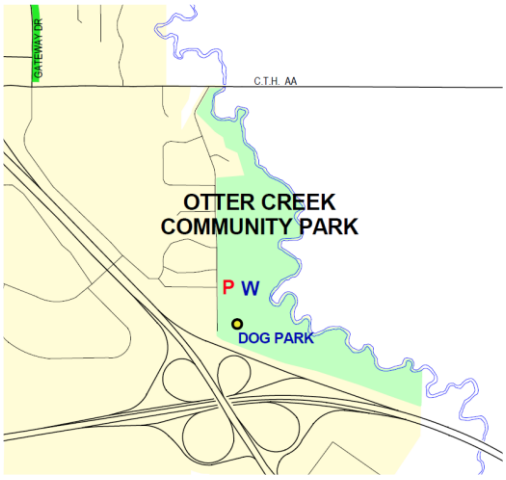
Natural Corridor of Regional Significance

Otter Creek Greenway is an envisioned corridor of preserved natural areas, highlighted by active parks and trails, following the existing course and topography of Otter Creek. The Greenway area begins at the confluence of Otter Creek and the Eau Claire River in the Eau Claire Country Club, and extends generally southeast past Prill Road, Highway 53 and beyond. Altoona's Centennial Park and Fairway Park are within this corridor.

Otter Creek is a regionally significant watercourse with headwaters in Otter Creek Township (Eau Claire County) and Sumner Township (Trempealeau County), near the Village of Osseo. The land use in the watershed outside of city limits is predominately agricultural.

The vision for corridor includes maximizing public ownership of property to ensure natural systems are preserved and public access is available for passive activities, such as a future trail, fishing, and birdwatching. Property may be preserved and access for contiguous trails granted through easements as necessary. Two existing Altoona City Parks are within the corridor, Centennial Park and Fairway Park, and locations for future parkland and conservancy area should be prioritized to be contiguous with and complementary to the Greenway.

A recreational trail is envisioned to generally follow the Greenway, with the north terminus being Centennial Park and extending to Prill Road and beyond. Connections to this trail are expected at serval points to allow for access from existing and future neighborhoods. The approximate alignment of the envisioned trail system is included in the Open Space & Trails Map.



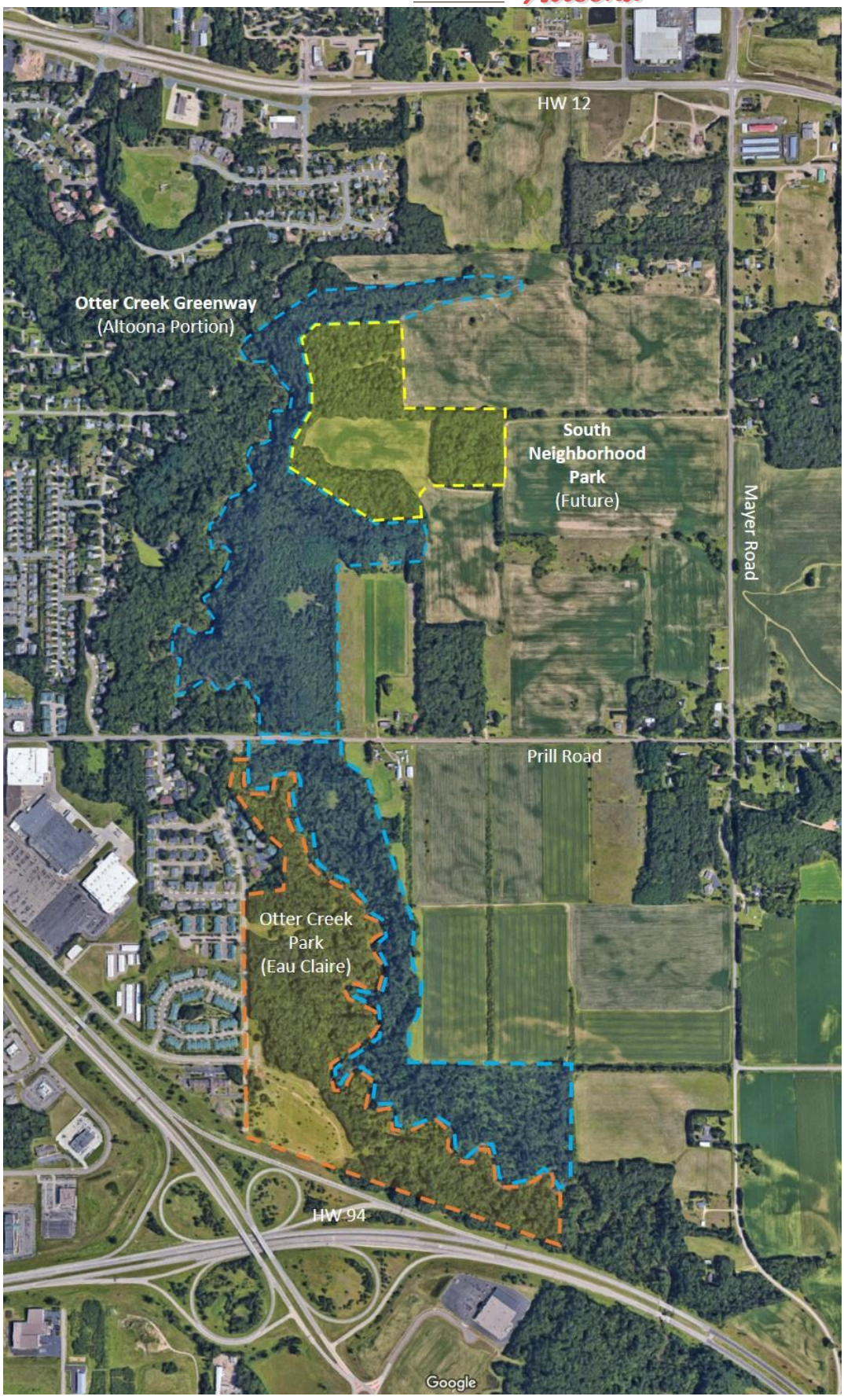
The City of Eau Claire has worked to preserve the greenway by acquiring Otter Creek Community Park (60.7 acres) and Dog Park (9.4 acres), south of the City of Altoona along the west bank of Otter Creek, between Prill Road and US Highway 53. The Eau Claire Waterways Plan (2012) identifies a future trail system through the park. Further, the City of Eau Claire has identified the east bank and forested area as future park expansion.

The City of Altoona should proactively acquire land within and adjacent to the Otter Creek Corridor for parkland and other public uses. In areas south of the existing developed area, the City will focus on areas on the east bank of Otter Creek, envisioning the corridor as the natural boundary with the City of Eau Claire.

<u>Issues and Opportunities</u>

Land Ownership – Significant stretches of the envisioned greenway are currently public property, including Centennial Park, Fairway Park, Highway 53 and Highway 12 right-of-way. Preservation of open space and natural features will require working with existing private landowners as well as proactive land planning of new developments. Strategic acquisition efforts of property or easements may fill the remaining gaps. Identifying the corridor in this plan, and subsequent planning efforts including Comprehensive Plan and official map, will ensure land dedication to occur in future development south of the Windsor Forest neighborhood.

Multi-jurisdictional Planning – Otter Creek generally serves as the boundary of the City of Altoona with the City of Eau Claire south of Highway 12. There are portions of the corridor north of Prill Road within the Town of Washington. The City of Eau Claire future land use map also reflects goals of preserving this corridor as a regionally significant natural area. Effective implementation of this vision will require proactive cooperation, especially future trail development.



The accompanying illustration shows the portion of the Otter Creek Greenway from the Windsor Forest Subdivision to Highway 94. The City expects to focus on the eastern bank (outlined in blue) and collaborate with the City of Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Town of Washington, landowners, and others to preserve the maximum extent of the Greenway.

Short-Term (1-3 years)

- Memorialize Otter Creek Greenway vision in City Comprehensive Plan and Official Map.
- Complete a more detailed plan of the corridor.
- Ensure future development preserves the open space and natural conditions of the Greenway, with envisioned trail connections and park spaces.
- Coordinate with the City of Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Town of Washington, Department of Natural Resources and others on long-range planning of the corridor.

Medium Term (3-5 years)

- Ensure future development preserves the open space and natural conditions of the Greenway, with envisioned trail connections and park spaces.
- Complete a more detailed study of potential recreational trail alignment and connections.
- Examine acquisition of properties within and adjacent to corridor through direct purchase, land dedication, or easement to preserve open space and trail connectivity.

Long Term (5+ years)

- Ensure future development preserves the open space and natural conditions of the Greenway, with envisioned trail connections and park spaces.

South Neighborhood Park

Future Park

Classification(s)	Community Park	40 acres

The area bounded by Prill Road, Mayer Road, Highway 12 and Otter Creek is identified as the South Neighborhood in the 2009 Altoona Comprehensive Plan. This area is approximately 424 acres and is predominately agricultural land uses, Otter Creek Corridor, and eight existing homes. Approximately 36 acres are sensitive natural features, including Otter Creek floodplain, steep slopes, and existing drainageways. This area is not included in the City's existing parkland inventory as the property is in private ownership.

The vision for the South Neighborhood Park is to serve as a community park with athletic fields, park pavilions, playground, parking, and other amenities to serve this subregion of the future City. The precise amenities will be determined through specific planning effort prior to park development. The Park location and uses are intended to be integrated into the larger vision for the City, for the Otter Creek Greenway, and serve as a "trailhead" opportunity for recreation trails throughout the neighborhood and region.

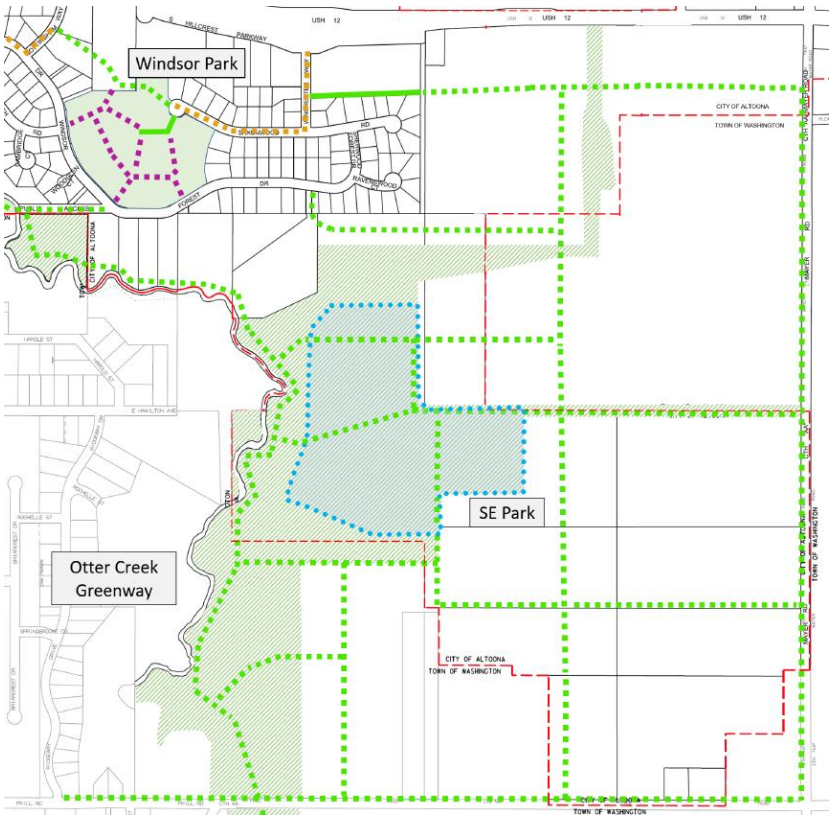
There are two potential locations examined for this park, each located along Otter Creek. The first area is located near the geographic center of the neighborhood along Otter Creek, and partially boarded on the north and south by existing drainageways. This location would allow the park to also function as a neighborhood park within 0.5 miles of the entire neighborhood. The envisioned area is approximately 40 acres, not including the primary creek corridor, steep slopes or drainageways, and inclusive of an existing wooded knob in the center of the neighborhood. Of this area, approximately 75% is currently wooded, and 25% agricultural. This existing land use mix permits complementary preservation of contiguous woodland within the Otter Creek Greenway with open land for playing fields and parking. Trails, pavilions, and other built amenities could be incorporated into the

woodland areas. This parkland would also serve as the trailhead facility for recreational trails envisioned for Otter Creek Greenway and throughout the neighborhood.

The second parkland area is approximately 16-20 acres of existing woodland just north of Prill Road. This location may be a good candidate for parkland due to complementary location to Otter Creek as well as proximity to Prill Road, which would allow relative ease of vehicle access. This property is predominately under single ownership and is currently outside of, but adjacent to, City corporate boundary. This area may be of interest to develop additional parkland should City resources permit, to expand the bounds of natural area within the Otter Creek Greenway, complement or incorporate into the primary site, and/or to create a greater destination open space.

The envisioned parkland should be identified in the Comprehensive Plan, and reserved through Official Mapping. As the neighborhood develops over time, parkland dedication and impact fees may be used to assemble parkland and greenway. The City's subdivision ordinance currently requires five percent of development area to be reserved, not including floodplains and steep slopes. The City may need to purchase or seek other funding options to assemble the land envisioned for this park.

The South Neighborhood may be able contain between 1,275 and 2,500 homes upon initial build-out at similar character as recent developments in the region. This figure may be greater depending upon the character of development along the County roads. This broad projection provides an estimate of the number of households and people for the 0.5-mile service area. It is possible adjacent properties may be evaluated for complementary future public facilities such as a school. These design considerations should be incorporated into the comprehensive and neighborhood plan, and the future a more detailed plan for the park. Given the service area, providing shared parking and playing fields may be an efficient use of space and resources.



South Neighborhood Park is used as a placeholder name until a specific title can be identified. One suggestion is utilizing a naming convention to honor Native American tribes from region.

South Neighborhood Parkland

Areas of Otter Creek floodplain, contributing drainages, steep slopes, and woodland integral thereof are intended to be public open space and not illustrated for ease of identifying future parkland.

THE CITY of Altoona

Joshua Clements, City Planner
2019 November 20

Image Source: Google Earth, 2018
Disclaimer: This map is a graphical representation only and is not intended for surveying purposes.

East Neighborhood Park

Future Park

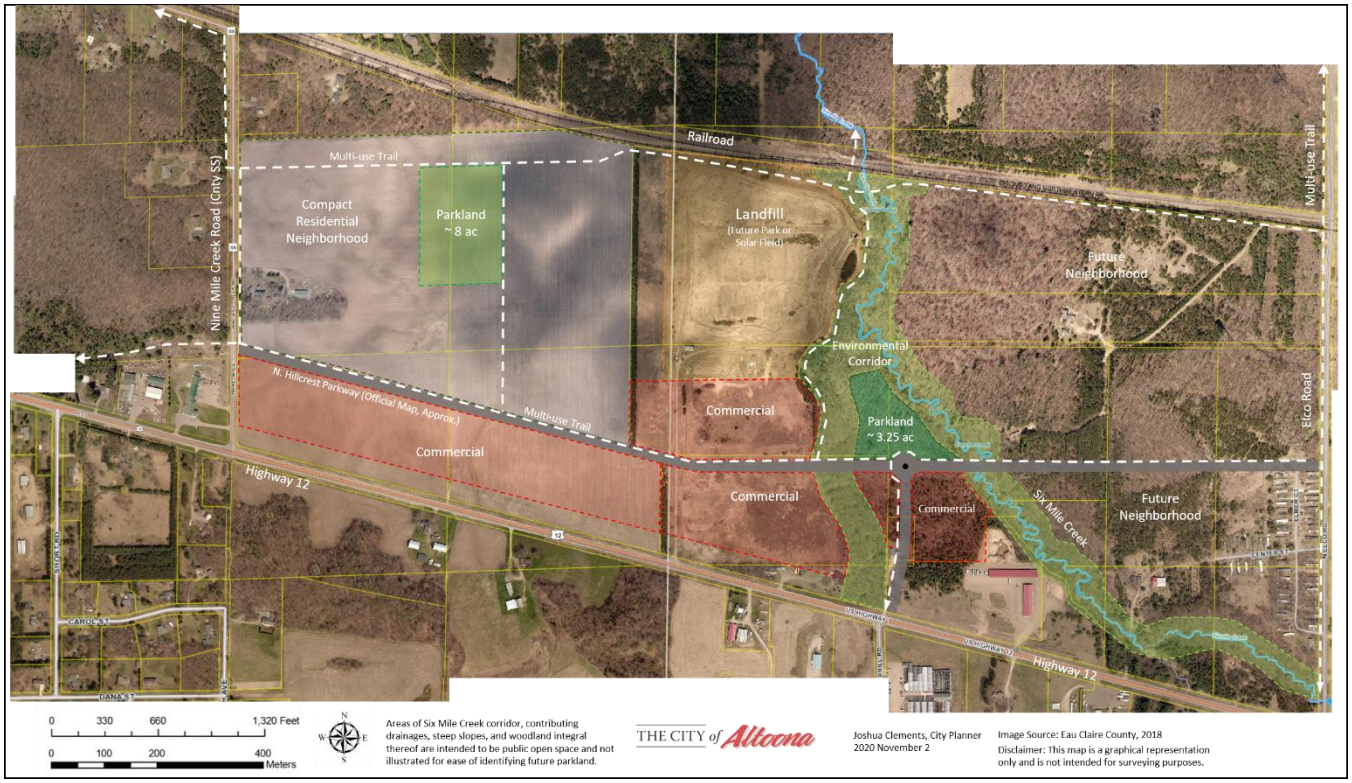
Classification(s)	Community Park	8 - 10 acres

The area bounded by County Highway SS (Nine Mile Creek Road), Highway 12, and Six-Mile Creek is loosely identified as the East Neighborhood. This area is approximately 240 acres and is predominately agricultural land uses, as well as a closed landfill encompassing approximately 28 acres, three existing homes, a composting business and self-storage units.

The City purchased 83 acres of farmland in 2020 and is currently engaged with a consultant to create a neighborhood plan for the property, and concept for the broader neighborhood. The general layout of streets, locations of parkland, and land uses are expected to be guided by that plan. A concept for this area prepared by City staff estimates between 80 and 120 acres for a compact neighborhood ranging from 500 to 1,200 dwellings depending upon the ultimate land use plan and types of housing.

The envisioned East Neighborhood Park may be located near the center of this new neighborhood and comprise about ten percent of the residential land area. At this size, the park could function as a community park, with intentional pedestrian and bicycling facilities connected throughout the neighborhood and nearby areas.

The eastern edge of this neighborhood is Six Mile Creek, which functions as a significant drainageway into the Chippewa River and Lake Altoona. This corridor includes existing woodland and steep slopes, and should be preserved as contiguous public open space.



Additional Amenities

The following amenities have been identified through the planning process as needed or desired, but a location has not been determined due to lack of information or required focus.

Skate Park

Skate parks are specialized facilities that permit skate boarders and in-line skaters a purpose-built environment for recreational activities and extreme sports. These facilities are typically comprised of durable materials and features such as ramps, rails, runs, and other objects. Although many of the features are common, there are no standard design templates or themes for skate parks. Given the often-active use of skate parks, and occasional noise, adjoining features and uses need to be harmonious and thoughtful in context. Ideally, these amenities will be integrated with other recreational uses and include (but not limited to) seating, restrooms, excellent visibility, shade, and nearby parking.

The City has been engaged with the skateboard community of the region to identify a potential location for a facility. This engagement initially stemmed from damage to seating and other features in River Prairie that were inappropriately utilized.

Highway 12 Crossing

Highway 12 is a substantial barrier that divides the City. As most development in Altoona in recent years outside of River Prairie has occurred along or south of Highway 12, a trend that is generally expected to continue, the safety and convenience of connections for pedestrians and cyclists crossing the highway has been of increasing concern and attention.

There are two at-grade crossings of the highway for non-automobiles, at 10th Street West and 3rd Street East. The 3rd Street connection is planned for completion in fall 2020. Each crossing will include multi-use trails with crosswalks and pedestrian-specific lighting controls.

This Plan includes a future trail along Otter Creek, including a facility that would traverse under the existing Highway 12 bridge of the creek. However, the topography is very challenging to implement that section, and the location would lend for recreational rather than transportation use.

A pedestrian bridge or tunnel has been discussed as a potential option for further investigation.

School District Open Space

The Altoona School District provides approximately 11 acres of recreational open space at two locations within the City of Altoona. These areas are comprised primarily of school playgrounds and athletic fields. In addition, the City and District have cooperative agreements for the use of City baseball and softball fields and tennis courts for school-sponsored sports team events and activities. Due to their location, District facilities complement City parks to serve as open space and play area for the neighborhoods in which they are located.

Altoona School District Central Campus

The Altoona School District campus is located at the geographic center of the City and is bounded by Bartlett Avenue, 7th Street West, 3rd Street West, and hillside. The 34.4 acre campus hosts grades 4 – 12 and administrative offices. Due to its location, the playground functions as a neighborhood park for some uses.

Central Campus	**8.3** acres
Playground Areas	1.2
Playing Fields	2.6
Stadium	4.5
Elementary Campus	**2.7** acres

Area measurements are approximated and rounded

In 2019 the District completed the OakLeaf Stadium project, reconstructing the District's primary sports field with field turf playing surface, rubberized track and refurbished grandstand, along with entrance and gate system, restrooms, and concessions. The grandstands now seat 1,673.

Altoona Elementary School

The Altoona Elementary School, grades 4K - 3, is located on the eastern edge of the City of Altoona at 157 Bartlett Avenue and opened in fall 2016. The campus includes a 0.7-acre playground, which is approximately 50% hardscape. The campus also includes a 2-acre playing field predominately utilized for physical education classes and intermural soccer.

Eau Claire County Park and Open Space Facilities

Eau Claire County owns and operates Lake Altoona County Park within the City of Altoona. Located at 604 Beach Road, the park is approximately **13 acres** and is very popular with boaters, beach-goers, and picnickers. It is one of seven major parks in the County Parks system and the only one within a City. The park hosts the Ski Sprite water ski shows weekly during the summer.

The County completed and adopted a Master Plan for the park in 2017 which calls for reconstruction of pavilions, bathrooms, parking areas, utilities, and refreshing landscaping over three phases.

Big Falls County Park is a 135-acre park located approximately 8 miles east of the City along the Eau Claire River. The park is predominately a natural amenity park that features waterfalls, hiking trails, and picnic areas.

Tower Ridge Recreational Area is the largest cross-country ski trail complex in west central Wisconsin with over 12 miles of maintained trails over its 700 acres. Tower Ridge is an increasingly popular area for mountain biking and hiking.

Beaver Creek Reserve offers over 400 acres of diverse forest and riverland along the Eau Claire River, located just east of Big Falls. Beaver Creek includes a citizen science center, Hobbs Observatory, Wildland's Charter School, butterfly house, and many other amenities.

City of Eau Claire Park and Open Space Facilities

Altoona recognizes its location and context within the Chippewa Valley and the regional social ecosystem where many people travel between communities and enjoy parks, trails, and other public spaces in various places. The City of Eau Claire features nearly 1,600 acres of parkland, including facilities and amenities that are regional destinations. Eau Claire also features over 34.4 miles of multi-use and recreation trails, the second-highest figure among Wisconsin cities, including those that connect into Altoona. The Altoona public space planning effort is arranged to learn from and complement public spaces throughout the region, including those notable successes in the City of Eau Claire.

Open Space and Trails Map

THE CITY of Altoona
WISCONSIN

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scale 500 feet

N W E S

River Prairie Park
Veterans Tribute
River Prairie Center
River Prairie Conservancy
Tower Park
Clubview Park
Altoona Lake Park (City)
Lake Altoona County Park
Cinder City Park
City Hall
Centennial Park
Altoona City Park
Altoona School Campus
Highland Park
Jellybean Hill
Devney Park
Windsor Park
Fairway Park
Perseverance Park
Gateway Connector
Altoona Elementary School
SE Park
Otter Creek Greenway

Features

- Park or Natural Area
- Future Park or Natural Area
- School District
- City Boundary

On-Street Bicycle Facilities

- Existing Lane
- Proposed Lane

Off-Street, Paved Multi-Use Trail

- Existing Trail
- Proposed Trail

Off-Street, Unpaved Recreation Trail

- Existing Trail
- Proposed Trail
- Proposed Sidewalk Connection

Joshua Clements, City of Altoona • Open Space and Trail Map • 2021-0415

THE CITY of Altoona

DISCLAIMER: THIS MAP IS A GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION ONLY AND IS NOT INTENDED FOR SURVEYING PURPOSES.

CHAPTER 6: BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN STRATEGY

People move about and experience the world in a variety of mediums. Our transportation system and land use regimes have focused on the automobile as the preferred and dominant form of locomotion for the past eighty years. However, there is increased recognition and interest in enjoying the world on foot or bike for both utilitarian and recreational purposes. This Chapter contributes to the Altoona Open Space Strategy by describing an approach to pedestrian and bicyclist mobility that seeks to fully integrate this purpose and function into the community's overall approach public space. This Chapter is constructed with the following approach:

First, briefly describing the City vision and values as they relate to active mobility, and summary of research and rationale into the benefits of human powered transportation, including land use, human health, economics, and others.

Second, Shaping Influences describes the relationships between the physical environment with pedestrian and cycling behavior.

Third, a Strategic Framework for an overarching vision for walking and bicycling along with supporting guiding principles and strategic directions.

Fourth, design considerations will be illustrated, drawing upon contemporary best practices and referring to select resources.

Fifth, the existing infrastructure in Altoona will be described and illustrated.

Sixth, description of identified opportunities to improve pedestrian and cyclist mobility.

The City of Altoona has initiated the creation of a new Comprehensive Plan for the City, and parallel to that effort, a focused Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. These processes are anticipated to be complete in Winter 2021 to Spring 2022. This Chapter is expected to be revised and/or replaced to reflect additional analysis and information in conjunction with those efforts.

HISTORY

Incorporated in 1887, Altoona's early European pioneer settlement began in the 1870s. In 1881 the railroad terminal was constructed and first plat of East Eau Claire was filed. Altoona's growth and development patterns were originally shaped by the railway, which supported the timber, farming and agricultural industry of the region. Situated on a relatively flat area east of Eau Claire, Altoona was founded as the railroad terminal for the area, as much of the land near the confluence of the Eau Claire and Chippewa Rivers were occupied by timber and mill industry and lacked long flat areas for needed expansion of rail facilities. The City's land use and development patterns are shaped by its major road and rail transportation networks that are critical to support the local and regional economy. The railroad, Highway 53 and Highway 12 greatly dictate nearby land uses and local transportation facilities, as well as serving as a barrier to safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle circulation.

Over half of the City of Altoona, predominately those areas platted before 1970, features the traditional rectilinear street grid with small block sizes and high intersection density. This arrangement generally facilitates bicycle and pedestrian circulation due to modest lot sizes, density of intersections, existing sidewalk, and predictable

wayfinding. Since none of these roads were subsequently expanded, this traditional street grid provides good opportunities for retrofitting pedestrian and bicycle facilities with modest expense.

Development in Altoona has historically followed a pattern of outward growth laid out in a more auto-dependent method, featuring rural roads subsequently incorporated into the City, and long curving streets and cul-de-sacs necessary to navigate topography and typical of post-modern subdivisions. While additional peripheral growth and development is anticipated, gains in improving place quality, including walking and bicycling accommodations, must occur by retrofitting existing developed areas that exist in a variety of forms.

Since the time period when most area roadways where constructed, the generally accepted engineering best practices to build and retrofit roadways, especially to improve biking and pedestrian conditions, has expanded to include treatments such as shared lane markings, buffered bike lanes, green bike lanes, wayfinding signage, bump-outs and enhanced intersections, left turn bike boxes, bicycle boulevards, among others. As such, there is a need to conduct a thorough assessment of the route network as studied in 2005 within the context of the existing and future transportation system. In order to improve safety and circulation for all people and to improve mode choice, these best practices should be thoughtfully deployed throughout the City with context-sensitive solutions to achieve both individual and community level objectives of improved safety, circulation and connectivity, and quality of life.

Vision & Values

As described in the Introduction to this Plan, Altoona recognizes walking and bicycling are integral components of a high performance, integrated system of public space, and fundamental mobility choices. Pedestrian and bicycling facilities are functionally distinct from other public spaces in terms of purpose and design considerations; however, they shall not be placed in a separate silo. Streetscapes and corridors will be designed, improved and managed to place people first (over machines), with a purposeful and natural consequence of more safe, enjoyable, and connected network of public space for transportation and general enjoyment. To the greatest degree possible, theses corridors and spaces will perform multiple functions, integrating public and private infrastructure, transportation, places to gather, and environmental services.

The overarching *Excellence in Place* vision has been crafted to describe the broad aspirations for the future of all public space throughout Altoona, inclusive of pedestrian and bicycling conditions. Following this holistic vision, this Chapter consists of a series of inspirational statements that act as the framework to guide the direction of walking and bicycling in Altoona into the future. The vision statement for the Strategies describes the future desired “end state”, or result, of implementing the Strategies.

- Walking and bicycling are **safe, enjoyable, convenient, practical, direct and attractive** transportation and recreational choices for people of all ages and abilities.
- **Equitable access** to walking and bicycling provides greater transportation and recreation choices for all residents and visitors in neighborhoods across Altoona and the region, especially historically marginalized populations, and persons with limited access to automobiles.
- Walking and bicycling **improves personal mobility, promotes healthy living, and reduces environmental impacts**, thus contributing directly to quality of life and community well-being.

- The community is engaged in an **inclusive and transparent processes** to invest in and prioritize cost-effective, progressive, and innovative infrastructure, support programs and policies.
- Walking and bicycling facilities are purposefully and **strategically integrated with land use** to foster walkable and bicycle-friendly communities in existing and new neighborhoods.
- Walking and bicycling infrastructure will be **maintained in good repair, operational in all seasons**, including winter maintenance of primary corridors.
- Altoona seeks to be a **leading Winter City** in promoting walking, bicycling, and outdoor recreation throughout the winter months.

The City of Altoona Strategic Framework for pedestrian and bicycling is within and complements the overall vision for an integrated public realm articulated throughout the *Place Plan*.

Altoona Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Strategic Framework:

1. Integrate with Land Use – Strategically develop accessible, well-connected networks of walking and cycling facilities, supporting the concept of complete communities.
2. Active, Accessible & Healthy – Make daily walking and cycling convenient, accessible, active, healthy travel modes for people of all ages and abilities.
3. Safe, Efficient & Equitable – Altoona's pedestrian and cycling networks will be designed, maintained and developed to ensure accessible, safe and efficient use for all users, while balancing needs of different users and trip types sharing the networks.
4. Design & Maintenance – Provide a high quality network of pedestrian and cycling facilities that are planned, designed, implemented, and maintained to address year-round access.
5. Financially Sustainable – Plan and implement cost-effective, financially sustainable walking and cycling facilities and networks, with due consideration for economic, health, and environmental cost benefits.
6. Environmental Sustainable – Invest in walking and cycling as environmentally-friendly modes of transportation as one way to help the City and its residents meet and surpass environmental and climate goals.
7. Transparent Process – Continuously engage with the community as part of a transparent process to develop policies, strategies, programs and infrastructure.

Consistent with Altoona's overall public space strategy, this portion of the Plan describes continuously pursuing a systematic framework of placing people first by reordering prioritizes, and meaningfully examining and reforming policies and practices. As described in the recent manifesto *Beyond Mobility*, this effort is about "recalibrating how we plan, design and build cities in ways that shift the focus from motorized movement to the needs and aspirations of people and the places they want to go[i]." This Plan focuses on bicycle and pedestrian dimensions of mobility specifically, cognizant of the complex constellation of policies and priorities impacting the built environment and the interrelationship with transportation. This is an effort of rebalancing and prioritizing to active travel modes, rather than design exclusively for the convenience of automobile use, and a commitment to prioritizing bicycle and pedestrian elements as integral components to our current and envisioned community vitality through policy and infrastructure decisions.

After all, *people* are the lifeblood of cities, the purpose for the arrangement of our civilization.

There are many perspectives, lenses and rationales for focusing significant effort in reframing our transportation system and built environment to prioritize active transportation methods such as walking and biking. Compelling, robust, and still growing depth and breadth of study strongly indicates that walking and biking benefit individual and community health, as well as provide significant economic and environmental benefits. These benefits are also briefly summarized in the Introduction.

There is growing interest in improving transportation infrastructure to support biking and walking in urban and rural areas throughout the U.S. and especially in Wisconsin. Individual communities and government agencies at all levels increasingly recognize a need to provide diverse and resilient transportation networks to meet safety, mobility, livability, environmental, and economic goals. Biking and walking are proven strategies to meet these goals and they provide the added benefits of being healthy and enjoyable options for people to get to work, school, and to other destinations. The Chippewa Valley has established itself as a leader and has actively embraced biking and walking for transportation and recreational purposes, and many more people are likely to be interested should facilities be improved or constructed to meet their needs and abilities.

> "The most essential designed component of New York is not a skyscraper or a station, but the street. That basic workhorse of public space carries people, freight, and vehicles on its surface; water, sewage, power, gas, steam, and data below. It is a complex but archaic machine — improvised, mistreated, and endlessly patched up. It needs an overhaul, and it needs one now." – Justin Davidson, NY Magazine

Walking and cycling for daily trips can provide valuable regular physical activity, as well as direct, enjoyable and inexpensive methods of transportation and recreation. However, the policies and priorities in place for most of the preceding 80 years prioritize the convenience and accessibility of the automobile, resulting in an entire landscape and lifestyle whereby the automobile is not a necessity, but a requirement to complete most daily activities. This is a dramatic departure from over 5,000 years of human settlement building. This dependence has resulted in widespread negative impacts on public health, public and personal finance, environmental quality, social and psychological connections to our neighborhoods and landscapes. The automobile is a tool, a means to an end, and the system is become dependent and out-of-balance.

There is clear indication that policies to promote active travel will work best when implemented in comprehensive packages, sustained commitment, and recognition of complex system-wide relationships. These may include infrastructure and facility improvements, land use controls, pricing policies, and education programs to achieve substantial shifts towards active modes.

> "Culture determines and limits strategy"
> - Peter Drucker

The intent of the bicycle and pedestrian element of the Place Plan is not to identify a universal transformative policy tool to reframe our approach to transportation or civic design with regard to the automobile. It is the intent of this Plan to reorient, reprioritize and reconstruct the policy, funding, and choice architecture toward a balanced transportation system where walking and biking are no less safe, convenient, and utilized as any other mode – if not moreso – at least at the local level throughout the City's scope of influence. The purpose is also about facilitating (as well as in response to) a cultural shift in recognition of the benefits of active transportation, and the complex and interrelated outcomes. Baring dramatic disruption in energy markets or finance at a national or global level, the rebalancing envisioned will take a generation or more to achieve.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Element of the *Place Plan* provides a framework for making walking and bicycling more safe, convenient, and comfortable modes of transportation and recreation in Altoona all-year-round. The strategies include a comprehensive arrangement of recommended policies and actions that are intended to guide Altoona's planning and capital investment decisions as well as on-gong operations and maintenance activities to continually improve walking and bicycling over the long-term.

The City has made significant investments in recent years in pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and related support measures, which have resulted in increases in walking and cycling activity in many areas of the city. However, there remains a significant opportunity to create a balanced and multi-modal transportation system that provides more transportation options for both residents and visitors to Altoona. The City of Altoona is committed to providing greater transportation options resulting in improved quality of life, attractive neighborhoods and vibrant city streets. Guided by the Comprehensive Plan and other policies, the *Place Plan* will support the City's goals of ensuring travel options and creating a sustainable transportation system to meet the needs of all residents and visitors.

> "The more successfully a city mingles everyday diversity of uses and users in its everyday streets, the more successfully, casually (and economically) its people thereby enliven and support well-located parks that can thus give back grace and delight to their neighborhoods instead of vacuity."
> - Jane Jacobs

Beyond Mobility

As briefly introduced in Chapter 2, the ultimate goal of transportation is to provide access to goods, services and activities. In general, the more transportation options available, the better the access, and nonmotorized modes are once again increasingly important transport choices. Safe and convenient nonmotorized travel provides many benefits, including reduced traffic congestion, user savings, road and parking facility savings, economic development, and a better environment.

A built environment that is hostile to non-motorized mobility reduces everybody's travel choices and does not create streetscape or public realm that are inclusive or comfortable for people activities. The result the creation of single-use roadways and broader "automobile dependency", greater need and distance of travel, increased traffic congestion, higher road and parking facility costs, increased consumer costs, and greater environmental degradation.

This Plan describes a broader philosophy of positioning Altoona with engaging public spaces, this plan recommends specific projects and adopting best practice policies to balance pedestrian and cyclist transportation with the automobile. This planning framework is typically developed to emphasize *transportation infrastructure* to efficiently and safely travel from one place to another.

Excellent planning and design resources are now available from governmental and specialized associations for use to help plan, evaluate, design and maintain nonmotorized facilities. There is no need to reinvent the wheel, and no excuse for employing inadequate or outdated methods. The intent of this Plan is to summarize and sample from contemporary planning and design techniques, space management approaches, and other practices that intentionally advances the City's overall vision and values pertaining to public space and mobility. These methods will need to be evaluated and updated regularly to ensure maximum pursuit of those goals.

PUBLIC HEALTH

The Introduction to this Plan provides a broad overview of the benefits of public space, and of pedestrian and bicycle modes of transportation. To provide particular emphasis, the connection between personal and public health and active lifestyles that include regular walking and/or biking has been of tremendous interest to the planning and health community for the past several years.

> "Bicycle infrastructure can indeed help improve cycling safety and increase cycling levels. That is clearly demonstrated by decades of evidence from Europe [and select US cities]. However, the type and quality of bicycle infrastructure matter as well. It is crucial to provide physical separation from fast-moving, high-volume motor vehicle traffic and better intersection design to avoid conflicts between cyclists and motor vehicles. More and better bicycle infrastructure and safer cycling would encourage Americans to make more of their daily trips by bicycle and, thus, help raise the currently low physical activity levels of the US population." – Puchler & Buehler, American Journal of Public Health

The volume and quality of research on both determinants of health and the links between active travel and public health has increased sharply in the recent decade. As the linkages between the built environment and public health – in particular, the obesity epidemic – have become clear, creating more opportunities for residents to incorporate active transportation modes such as walking and bicycling into their daily lives has been identified as a key strategy to enable and encourage healthier lifestyles.[2]

Walking and cycling are effective ways to support mental and physical health and build a healthier and happier community. The World Health Organization has identified physical inactivity as one of the main leading risk factors for global mortality, and as an underlying factor for many chronic diseases. The health benefits of walking and cycling can be experienced by residents of all ages and abilities. Walking and cycling for daily activities, such as trips to work, school or to grocery stores, can increase physical activity levels, which can in turn reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, some cancers and improve mental illness and mood. Improved strength and bone density can also lead to an enhanced ability to do daily activities and avoid falls. Regular physical activity even at a moderate intensity, which includes walking briskly or cycling for 30 minutes five or more days per week, reduces the risk of early death and numerous chronic diseases. Physical activity has been proven to improve psychological well-being, and prevents weight gain and obesity. Walking and cycling are some of the most affordable and accessible ways to add exercise to a daily routine.

Active travel, such as walking and cycling, can substantially increase levels of physical activity. Studies indicate that the health benefits of active travel exceed any associated risks of injury and exposure to air pollution; however, there are good tools available to reduce these risks further. Individuals' decisions to walk or cycle are not only determined by their personal needs, preferences and attitudes, but also by a complicated mix of physical and social environments.

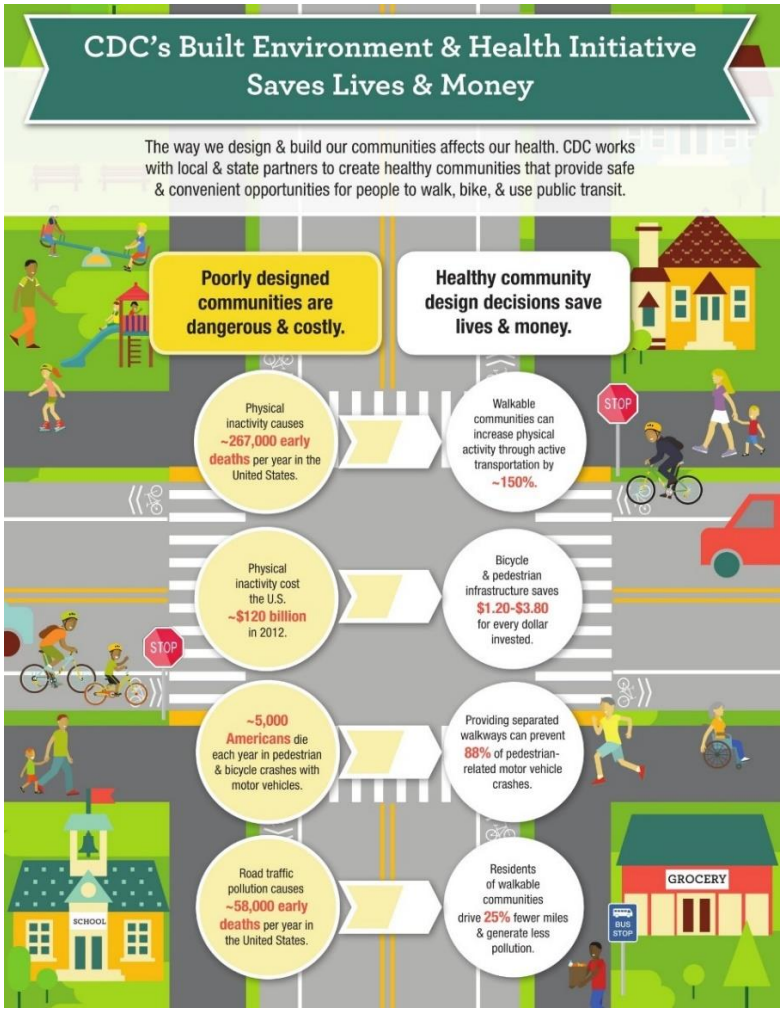
Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are among the many types of infrastructure that exist within a broader context shaped by demographic and land use changes and influenced by interrelated transportation, public health, environmental and economic factors. In many communities in the U.S. there is an aging population maintaining an independent lifestyle later in life and at the same time a generation of younger adults that is driving less and biking more than recent generations. A complete bicycle facilities network can speak to both of these demographic trends, while also contributing to the City and broader community's health and economic goals.

Key findings from research review include[3]:

- The health benefits of physical activity in general have been well documented by hundreds of studies. More recently, a growing number of studies have confirmed such benefits specifically for transportation-related walking and cycling.
- Physical activity has been associated with a risk reduction for premature death and chronic diseases.
- The health benefits of active transportation exceed its risks and exposure to air pollution.
- Safety is a key consideration for promoting active travel. Importantly, places with higher levels of walking and cycling also have greater safety for pedestrians.

  Safety concerns, both real and perceived, are a major deterrent to active travel. Crashes and injuries have severe consequences, and there is a growing body of evidence on safer infrastructure design. Yet, for widespread acceptance of active transportation, low crash risks are not sufficient — active travel needs to feel safe as well.

- Both more cycling and greater safety are typically observed in environments with better and more infrastructure and more pro-walk/bike policies and programs.
- Walking or biking for daily travel needs can be promoted as a convenient and competitive option through programs that shift travel behavior.[2]



EQUITY

Equity, diversity, and inclusion are core values of the City, and public space planning, design and programming are integral to this mission. As a foundational element of the community that touches every person by necessity, the transportation system must reflect equity principles for the community to be successful in pursuing its equity commitments.

An equitable transportation system fosters fairness and helps facilitate access to opportunities for all community members. That access must be genuine, safe, convenient, and effective. Equity can be considered both a process and an outcome. To achieve transportation equity, communities must engage in inclusionary, authentic participation with all community groups to address underlying disparities of mobility and access and prioritize equity during all stages of the planning, implementation, management, and evaluation process. This involves building an accessible, affordable, and reliable transportation network that effectively serves all people.

Application of an *Equity Lens* in this context generally refers to the distribution of and access to safe and enjoyable bicycle and pedestrian facilities that support both convenient transportation and desirable recreation for people with various racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, physical abilities and financial resources.

Equity is a multi-dimensional concept, the complexity of which is undergoing increased recognition and study by practitioners to better understand how the built environment is deterministic of uneven racial and economic equity. The design and management of public space, indeed any development or governance activity, must be conscious of historic and ongoing systems of racism and bias, and the disparate impacts to people of color. Public space affects equity of opportunity. Transportation affects how someone navigates our world and their experience within it. The access to and experience within public space fundamentally impacts access to opportunity, the ability to pursue social and economic desires, ability to perform basic life activities.

SAFETY

Streets that support high levels of walking and cycling are slower and safer. Walkable and bikeable environments contribute to a safer transportation system by making walking and cycling more visible and viable modes of travel, resulting in reduced risk of collisions. Streets that are designed for slower vehicle speeds feel safer for both pedestrians and cyclists as well as motorists. Studies show that slower motor vehicle speeds exponentially increase survival rates for both pedestrians and people riding bicycles involved in collisions with vehicles. Further, when walking and cycling rates increase, rates of collisions with motor vehicles decrease. This is known as the "safety-in-numbers" principle. Places with the highest levels of pedestrians and cyclists are also the safest places to walk and cycle.

Pedestrians face greater exposure to traffic collisions. Pedestrians of all ages and abilities are disproportionately impacted by traffic collisions, which most commonly occur at intersections. Sidewalks and bicycle facilities are regularly crossed or punctuated by intersections and driveways which introduce conflict with automobiles. It is crucial that these conflict points are reasonably designed for maximum pedestrian and bicyclist visibility and safety. This is typically accomplished through physical separation, visibility, signage, and contributing measures.

Well-designed infrastructure and facilities provide a comfortable, functional, and safe support for walking and bicycling. Good urban design of pedestrian and bicycle facilities plays a key role in encouraging and discouraging use, including but not limited to sidewalks, trails, and protected intersections. There must be continuity in the facilities, as the "weak links" for safety or accessibility disproportionately affect the overall functionality of the entire system. Pedestrian facilities must meet ADA standards and serve many different non-motorized users, such as runners, strollers, wheel chairs, and other small wheels. Additional amenities and fixtures should be provided to improve comfort, safety, and function. Landscaping needs to be intentional and well-maintained. Improvements must be continuously pursued in existing neighborhoods in conjunction with planned projects as well as focused investments. Implementing design standards for new developments and sites will ensure a comprehensive network of pedestrian and bicyclist facilities safely connect residents to pedestrian destinations.

Pedestrian safety and security can be inhibited by fear of crime and greater risk can occur in areas that have low pedestrian traffic. Fear of crime is another aspect that has an impact on pedestrian safety and security. Some areas in Altoona are not well lit and have limited access points, which may result in pedestrians feeling vulnerable to attack or robbery. Incorporating principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) in facility design and site planning increases security in public areas and will in turn promote walking and biking as transportation mode choices.

There are 'softer' measures that can be adopted such as education and awareness to help improve safety. Safety training and education are critical to increasing an individual's confidence and skill level. The Altoona Police Department provides regular bicycle training targeted toward youth. The City has partnered with the Altoona School District to complete Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs and school travel planning. The SRTS program components include neighborhood walkabouts, transportation surveys, educational events and programming, and active transportation events. It is recommended that the City increase partnerships to improve impact and reach of neighborhood-level engagement and active transportation improvements.

Seasonality and inclement weather are a reality of any environment. In a northern climate with up to six months of winter conditions, facility design and management should take snow, ice, and cold wind into consideration. People should be encourage to acquire and utilize the appropriate clothing and gear for the conditions, but the facilities should be designed and managed such that the infrastructure is not the impediment.

The provision of **end of trip** facilities for both pedestrians and bicyclists are crucial to increase safety and continence. This includes site design that requires separation of automobiles from people, entrances designed and located to favor pedestrian circulation, attractive landscaping and shade, people-scale lighting, interesting and transparent building facades, and provision of visible and secure bicycle parking.

SOCIETY

The central vision of this Plan is to advance principles of a holistic approach to a strong community and peoples through public space. This is a social mission.

A pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly community can encourage a more livable and enjoyable place to be, with a stronger sense of place and freedom of mobility. Communities that support walking and cycling can also contribute to safer streets and improved social interactions. Pedestrians and cyclists are visible and identifiable,

interact more readily with other people and their surroundings, and increase likelihood of chance social interactions. All these qualities can enhance the high quality of life that Altoona residents enjoy today and hope to into the future.

Transportation, particularly walking and cycling, is one of the pillars of the AARP Livable Communities program.

Creating active communities for both the young and old in society. Building safe and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle facilities for all ages and abilities provides affordable and accessible transportation choices for all residents. Youth and seniors require transportation alternatives as they may not have access to an automobile and are more reliant on walking, cycling and transit. Additionally, enabling sustainable travel patterns at an early age can continue later in life.

Well-designed pedestrian and bicycle facilities increase real and perceived safety in the City and its neighborhoods. Gender considerations are important in planning our communities, as studies reveal men and women perceive and utilize their environments differently. Women are generally more sensitive than men to safety in pedestrian and bicycling environments, suggesting that there should be a concerted focus to improve safety to create more equitable transportation and recreation options. People may also experience the built environment differently depending upon their culture, history, and ethnic representation, and these differences must be taking into consideration.

> "If everything we do in our public spaces is great for an 8-year-old and an 80-year-old, then it will be great for people of all ages"
>
> – Gil Penalosa, Founder, 8-80 Cities
>
> "Forget the damned motor car and build the cities for lovers and friends."
> - Lewis Mumford

ECONOMY

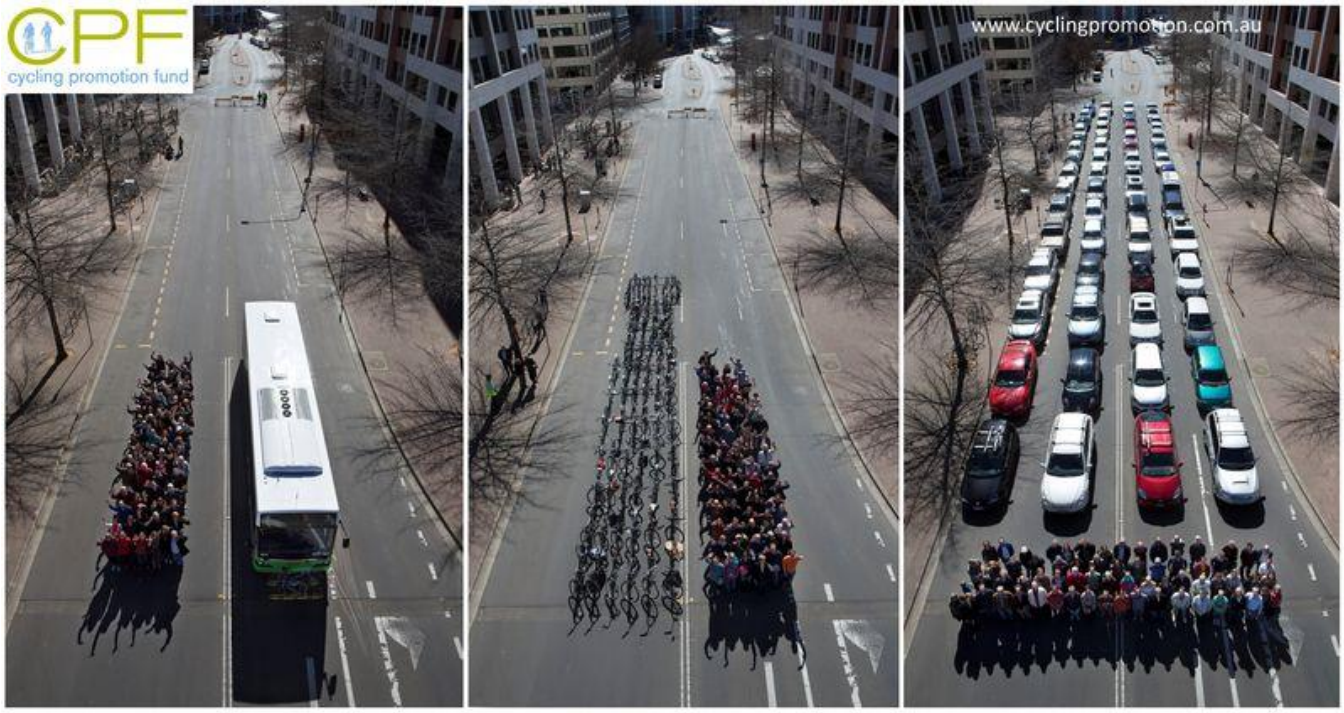
Research suggests that the creation of pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly streets can be a boon to business, encouraging greater patronage of retail and service businesses by expanding use and access. Many communities across the U.S. include pedestrian and bicycle access as core elements of their economic development strategies.

Investing in walking and cycling infrastructure and programs can stimulate the local economy by generating tourism revenue and supporting local business. Pedestrian and bicycle-supportive design can enable residents to take short trips to local businesses by walking or cycling, instead of driving to services further away in adjacent communities. Bicycle and walk-friendly environments can attract more visitors to neighborhoods, who will in turn be patrons of local services and amenities. A walkable and bikeable community can encourage more livable and enjoyable places to be, with a stronger sense of place and freedom of mobility. This can attract businesses, residents and visitors (and spending dollars) to certain areas.

Better opportunities for walking and cycling may allow **residents to spend less on transportation costs**, leaving them with more disposable income for purchasing other goods and services – which in turn can stimulate the local economy. Transportation costs are second only to housing costs as a percentage of household spending in North America. Spending on transportation is disproportionately high among low and moderate-income families, and walking and biking present affordable transportation options. Using walking and cycling for transportation reduces household spending on transportation and, in some cases, can eliminate the need for an extra vehicle. In 2019, AAA Reveals True Cost of Vehicle Ownership study estimates the average cost of a new vehicle is $9,282, or

$773.50 per month annually to own and operate[1]. While these numbers may vary and depend on personal use habits, there is clear evidence that there are great personal savings available through engaging in more walking and cycling activity. These cost savings can result in people having resources to apply toward housing, food, childcare, or larger discretionary budgets.

Increased property values have been associated with properties located near desirable active transportation facilities such as trail networks, and bicycle routes. For example, the presence of amenities such as neighborhood trails, sidewalks, and bicycle routes can be highly valued by prospective homeowners, and walkable communities provide intangible benefits through healthier and active populations.



Space Efficiency. Pedestrians and cyclists need less space than motor vehicles; more walking and cycling means less congestion and better overall transportation system performance. Parking becomes more efficient – ten bicycles can be stored in a single motor vehicle parking space, not even considering stacked or vertical storage options.

Many of the benefits described are accrued by the individual pedestrian or cyclist. Yet most of the individual benefits of active transportation also have societal elements. For instance, more walking and cycling can lead to decreased personal health care costs (in the form of fewer prescriptions, reduced emergency room visits, fewer sick days, etc.) and can help to ease the burden on the health care system as a whole. This results in a cost savings to society in the form of reduced taxes and/or premiums for health care. Less automobile use results in less noise in the environment, improving enjoyment and reducing nuisance to humans; and studies suggest reduced stress on many animals, especially birds.

[1] AAA, accessed 2019-1212. https://newsroom.aaa.com/auto/your-driving-costs/

ENVIRONMENT

Walking and cycling are considered a sustainable form of transportation and an alternative to the personal vehicle as they generate no greenhouse gas emissions, create no air or water pollution, cause minimal noise and/or light pollution, and reduce the demand for streets and parking lots by making more efficient use of existing road space. As walking and cycling reduce vehicle trips, the reduced congestion, and air pollution can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Promoting walking and cycling can also help in the City's efforts towards climate change mitigation. Supporting sustainability is a priority of the City and supporting walking and cycling can protect and improve Altoona's natural environment.

Network Principles

An effective pedestrian and bicycle network for Altoona should follow specific principles and performance measurements. This set of principles is derived from research conducted by the Netherlands Centre for Research and Contract Standardization in Civil and Traffic Engineering, in a region that has been focused on active mobility for over a generation. This research has been adapted into other tools such as the NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide and Wisconsin Bicycle Facilities Guide. This Plan adapts the Netherlands concepts to identifying six guiding elements for an effective active transportation network:

- **Integrity.** The ability of a system to link starting points continuously to destinations, and to be easily and clearly understood by users.
- **Directness.** The capacity to provide direct routes with minimum misdirection or unnecessary distance.
- **Safety.** The ability to minimize hazards and improve safety for users of all transportation modes.
- **Comfort.** Consistency with the capacities of users and avoidance of mental or physical stress.
- **Experience.** The quality of offering users a pleasant and positive experience.
- **Feasibility.** The ability to maximize benefits and minimize costs, including financial cost, inconvenience, and potential political opposition.

These six elements express the general principles of design for a high-performance mobility system. Specific criteria and measurements that both guide the system's design and evaluate how well it works must be used to effectively implement these principles, continuously improve, and adapt.

Attributes of the Network

Based on this development of the six network principles illustrated above, and complementary principles throughout this Chapter and Plan, the Altoona pedestrian and bicycle network design follows the following major attributes:

Tailored to User Groups. Planning a bicycle network for Altoona, with a geography that includes significant barriers, such as highways and railroad, significant grades in certain areas, the Eau Claire River and Otter Creek,

creates some relatively isolated areas and barriers to mobility, requiring an understanding of the specific user groups for the system. User groups are thought to include:

- Recreational users. Surveys indicate that walking and bicycling are not only among the top current recreational activities, but also where additional investment is desired. The River Prairie loop, Lake Road, and other trails are major elements of the regional trail system with year-round recreational use. These facilities serve both recreational users and people bound for specific destinations.
- Travelers to parks and trails. Altoona's bicycle network should be integrated with its park system as a unified approach to pubic space. Additionally, trails themselves are both facilities and popular destinations, so on-street routes from neighborhoods to trails are important.
- Pedestrians and cyclists making utilitarian trips to destinations such as school, work, retail and service destinations for basic transportation is likely a small percentage of users. However, to facilitate healthy lifestyles, environmental performance, and cost savings, the community vision and values indicate an interest and focus on improving facilities to support active mobility for daily tasks.
- Users out of necessity. Most people of Altoona have access to automobiles for basic travel. However, many residents may not have this access due to economic, health, or lifestyle reasons. This is especially true of individuals or families experiencing limited incomes who may not have regular access to cars. For these residents, the bicycle offers an invaluable tool, connecting them to economic opportunities and community resources that might otherwise be difficult to reach. A mobility system that serves the interest of social equity must also expand options and access between neighborhoods, employment, and other core destinations.
- Children, teens, and young adults in Altoona can be grouped into most of the categories described above. However, younger residents are unique in both their lack of experience with motor vehicle traffic and ability to anticipate and negotiate interactions with other road users. Building a pedestrian and bicycle network that supports youth, including safe routes to school and parks, will help foster healthy lifestyles and build an appreciation for and commitment to active transportation for future generations.

Destination-Based. Destinations that the community and both existing and potential users identify as important contribute powerfully to the effective usefulness of the entire network. The proposed network is more than a system of bicycle friendly streets. It is a mobility system that takes people to specific places.

Function Model. The approach utilized by Altoona to plan for and govern public space is to recognize the entire system of facilities and uses. Recognizing this, proactively focusing on the principal routes that offer long-distance continuity along destination-rich corridors provides the greatest opportunity to improve use and functionality of the entire system. These higher interest routes create highest return-on-investment to create patterns of use that address the biggest barriers in safety and convenance. While focusing on the integrity of the entire mobility system to prioritize pedestrian and cyclist modes, the core routes provide multi-level, multi-purpose improvements to support pedestrian and bicycling transportation and recreation choices.

Incremental Integrity. Incremental integrity – the ability of the network to provide a system of value at each step of completion – is an important attribute. The first step in completion should be valuable and increase bicycle access even if nothing else is done. Each subsequent phase of completion follows the same principle of leaving something of clear value and integrity, even if it were the ultimate stage of completion.

Evolution. As part of the concept of incremental integrity, the system is designed to evolve and improve over time. For example, a temporary measure, or relatively low cost design element can establish a pattern of use that supports something better in the future. Independent segments should connect with other segments by means of an interim signing or marking strategy so it is not isolated.

Use of Existing Facilities. Existing features like Spooner Avenue, River Prairie, 10th Street, and other existing sidepaths and trails are integral to the bikeway system. Of special importance is the community response to the addition of new facilities in recent years, energizing interest in closing network gaps and getting every neighborhood connected.

Fill Gaps. In many cases, the most important parts of a network are small projects that complete connections. These short links can knit street or trail segments together into longer routes or provide access to important destinations. These gaps may include a short trail segment that connects two continuous streets together, or an intersection improvement that bridges a barrier. The development of the overall network is strategic, using manageable initiatives to create a comprehensive system.

Low-Stress Facilities. Research regularly reflects the greater preference and use for facility characteristics that create low street environment, such as physical separation from moving vehicles, through physical buffers or using quiet streets or corridors separated from heavy traffic.

Regional Connectivity. The Altoona network must also connect to regional facilities, including trail and on-street routes in the City of Eau Claire, and Town of Washington. These facilities should be cooperatively planned for continuity.

Network Structure

The Planned Pedestrian and Bicycle Segment Map illustrates the proposed functional bicycle network for the City of Altoona, consistent with information gathered through the citizen engagement process, analysis of existing conditions and demands, and the guidelines and criteria described previously in this Chapter. The functional network map displays the ultimate build-out by component type. Specific design measures for each corridor and crossing should be studied in detail and various alternatives considered to ensure an effective application of these principles.

Off-Street Facilities

These facilities are the core of the system, and are generally oriented in ordinal east-west and north-south directions, following major roadways, utility easements, and environmental corridors. They form the “bike arterials” that lead between core destinations and many other key locations around the city and region. They are designed to connect to on-street facilities to ensure continuity of the system through neighborhoods and existing developed areas. Ideally, these facilities would have dedicated right-of-way and landscaped separation, but are often constructed as part of the standard road corridor as a sidepath where space is constrained or as part of a retrofit. Off-street facilities should strive to feature enhanced crossing treatments whenever they intersect a roadway. Facilities should feature physical separation from vehicles for greater real and perceived safety to the maximum degree possible. Some confident riders may choose to avoid off-street facilities in favor of on-street facilities to avoid conflicts with slower moving cyclists and other trail users.

On-Street Facilities

On-street facilities generally provide a cost-effective method to designate bicycle facilities through existing developed areas for which off-street facilities are not yet possible or cost effective. Infrastructure for these routes typically use the most separated types of bicycle facilities wherever possible, including cycle tracks, buffered and conventional bike lanes, and short segments of multi-use trail. However, in some cases, they may include segments of relatively low-volume local streets indicted through signage and/or sharrows.

SHAPING INFLUENCES

WALKABILITY & PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

Walkability has emerged as a frame of reference around which other community development topics are increasingly frame. It is an approachable scale, and reflects how people view the world.

> "Walkability is the degree to which an environment welcomes and indeed entices pedestrian activity and, by extension, cycling."
> – Jeff Speck

The sidewalk is the core building block of a walkable community, but it is just the first step, and not sufficient on its own. Sidewalks must be comfortable, a complete network, and be safe and enjoyable. Many other physical and design aspects are of paramount importance, including land use, mixed uses, connectivity, and design features.

Similar to traditional transportation planning, there are various scales to consider this element: regional, corridor, and destination.

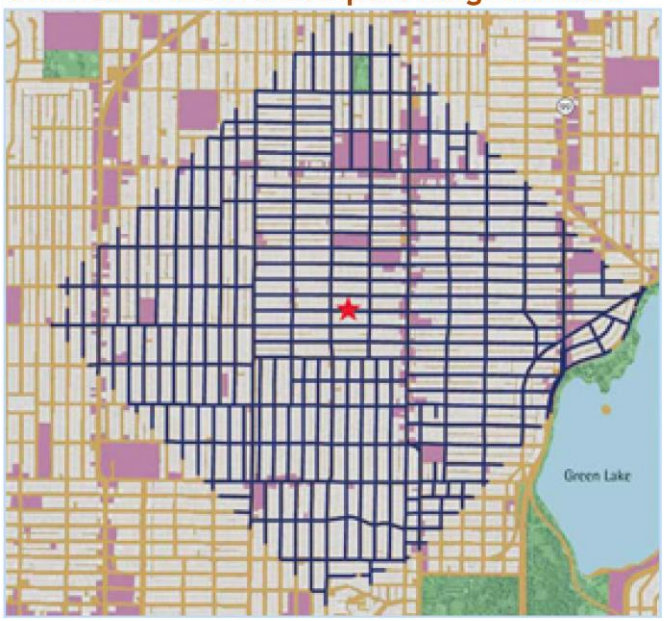
What makes a neighborhood walkable?

The neighborhood is an appropriate frame to evaluate how walkable a community is, as most walking trips take place within a one-mile area. Transit agencies view quarter- and half-mile radius as a comfortable distance for evaluating access to transit stops.

Walkscore.com is one accessible tool to emerge in recent years to "score" a location based upon proximity to amenities. While quality or directness of walking connections are difficult to evaluate remotely, the effort reflects the increasing interest in walkable places and availability of electronic information to provide some insights. This tool provides an accessible explanation for, at the neighborhood scale, what makes a place walkable[4]:

- **A center:** Walkable neighborhoods have a center, whether it's a main street or a public space.
- **People:** Enough people for businesses to flourish and for public transit to run frequently.
- **Mixed income, mixed use:** Affordable housing located near businesses and services.
- **Parks and public space:** Plenty of public places to gather and play.
- **Pedestrian design:** Buildings are close to and face the street, automobile parking is to the rear.
- **Schools and workplaces:** Close enough that most residents can walk from their homes.
- **Complete streets:** Streets designed for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit.

One-Mile Walk in a Compact Neighborhood



A one-mile walk in Seattle's Phinney Ridge takes you through a grid-like street network with a mix of residences and businesses.

One-Mile Walk in a Sprawling Suburb

A one-mile walk in Bellevue, WA with cul-de-sacs and winding streets has few shops and services within walking distance.

Maps courtesy of Lawrence Frank & Co. and the Sightline Institute (Walkscore.com)

The Corridor

A survey of peer-reviewed research conducted by the University of Maryland has created a walkability methodology to describe and measure walkability along five elements: Imageability, Enclosure, Human Scale, Transparency, and Complexity. This methodology is published in *Measuring Urban Design* by Reid Ewing and Otto Clemente, who have developed an accompanying *Field Manual* that enables practitioners to evaluate and score places and corridors. This publication is one such guide that will be utilized to inform design and policies impacting public space generally, and streetscapes specifically. The following summarizes these elements:

Imageability

Imageability refers to the quality of a place that makes it distinct, recognizable, and memorable. A place has high imageability when physical elements capture attention, evoke feelings, and create a lasting impression.

Enclosure

Enclosure refers to the degree to which streets and other public spaces are visually defined by buildings, walls, trees, and other elements. Enclosed spaces create a room-like quality and a safe feeling for pedestrians which encourages walking.

Human Scale

Human scale refers to the size, texture, and articulation of physical elements that match the size and proportions of humans and the speed at which humans walk. Architectural features, pavement texture, street trees, and street furniture are all physical elements contributing to human scale. A pedestrian feels comfortable and welcome in a space high in human scale.

Transparency

Transparency refers to the degree to which people can see or perceive human activity beyond the edge of a street or other public space. Physical elements that influence transparency include windows, doors, gates, walls, fences, landscaping, and openings into midblock spaces. That quality of transparency invites exploration and increases perception of safety.

Complexity

Complexity refers to the visual richness of a place. The complexity of a place depends on the variety of the physical environment, specifically the numbers and kinds of buildings, colors, architectural diversity, landscape elements, public art, signage, and the presence of other people. A complex environment is enjoyable for the senses.

The foundational element of the pedestrian corridor is the sidewalk: ideally ubiquitous, often overlooked. There are characteristics of the sidewalk that result in greater appeal and therefore use and enjoyment. Some of these a duplicative of the *Measuring Urban Design* principles, but bear illustrating:

- Wide enough to comfortably accommodate at least two adults walking side-by-side, or people to pass in opposite directions. This results in six feet being the desired paved width, with five being the current standard in Altoona residential areas. This width should be entirely clear of obstructions, such as poles, signage, or low-hanging vegetation.
- Landscaped buffer from automobile travel lanes, typically featuring a low-growing grass or garden as well as canopy trees. Sidewalks should be buffered from undesirable land uses, such as automobile parking lots and drive lanes.
- Curb ramps at corners that face each opposing connection.
- Highly visible and protected crossings of busy vehicle thoroughfares.
- Gentle cross-slopes (no more than two percent).
- Adequate lighting. This may come from street lights or, in more trafficked corridors, pedestrian-scale lights.
- Adequate maintenance, ensuring there is a smooth surface without significant dips, lifted sections, crumbling or broken sections that create tripping hazards or barriers to people with limited mobility.

The Destination

The designation refers to the particulars of a place, typically private property of some form, which serves as both the beginning and end of each trip. Regardless of if a person drives, bikes, or walks from end-to-end, each begins and ends somewhere, and at some point, if the person is able, they are a pedestrian for at least some portion.

The principles from *Measuring Urban Design* illustrated also apply to the place. In order to be walkable (or bikeable), sites must be arranged at least accommodate, if not invite, pedestrians to come and go safety, conveniently, and enjoyably. The process of orienting our landscape to accommodate the automobile has resulted in sites with significant area dedicated to parking and driving spaces, and buildings that are located around the convenience of automobile access, rather than as the principal element around which all else is designed. Just like streetscapes, this is a dramatic change from human history of settlement-building.

Site design policies, standards and expectations should be reframed to focus on principals to create an enjoyable human experience, in addition to other desirable conditions such as superior environmental performance. Automobile access should also be accommodated, but in recognition that these conditions should be sufficient and secondary, not controlling.

BEST PRACTICES AND STANDARDS

Best practices regarding pedestrian and bicycle facilities are an area of expanding research and experimentation around basic tenants of safety, convenience, and experience. This Plan is based upon sampling of studies, latest design guides, and successful examples. However, it is anticipated that what is regarded as best practice will continue to evolve as additional insight, observation and innovation occurs. The City should selectively utilize the most contemporary resource for the facility, feature, or activity.

Recommended Standards and Resources include:

- State of Wisconsin Facilities Design Manual 11-46 "Complete Streets"
- FHWA Incorporating On-Road Bicycle Networks into Resurfacing Projects (2016)
- FHWA Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide (2015)
- NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide (2014)
- NACTO Designing for All Ages and Abilities: Contextual Guidance for High-Comfort Bicycle Facilities (2017)
- ASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (2019)
- FHWA Bicycle Facilities and the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (2015)
- FHWA Memorandum on Bicycle and Pedestrian Design Flexibility (2013)
- FHWA Pursuing Equity in Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning (2016)
- Low-Stress Bicycling and Network Connectivity, Mineta Transportation Institute (2012)

- NACTO Urban Street Design Guide (2013)
- FHWA PEDSAFE Pedestrian Safety Guide and Countermeasure Selection System (2013)
- FHWA Guide for Achieving Multimodal Networks: Applying Design Flexibility and Reducing Conflicts (2016)
- Bicycle Parking Guidelines, 2nd Edition, Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (2010)

FHWA – Federal Highway Administration
NACTO – National Association of City Transportation Officials
AASHTO – American Association of Sate Highway and Transportation Officials

FACILITY DESIGN

Provision of convenient, safe, and connected walking and cycling infrastructure is at the core of promoting active travel. A key purpose of such infrastructure should be to protect pedestrians and bicyclists from cars, which the primary barrier and threat to safety. Aside from specific infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians, the way entire neighborhoods and communities are built affects levels of active travel since community design determines whether trip origins and destinations are sufficiently close to each other to be covered by foot or bicycle. Policies that improve public transport can boost active travel as an access mode to transit, while policies that make car use less attractive will increase the competitiveness of active travel modes. Moreover, such efforts may be

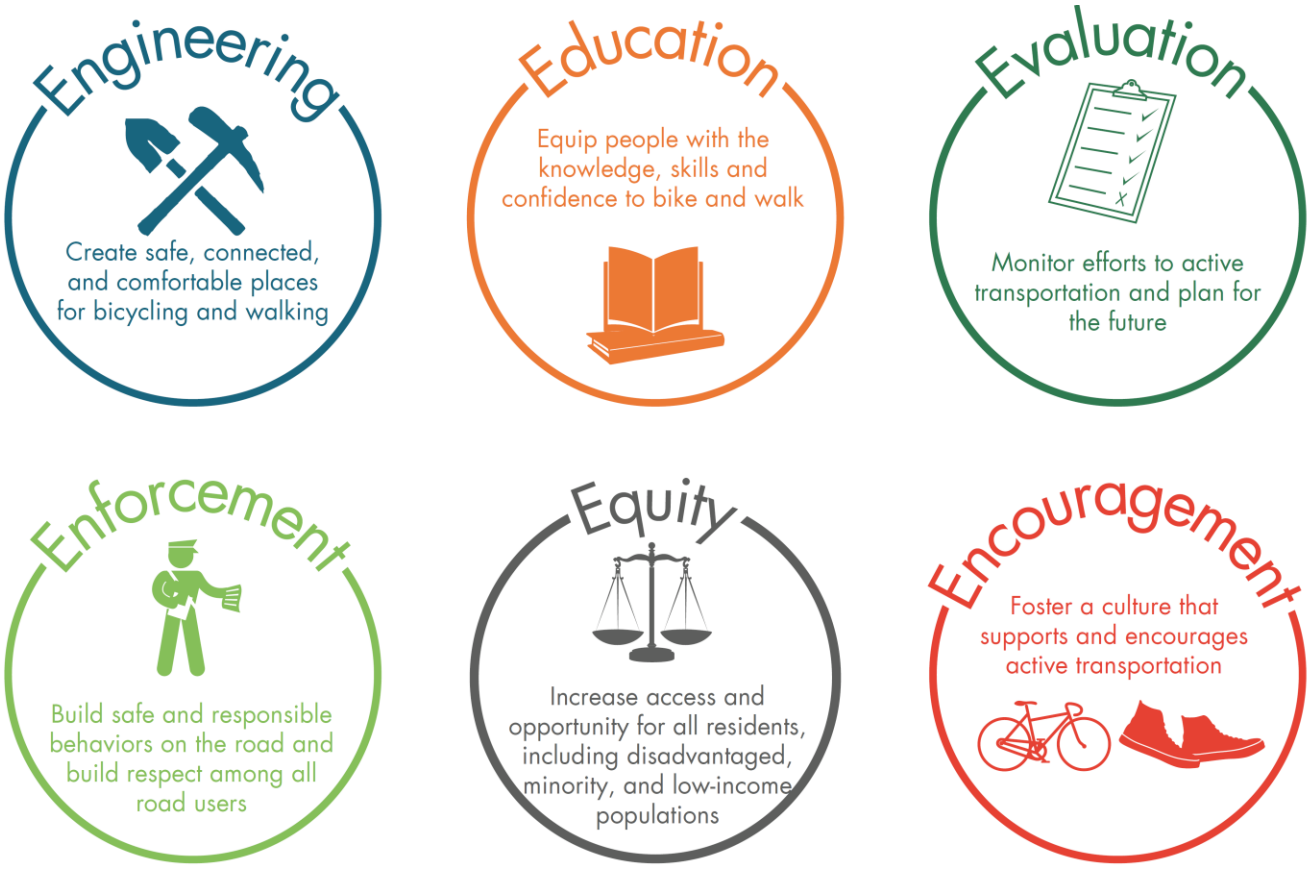
complemented through promotional programs that emphasize active travel as a convenient and healthy travel option.

The following tools may appear reductionist and overlapping, but they are useful lenses when, taken together and with other systemic principles, serve as an aid in understanding, planning for, managing and evaluating the public realm.

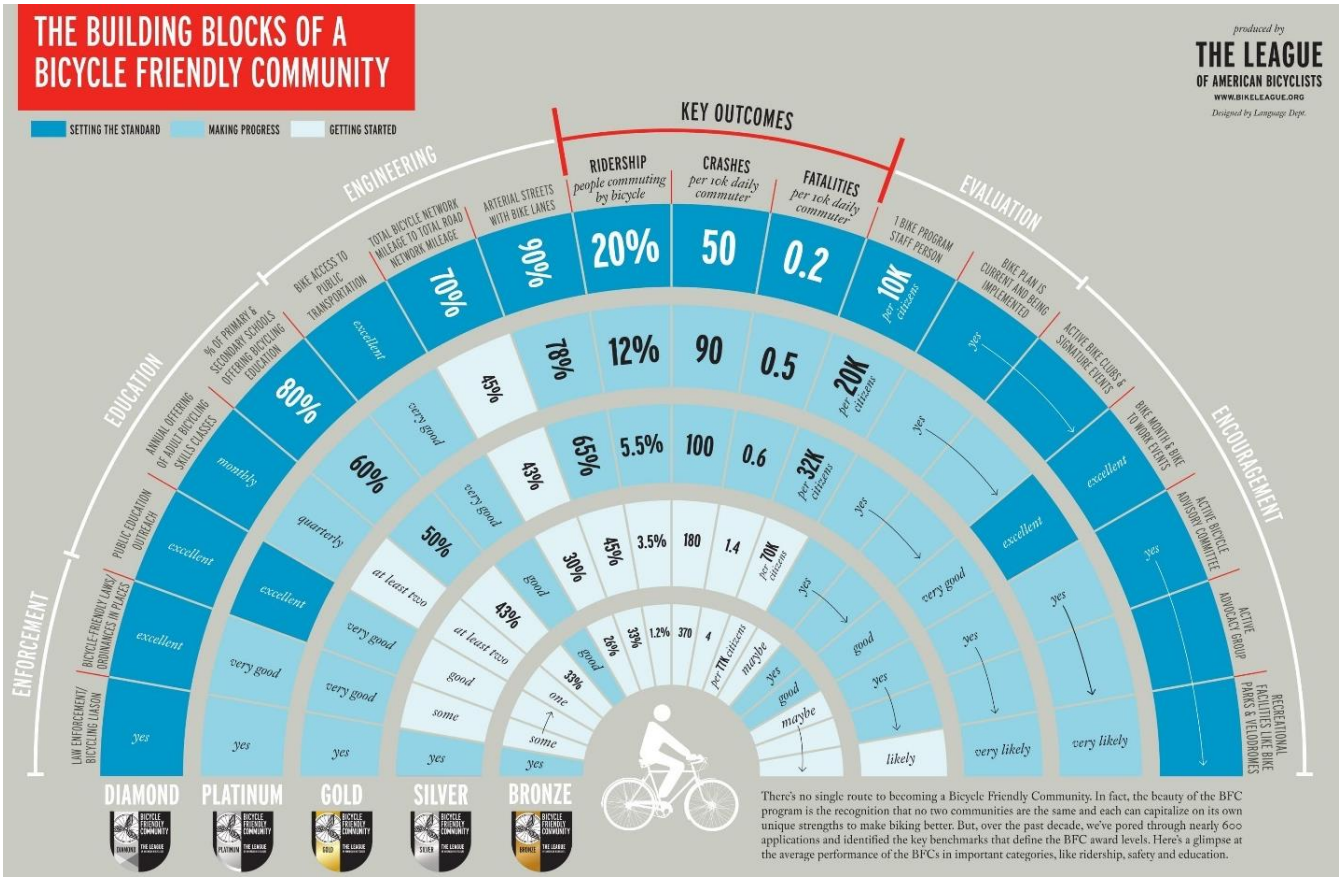
The so-called "Five Ds" of the built environment — **D**ensity, **D**iversity, **D**esign, **D**estination, and **D**istance to transit— have been found to reduce car use and promote walking, cycling, and public transportation usage. Effects of individual measures relating to the "Five Ds" are small, but the joint effect of multiple measures may be large. Density of people, housing, workplaces and /or intersections results in reduced travel distances, which favors walking and cycling. (Ewing R, Cervero R. Travel and the built environment: a meta-analysis. *JAPA.* 2010;76(3):265-294.)

- Provision of convenient, safe, and connected walking and cycling infrastructure is at the core of promoting active travel.[2]
- Physically separating cyclists and pedestrians from cars, where motorized traffic volumes and speeds are high, is important. So is reducing vehicle speeds and traffic volume through traffic calming on other streets.
- Bike paths and separate facilities are perceived as safer which may help less confident cyclists make the decision to ride a bicycle.[5]
- Bike parking and shower and locker facilities at work are associated with more bike commuting.[6]
- Sidewalks, crosswalks and paths can reduce walking crash risk and increase walking.[7]
- Walking and cycling can be increased by community-scale urban design and land use policies. These include zoning regulations and building codes that encourage transit-oriented development, higher street connectivity, higher density of development and having more stores, jobs and schools within walking distance of where people live.[8]
- Traffic volume, highway density, and traffic speeds are negatively associated with level of active travel, while smaller block size, access to public transit, retail, neighborhoods shops, and street connectively are positively associated with level of bicycle ridership.[9]
- The available evidence consistently suggests that there is a positive relationship between bikeway networks and cycling level.[10]
- Area-wide urban traffic calming efforts have been shown on average to reduce the number of crashes with injuries by about 25 percent on residential streets, and 10 percent on main roads.[11]

The “six E’s” utilized by Safe Routes to School: Evaluation, Engineering, Encouragement, Education, Equity, Enforcement



Building a culture of bicycling that will take Altoona to the next level takes more than bike lanes and trails. It will require the addition of low-stress bikeways that support bicycling by people for all ages and abilities; programs, training and organized rides to give people the skills and confidence to travel by bike; enforcement programs and laws that create an environment of mutual respect among all road users; and guidelines and policies that guide city staff and elected officials to enable smart, responsible choices. It takes a comprehensive approach, and, above all, it takes ambition, will and perseverance.



The American League of Bicyclists created the Bicycle Friendly Community program in 1995 to provide a road map to improving conditions for bicycling and guidance to help make a community's vision for better, bikeable community a reality. The program functions as both a guide, matched with evaluation methodologies and criteria to measure and track progress. As of 2020, there were 485 recognized Bicycle Friendly Communities, including the City of Eau Claire.

Utilizing a tool and recognition program may function to assist in tracking, reporting, and public awareness of the City's vision and values pertaining to bicycle mobility.

EXISTING PLANS

Feasibility Study (SEH, 2005)

The City of Altoona contracted with the consulting firm SEH to complete a feasibility study for a network of bicycle and pedestrian trails. The plan includes 23 trail segments totaling 11.3 miles. This study has served as the de facto bicycle and pedestrian plan for the City, with several segments since completed. Many of the remaining segments are incorporated in this Plan.

Safe Routes to School Plan (2017)

Conducted by the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission with support by City and District staff, this study examined progress since the 2008 plan and updated for contemporary conditions including the addition of the Altoona Elementary School at its new peripheral location. The plan focused on the two school locations as

the principal destinations by identifying key corridors and constraints for engineering and evaluation, and directing education and encouragement toward students and their parents.

Metropolitan Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan 2017 – 2027

The West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission completed a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPO), and adopted by the City of Altoona as an advisory document in October, 2017.

Facility Types

For the purposes of establishing and describing existing and desired bicycle facilities in Altoona, bicycle facilities are broken into two general categories: off-street trails and paths, and on-street bikeways. Off-street trails and paths are generally located along natural features like rivers and streams or along other transportation infrastructure like arterial roads and utility corridors. On-street bikeways are located on the roadway pavement itself, often in the form of bike lanes, marked shared lanes (also known as sharrows), or simply identified as signed bike routes.

The Federal Highway Administration defines a bicycle network as an "interconnected pedestrian and/or bicycle transportation facilities that allow people of all ages and abilities to safely and conveniently get where they want to go."

The figure on page 6-23 illustrates examples of typical bicycle facilities. Generally, the most separated facility is preferred due to safety and convenience. Signed routes and shared lane markings are only recommended where low volume of vehicle traffic or physical space is not available, or as interim treatments until the preferred separated facility is constructed.

Off-street paths should be pursued as the preferred option wherever feasible and to function as core routes through the City and its neighborhoods. Separated bike lanes and sidepaths provide great potential to fill needs in the second tier of access to create low-street bicycle networks. The goal of a low-stress network is to create connections that cover the City while emphasizing the quality of the facility over quantity. Depending upon the context (vehicle speed and volume, roadway alignment, types of conflicts), the design of the facility must be customized to achieve mobility goals.

The bicycle facilities identified in this plan have varying levels of appeal for different users. Bicycle facilities that are physically separated from motor vehicle traffic, such as off-street pathways and protected bicycle lanes, are generally the most comfortable. In general, each type of bicycle facility can be located on a comfort continuum. Facilities along this comfort continuum have different levels of appeal for different users. Not all types of these facilities necessarily meet the needs or appeal to all users. A significant amount of research has found that three types of facilities in particular are most effective at attracting bicyclists of all ages and abilities:

- Many potential cyclists, including children and the elderly, may avoid cycling if no physical separation from vehicle traffic is provided, and this separation is important to improve safety wherever possible.
- Physically separated bikeways have the lowest level of user stress between intersections.
- Even though some users may utilize sidewalks for bicycling, sidewalks are designed for pedestrian use and are not considered to be designed elements of a complete bicycle network.

Developing a network that feels comfortable for people of all ages and abilities will require providing facilities that have the highest benefits for cycling safety and are the most successful at attracting more ridership. Focusing on providing off-street pathways and protected lanes where possible will ensure that the highest standards of quality, safety and comfort are provided throughout the network. This means that for busy streets and other street contexts, off-street pathways will be used where there is enough space, with the highest level of separation possible from different users. Protected bicycle lanes or buffered bicycle lanes will also be used where possible on busy streets to ensure cyclists are separated from motorists. On local streets, neighborhood greenways will be used, with pavement markings, signage, and traffic calming where needed to ensure low traffic volumes and speeds.

Pavement markings for bicycle and pedestrian mobility, including crosswalks, bike lanes, sharrows and other applications, are complementary and necessary features but are not considered bicycle facilities or infrastructure, and are not a substitute for physical separation and barriers between people and vehicles.

In addition to facility design, there are many spatial considerations regarding bicycle and pedestrian network connectivity. The main objective of a bicycle or pedestrian network is to make it possible for people to get to where they want to go using a route that does not exceed their tolerance for traffic stress, and without undue detour. Because the appeal of bicycling and walking as a valid mode of transportation varies with distance, it is crucial that land use regulations and policies prioritize mixed-use nodes and neighborhoods, and that existing nodes are connected by low-stress facilities.

The process of planning for bicycle facilities is complex and involves diverse stakeholders and multiple constraints and goals. After identifying overall destination areas to connect, each facility design must be examined holistically with the multiple considerations in producing and maintaining a low-stress transportation environment. This plan places priority emphasis and bicyclists and pedestrians, due to superior quality of life, public health and environmental qualities, as well as bicyclists and pedestrians as the most vulnerable users and users for whom stress and other deterrents are most impactful.

Recommended Bicycle Facilities

The following illustration reflects general bicycle facility types and indicates how facilities vary greatly in character, context, and intended user. These facility types are based on national standards and best practices in bikeway design using contemporary resources including the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, the NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide, and the FHWA Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks Guide.

Least Separation

Signed Routes (No Pavement Markings)

A roadway designated as a preferred route for bicycles.

Shared Lane Markings

A shared roadway with pavement markings providing wayfinding guidance to bicyclists and alerting drivers that bicyclists are likely to be operating in mixed traffic.

On-Street Bike Lanes

An on-road bicycle facility designated by striping, signing, and pavement markings.

On-Street Buffered Bike Lanes

Bike lanes with a painted buffer increase lateral separation between bicyclists and motor vehicles.

Separated Bike Lanes

A separated bike lane is an exclusive facility for bicyclists that is located within or directly adjacent to the roadway and that is physically separated from motor vehicle traffic with a vertical element.

Including "Protected Bike Lane" or "Cycle Track"

Off Street Trails / Sidepaths

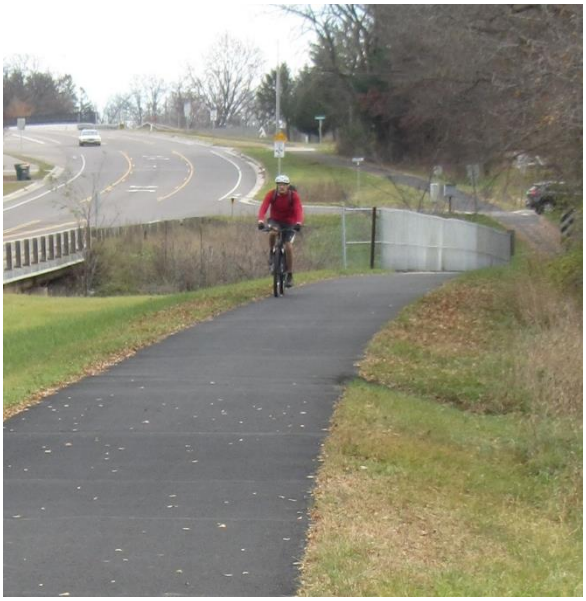
Bicycle facilities physically separated from traffic, but intended for shared use by a variety of groups, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and joggers.

Most Separation

Source: Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide, Federal Highway Administration (2015)

Shared-use Paths (Trails)

A shared use path, interchangeably called a multi-use trail, allows for two-way, off-street bicycle use and may be used by pedestrians, joggers, skaters, wheelchair users, and other non-motorized users. These facilities are frequently found in parks, along rivers and in greenbelts or utility corridors where there are few conflicts with motorized vehicles, except at roadway crossings. Shared-use paths tend to appeal to the widest variety of users types due to their separation from motor vehicle traffic. Use is available to all ages and serves both recreation and transportation functions. Due to superior relative safety performance and volume accommodation, these paths perform best when serving to connect popular destinations and to form the principal routes throughout a bicycle network where space is available.



Shared-use paths, such as the trail parallel to Spooner Avenue, provide a separated and comfortable facility.

Sidepaths

Sidepaths are constructed to trail standards along roadways, and often in place of sidewalks and combine design characteristics of a shared-use path with the directness and convenience of the roadway system. Sidepaths are separated from the road by a curb and a landscaped boulevard, providing at least a minimum separation from adjacent motor vehicles. Where right-of-way is constrained by ownership or topography, the sidepath may directly abut the curb. Increased design attention is required when sidepaths intersect driveways and streets due to potential conflicts. Sidepaths work best along streets with controlled access and relatively few driveway interruptions.

Where in place of sidewalk, sidepaths should be ten to twelve feet in width to provide clearance for bi-directional pedestrian and bicycle uses. Separation from the vehicle lanes of travel should be maximized and include landscaping.

Sidepaths may be adjacent to a roadway, such as 3rd Street East in Altoona.

Examples of sidepaths in Altoona include along portions of 3rd Street East, North Hillcrest Parkway, and Bartlett Avenue.

Recreation Trails

Recreation trails are designed and located primarily for recreational use to highlight and access scenic areas and travel within and around large parks, natural areas, and environmental corridors. These trails are designed for co-use by pedestrians and cyclists and should feature signs should there be anticipated conflict between off-road bikes and those on foot.

These trails take a variety of forms, from curvilinear paved trails to unpaved areas that may be crushed aggregate materials or packed dirt. These trails are unlikely to serve a transportation function but are highly utilized and desired recreational features.

Centennial Park in Altoona features approximately 2.5 miles of single-track dirt trails that are maintained by the Chippewa Valley Off-Road Biking Association, and are well used by walkers and bicyclists alike. Fairway Park includes portions of old pavement as well as groomed lawn trails that follow former golf course cart paths through prairie and woodland along Otter Creek.

Recreational trails such as those in Fairway Park provide access to enjoyment to parks and natural areas.

Separated Bike Lanes

A separated bike lane is an exclusive facility for bicyclists that is located within or directly adjacent to the roadway and that is physically separated from motor vehicle traffic with a vertical element. These facilities are differentiated from shared use paths and sidepaths by their more proximate relationship to the adjacent roadway and the fact that they are bike-only facility. Separated bike lanes are also known as “protected bike lanes” or “cycle tracks”.

Hornby Street in Vancouver, BC, is an example of utilizing planters to create a separated bicycle route.

Protected bike lanes have different forms but all share common elements—they provide space that is intended to be exclusively or primarily used by bicycles, and are separated from motor vehicle travel lanes, parking lanes, and sidewalks. There is flexibility and diversity in the particular arrangement of the cycling surface, separation element, and relationship to adjoining walkway and landscaping. This separation may be achieved by a concrete curbed median, or retrofitted by utilizing planters, curb stops, or other objects that create a vertical element. Some cities have experimented with temporarily placing objects to create a protected lane to determine if a more permanent installation should be completed.

Development of separated bike lanes in North America has dramatically increased in interest and use as an effective way to improve bicycling where off-street space is not possible or appropriate. Recent studies suggest

that installing protected bicycle lanes, when connecting to a larger network, significantly improves ridership of between 20 and 170 percent.

Conventional Bicycle Lanes

Conventional bicycle lanes are separate lanes adjacent to vehicle travel that are clearly marked and designated exclusively for bicycle travel. Pavement markings include solid lines and bicycle lane indictors. The bicycle lane is located adjacent to motor vehicle travel lanes, and bicyclists ride in the same direction as motor vehicle traffic. These lanes are typically indicated by a solid white line and located between the adjacent travel lane and the curb or road edge.

Bicycle lanes vary in width, but are recommended to be not less than 5 feet. Physical barriers and maximum separation from vehicles are recommended wherever possible.

This separated bicycle lane in utilizes wheel stops and paint for a low-cost retrofit.

Buffered Bicycle Lanes

Buffered bicycle lanes are conventional bike lanes paired with a designated buffer space, typically utilizing pavement markings to provide more separation between bicyclists and vehicles by including a painted double-line buffer zone. This treatment is appropriate for bike lanes on roadways with high motor vehicle traffic volumes and speed, adjacent to parking lanes, or a high volume of truck or oversized vehicle traffic.

This buffered bicycle lane in Wausau, WI creates separation, with dashed lane markings through intersections.

Neighborhood Greenways or Bike Boulevard

Neighborhood Greenways are a combination of on-street markings, traffic calming, and signage over a designated local low traffic road. This technique is employed where there may not be either the need or the space to identify a bicycle lane in both directions, and where off-street facilities are not possible or not proximate. These greenways can act as corridors through established neighborhoods to connect local roads to an off-street facility.

Intersections and Crossing Treatments

According to the FHWA, the solution to pedestrian/vehicle conflicts at intersections is to build intersections that:

- Slow vehicular traffic;
- Encourage pedestrian use in lieu of mid-block crossings;
- Make pedestrians as visible as possible;
- Make pedestrian actions as predictable as possible;

This retrofitted curb extension in Minneapolis features a supplemental storm water facility.

The critical locations throughout the network are where pedestrian and/or bicycle routes intersect with major roads. At these areas, there is a need for treatments that distinguish pedestrians and cyclists and separate bikeways at intersections. As an intersection is the interchange between motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists, it is important that intersections with pedestrian and bicycle facilities have treatments to reduce conflict between pedestrians and bicyclists from vehicles and from each other. Treatment should serve to increase the level of visibility, improve physical separation or barrier, denote clear right-of-way and facilitate eye contact and awareness with other modes. Intersection treatments can improve movements for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as vehicles, and can be coordinated with timed or specialized signals. Crossing treatments to improve safety at an intersection for pedestrians and bicyclists can include elements such as color, signage, medians, signal detection and pavement markings. The type of treatment required depends on the facility, whether there are intersecting pedestrian or bicycle routes, street function and land uses. The following are examples of crossing treatments to consider:

Research also shows that roadway elements such as bulb-outs, boulevard trees, and conspicuous pavements markings and signage slow vehicles down as drivers process their environment and/or raise their awareness of their surroundings.

Crosswalk Design

Well-designed crosswalks are key to any walkable community. Safety for all pedestrians, especially those with limited mobility, is the single most important criteria informing crosswalk design. Crosswalks serve a dual function of guiding pedestrians to locations where they should cross the street and informing drivers of pedestrian movements. Crosswalks are used in locations where pedestrians are expected, such as at intersections, as well as places where they may not be expected, such as mid-block crossings.

A **conventional crosswalk** consists of parallel lines that are at least five feet apart and connect two crossing points. Treatments such as bars or stripes may also be used. The markings may be reflective paint or thermoplastic (recommended).

An **enhanced crosswalk** utilizes additional treatments and techniques to increase visibility of the pedestrian crossing. These include brightly colored treatments, textured and/or colored crossing material. Enhanced crosswalks are often used in areas of greater pedestrian use or conflict with vehicles, and may be utilized where other features, such as curb extensions, refuge islands, are in use. These locations may also utilize brightly colored pedestrian crossing signs or advance warning signs, and flashing lights on occasion, to announce a crossing.

Curb Extensions

Curb extensions, also referred to as “bulb-outs”, project the curb into the street, usually for a distance equal to the depth of a typical parallel parking space, making it easier for pedestrians to see approaching traffic and giving motorists a better view of pedestrians. When motorists are better able to see pedestrians, they have a greater opportunity to stop before a crash can occur. This also shortens the distance pedestrians must cross at intersections and other crossings. Pedestrians are exposed to vehicles for a shorter period of time and are more visible as they await the opportunity to cross.

This curb extension in Minneapolis utilizes colored paint and candlestick posts as an inexpensive retrofit.

Curb extensions are also a traffic calming technique as they create tighter turning radii for vehicles, forcing them to slow down, and create visual texture to the streetscape. This technique is most effective when combined with a vertical element, such as signage or bollards, lighting, and enhanced crosswalk treatments.

Curb extensions and colored, textured crosswalks at the Altoona School Campus improve safety and visibility in a high conflict area. This treatment was installed following recommendation of the 2009 Safe Routes to School Plan.

Refuge Islands

Refuge islands are defined as areas within an intersection or between lanes of traffic where pedestrians and/or bicylists wait until vehicles traffic clears, allowing them to continue. Refuge islands are typically curbed and include a verticle elment, such as signage.

Similar to curb extensions, islands reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians and improve visibility of the crossing area.

In addition to serving as a means for physical seperation and awareness, refuge islands calm traffic by alterting motorists to the potential conflict and may alter travel lane or turning radius.

Refuge islands may be an effective treatment when traffic is heavy for short periods of time, and where motorist sight lines are obstructed by street geometry or change in elevation. They may also be installed at mid-block crossings to improve visibility.

Refuge islands should be designed to maximize protection and visibility to pedestrians, while also minimizing unacceptable hazard to vehicles and damage due to snow removal. Special consideration should also be given to complex or irregularly shaped intersections.

This on-site crossing of a parking lot entry of the Altoona School District Campus utilizes a refuge island and patterned crosswalk.

The minimum width should not be less than 6 feet wide from the face of the curb to the face of the curb, but preferred width of 8 – 10 feet. Crossings that feature bicycle routes should feature extra width to accommodate bicycles of various lengths, such as those with trailers. The island should not be less than 12 feet long or the width of the crosswalk, whichever is greater. The minimum island size should be 50 square feet.

An approach nose, offset from the edge of the traffic lane, appropriately treated to provide motorists with sufficient warning of the island's presence. Barriers or other vertical elements may be considered to keep pedestrians from stepping into traffic or making unpredictable crossings.

This mid-block crossing includes a raised crosswalk, colored pavement, landscaped refuge islands, and signage.

Raised Crosswalks

Raised crosswalks are elevated above roadway pavement in the form of an elongated speed hump with a flat section in the middle and at-grade (or near grade) with adjacent sidewalks. A raised intersection is a plateau covering the entire intersection, including crosswalks, with ramps on all vehicles approaches. The objective is to control and calm vehicle speeds approaching and then traversing a crossing area or intersection, as well as improve visibility and identification of the crossing, thereby improving the safety of pedestrians at these locations. Raised crosswalks are typically paired with other measures, such as curb extensions, refuge islands, signage, colored and textured crossing materials for maximum impact.

Adding crosswalk signage in the roadway is an inexpensive, seasonal method to slow traffic.

Colored Conflict Zone Markings

Colored Conflict Zone Markings utilize pavement markings, often a vibrant color, to identify when off-street trail or on-road lanes meet intersections, driveways, or other conflict zones to raise visibility of bicyclists to raise vigilance of both bicyclists and drivers.

This colored and dashed bicycle lane identifies the lane of travel for cyclists through an intersection.

Dashed Bicycle Lane Markings

Dashed bicycle lane markings continue bicycle lanes through intersections and serve to position bicyclists appropriately as they traverse the intersection, and to alert motorists of the potential presence of bicyclists.

Enhanced Signage

Signed Routes utilize signage to designate routes throughout the City and region, sometimes utilizing a numbered identification system for wayfinding. These signs serve as a reminder and warning to alert drivers to be aware and respectful of other road users. Other wayfinding information may be incorporated into these signs, such as where a route turns, upcoming hazard, or distance to a destination. Signage may be used in place of bike lanes on low-volume, low-speed roadways.

Rapid flashing beacons are motion or button activated to improve crossing visibility.

Wayfinding

Wayfinding signage takes many forms, assisting pedestrians and bicyclists navigate along primary circulation or recreation routes to landmarks and other destinations. These signs function similar to street signage for motorists, but at a more appropriate scale and placement. These signs provide critical information to people walking and biking in addition to directional information, such distance to destination, transitions in pedestrian or bicycle facility type, and identifying upcoming barriers.

In addition to industry standard wayfinding signs, the City of Altoona is working with WCWRPC and area jurisdictions to determine a design of consistent wayfinding signs for regionally identified routes. Once this design is identified, Altoona plans to sign these routes as well as complementary signage and local routes.

An effective wayfinding system includes a network of signed routes to alert users that they are on their intended path. At key intersections, such as where major routes cross, additional information and amenities might be provided, such as distance to major destinations, seating, or maps.

Above: Charleson Park in Vancouver, BC features intersecting regional trails and excellent wayfinding signage.

Right: Examples of wayfinding signage.

Roadway Design

Where new roadways are constructed or existing roadways are reconstructed, careful thought should be utilized to ensure that pedestrian and bicyclists are taking into consideration, as well as opportunities to add green space, enhance neighborhood identify, and improve management of stormwater.

"Complete streets" is an approach to roadway design with the intent to incorporate all users. Many of the facilities and techniques included in this plan are also part of complete streets, seeking to slow vehicle speed, narrow lane and streets, improve crossing situations, and elevate pedestrian and bicycle considerations of all kinds. "Green complete streets" adds an additional layer to elevate landscaping and stormwater management into roadway design and management. Essentially, green complete streets represent comprehensive and integrated thinking and planning.

Roadway projects provide the opportunity to evaluate the width of streets to ensure it is "right-sized" to the conditions and context. Many existing roads in Altoona are "overbuilt", often 37 feet wide (and wider) where 32 (or less) performs the needed vehicle functions while being less expensive to build and maintain. Narrower roads tend to slow traffic, create wider landscaped boulevards, and improve opportunity and environment for separated bicycle facilities. Examination of intersections allow for curb extensions, refuge islands, or other measures to improve safety.

Roadway Treatments and Traffic Calming

Traffic Circles or "Mini Circles" are raised circular medians constructed in the center of a residential intersection. Vehicles must change their travel path to maneuver around the circle with the objective of slowing traffic speed, managing traffic, discouraging "cut-through" routes, and improve pedestrian safety. These structures are often complemented with yield or other signage, landscaping, and occasionally public art or another feature.

Traffic circles slow vehicles at unsignaled intersections.

The advantage of traffic circles is that they can significantly slow traffic speed on two intersecting roadways and the reduce the likelihood and severity of pedestrian crashes. This benefit can be particularly useful near civic spaces where children are present. These allow intersections to be controlled without stopping vehicles, and encourage a more consistent rate of speed. Depending upon design and features, these may have a positive aesthetic and enhance a streetscape.

The challenge with this treatment is that they may reduce the turning radius of larger vehicles, which can be partially addressed by utilizing mountable curbs, and are not recommended on routes with frequent large vehicle use.

Medians Islands are curbed structures placed in line with vehicle traffic which narrow the travel lane with the intent to slow vehicles down. In some cases, these may be landscaped or include signage. These may or may not include a pedestrian crossing, as described earlier. Median islands may be used to guide or slow traffic, or as a technique to narrow roadways.

Shared Lane Markings or "sharrows" are pavement treatments utilized to communicate a shared lane environment for bicycles and automobiles. The purpose is to elevate awareness of potential cyclists. Among other benefits shared lane markings reinforce the legitimacy of bicycle traffic on the street, recommend proper bicyclist positioning, and may be configured to offer directional and wayfinding guidance. The shared lane marking is a pavement marking with a variety of uses to support a complete bikeway network; it is not a facility type and should not be considered a substitute for bike lanes, cycle tracks, or other separation treatments where these types of facilities are otherwise warranted or space permits.

These markings are used in areas where insufficient space exists for bicycle lanes or other separated facility, or where vehicle traffic is sufficiently low that conflicts between cyclists and vehicles are low. When used, shared lane markings through be used throughout the corridor, and with sufficient frequency (50 to 100 feet) to reinforce the shared space, such as low volume residential streets.

"Inverted U" bike racks, such as these custom units at Cowboy Jacks in Altoona, are a creative way to brand and add value to a place.

Support Facilities

End-of-trip facilities like short-term bike racks and long-term secure bike parking areas are essential to the success of the bike network. A lack of secure parking can deter people from bicycling to destinations, even for short trips. Bike parking needs to be in a location visible and accessible to bicyclists to identify and safely navigate to.

Part of the automobile dominated landscape are parking lots that are designed exclusively for use by automobiles and make use by bicyclists and pedestrians unsafe. The City recently amended its parking ordinance and quantity requirements to require provision of approved bicycle racks for the first time, as well as overall design requirements to prioritize bicyclist and pedestrian safety and circulation.

The City Hall bike rack on June 11, 2018.

The City and Altoona School District have made a concerted effort in recent years to incorporate additional bicycle parking into streetscape projects and new developments, such as River Prairie and school administration building.

Bicycle repair stations, or "fix-it" stations, have become an important part of the bicycle landscape in recent years. Each station provides a bike stand, tools, and in most cases tire pumps for people to fix a flat or make other basic adjustments to their bikes. The City has added its first two fix-it stations in River Prairie in 2017.

TACTIAL EXPERIMENTATION

Rather than investing in sometimes costly infrastructure retrofits, such as curb extensions, refuge islands, traffic circles or other facilities, inexpensive temporary interventions are encouraged to test the facility. This technique may also be used to rapidly improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety until permanent infrastructure is installed. Traditional materials such as construction barriers and barrels may be used, or brightly colored tires, planters, rubber curbs, temporary pavement markings, or other creative materials.

By utilizing this tactical method, many interventions may be implemented throughout a corridor or neighborhood, or several versions or varieties of interventions tested at a single site before making design decisions and committing more significant budgetary resources. If the intervention is well received, it can be renewed, or made permanent.

The image at the left is an example of a separated bike lane created on an existing street utilizing traffic cones. The cones provide no physical protection from vehicles but create visual distinction to reserve the space for cyclists. Temporary signs might be also used to indicate the intended purpose, matched with marketing and outreach by the City or partners. The cones could be used to test if such a facility where to be used if provided, and to reflect how vehicle circulation will still be accommodated. If this low-cost experiment is a success, the cones could be replaced by a concrete curb or physical barrier, improving safety and separation of cyclists from vehicles.

EXISTING DEVELOPED AREA

Generally, Altoona's land use and development pattern has been driven by automobile-oriented design. Suburban land development is characterized by large lot and primarily single-family residential development. Today in the City of Altoona, there is a renewed focus on compact and mixed land-use neighborhoods that enable multi-modal transportation, walking, cycling, and proximity to public space, employment, and services. While currently the vast majority of Altoona citizens use an automobile to travel around the City and region, the City recognizes the importance of developing a multi-modal and sustainable transportation system and has committed to finding improvement opportunities for active modes of transit, including walking and cycling, as well as public transit.

To help inform the development of improvements to Altoona's pedestrian and bicycle networks, several different types of analyses were conducted. Together, these analyses help to answer the questions of where the current network falls short and where future network improvements should be targeted. The results of these analyses directly influenced the proposed network plan outlined in Strategic Direction 1 later in this Chapter. Three types of analyses were conducted:

Gap Analysis – Exposes gaps and weak points in the existing pedestrian and bicycle network.

Walking and Bicycling Potential – Highlights areas of Altoona where walking and cycling has the potential to be the most convenient.

Equity Analysis – Considers communities in Altoona that would especially benefit from increased transportation options, including access to a safer pedestrian and bicycling network.

Destination Analysis – Qualitative identification of uses and activity clusters likely to function as current or future destinations for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (BLTS) – An analysis that examines the extent to which arterial and collector roadways create stress on bicyclists due to comfort and safety hazard due to the type of facility, speed, and volume of automobile traffic. This

Gap Analysis

Gaps in the cycling and walking network have a similar impact on cyclists and pedestrians as gaps or barriers have on motorists travelling the road network. A traveler encountering an unexpected gap in the network is forced to either detour to a safer route which often requires local knowledge, or to continue through substandard or potentially hazardous conditions. To the extent that traffic hazards are a major deterrent for potential pedestrians and cyclists, examining gaps in the walkway and bikeway network is a logical first step in developing a plan for future infrastructure improvements.

A gap analysis was conducted specifically for existing bicycle facilities. The purpose of bikeway network gap analysis is to catalogue and classify gaps in the existing bikeway system. Table 6.B summarizes the three types of Spot Gaps and one type of Area Gap.

Table 6-B: Pedestrian and Bikeway Gap Types

Gap Type	Gap Sub-Type	Description	Rationale & Notes
Spot Gap	Network Gap	Where is facility is discontinuous	Facilities that terminate unexpectedly and networks that are incomplete create potentially hazardous transitions to less safe facilities.
Spot Gap	Crossing Gap	Where a facility meets a major road or barrier without a safe crossing facility	Busy streets can represent significant barriers to movement when bicycle and pedestrian crossing treatments are not present or meet the level and nature of threat. Refuge islands, raised and colored crossings, person-actuated signals, and flashing lights are best practices at these barriers.
Spot Gap	Quality Gap	Where a walkway or bikeway transitions to a lower-order facility (reduction in surface quality, separation and/or comfort)	A route is only as attractive and safe as its "weakest link". An unexpected reduction in facility quality is a disincentive to walk or bike.
Area Gap	Area Gap	Where no facility is present in a given area	

The Planned Bicycle and Pedestrian Segments map following this Chapter illustrates Spot Gaps across the Altoona pedestrian and biking network and highlights several patterns:

- Quality Gaps
- Crossing Gaps
  - With the development of Hillcrest, future planned development to the southeast, and connection opportunities throughout Windsor Forest subdivision and Fairway Park, Highway 12 serves as a very significant barrier and impediment to safe circulation of pedestrians and bicyclists through Altoona. These new developments have planned and constructed a network of separated bicycle facilities, but without a safe crossing of Highway 12 this system will be relegated to primarily local short-distance recreational use.
- Network Gaps
  - Existing sidepaths along N. Hillcrest Parkway and 3rd Street East terminate into either sidewalks or simply into a roadway without person accommodations. Safe crossings and continuing these facilities would greatly increase usability and reach of the network.
  - New developments, such as River Prairie and Hillcrest, include dedicated and high-quality bicycle and pedestrian facilities through cooperation between the City and developers. Existing neighborhoods exist in a range of conditions for sidewalk connectivity or distance from dedicated bicycle facilities. Connecting these areas underserved by safe pedestrian and bicycle facilities to new network improves connectivity for all.
- Area Gaps
  - Area gaps exist in neighborhoods with poor sidewalk connectivity, or areas where existing local networks have significant separation from dedicated pedestrian and bicyclists corridors. These areas include Hillcrest Estates manufactured home park, and the Sherman-Highland neighborhood.

Walking and Bicycling Potential

The City of Altoona lacks a central business district, which are typically the primary source and destination of pedestrian and bicycling trips. According to most recent U.S. Census statistics, most people that reside in Altoona commute outside of the City for employment. Fortunately, many of these trips are into nearby Eau Claire, and the bicycle network is contiguous with our neighbor.

Most of the City of Altoona is relatively flat with grid-like roadway network that facilities relative ease in pedestrian and bicycle circulation. However, there are neighborhoods and areas that lack sidewalks, are built onto moderate hillsides, or feature significant permeability barriers such as highways and railroads. While facilities to accommodate topography have limited effectiveness, addressing spot gaps in Altoona has the potential to improve pedestrian and bicycle access.

Equity Analysis

The *Place Plan* Pedestrian and Bicycling Strategies seek to develop well-connected pedestrian and bicycle networks that serve all areas of the City, including areas that have a higher density of historically underserved populations and relatively low levels of existing facilities. A qualitative equity analysis was conducted to examine the distribution of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in relation to historically underserved populations. The equity analysis helped to identify those areas of Altoona where limited access to walking or bicycle facilities is compounded by people experiencing socio-economic challenges. Promoting equitable transportation options and

harnessing latent demand for walking and cycling are two important reasons to prioritize improvements to bicycle facilities in these communities.

A first step in equity analysis is the selection of equity indicators. Four indicators of equity in Altoona were selected: youth population (under 19), senior population (over 65), racial minority (all), and households experiencing low income. These indicators are synthesized into an overall index of equity, which can then be mapped and utilized to prioritize implementation activities.

Destination Analysis

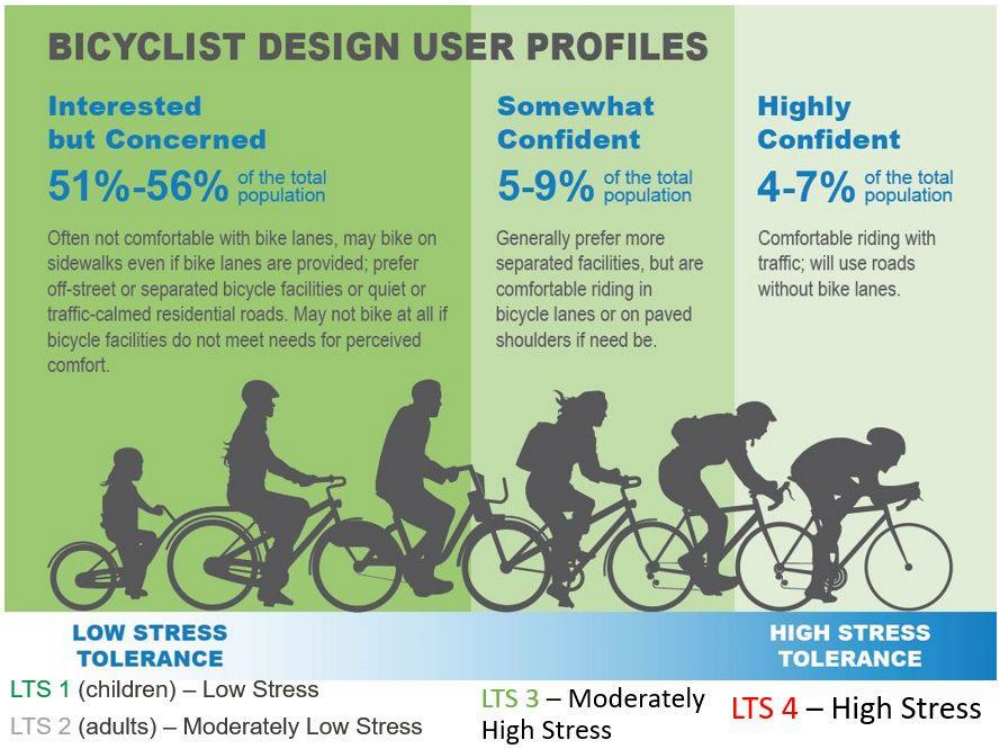
Destinations are an important aspect of pedestrian and bicycle network design. These destinations can be thought of as "activity clusters"—areas that are attractive to all transportation users. A future pedestrian and bicycle network that serves Altoona's activity clusters (as well as those in the region) in a direct and convenient manner is a central theme of the proposed pedestrian and bicycle network. By focusing efforts on creating high-quality pedestrian and bicycle corridors between these destinations, and complementary neighborhood connections and amenities, most areas of the Altoona will be well-served.

Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress

The BLTS methodology was established by the Mineta Transportation Institute's (MTI)(Report 11-19: Low-Stress Bicycling and Network Connectivity, 2012) to analyze level of bicycle traffic stress on arterial and collector roads based on several factors. The analysis combines individual roadway characteristics, like the presence of dedicated bicycle facilities, number of travel lanes, presence of parking, and posted speed limit, to assign a level of traffic stress to the roadway. While many routes on the existing bike network are off-street sidepaths and trails, most people bicycling in Altoona must travel on or across these major roadways to reach their destinations. Definitions for each of the four levels of traffic stress as identified by MTI are as follows:

- **BLTS 1**: Presenting little traffic stress and demanding little attention from cyclists, and attractive enough for a relaxing bike ride. Suitable for almost all cyclists, including children trained to safely cross intersections. On links, cyclists are either physically separated from traffic, or are in an exclusive bicycling zone next to a slow traffic stream with no more than one lane per direction, or are on a shared road where they interact with only occasional motor vehicles (as opposed to a stream of traffic) with a low speed differential. Where cyclists ride alongside a parking lane, they have ample operating space outside the zone into which car doors are opened. Intersections are easy to approach and cross.
- **BLTS 2**: Presenting little traffic stress and therefore suitable to most adult cyclists but demanding more attention than might be expected from children. On links, cyclists are either physically separated from traffic, or are in an exclusive bicycling zone next to a well-confined traffic stream with adequate clearance from a parking lane, or are on a shared roadway where they interact with only occasional motor vehicles (as opposed to a stream of traffic) with a low speed differential. Where a bike lane lies between a through lane and a right-turn lane, it is configured to give cyclists unambiguous priority where cars cross the bike lane and to keep car speed in the right-turn lane comparable to bicycling speeds. Crossings are not difficult for most adults.
- **BLTS 3**: More traffic stress than BLTS 2, yet markedly less than the stress of integrating with multilane traffic, and therefore welcome many people currently riding bikes in American cities. Offering cyclists either an exclusive riding zone (lane) next to moderate-speed traffic or shared lanes on streets that are not multilane and have moderately low speed. Crossings may be longer or across higher-speed roads than allowed by BLTS 2, but are still considered acceptably safe to most adult pedestrians.
- **BLTS 4**: A level of stress beyond BLTS 3.

BICYCLE LEVEL OF TRAFFIC STRESS (LTS)



Factors affecting bicycle traffic stress:

1. Type and size of bicycle facility (lanes width, protection, etc.)
2. Number of vehicle lanes
3. Vehicle speeds
4. Vehicle volume (Average Daily Trips or ADT)
5. 1-way vs. 2-way roads
6. Type of intersection and crossing treatments

These criteria can also relate to pedestrian comfort and safety

At its core, the BLTS scoring decreases in comfort (1 is the highest comfort level) as the number of lanes, posted speed limit, and traffic volumes increase. Scoring in BLTS is based off of the four basic categories defined in the MTI report. The BLTS scoring decreases comfort (1 is the highest comfort level) as the number of lanes, posted speed limit, and traffic volumes increase. Traffic volumes reduce comfort more where bicyclists share the road with motorized vehicles, but comfort also decreases in bicycle lanes as traffic volumes next to those bicycle lanes increase. It is important to note that the presence of wide sidewalks along arterial and collector roadways was not factored into this analysis in order to represent on-road level of traffic stress for bicycling. Wide sidewalks and shared-use paths along roadways generally earn higher scores than adjacent on-street facilities, but those higher scores are often reduced when the path crosses a busier roadway with a lower BLTS score, reflecting the impact of major roadway crossings on a facility's safety and comfort.

Altoona will conduct a BLTS scoring and mapping analysis in conjunction with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and incorporate into this Chapter.

Big Picture – Trail Corridors

This Plan continues the City's vision of establishing multi-use trails accessible to all areas of the City and adjacent communities for safe, convenient, and enjoyable non-motorized transportation and recreation. The next portions of the Plan highlight notable **segments** and **spots** for new or improved facilities. These opportunities are identified throughout the existing developed and future areas of the City. In addition to improvements that are recommended throughout the City, the following four "big picture" efforts are further comprised of many constituent projects anticipated to be pursued over many years.

Otter Creek Greenway

As explored in Chapter 5, the Otter Creek Greenway is the existing and envisioned natural area and recreational corridor following the course of Otter Creek. Areas of Centennial Park and Fairway Park have existing segments of recreation trails. This Plan envisions incremental additions to create a high-quality system of trails for a variety of recreational uses, with access into adjoining neighborhoods.

North Hillcrest Parkway

North Hillcrest Parkway is a frontage road along the north side of Highway 12. This local road is the primary east-west route through the City and subregion, connecting to Eau Claire to the west and rural county areas to the east. Incrementally adding trails along North Hillcrest will create the connection to and continuation of over 4.2-mile trail along the Eau Claire portion of Highway 12 / Clairemont Avenue.

Separated Backbone Routes

The older portions of the Altoona feature a complete street grid and (nearly complete) sidewalk system. Low-volume neighborhood streets are generally fair conditions for cycling. This Plan envisions creating a separated multi-use trails to function as backbone transportation and recreation corridors. Spooner Avenue, 10th Street West and 3rd Street East are envisioned as future routes, mirroring the primary automobile routes.

Future Neighborhoods

Future neighborhoods are anticipated east and south of the City and focus of this Plan is ensuring provision of parkland, preservation of natural areas, complete network of separated trail facilities, roadways that are designed to pedestrian circulation best practices, and intersections safely accommodate all users. These neighborhoods include envisioned regional routes as well as neighborhood collector trail facilities.

Key Connection Opportunities

The following connections are indicated in the Planned Bicycle and Pedestrian Segments Map with a brief explanation of each element. Projects will require detailed feasibility, design, and engineering. Project numbers are assigned generally from west and north to east and south and are not illustrated in priority order.

Project	Location	Summary	Type
1	Eau Claire River	Connect SW Quadrant of River Prairie to Archery Park in Eau Claire	Off-Street, Paved
2	Fairfax Street	Fairfax Street from Hastings Way to Spooner Avenue	Off-Street
3	Sherman-Highland Route	Route from Fairfax Street to Clairemont	On Street
4	Centennial Park Connector	Connect existing trails in Centennial Park to S.Willson Street	Off-Street
5	Otter Creek Segment A	Connect Centennial Park to Highway 12 corridor	Off-Road Recreational
6	Otter Creek Segment B	Highway 12 to Fairway Park	Off-Road Recreational
7	Spooner Avenue	County Road A from S.Willson to Division	Hybrid
8	Tower Park	Recreational footpaths	Off-Road Recreational
9	Cinder City Park		Off-Road Recreational
10	10th Street West	10th Street from Spooner Avenue to N. Hillcrest Parkway	Hybrid
11	N.Hillcrest Segment A	10th Street West to McCann Drive	Off-Street
12	Bartlett Avenue	S. Willson to 3rd Street East	On Street
13	Devney Drive	On-street bicycle improvements	On-Street
14	Otter Creek Segment C	Improvement of existing recreational paths	Off-Road Recreational
15	Gateway Connector	Potential future connection of 3rd Street East to Gateway Drive in Eau Claire	Off-Street
16	Otter Creek Segment D	Existing unpaved trail	Off-Road Recreational
17	N. Hillcrest Segment B	3rd Street East to Oak Drive	Off-Street
18	Windsor Park	Connection from Nottingham Way to Saxsonwood	Off-Street
19	N. Hillcrest Segment C	Oak Drive to N. Mayer Road	Off-Street
20	S. Beach Road	Lake Road to Bridge	Off-Street
21	Bartlett Avenue	Link Bartlett Avenue Trial to County KB Bridge	Off-Street
22	CTY SS North	County Road SS east of Bridge	Off-Street
23	CTY SS South	County Road SS south of Bridge	Off-Street
24	N. Hillcrest Segment D	N. Mayer Road to County SS	Off-Street
25	East Neighborhood	Future neighborhood	
26	N. Hillcrest Segment E	Future road east of County SS	Off-Street
27	Baumbach Way	Planned route	Off-Street
28	Hong Street	Future south neighborhood	Off-Street
29	Mayer Road	Mayer Road between Highway 12 and Prill Road	Off-Street
30	Otter Creek Segment E		Off-Road Recreational
31	Prill Road		Off-Street

1. Eau Claire River

The Eau Claire River corridor through Altoona is a beautiful natural area with shoreline areas predominately in public ownership downstream from the Lake Altoona Dam. This trail segment would connect the recently completed trails in River Prairie to the Waterford development on Pinnacle Way in Eau Claire and beyond to Archery Park.

This segment must be a shared project with the City of Eau Claire, with engagement and collaboration with the Eau Claire Country Club. The segment between the existing trail in River Prairie to The Waterford is approximately 2,250 feet, of which 1,250 is in Altoona. The connection between The Waterford and Archery Park would be an additional 1,000 feet, traversing under the Hasting Way bridge of the river.

This section is fully within the half-mile expenditure eligibility of Tax Increment District #3.

Expected Constraints:

- Union Pacific Railroad. The existing rail bridge over the river appears to have the head space required for a trail to continue under the rail bridge with modest land modifications.
- Country Club. The Eau Claire Golf and Country Club controls most of the land along the river between the railroad and Hastings Way. Conversations with the Club staff have been constructive, and their cooperation will be essential.
- Otter Creek. The confluence of Otter Creek and the Eau Claire river is located along this segment and within the Country Club, in the City of Eau Claire. This is a beautiful location and opportunity for a destination feature bridge and overlook, and also located immediately adjacent to a putting green and existing wetlands.

Above: conceptual alignment of Segment 1.

2. Fairfax Street

Fairfax Street is an approximately 2,400 feet long roadway segment that is shared between the City of Altoona and Eau Claire. The roadway is currently approximately 44 feet in width and built as a four-lane street without sidewalks. The roadway is scheduled for reconstruction in 2022 as a joint project with Federal funding.

The current design concept is to complete a road diet to reduce four travel lanes to two, creating space for expanded pedestrian and bicycle facilities and encouraging slower speeds. The vision is to create a physically separated bicycle facility on one or both sides of the roadway in addition to the sidewalk, if federal funding standards and physical area will permit. Creating a high-quality bicycle facility in this corridor, with safe and convenient crossings of Fairfax Street, would substantially improve mobility options for people who live in, near, or travel through the area.

3. Sherman-Highland

Over the past few years, the City has included sidewalks in the Sherman-Highland neighborhood during road reconstruction projects. Previously, this neighborhood between Hastings Way and Otter Creek did not have any pedestrian facilities. The planned reconstruction of Fairfax Street will improve accessibility around and to/from the neighborhood to the west.

The route map includes a connection between Fairfax Street and Clairmont Avenue, utilizing Valmont, Vernon, and Otter Road. This would connect the future facilities along Fairfax Street, Highland Park, and the east-west route along Clairemont using existing roads. The route would also increase accessibility to access points to Centennial Park and the Otter Creek Greenway to the east. The vision is that as these roadways are reconstructed, sidewalks will be added as well as additional pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

Expected Constraints:

- There is a 750-foot section of Vernon Street in the City of Eau Claire. Cooperation between jurisdictions would be needed to address this gap.
- Many existing apartment, commercial and industrial uses along this route are utilizing existing right-of-way property for automobile parking and other site operations where there would otherwise be sidewalks and landscaping. This may result in opposition to pedestrian improvements and force changes to existing adjacent site conditions.

4. Centennial Park Connector

Centennial Park features over 2.5 miles of curated single-track walking and cycling trails that connect to the developed portion of the park as well as adjoining neighborhood. This proposed section would connect existing trails in the park under Highway 53 at the bridge over Otter Creek, and utilize an existing utility easement, or adjacent stormwater pond, to connect to South Willson Drive. This connection would greatly increase accessibility of Centennial Park and its trails to residents east of Highway 53. In addition, this connection would facilitate future trail connections south through the Otter Creek Greenway, and potentially reduce occasional vagrant activity that takes place under the bridge.

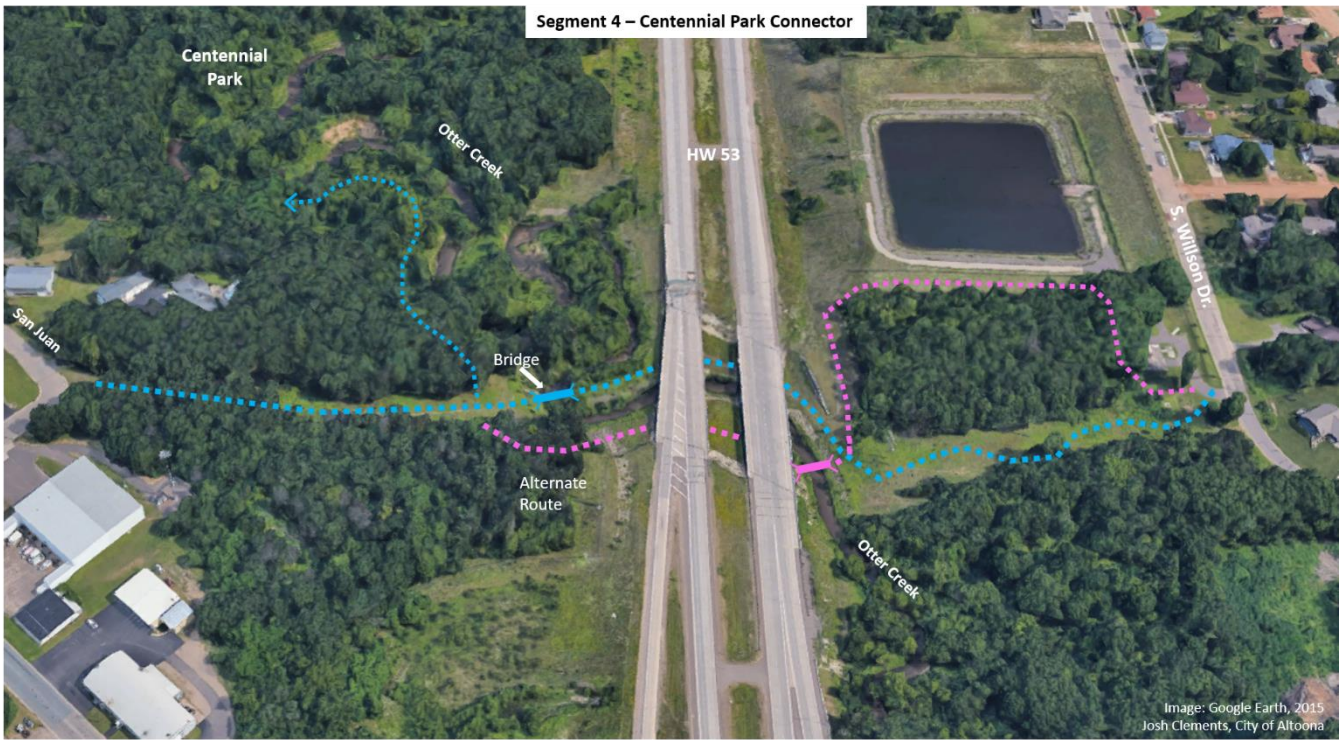
The existing highway bridge has plenty of vertical and horizonal space on both sides of Otter Creek to receive a trail. The creek in this section is generally managed with stone riprap implemented with the highway construction to minimize erosion. This section is fully within the half-mile expenditure eligibility of Tax Increment District #3.

There are two primary route options, as both sides of Otter Creek feature generous areas to accommodate a trail. The variable is likely the desired bridge location, and route to continue the trail to the south through the greenway.

The preferred route follows an existing utility easement from the creek to S. Willson Drive. An alternative route is to utilize existing City property associated with the storm water pond and pump station to complete the connection to S. Willson.

Expected Constraints:

- Bridge over Otter Creek
- Utilization of existing utility easement between Otter Creek and S. Willson Drive, or routing along the existing fenced stormwater pond.



Otter Creek Greenway (5, 6, 14, 16, 30)

As discussed in Chapter 6, the Otter Creek Greenway is envisioned to stretch from the Eau Claire River through Altoona and beyond, creating a natural and recreational corridor preserving Otter Creek and adjoining natural areas.

5. Otter Creek Greenway Section A

Section A is likely the shortest section for implementation at approximately 2,000 feet, but likely the portion with the most significant physical constraints. This section begins at Highway 53 and the earlier illustrated "(4) Centennial Park Connector" and proceeds south. The route is intended to traverse under Highway 12 along

Otter Creek, where the greatest constraint exists. The intent is to proceed to lands owned by Cedar Creek Community Church, who utilizes the property for recreation and contemplation, before crossing back into Fairway Park.

Otter Creek is contained in a small valley with some abrupt rock outcroppings within about 200 feet on either side of the Highway 12 bridge crossing. The area under the bridge itself lacks a shelf to receive a trail without significant alteration or creating a new structure for the trail. Lands beyond the western bank of Otter Creek is generally WI DOT right-of-way, while lands east are privately owned. Preliminary site visits suggest the western bank more amenable for trail development. The trail could be hung from the highway bridge structure, located on piers, or some combination of these.

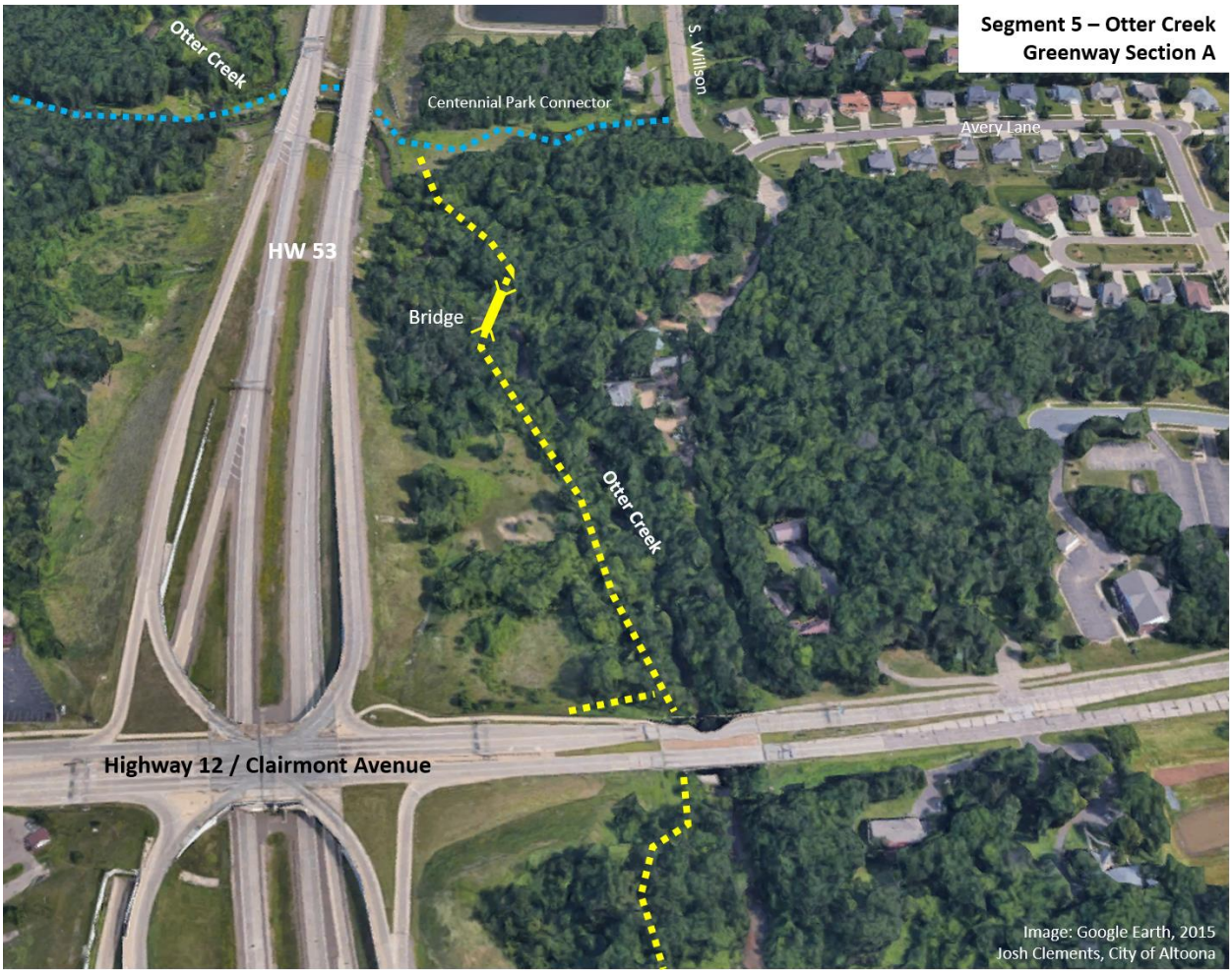
The Cedar Creek Community Church, accessed from Eastwind Drive in Eau Claire, maintains a footpath from their property along Otter Creek south to the church. Cooperation with the church may enable this connection to be implemented along the south side of the creek, which is thought to have less physical constraints in this area, and provide an opportunity for expanded use by church members and connect to Eau Claire.

This section may also include a connecting spur to the existing trail along the north side of Highway 12, if feasible. This section is fully within the half-mile expenditure eligibility of Tax Increment District #3.

Expected Constraints:

- Shoreline topography
- Highway 12 bridge abutments

Above Left: View of Otter Creek looking north under HW12. Right: Constraints under HW12 bridge.



6. Otter Creek Greenway Section B

Section B connects Section A (#5) generally from the Cedar Creek Community Church property to the existing developed portions of Fairway Park, approximately 2,700 feet. This route traverses areas owned by the City as part of Fairway Park and generally within the Otter Creek floodplain. The area is comprised of mature woodland and mapped wetlands that may require stretches of boardwalk and/or route deviations. This section would require a bridge from the church property back into City lands. Aside from the bridge and wetlands, there is a 250-foot section where the topography is challenging where the shoreline is steep and drops approximately 15 feet from the nearby lands to the creek, located just west of the existing park.

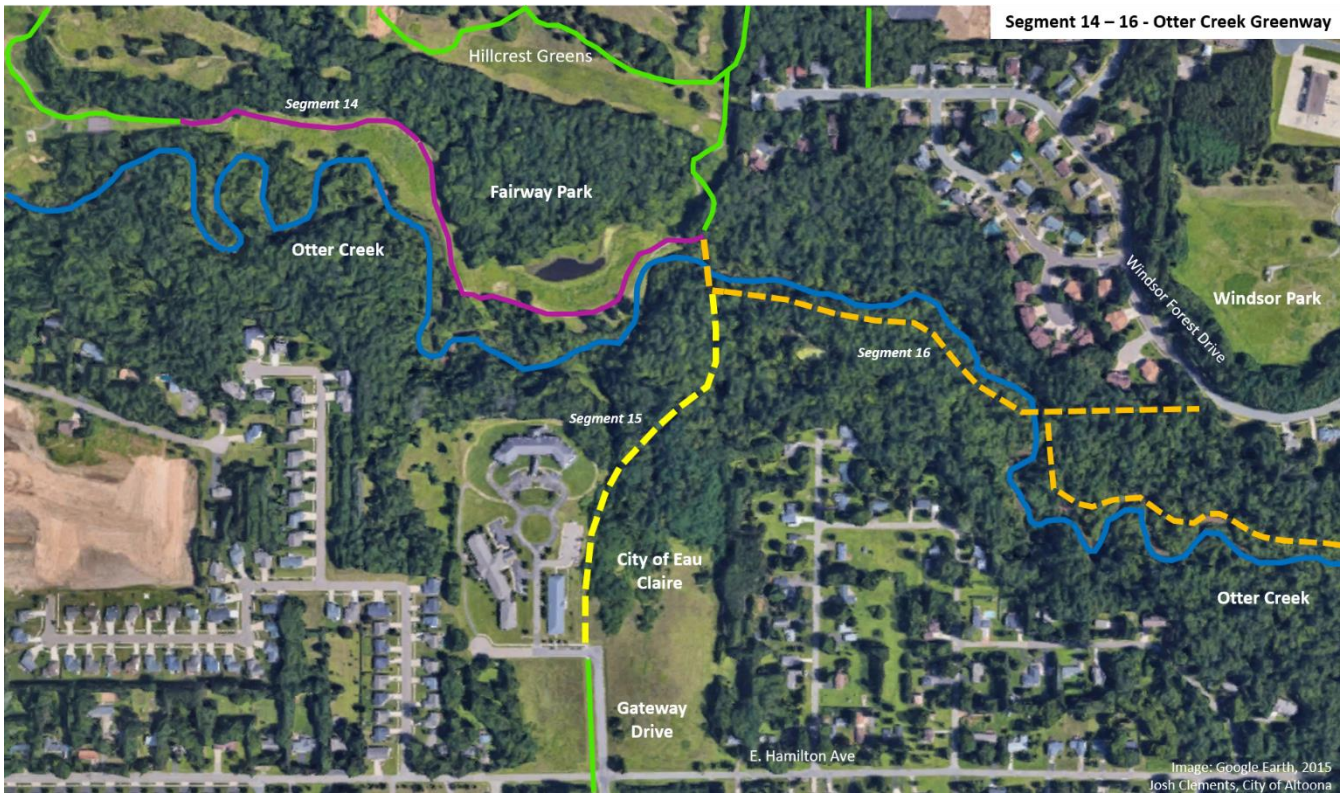
This section is not contingent on Section B achieving completion, or vice-versa.

Expected Constraints:

- Wetlands
- Steep shoreline

14. Otter Creek Greenway Section C

Fairway Park features approximately 4,000 feet of existing trails. Of these, about 2,700 feet is an unpaved golf cart path remaining from when that area of parkland was within the Hillcrest Golf Course. This mostly unpaved section features a solid and level base that accommodates pedestrians as well as recreational cycling. The trail is multi-functional in its current condition. However, there are sections near Otter Creek that have experienced erosion in recent years and require restoration. In addition, there is an existing paved section on the east end that switchbacks up the hill approximately 80 vertical feet that also has deteriorated in points that require attention.



Above: Intersection of multiple trail segments, 14 (purple), 15 (yellow), and 16 (orange). The channel of Otter Creek is highlighted in blue.

16. Otter Creek Greenway Section D

Section D begins at the current eastern boundary of Fairway Park and continues approximately 3,500 feet along Otter Creek through the Windsor Forest Neighborhood. This stretch includes a mix of public and private property. Acquisition of property and easements will be necessary to accomplish this section. There may be multiple route options available depending upon willingness of landowners, barring technical barriers.

As shown on the route map and further illustrated in the specific route illustration, the concept of this section is to cross to the south side of Otter Creek immediately east of Fairway Park. The purpose is to utilize lands owned by the City to avoid the need to acquire easements from multiple (8) property owners in favor of two bridge crossings. This route would also create access to this City property where currently access is limited to traversing the creek without accommodation. Additionally, there is an envisioned option to utilize City property to connect to Gateway Drive in the City of Eau Claire (#15) that would further support this southern routing of Segment 16. The trail would cross back to the north or east side of the creek at the point of existing right-of-way owned by the City of Altoona. The trail would fork at this point, one route traversing up to Windsor Forest Drive within the right-of-way, and the other continuing along the Otter Creek corridor.

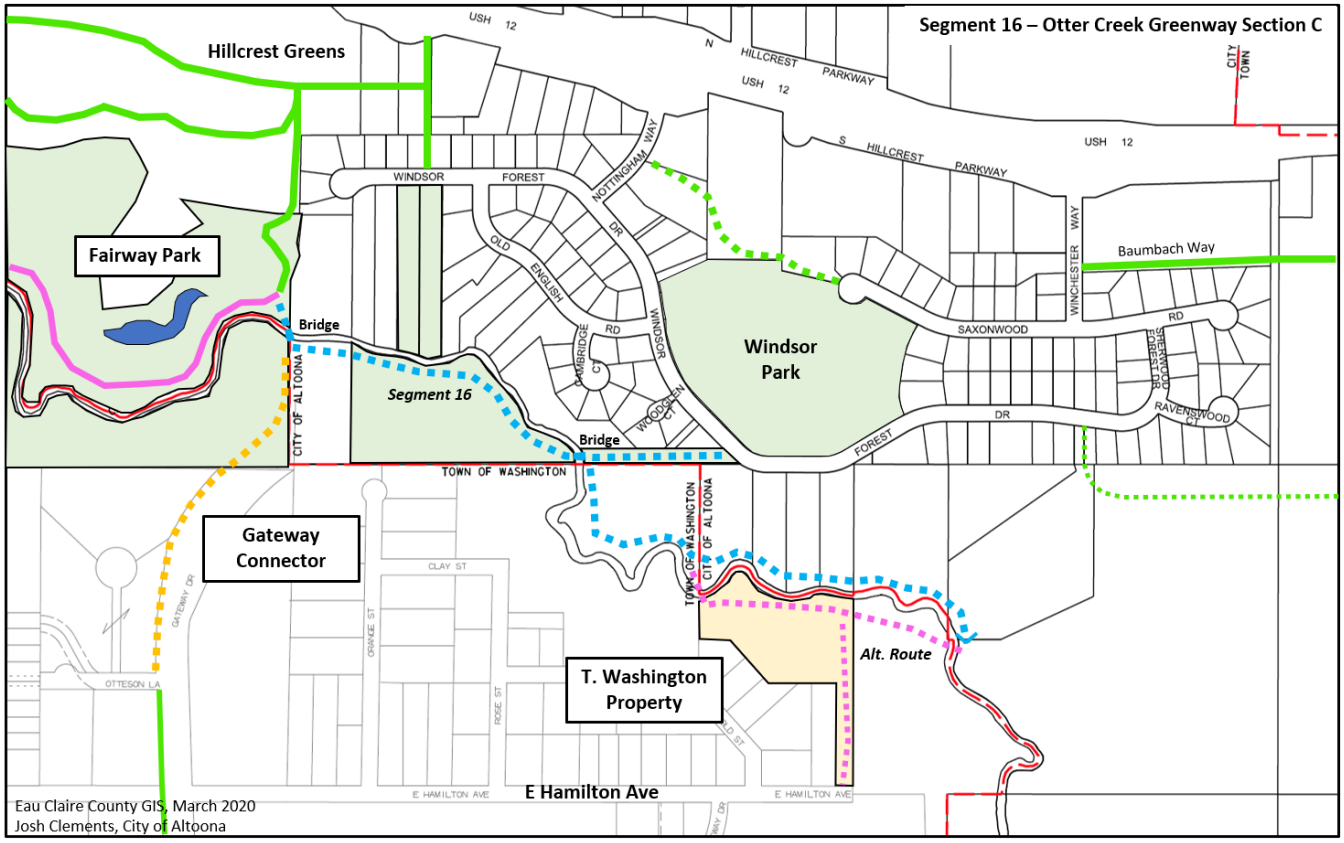
The route option at this point is repeated: to continue on the north/east side of the creek, or to continue a short distance and then cross back to the south side of the creek, thereby utilizing lands owned by the Town of Washington to reduce the number and extent of easements required. The route is shown along the north/east side in part due to these properties being within the City of Altoona, and those in the south side

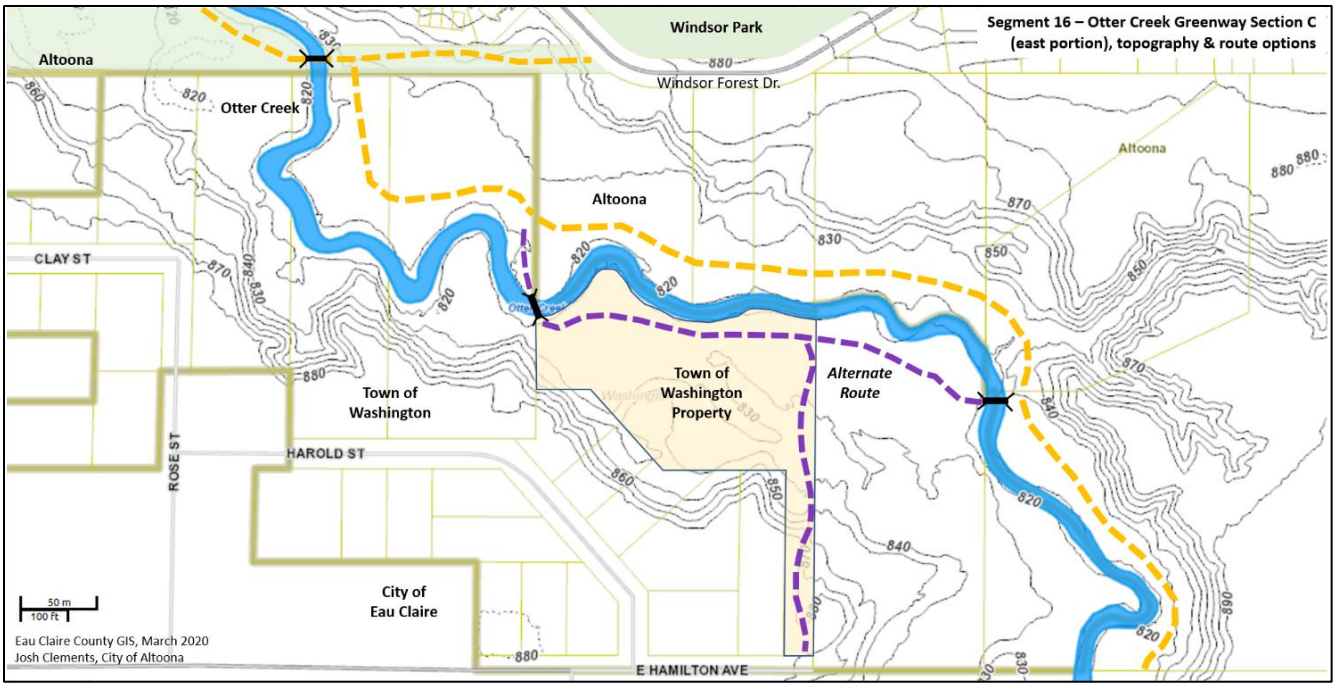
are in the Town. The southern route option would require working with only one private property owner, but require two bridges to accomplish.

In terms of easement or land acquisition, this may be the most complex section of Otter Creek Greenway due to multiple existing private property owners.

Expected Constraints:

- Land Ownership (purchase / easements)
- Multiple bridges





30. Otter Creek Section E

Section D of Otter Creek Greenway Trail begins approximately at the edge of the Windsor Forest Neighborhood, where the Mayer Family Property meets Otter Creek, coinciding with the confluence of a natural drainage ravine and Otter Creek. The section continues to Prill Road, although it may be completed incrementally. This section is approximately 3,900 feet, depending upon ultimate alignment. The trail is envisioned to continue beyond Prill Road within the Otter Creek Corridor.

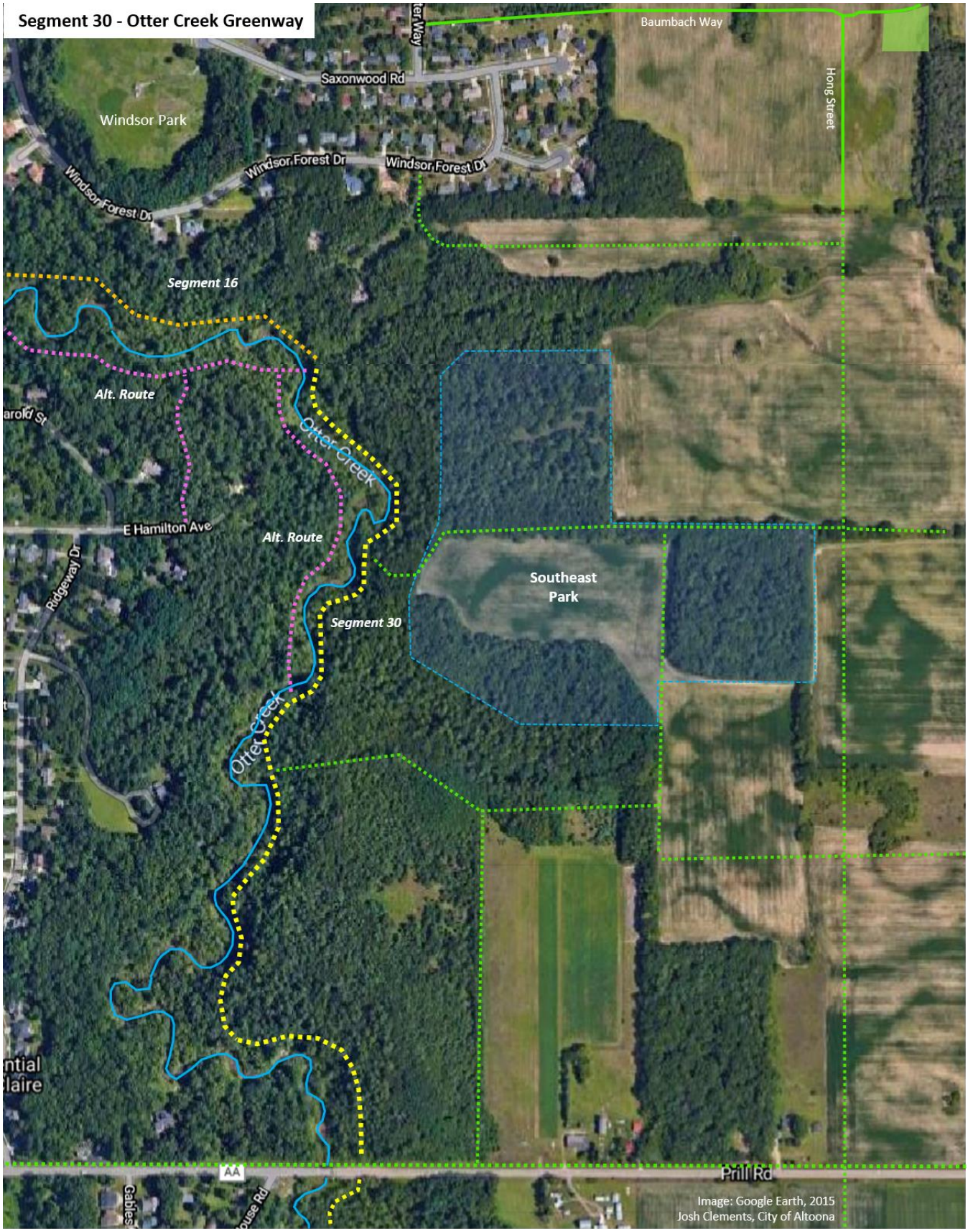
This Section of trail is envisioned to connect into the adjoining neighborhood in multiple locations, as topography allows, to enable convenient access. Most notably, South Neighborhood Park is envisioned to be located adjacent to the Greenway, serving as a regional recreational destination, and a natural trailhead.

Unlike the other sections in this Plan, this portion is not well explored or evaluated in the field during the planning process. The alignment shown on the planning document is based upon remotely identified topography and current land ownership. Remote sensing suggests the floodplain area along the east side of the creek is relatively narrow prior to constraint from steep slopes.

Portions of the land in this Section may be dedicated as part of required public land dedication through the development process. However, much of the envisioned Greenway is steep slopes and floodplain, which do not contribute to the minimum dedication under the current parkland dedication ordinance.

Expected Constraints:

- Steep slopes
- Land ownership (purchase / easement)


Segment 30 - Otter Creek Greenway
Baumbach Way
Saxonwood Rd
Windsor Park
Windsor Forest Dr
Windsor Forest Dr
Windsor Forest Dr
Hong Street
Segment 16
Alt. Route
Otter Creek
E Hamilton Ave
Alt. Route
Ridgeway Dr
Southeast Park
Segment 30
Otter Creek
AA
Prill Rd
Image: Google Earth, 2015
Josh Clements, City of Altoona

7. Spooner Avenue

Spooner Avenue is the primary east-west route through the central portion of Altoona. The segment identified in this Plan is bounded by Willson Drive and Division Street, approximately 5,000 feet. This is a shared roadway with Eau Claire County, as County Highway A. The current pavement width is 42 feet, with relatively few driveways along most of this stretch due in part to access control exercised by Eau Claire County. The existing conditions provides more than sufficient pavement area for separated bicycle lanes achieved through pavement markings.

Elevating the bicycle facilities within this corridor would provide a transportation route for the central neighborhoods of Altoona, which connects to existing trial system along North 10th Street, North Willson, and Spooner (west of Willson).

Stretch Project – As the primary east-west corridor, creating a protected or grade separated trail would create a convenient and effective bicycle transportation route. A protected bicycle facility could be accomplished without street modifications through adding barriers and intersection markings. This route could be tested by utilizing cones or some other relatively inexpensive and temporary measure.

Creating a grade separated trail, either in place of a sidewalk or as a new facility, would require reconstruction to narrow the road width and improve curb ramps.

Expected Constraints (protected lane):

- Public adjustment to facility
- Snow removal regime

8. Tower Park

As described in Chapter 5, Tower Park is a wooded area intended to function as a passive recreation area and public open space. The Park includes a water tower, but is otherwise undeveloped. The Park has good pedestrian and bicycle access from the Oakleaf trail. The concept for Tower Park includes adding a recreational walking path through the park that encourages people to stroll, and pause to contemplate or observe wildlife. This trail could formalize existing paths that connect the park to Timberview Drive and Moonlight Bay Drive into the property.

9. Cinder City Park

The trail section illustrated in Cinder City Park is approximately 1,900 feet along the north and east perimeter of the park. This improvement would create a ¾ mile loop around the park for users or programs in the park, walkers or recreational cyclists. This loop could be incorporated into other potential improvements of the park, such as development of the rear carnival area into a recreational amenity.

10. 10th Street West

10th Street West is one of two contagious north-south routes in the central area of Altoona (the other being 3rd Street East). This section is approximately 3,800 feet from Spooner Avenue to North Hillcrest Parkway. The

typical street width is 37 feet, which flares to 41 feet toward North Hillcrest on the southern end. The north end connects to the existing trail along North 10th Street.

10th Street is an arterial with relatively high traffic during commuting periods. The portion along 10th Street Park frequently hosts heavy vehicle parking during games and events.

Improving bicycle facilities along 10th Street would create a route that serves adjacent neighborhoods and work toward completing the Central City Loop. This section also serves as the connection point to the east-wide route paralleling Highway 12.

The existing pavement width permits creation of separated bicycle lanes. These lanes would need to be shared parking in the vicinity of 10th Street Park.

Stretch Project – Creating a protected bike lane or grade separated trail or sidepath would create a convenient and effective bicycle transportation route. Given the existing street width, a protected bi-directional lane might be accomplished with modest disruption to driveways and existing street parking. Solving the bike routing challenge near 10th Street Park would be the remaining obstacle. Should 10th Street require reconstruction, adding a protected bicycle facility should be a top priority.

11. North Hillcrest Parkway Segment A

Segment A of North Hillcrest Parkway improvements is bounded by 10th Street West and McCann Drive, approximately 1,950 feet in length. North Hillcrest Parkway is a frontage road with developed property predominately on the north side of the road. The portion of North Hillcrest to the east of McCann Drive features an existing sidepath. The right-of-way width varies, creating challenges for implementation.

Beginning on the west, the right-of-way width of N. Hillcrest is 60 feet, with property improvements on both sides. The pavement width of North Hillcrest in this area is 26 feet, providing approximately 15 feet on either side for a trail and limited boulevard without modifications to the existing roadway geometry. In order to continue west from this Segment, users would need to navigate the busy intersection with 10th Street West, with vehicles travelling to and from nearby Highway 12, to reach the existing trail on the west side of 10th Street and then proceed along the existing trail parallel to Highway 12.

North Hillcrest curves to run adjacent to Highway 12, and through this portion the right-of-way on the north side narrows to approximately 6 feet, leaving over 25 feet on the south side. Along the north side is a slope that creates a constraint as well as location of at least one hydrant.

The eastern half of this section has a consistent 15’ feet of right-of-way outside the existing road to construct a trail and provide a limited boulevard. There are some existing private uses that encumber the right-of-way that will be relocated.

Following a cursory visual inspection of the pavement and curb, this stretch of road may be a candidate for surface reconstruction in 5-10 years. At that time, oddities in the right-of-way width might be ameliorated by shifting the road over, particularly through the existing curve, to enable construction of a trail and boulevard.

Expected Constraints:

- Irregular right-of-way width
- Topography (limited)

12. Bartlett Avenue

Bartlett Avenue is a neighborhood street that carries most of the traffic to-and-from the Altoona School Campus. This is a key route for Safe Routes to School to support safe walking, cycling, and vehicle traffic calming. The portion of Bartlett Avenue from 10th Street West to 7th Street West was reconstructed in 2019 and includes curb extensions. The frontage along the school campus also features curb extensions.

Adding bicycle lanes along Bartlett Avenue may improve vehicles staying within the travel lanes and encourage bicycling. Visual surveys conducted during the 2018 Safe Routes to School Plan observed school-aged cyclists using sidewalks to avoid vehicle conflicts.

The portion of Bartlett Avenue west of 10th Street West to S. Willson Drive, and east of the school campus to 3rd Street East have sidewalks, but do not include other pedestrian or bicycle facilities to improve safety and encourage use. The section from 3rd Street West (at the School Campus) to 3rd Street East may be an opportunity for a protected bicycle lane or trail when that stretch is reconstructed in the future, connecting to existing trail facilities at that 3rd Street East intersection.

Expected Constraints:

- Street parking during events at 10th Street Park
- Vehicle traffic corresponding to school hours

13. Devney Drive

Devney Drive is a neighborhood street that is thought to accommodate greater than typical vehicle traffic due to nearby residential and commercial uses, as well as serving as an alternative east-west route parallel to Highway 12. The street is 37 feet wide with sidewalks, and street parking is frequent. The City added sidewalks through the Business Park on the west end of Devney Drive in 2019, along the south side of the street, partially completing a major area gap. Boulevard trees were added at that time for a portion of the corridor.

The primary bicycle route in this area is the parallel sidepath along North Hillcrest Parkway one block south.

Improving pedestrian crossing facilities along Devney Drive may improve safety for people travelling to Devney Park or walking the neighborhood. As described in Chapter 6, Devney Park is the primary parkland in terms of proximity for a substantial portion of the City.

Recommendations in this corridor include:

- Improving crossings of Devney Drive at Thompson and Glades Drive
- Complete boulevard tree planting as a priority corridor
- Add line lines to encourage vehicles to travel slowly and within lanes

14. Otter Creek Section C

    See summary under "Otter Creek Greenway", above.

15. Gateway Connector

    The City of Altoona, City and County of Eau Claire, and Department of Transportation collaboratively planned a connection of Eau Claire's Gateway Drive to County Highway A (3rd Street East) in Altoona in the 1980s. In recent years, the Cities have revisited discussion regarding this roadway connection, finding the bridge and associated improvements likely to be several million dollars. If that roadway project is initiated, it is the recommendation of this Plan that the bridge feature a primer separated bicycle and pedestrian facility.

    In lieu of this road bridge, and even if that bridge is constructed, there is the opportunity to extend existing separated trails through this corridor to create a high-value transportation and recreation connection. Gateway Drive in Eau Claire currently features a separated trail along the west side of the road. This could connect through property owned by the City of Altoona to bridge Otter Creek and connect directly to Fairway Park (#14). Future trail improvements through the Otter Creek Greenway could also connect around this point (#16). See illustrations include above in the description of trail segments within the Otter Creek Greenway.

    A bridge would be required to traverse Otter Creek. Given the anticipated frequency of use and regular seasonal flooding of Otter Creek, this bridge should be a robust structure sufficient to accommodate service vehicles and endure inundation without damage.

    This connection could be a high-value connection for residents of both cities to access the trail system, as well as provide opportunity for Altoona residents to cycle to employment and services areas near Oakwood Mall and the nearby concentration of retail and service firms.

    The precise alignment of the trail in navigating the steep slopes and floodplain will require more detailed study. The illustration provided is a general concept of the alignment.

16. Otter Creek Section D

    See summary under "Otter Creek Greenway", above.

17. North Hillcrest Parkway Segment B

    This second segment of North Hillcrest Parkway Trail (in addition to #11, and the existing portion) connects 3rd Street East to Oak Drive, a distance of approximately 2,900 feet. This segment may be implemented in three pieces due to varying timing, context and constraints. This Segment is important for several reasons. This route is likely to serve as the primary east-west bicycle and pedestrian facility parallel to Highway 12 due to topography. In addition, his Segment creates a much-needed non-automobile connection to the Hillcrest Estates Manufactured Home Community that has capacity for over 350 dwellings. Further, future growth of the City is likely to proceed to the east and south.

Development of "Ry Estates" at 1000 North Hillcrest Parkway completed a missing roadway segment and created the first piece of this trail Segment along its frontage, with full boulevard. The remaining 300-foot section of trail to the west of Ry Estates to 3rd Street East is planned for 2021.

A notable constraint is that the remaining portion of North Hillcrest Parkway has open stormwater ditches. In order to accommodate the 1,400 foot trail section from Ry Estates to the current terminus of North Hillcrest, a stormwater solution must be determined.

The remaining portion of this Segment will be approximately 740 feet, along a future extension of North Hillcrest Parkway to Oak Drive. Oak Drive is presently a private road and the entrance to Hillcrest Estates. This portion of North Hillcrest Parkway is been Officially Mapped by the City to provide continuity in transportation facilities and to provide an alternative route to Hillcrest Estates.

Expected Constraints:

- Stormwater management
- Completion of roadway connection – Hillcrest to Oak Drive.

18. Windsor Park

As described in Chapter 5, Windsor Park is comprised of lands encompassing a former landfill. The vision for this park includes a 940-foot trail connection between Saxonwood Road and Nottingham Way. The trail may or may not be accompanied by a road connection, and include lands owned by the City and targeted for future development. Located near the center of the Windsor Forest Neighborhood, this connection would improve connectivity through the neighborhood, which has only one contiguous road. In the big picture, in addition to improving neighborhood connectivity, this link would improve east-west mobility for non-automobile travel and recreation.

19. North Hillcrest Parkway Segment C

This Segment follows approximately 3,500 feet of future North Hillcrest Parkway from Oak Drive to North Mayer Road. This roadway is included in the City's Official Map. This Segment will improve non-motorized access to employment near North Mayer Road, as well as serve as an east-west route for future neighborhoods and business uses east along the Highway 12 corridor.

Expected Constraints:

- Industrial Uses near Industrial Drive and North Mayer Road may create conflicts between commercial vehicles and trail users.

20. Beach Road

The South Beach Road Segment is approximately 4,500 feet from Lake Road to County KB Bridge. The preliminary design of this Segment has been completed and was planned to be constructed in 2014 with financial support from a State DNR grant. The trail is intended to be on the north/east side of the road, with adjacent properties in the Town of Washington. The City was unable to secure a necessary grading easement

for construction, and thus implementation of the trail was suspended and the grant funding reallocated to complete trails in River Prairie.

This Segment would complete an important missing segment of a large recreation loop that includes Lake Road Trail. This trail may also create new transportation opportunities. With corresponding improvements to the County Bridge, this route serves as only one of two connection points between areas of Altoona and Town of Washington north of the railroad, and those south.

This Segment is part of a regional route identified by the Eau Claire County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, generally leading east on Lake Road, Beach Road, County HW SS, and points easterly.

Expected Constraints:

- Grading easements
- Safe integration with County KB Bridge.

21. Bartlett Avenue – Bridge Connection

This 900-foot Segment connects the existing separated trail constructed along Bartlett Avenue in 2018-19 from the Altoona Elementary School driveway to the County KB Bridge. The roadway in this area is built up from adjacent lands for the purpose of the bridge approach, and constructing a trail will require grading activities.

Expected Constraints:

- Grading construction and easements
- Safe crossing of Bartlett Avenue / HW KB and integration with County KB Bridge.

22. Nine Mile Creek Road North

Improvements along Nine Mile Creek Road (County HW SS) in the form of an expanded paved shoulder (minimum) to separated multi-use trail (recommended) contributes to a regional recreation route identified in the Eau Claire County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and MPO Plan.

It is unlikely that urban development will occur within this corridor in the short- or medium-term. However, including this regional route in City plans reflects support for implementation, and long-term thinking if these areas become incorporated into the City.

23. Nine Mile Creek Road South

This Segment of Nine Mile Creek Road connects the County KB Bridge to the east and south to a future intersection of North Hillcrest Parkway, just north of Highway 12. This Segment is approximately 3,800 feet in length.

This Segment, when combined with #22, will continue trail continuity and create a connection to future planned neighborhoods east of Highway SS. Similar to #22, the portion of trail near the Bridge has steep slopes and limited shoulder, so grading activities would be required for implementation.

24. North Hillcrest Parkway Segment D

Segment D of North Hillcrest Parkway Trail connects North Mayer Road to Nine Mile Creek Road. The Segment would be approximately 1,250 feet. This roadway is included in Department of Transportation maps for the Highway 12 corridor as well as the City's Official Map. There are topographical challenges to implement this roadway connection, however, if that project is completed ensuring that there is a trail connection would provide continuity in the east-west route parallel to Highway 12.

25. Future Neighborhood Trail

The lands east of Nine Mile Creek is expected to become a mixed-use neighborhood with significant residential and commercial uses. The neighborhood will be approximately 160 acres extending to Six Mile Creek. Segment #26 will follow the Officially Mapped future addition to North Hillcrest Parkway. Segment #25 is intended to serve as the corresponding northern route into the neighborhood.

26. North Hillcrest Parkway Segment E

Segment E of North Hillcrest Parkway Trail follows the future addition to North Hillcrest Parkway east from Nine Mile Creek. This roadway is planned to continue to east to North Elco Road, a distance of approximately 6,800 feet (1.3 miles). Uses along this corridor are expected to be predominately commercial and light industrial use, and this trail will serve as the primary transportation and recreation route parallel to Highway 12.

27. Baumbach Way

The first component of Baumbach Way, beginning at Winchester Way, was constructed in 2019 with the foresight to add a separated multi-use trail that would continue east and serve as the future primary route for new neighborhoods. The remaining 2,600 feet to Mayer Road is included in the approved plan for this new development area. Construction is anticipated in 2020-21.

28. Hong Street

As described elsewhere in this Plan, the area bounded by Highway 12, Mayer Road, Prill Road, and Otter Creek is identified as the "South Neighborhood" in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. Hong Street is the planned neighborhood street connecting Highway 12 to Prill Road (and beyond).

The 1,260 portion of Hong Street immediately south of Highway 12 is planned to be constructed with the development of that property in 2020-2021. A separated multi-use trail is planned from Baumbach Way to the south, and like the road, intended to serve as the primary bicycle and pedestrian route through the neighborhood. Hong Street is expected to continue south from Prill Road with the accompanying separated trail.

The remaining portion of Hong Street to Prill Road, approximately 3,900 feet, will likely be implemented in two phases with uncertain timing when those properties become developed. Additional trails are planned to

branch from Hong to the east toward Mayer Road and west toward Otter Creek approximately as illustrated in the trail map. While the precise locations will be determined through future neighborhood planning and property development, the purpose of illustrating these connections is to ensure that they occur.

29. Mayer Road

Mayer Road is County Highway AA, a rural highway with limited paved shoulder, high posted speed (45), open stormwater ditches, and a 100-foot-wide right-of-way. For the purpose of this plan, it is assumed the roadway geometry will not change in the near future.

The vision for this corridor is to utilize the right-of-way space to add a bi-directional separated trail for both transportation and recreational functions. This area is controlled by Eau Claire County, and thus cooperation will be required.

30. Otter Creek Greenway Segment E

Segment E of Otter Creek Greenway Trail is approximately 3,900 feet through undeveloped floodplain. See "Otter Creek Greenway" earlier in this summary.

31. Prill Road

Like Mayer Road, Prill Road is County Highway AA (that portion west of Mayer Road), a rural highway with limited paved shoulder, high posted speed (45), open ditches and a 100-foot-wide right-of-way.

The vision for this corridor is to utilize the right-of-way space to add a bi-directional separated trail for both transportation and recreational functions. This area is controlled by Eau Claire County, and thus cooperation will be required. It is envisioned that this trail will connect to trails along Hong Street and Mayer Road, recreational trails within the Otter Creek Corridor, and continue east past the Prill Road – Mayer Road intersection.

Prill Road connects directly to Eau Claire and becomes Golf Road, a high-traffic arterial roadway that serves the regional retail and service area that surrounds the Oakwood Mall and U.S. Highway 53 corridor. As Altoona continues to grow, it is anticipated that this corridor will carry greater vehicle traffic. A trail within this corridor may provide a particularly direct and well-used cycling connection to nearby employment and services from Altoona residents, as well as recreational riders.

A particular constraint of this corridor is the bridge over Otter Creek and the approach on both sides. The bridge surface is 40 feet wide, providing space for a cycling lane, but with minimal separation and no physical protection from vehicles.

Spot Gap

The following Spot Gaps are conflict points or pedestrians and cyclists to safely and conveniently navigate dedicated infrastructure. These include intersections, gaps in facilities, natural features, and other barriers.

The following Spot Gaps are indicated in the Planned Bicycle and Pedestrian Segments map with a brief explanation of each element. Projects will require detailed feasibility, design, and engineering. Project numbers are assigned generally from west and north to east and south and are not illustrated in priority order. This list is not anticipated to be inclusive of all conflict points through the existing and planned system.

Project	Location	Summary	Type
1	Intersection of Oakleaf Way and Lake Road	Pedestrian and cyclists continue to use this point to cross Oakleaf Way under unsafe conditions, rather than travel just to the north to utilize the protected crossing.	Crossing Gap
2	Intersection of North Willson Drive and North 10th Street	Gap between the sidepath along North Willson and North 10th Street, including safe crossing facilities at an intersection with higher speeds and sight line constraints.	Network Gap, Crossing Gap
3	Clubview Drive at Spooner Avenue	This higher traffic, uncontrolled intersection is a challenge for pedestrians and cyclists. The roadway includes a larger crossing distance.	Crossing Gap
4	Willson Drive at Spooner Avenue	This higher traffic, uncontrolled intersection is a challenge for pedestrians and cyclists. The roadway includes a larger crossing distance.	Crossing Gap
5	10th Street West at Spooner Avenue	A main intersection of two minor arterials near higher density housing and between two parks. Includes the current terminus of a multi-use trail.	Crossing Gap, Area Gap
6	Fairfax Street	This corridor does not include pedestrian or cyclist facilities. It is a barrier for non-motorists to travel between the neighborhood and nearby commercial destinations.	Area Gap
7	10th Street West at Bartlett Avenue	Intersection adjacent to Altoona City Park, this is a critical intersection on a primary route to the park and Altoona School campus	Crossing Gap
8	School Campus	The Altoona School Campus is a high traffic area for motorist, pedestrians and cyclists. Area for further addition to improve safety and convenience	Quality Gap
9	Highway 12 at Highway 53	The existing trail along Highway 12 / Clairemont Avenue features several accessibility and convenience constraints.	Quality Gap
10	10th Street West at North Hillcrest Parkway	High conflict intersection with higher speeds, dynamic vehicle movements, and great crossing distance.	Network Gap
11	10th Street West at Highway 12	Existing trail crossing of an at-grade State highway.	Quality Gap
12	Downtown	This area includes conventional sidewalks without additional crossing features or bicycle facilities. An increasing area of commerce, pedestrian and cyclist interest.	Network Gap
13	Bartlett Avenue at 3rd Street East	This intersection was reconstructed as part of the project to rebuild Bartlett Avenue and add the multi-use trail. A refuge island was added, but management challenges persist.	Quality Gap

14	3rd Street East at Devney Drive	Primary crossing for residents accessing Devney Park from the east.	Quality Gap
15	3rd Street East at North Hillcrest Parkway	Intersection of two multi-use trails at a busy vehicle intersection	Quality Gap
16	3rd Street East at Highway 12	Trail crossing of an at-grade State Highway	Quality Gap
17	Fairway Park East	Likely bridge crossing of Otter Creek to continue trail network to the south and east.	Network Gap
18	County Highway KB/SS Bridge	Narrow bridge with dynamic vehicle movements, without pedestrian or cyclist accommodations. A regional "pinch point" in all transportation modes.	Network Gap, Crossing Gap
19	North Hillcrest Industrial Area	Gap in an envisioned primary east-west trail corridor through an existing industrial area with significant large vehicle traffic.	Network Gap
20	Mayer Road at Highway 12	Signalized intersection of a County highway and State Highway. Likely of increased interest for future accessibility	Network Gap, Crossing Gap
21	Nine Mile Creek Road	Anticipated development of new neighborhoods will create trail crossings of Nine Mile Creek Road, likely at multiple locations.	Network Gap, Crossing Gap
22	Prill Road Bridge	Utilize a recently replaced bridge over Otter Creek for regional trail connectivity	Network Gap
23	Hong Street at Prill Road	Long-term anticipated conflict point	Crossing Gap
24	Mayer Road	Long-term anticipated crossing of the County highway	Crossing Gap
25	Mayer Road at Prill Road	Long-term anticipated crossing of County highway. Used by recreational road cyclists at present	Crossing Gap

1. Intersection of Oakleaf Way and Lake Road

   Oakleaf Way and Lake Road each feature well-used separated multi-use trails that are backbones of the trail network of Altoona, and are identified as regional routes. The crossing of the Oakleaf Trail at Lake Road includes a crosswalk navigating a busy vehicle intersection that features turn lanes off of Lake Road as well as from Oakleaf Way. In this sense, it is a classic conflict at the intersection of two higher traffic roadways with a popular walking and cycling facility. The crosswalk is not regarded as insufficient, but improvements may improve visibility and safety.

   The different factor at this location is that there is a trail on both sides of Oakleaf Way and crossing of Oakleaf at this location is discouraged due to safety concerns. The posted speed on Oakleaf is 35, and the curve of the road associated with the bridge crossing of the railroad creates visibility challenges at the intersection. Approximately 300 feet north is a protected mid-block trail crossing that provides significantly improved visibility for trail users and motorists. Despite this crossing, trail users are regularly seen crossing Oakleaf Way at this point.

2. Intersection of North Willson Drive and North 10th Street

   This indictor includes both a spot gap as well as a conflict point. The spot gap is approximately 350 feet between Fairway Drive and North 10th Street where a gap exists in the multi-use trail. North Willson Drive features a separated trail that connects south to Spooner Avenue, and turns west at Fairway Drive. Sidewalk exists in this gap, but the narrow pavement introduces conflicts between cyclists and other users, and does not clearly reflect physical continuity in the route. To complete this gap, the existing trail from North Willson

and Fairway Drive is to cross to the east side of North Willson at the existing crosswalk, proceed north to North 10th Street by expanding the sidewalk, and improve the existing crossing at North Willson.

The conflict point is the existing crossing point at the intersection of North Willson and North 10th Street. North 10th Street includes a popular separated multi-use trail, and this crossing is a route south to the trail along North Willson. The posted speed on North 10th Street is 30 and vehicle traffic often is moving faster, and the curve of the roadway combined with the bridge barriers creates an environment of limited visibility.

To improve visibility of this crossing, this location may be a candidate for a mid-pavement barrier similar to a refuge island to slow vehicles. Crossing indicator signage should be added to boulevards on each side.

3. Clubview Lane at Spooner Avenue

Spooner Avenue features a significant separated trail that is a regional connector between Altoona and Eau Claire. The Clubview neighborhood to the north includes an integrated multi-use trail in place of a sidewalk. This area of Spooner Avenue is known as the "Spooner Dip", due to the significant hill through the Otter Creek corridor. With a posted speed of 35, vehicles frequently travel at greater speed.

When Spooner Avenue was resurfaced in 2015, the project scope included a pedestrian refuge island at this point. While visibility is generally good at this location, adding a refuge island may encourage pedestrian and bicyclist circulation.

4. Willson Drive at Spooner Avenue

The separated trail parallel to North Willson Avenue meets the trail along Spooner Avenue at this intersection, and bicycle facilities to not presently continue further south on South Willson or east on Spooner. This intersection is a conflict point includes speed, roadway geometry and visibility challenges. Spooner Avenue is County Highway A, so facilities must be reviewed and approved by the County.

- Spooner Avenue east of Willson is posted at 30 mph, and 35 mph to the west. Due to roadway geometry and Spooner Avenue serving as the major arterial connection between Altoona and Eau Claire results in greater observed speeds.

- Spooner Avenue bends slightly west of Willson Drive as the road begins to traverse downhill and also features the bridge over Highway 53. This bend reduces visibility of persons crossing Spooner Avenue from motorists travelling from the east.

- The eastbound lanes of Spooner Avenue include a west turn lane (three total travel lanes) and approximately 48 feet of pavement width.

The proposed improvement to the crossing situation is to add a pedestrian refuge island, add colored crosswalk markings, and associated signage.

5. 10th Street at Spooner Avenue

The intersection of 10th Street and Spooner Avenue is a busy intersection for vehicles and pedestrians controlled with stop signs. While there is a complete sidewalk network at the intersection and in the vicinity, the only bicycle infrastructure is the separated multi-use trail along North 10th Street that begins/ends at this intersection.

To improve pedestrian safety and cyclist circulation, the proposed improvement includes colored crosswalks, improved signage, and the addition to defined lane lines to encourage vehicles to remain in their lanes.

6. Fairfax Street

Fairfax Street is an approximately 2,400-foot-long shared roadway and boarder with the City of Eau Claire. Fairfax is also an arterial street that separates a major commercial node to the west, anchored by the Eastridge Center, and the Sherman-Highland neighborhood to the east. This general area presents opportunities for people to live and work in relatively close proximity, with access to some household necessities.

Fairfax Street currently does not have any pedestrian or cyclist facilities on the Altoona side, nor for most of the Eau Claire frontage. This stretch of roadway is planned for reconstruction in 2022, as described in trail segment #2 earlier in this Chapter. There are two well-developed and well used mid-block pedestrian refuge islands at the Eastridge Center.

Focused intersection improvements may greatly improve safety and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists across this street that currently functions like a barrier. This corridor is also in close proximity to existing pedestrian and cyclist facilities, including the Spooner Avenue Trail, which currently ends at Fairfax Street, and the pedestrian underpass beneath Hastings Way at Fenwick Avenue in Eau Claire.

- Preserve or enhance existing mid-block crossings;
- Consider refuge island at Fairfax and Spooner/Highland at the trail crossing;
- Enhanced crossing facilities at Fenwick, aligning with the pedestrian underpass of Hastings Way;
- Improved crossing at Hamilton, to enable increased mobility routes toward Hastings and Bracket Avenue.

7. 10th Street West at Bartlett Avenue

This intersection is the only controlled stop along 10th Street between Spooner Avenue and Highway 12, is a key pedestrian crossing adjacent to 10th Street Park, a well-travelled vehicle intersection with traffic travelling west toward the School Campus and into the neighborhood, as well as a popular crossing location for students walking and cycling to and from school. This intersection becomes particularly congested during morning and afternoon school traffic, as well as during events at the park.

The section of Bartlett Avenue to the east was reconstructed in 2019, adding curb extensions and crosswalks. The crossing of 10th Street could be improved with colored pavement crosswalks during future projects, and signage added, including the deployment of crosswalk signage within the roadway during appropriate conditions.

8. School Campus

The Altoona School Campus includes instruction for students in grades 3 through 12, as well as the district administration offices. The district is also among the largest employers in the City. The City has implemented improvements along the Bartlett Avenue to improve pedestrian safety, such as curb extensions, crosswalks, and signage, but additional measures could be added. The west side of the campus, including 7th Street West, does not have a similar level of pedestrian access or safety improvements and is an area of concern. Busses cue along 7th Street, access to the primary parking area is from 7th Street, and many pedestrians and cyclists approach the campus from this direction.

Short-term recommendations include adding pavement markings, signage, and in-road crosswalk signage to slow vehicle movements and guide pedestrians. Long-term, physical improvements to the roadway and pedestrian facilities should be evaluated.

The School District campus is the focus of the Safe Routes to School Plan to utilize the 6 E's to improve both conditions and habits for walking and biking to school for students and staff. The immediate physical interface of the campus and the surrounding transportation system is the first layer, and expands outward along key corridors of travel. This portion of the Place Plan focuses on physical infrastructure, but the practice of safe and effective walking and bicycling include many additional education, encouragement and enforcement practices.

9. Highway 12 at Highway 53

The Highway 12 corridor west of 10th Street West includes a separated multi-use trail that is nearly contagious until the intersection with Menominee Street in Eau Claire, 4.2 miles to the west. Destinations along this corridor include Eau Claire Memorial High School, UW Eau Claire upper campus, Chippewa Valley Technical College, HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital, and many more. This corridor and trail facility is an important regional route.

The portion of the trail crossing of Highway 53 at the "four point" interchange is outside of the City of Altoona's jurisdiction in the Town of Washington and owned by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The bridge crossing does include a physical space for pedestrians and cyclists, but one that is challenged by crossing high-traffic and high-speed highway ramp approaches. The overall environment of the bridge crossing is not comfortable for non-motorized users due to exposed conditions to moving and idling vehicles in a high traffic environment. Transition points between the various sections of travel surface are rough transitions for cyclists and barriers for persons who may have mobility challenges.

Improving this crossing area in cooperation with the DOT may include reducing or eliminating the abrupt vertical changes in the travel surface as transition points, and adding physical barriers between the trail and vehicles areas.

10. 10th Street West at North Hillcrest Parkway

This intersection of 10th Street West at North Hillcrest Parkway is a transition area where vehicles approaching and departing the nearby Highway 12 are typically travelling at greater speeds, with increased congestion, and motorists focused on the positioning of vehicles. The existing pavement width of 46 feet is a significant distance to safely cross as vehicles are positioning from a wide two-lane environment of 10th Street to a 4-lane environment approaching the highway.

North Hillcrest Parkway is envisioned as the primary east-west trail route, continuing the existing facilities from the west along Clairemont Avenue / Highway 12. This intersection represents a conflict area for pedestrians and cyclists to successfully access and navigate this route.

The existing trail connection to Clairemont Avenue begins at the west side of this intersection and proceeds almost uninterrupted for over 4 miles (as briefly described in #9). Presently, there are no bicycle facilities north or east beyond this point. Sidewalks exist to the north, but not east.

Improving safe access to the existing trail facility, and transition to future facilities along 10th Street (segment #10) and North Hillcrest (#11) involve improving facilities at this intersection. These improvements should be timed and designed in coordination with trail improvements.

Recommendations:

- Add significant curbed pedestrian refuge island within 10th Street at the trail crossing;
- Enhanced crosswalk markings at all encouraged crossing situations of both roadways.
- Generous signage

11. 10th Street West at Highway 12

The intersection of 10th Street West and Highway 12 includes surface improvements, including refuge islands, crosswalks and pedestrian countdown indicators. The facility is typical of a surface crossing of a state highway. This is a crossing of interest due to trail facilities on both sides, as well as being only one of two signalized crossings of Highway 12 in Altoona, and the only one with pedestrian and bicycle facilities (until 3rd Street East is completed in 2020/21).

The City should remain vigilant on conditions of this crossing, and opportunities to improve visibility and safety, such as improved pavement markings.

12. Downtown

The historic downtown area of Altoona is experiencing increased investment and business activity, drawing pedestrians, cyclists, and demand for street parking. This area of Altoona has a complete street grid and sidewalk system. Intersections of Lynn Avenue at Division Street and 1st Street West feature basic crosswalks. As the City determines options for encouraging new development and revitalization in pursuit of a more traditional business district environment, measures to improve pedestrian access and safety will elevate in importance. Lynn Avenue in this area is County Highway A, thus any improvements will be reviewed by the County.

13. Bartlett Avenue at 3rd Street East

The Bartlett Avenue / Highway KB trail was completed from 3rd Street East to the Elementary School in 2018 and 2019, including the addition of a pedestrian refuge island at this intersection. This intersection is the crossing of the multi-use trail that exists south of this point along 3rd Street to the new Bartlett trail.

Due to this intersection location on the downslope of a hill on 3rd Street, this intersection does not have good visibility from motorists travelling northbound, and the hill contributes to increased vehicle speed. This is a key point in the trail system, and attention will need to be maintained to ensure safe functioning of the facility, and potentially identifying opportunities for continued improvement.

14. 3rd Street East at Devney Drive

Devney Drive serves as a primary neighborhood street and access to Devney Park, connecting to the 3rd Street West sidepath. This intersection with 3rd Street is an offset intersection with those neighborhoods to the east, as people navigate for transportation or recreation, especially people seeking the park and circuit walkers.

The crosswalk crossing of 3rd Street East functions as a mid-block crossing at this “T” intersection, with good visibility. This intersection may be a candidate for a pedestrian refuge island or other crosswalk treatment to improve visibility and seek to calm vehicle speeds.

15. 3rd Street East at North Hillcrest Parkway

Similar to spot #10, the intersection of 3rd Street East and North Hillcrest Parkway is a transition area where vehicles approaching and departing Highway 12 are typically travelling at greater speeds, increased congestion, and positioning of vehicles. The existing pavement width of 46 feet is a significant distance to safely cross as vehicles are positioning from a wide two-lane environment of 3rd Street to a 4-lane environment approaching the highway.

North Hillcrest Parkway is envisioned as the primary east-west trail route, and this intersection represents a conflict area for pedestrians and cyclists to successfully access and navigate this route.

Unlike the 10th Street analogue, the sidepath exists west along North Hillcrest, north along 3rd Street East, and connections east along North Hillcrest and south along 3rd Street East and across Highway 12 are planned for 2020/21 construction. The sidepath to the north is on the west side of 3rd Street, and to the south will transition to the east side to cross Highway 12, further elevating the importance of a safe crossing facility.

Recommendations:

- Add significant curbed pedestrian refuge island within 3rd Street at the trail crossing;
- Enhanced crosswalk markings at all encouraged crossing situations of both roadways.
- Generous signage

16. 3rd Street East at Highway 12

The trail crossing of Highway 12 at 3rd Street East, on the east side of this intersection, is currently under design by the WI DOT to be constructed in 2020 or 2021. It is likely to be of similar character to the existing crossing at 10th Street (#11). The City should remain vigilant on conditions of this crossing, and opportunities to improve visibility and safety, such as improved pavement markings.

17. Fairway Park East

This element has two components: switchback trail navigating the hillside, and future bridge crossing of Otter Creek. The existing switchback trail is a remnant of the former Country Club and utilized in the City's trail system. Areas of the switchbacks have been washed out and require repair and stabilization.

The envisioned future trail connection south to Gateway Drive in Eau Claire (#15) introduces a bridge crossing of Otter Creek. This bridge location might also be used to continue the Otter Creek Corridor trail to the east, utilizing existing City property rather than navigate easements from multiple property owners and account for more challenging topography. This bridge could function as a gateway feature for multiple routes.

18. County Highway KB/SS Bridge

The County Highway KB/SS bridge over the railroad functions as a regional pinch point for all mobility modes, including vehicles and cyclists. With residential growth in Altoona and the Town of Washington, as well as addition of the Elementary School in close proximity, this bridge is experiencing much greater traffic than even a few years previous.

The bridge deck is only about 28 feet wide with no pedestrian or bicyclist facilities. Even with the implementation of the four trail segments that converge on this point (#20 – 23), improvements to the bridge would be necessary for safe circulation to separate motorists from other users. There is limited opportunity to create separation with the existing bridge geometry. Utilizing jersey barriers to create a limited five-foot-

wide protected lane would reduce vehicle area to about twenty feet (accounting for the footprint of the barriers). Future improvements to the bridge may be necessary to create a safe environment for non-motorists, or the addition of a parallel structure to accommodate the trail.

19. North Hillcrest Industrial Area

    Future phases of North Hillcrest Parkway include a segment adjacent to Curt Manufacturing and JD Manufacturing near North Mayer Road. This is likely to be an area of conflict between semi vehicles and other users, including motorists and non-motorized trail users. The design of the future roadway and trail will need to incorporate this context to improve visibility, separation of users, and limit conflicts.

20. Mayer Road at Highway 12

    A trail crossing of Highway 12 at Mayer Road would present the opportunity for a third signalized crossing of Highway 12. This is perhaps the final opportunity to create an additional at-grade crossing, as no additional signalized intersections are anticipated in Altoona.

21. Nine Mile Creek Road

    The envisioned trail parallel to Nine Mile Creek Road (#23) is anticipated to cross the road at two points, at future extension of North Hillcrest Parkway, and a future neighborhood street to the north area of this neighborhood. Nine Mike Creek Road is County SS with posted speeds anticipated to be 35, even following development of adjacent lands. The crossing facility at North Hillcrest Parkway should be similar to others near Highway 12 (#11, #16) with a robust refuge island, enhanced crosswalk and ample signage. The crossing facility at the future neighborhood street is also recommended to include a refuge island due to anticipated speed, roadway geometry, and proximity to the Elementary School.

22. Prill Road Bridge

    This element has two components: incorporating the future Prill Road trail facility into the bridge, and the continuation of the Otter Creek Corridor recreation trail and crossing of Prill Road. The bridge deck is approximately 40 feet, with well defined lane lines providing approximately seven-foot shoulders. This is a fair arrangement for bicycle and pedestrian circulation, although this space is not physically separated from the vehicle travel lanes.

    The envisioned Otter Creek Corridor trail would need to cross Prill Road at some point within this vicinity for continuity. There may be space under the bridge to accommodate access, but seasonal and storm-based swelling of the creek may limit trail use and safety, as well as long-term maintenance. This routing will require greater study.

23. Hong Street at Prill Road

    Hong Street is planned as the primary north-south route through the south neighborhood, and expected to continue south of Prill Road. A multi-use trail is expected to parallel Hong Street and also function as the primary bicycle and pedestrian route. The trail crossing of Prill Road should be designed to protect non-motorized users with a robust refuge island, enhanced crosswalk, and other measures. Prill Road is anticipated to remain a County Highway facility with posted speeds of 35.

24. Mayer Road and Future Intersection

Development of future neighborhoods adjacent to Mayer Road is expected to result in a new intersection with associated trail improvements. This major neighborhood street is expected to meet and cross Mayer Road approximately 1,200 feet north of the Mayer Road – Prill Road intersection. Similar to the intersection of Hong Street and Prill Road, this facility should feature physical structures to protect non-motorized users crossing a County Highway with posted speeds of 35 to 45 anticipated.

25. Mayer Road – Prill Road Intersection

This intersection of two County Highways is expected to accommodate greater vehicle traffic in the future as development continues east and south of Highway 12. This location is not presently within the City boundary, but the City seeks to coordinate improvements with the County. Safe and separated crossing for pedestrians and cyclists given the volume and speed of vehicles is a priority. The future trails along each Mayer and Prill Road are expected to be key non-motorized routes for both transportation and recreation.

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Planned Bicycle & Pedestrian Segments

THE CITY of Altoona
WISCONSIN

1000 0 1000 2000
scale 500 feet

N W E S

River Prairie Park
Veterans Tribute
River Prairie Center
River Prairie Conservancy
Tower Park
Clubview Park
Altoona Lake Park (City)
Lake Altoona County Park
Cinder City Park
City Hall
Centennial Park
Altoona City Park
Altoona School Campus
Highland Park
Jellybean Hill
Devney Park
Altoona Elementary School
Windsor Park
Fairway Park
Perseverance Park
Gateway Connector
SE Park
Otter Creek Greenway

Features

- Park or Natural Area
- Future Park or Natural Area
- School District
- City Boundary

On-Street Bicycle Facilities

- Existing Lane
- Proposed Lane

Off-Street, Paved Multi-Use Trail

- Existing Trail
- Proposed Trail

Off-Street, Unpaved Recreation Trail

- Existing Trail
- Proposed Trail
- Proposed Sidewalk Connection

1 Facility Segment

2 Intersection or Conflict Point

Joshua Clements, City of Altoona • Bicycle & Pedestrian Segment Map • 2021-0414

THE CITY of Altoona

CHAPTER 7: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES & TOOLS

> "The truth about a city's aspirations isn't found in its vision. It's found in its budget."
>
> - Brent Toderian, former Chief Planner, Vancouver BC

This chapter outlines a recommended implementation strategy that summarizes tools, timelines, and considerations for completing projects and changes in policy. Recommendations include direct and functional projects, while others, especially those highly aspirational, visionary, or long-term and nature, will require significant additional study, preparation, and time to design and implement. This vision will be achieved through a series of strategic short, medium, and long-term actions that will guide the City toward achieving the type of community it wants to be.

The *Place Plan* is intended as a flexible and living document that should be revisited frequently. This plan recommends a wide range of short-, medium- and long-term strategies to be implemented. As such, the City should monitor progress on implementing these strategies on a regular basis, and commit to reviewing these strategies every five years to update changing priorities and needs to reflect progress. Examine what is working, determine what may need revision, and incorporate most contemporary practices.

Availability of public funds over the next five to ten years will be a determining factor as to which projects can be undertaken and when. This is largely due to five important factors:

(1) The opening of River Prairie Park and the River Prairie Center in 2017, which will result in a rebalancing period of staff and budgets.

(2) The large tax increment district that encompasses River Prairie and adjacent developments that occupies a large and dedicated portion of the City budget until that district successfully closes.

(3) Maintenance and replacement schedule of other public works, principally streets and sewer system.

(4) State revenue limits.

(5) Recent rate of development and population growth increasing use of existing facilities, with delay in receipt of property tax revenue.

It is generally understood that there is never sufficient funding to fully meet all of the needs and opportunities identified to pursue the community's vision, values, and ambitions. Funding for public open spaces need to be considered in the broader context of the community's needs, pragmatically evaluate resources available, and how to align operational and capital budgets with the community's vision as whole system of facilities and services. As described throughout this plan, the values expressed by the community seem to indicate a strong desire for a robust, quality, and accessible system of public spaces. Research indicates that these public spaces contribute to public health, safety and welfare.

What does successful implementation strategy look like?

- The city should emphasize maximum coordination and complete integration of all subsystems of public space whenever a planning exercise, public project, or private development review as a matter of both culture and procedure, to further the common and thorough implementation of *excellence in public space* in letter and spirit. This will require diligence, use of process management tools, and cooperation among departments to review the various system principles throughout a project.

- Apply principles of monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement in terms of how public space is designed, managed, and coordinated in implementation.
- Regularly revisit the plan framework and objectives for opportunities for improved understanding and effectiveness and to maintain a contemporary understanding of best practices in public space.
- Existing public spaces, including parklands, playgrounds, recreational facilities, trails and sidewalks are well maintained, recreational programs are successful, and progress is made toward achieving the goals outlined in this plan including proximity to parks, complete and contiguous bicycle and pedestrian system, and preservation of natural areas.

A key implementation strategy of this plan, as summarized in this chapter and highlighted through the document, is to ***continually improve Altoona's capacity to design and manage high-performing public spaces*** that meet contemporary community needs and desires. In order to successfully implement, and continue to improve, the place design and management concepts in this plan, staff conducted a literature review regarding which specific factors are most likely to influence the adoption of these principles. According to public space planning scholar David Barth, *Diffusion of Innovation Theory*[1] as applied to public space design and management provides the basis for understanding how to approach this challenge.

Diffusion of Innovation Theory

If the ambitious philosophy of public space is to be achieved, and the various suggested projects completed, an understanding of how new ideas are concepts are created, accepted, and acted upon is an important factor to guide systemic implementation. This may appear academic but having an understanding of community change and the process of guiding that change can only aid in achieving the community's vision.

While most of this planning document illustrates a design and management philosophy sampling established best practices and emerging innovations, successfully implementing positive change, as well as continuing to improve over time, will depend upon consciously continuing to improve the capacity of the city as well as community partners. As needs and expectations of public space improve, cultural norms and preferences change, and understanding of space design and management grow, this space philosophy will ideally improve as well. Research into Diffusion of Innovation Theory suggest that implementation is the greater impediment to institutionalizing the innovation than is adopting it in concept. Of particular importance is the presence of influential champions who adopt and further the cause, overcoming indifference or resistance. Creating a continuous strategy to institutionalize *excellence in public space* as well as improve community capacity are key to successful implementation.

Project Prioritization Principles

The following principles are utilized to assist in determining relative priority in implementing public space projects in the City of Altoona. These principals shall be considered toward implementing the overall *excellence in place* vision and complement the foundational public realm planning objectives described in Chapter 3. Some of the recommended tools and methods utilized to evaluate and implement these principals are described later in this Chapter.

[1] Barth, David. 2015. "The Adoption of Innovation in the Planning and Design Process- Creating High Performance Public Spaces that Contribute to Community Sustainability". University of Florida. https://ufdc.ufl.edu/UFE0047636/00001

A. Enhance **network connectivity** for all public spaces and natural areas, including parks, environmental corridors, and networked bicycle and pedestrian systems. While opportunistic development and reconstruction of roadways have been a large driver of construction and siting of parks, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, emphasizing network connectivity means that priority will be elevated for stitching together existing discontinuous networks. Opportunities will continue to determine cost and timing to complete improvements, but the entire system of open space is of greater function when systems are contiguous and connected.

   The degree to which bicycle and pedestrian facilities connect priority destinations and network is complete is of particular importance. The degree to which environmental corridors, such as watercourses and sensitive habitats as well as constructed greenways are cohesive is equally crucial to overall functioning and habitat for flora and fauna.

B. **Equity** in the location, design, and access to public spaces. Public spaces are our common spaces upon which social relationships are developed and maintained and enable people to lead vibrant lives. Equity affirmatively includes **racial equity**, in terms of access to all populations, especially those historically underserved, and **economic equity**, in terms of household income and/or wealth. Equity also means **geographic equity** in ensuring all areas of the City have proximate access to high-quality public spaces and amenities.

   Walking and bicycling are the most affordable modes of urban transportation. Although each play an increasing role in recreation, their importance as an integral and affordable part of the complex urban transportation system has been rediscovered and reaffirmed. Equitable access for all people means that people in all neighborhoods can successfully complete trip by walking, bicycling, or other non-motorized mode (such as wheel chair, skateboard, etc.). Many households do not have access, or limited access, to a car due to constraint or by choice. Many residents are too young or old, incapable of operating a vehicle due to illness or disability, cannot afford the significant expense of vehicle ownership and operation, or choose to utilize other modes for a variety of reasons. The *Place Plan* strives to achieve equity of access by ensuring geographic equity throughout the City, especially those areas that have higher proportion of transportation limited households, and by ensuring facilities are designed to remove barriers, are convenient and safe to access and use.

C. Target investments, facilities, and amenities of potential **high impact**. The *Place Plan* identifies many opportunities and needs to continually work toward the *excellence in place* vision. However, stewardship of limited financial resources necessitates evaluating projects to determine relative impact to maximize positive impact and progress. The selection of projects will be deliberate, thoughtful, and engage the public and stakeholders as relative impact is evaluated.

   High impact improvements in the pedestrian and bicycle network follows examination of needs and opportunities as illustrated in this plan. Aside for improvements of opportunity, such as street reconstruction or a new development area, certain improvements are likely to yield greater improvements in safety, convenience, network continuity, access and use.

D. Be cost efficient and improve **fiscal and structural performance** of the City, recognizing that public open spaces are fundamental parts of the urban environment and provide significant public benefits that are

expected by citizens. Projects should provide significant potential impact and benefit for the investment. While allowing for and encouraging experimentation and creativity, investments should generally be dedicated to projects that produce the highest overall public impact, cognizant of municipal investment to implement, operate, and maintain.

Projects will be evaluated for long-term fiscal impacts to the greatest degree practicable, including induced and indirect effects. This means that investments in public spaces can result in more or less efficient land and infrastructure development patterns (structural performance), thus impacting municipal property tax revenues in a more-or-less permanent basis. Investments in enhancing parks and pedestrian or bicycle facilities have been shown to positively impact property values of adjacent and nearby properties, resulting in indirect municipal revenue.

Reinvestment in Existing Infrastructure

The City owns and operates many parks athletic facilities and complexes of varying ages. These properties and facilities are summarized in Chapter 5: Open Space Inventory. Many are aging to the point that redesign, replacement, or renovation is needed. The City has been very active in recent years in evaluating and completing replacement of obsolete facilities and equipment, such as the 10th Street Park Recreation Building and Devney Park Playground. The Hobbs-Altoona Sports Center in particular is approximately 30 years old with equipment and facility elements that are at the end of their lifecycle. Significant reinvestment in the facilities is likely to maintain existing uses or to accommodate other uses. The City has begun meeting with facility stakeholders to discuss how to effectively reinvest in Cinder City Park to accommodate the uses currently supported by the Hobbs.

Other envisioned improvements and equipment replacements are included in Chapter 5, as well as the Projected Capital Improvement Plan. These references should be reviewed annually and updated periodically to ensure continual progress toward maintaining existing facilities and in pursuit of long-term objectives. Specific cost estimates are included for projects where a recent improvement in the City provides a baseline upon which to create the projection. Each project should be studied prior to initiating the budget request to ensure adequate resources to achieve the desired outcome.

Many components of this plan may and should be incorporated into other projects as appropriate and feasible, such as roadway improvements or new development. At each opportunity, the expectation is that the greatest possible advance toward the vision, goals and objectives should be realized. Meaning, the City will pursue continuous improvement while identifying and taking advance of opportunities to leap forward. This plan should be used as a guide to aid in deciding which projects should be considered, and as a tool to raise funds from other sources.

Strengthening Collaborative Partnerships for Future Program and Facility Development

Significant collaboration between Altoona Parks and Recreation, and various groups including the Altoona School District, Altoona Youth Hockey Association, Altoona Youth Softball Association, Chippewa Valley Off Road Biking Association, Visit Eau Claire, and many others already goes on for many of the program provided in Altoona. Collaboration with those groups relevant to these projects should be increased to ensure that services provided by the City can be maximized. Partnerships between the City and other organizations can provide stable management of specialized facilities while leveraging additional citizen and business investment and volunteerism beyond the City's typical capacity.

Trend Based Programming

Altoona City staff evaluate participation in existing recreation programs, communicate with peers in the region, and connect through professional and industry associations to track trends in recreation interests. The Covid-19 pandemic has turned some trends upside down, emphasizing the need to continually examine and re-examine programs that are desired and well-used.

Surveys, program information and sale of recreational equipment over the past year suggest a national surge in interest in activities as diverse as bicycling and walking, to boating and birding. These same surveys seem to indicate that increased interest in outdoor activities is durable beyond the current public health concerns, to some extent.

Innovation

The City of Altoona has become known for entrepreneurialism, learning from successes and examples from other regions, and innovation. For example, the City meticulously studied Phoenix Park in Eau Claire when designing River Prairie, as well as other successful destination parks to learn what features worked well, what could be improved upon, and how these lessons inform how to approach our context. Staff studied the performance space in Phoenix Park not to replicate, but to learn from. The result is the Prevea Amphitheater that successfully hosts large travelling performers, as well as twice-weekly live music series throughout the summer.

In January 2021, the City hosted the "U.S. Crokicurl Championships". Crokicurl is an ice sport combining the tabletop game crokinole and ice sport of curling. Developed by Winnipeg Canada by Public City Architecture, Altoona city staff learned of the game while exploring opportunities for fun winter programming. The Public City Architecture team shared their design, City staff reproduced the first known rink in the United States. Weather constrained use of the rink to about three weeks, but the City is planning for multiple rinks throughout the 2021-2022 winter season. Similar to the popularization of Kubb in Eau Claire over the past decade, Crokicurl is an example of Altoona's creative approach.

Above: City Administrator Mike Golat, Crokicurl Mastermind^{tm}, testing the first U.S. rink.

Evaluation and Monitoring

Successful plan implementation includes evaluation and monitoring strategies as essential components to ensure that the vision, values and goals of the plan are implemented as intended. A monitoring program will also enable City staff to appropriately allocate staff and financial resources to implement prioritized initiatives. Effective monitoring also provides a means of identifying changing conditions would indicate attention is needed to resolve maintenance challenges, document successes, or that change in strategy is needed.

Monitoring programs should focus on identifying both short-term and long-term measures of success. Short-term measures may include facility and program use tracking, qualitative user surveys, and observations of public spaces. Long-term components may include progress toward achieving the projects and objectives envisioned by this plan. In addition to being critical for tracking implementation and internal adjustments to city operations, monitoring indicators may be useful to communicating the value of public space to the public, and how the city is progressing on achieving key indicators.

Funding and Acquisition

Land Acquisition and Facility Development

The City of Altoona has grown tremendously over the past ten years, including outward growth of new neighborhoods as well as investments in existing neighborhoods. Most existing neighborhoods have dedicated parkland or have access to parkland and recreational trails within a 10-minute walk. The City should continue to seek solutions for those areas of the City without such proximity, and to ensure equitable access and quality.

As the City continues to plan for new neighborhoods, the City should advance planning tools, such as this Plan, to identify preferential locations for new parks, recreation trails, and natural areas to preserve. Some of these areas are identified in this Plan in Chapter 6.

City ordinances require that new neighborhoods be required to dedicate property for public open space, and/or to provide a fee in lieu of dedication through the land subdivision process. The current requirement is that five percent of new subdivisions are dedicated to parkland uses. The current fee in lieu of parkland dedication requirements were last amended in 2001. These dedication standards should be revisited to ensure achievement of the National Recreation and Parks Association benchmark of 10 acres of “active” parkland for every 1,000 people.

The City should ensure that the maps and illustrations in this plan are current and utilized as a definitive guide for open space decision. The City’s Official Map and Comprehensive Plan should be utilized in a similar fashion.

Community Fund-Raising and Volunteer Groups

Community groups and civic organizations are sometimes willing to organize fundraising efforts to assist with parks acquisition, equipment, and upkeep, and may also be able to marshal volunteer labor to assist with certain projects such as trail creation and maintenance. For example, the Chippewa Valley Off Road Biking Association (CORBA) manages the off-road recreational trails in Centennial Park through an agreement with the City, contributing hundreds of hours of volunteer labor.

Local businesses and corporate support should also be sought. Both non-profit and for-profit organizations can be recognized for their support through acknowledgement through site signage and in City communications.

501(c)3 Foundation

The City can set up an endowment fund as an additional means of providing continual financial support for park acquisition and development, such as a "Friends of the Altoona City Parks" group. An endowment fund works like a permanent savings account. The amount individuals contribute, which is the principal, is never spent. The interest accumulates and thereby creating a continual source of resources for the purpose. A park endowment fund can provide a means for residents to either bequeath money or provide ongoing donations to the City's park system, with the certainty that the money donated will only be used for the advancement of recreation in the community. Grants to an endowment fund are typically tax deductible under federal and state law.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

As part of a broader plan to redevelop an area, the City can utilize tax increment financing to assist with parkland, trail, and transportation facilities acquisition and development. There are some limitation to what revenues from a TIF district can be use for, generally the costs associated with constructing public building cannot be funded with TIF.

The City of Altoona's strategy to develop River Prairie was intentionally predicated on creating a destination park, preserving river shoreline, and a comprehensive recreational trail system. Tax Increment District #3 was utilized as the funding mechanism to utilize the revenue from future planned development to support the design and construction of amenities that serve to stimulate both that planned development and serve the broader community and region. While TID #3 is still active, resources are available to complete complementary public space improvements as the City and joint review board determines is justified.

While the City is unable to create additional TIDs while TID #3 is open, the City should plan ahead for how TIF might be a powerful tool to guide reinvestment through the creation of public amenities.

Grant Programs

Grants are an important source of funding offered through state and federal agencies as well as non-profit partners. Grants are typically used for signature or larger projects such as natural area preservation, community park facilities, and other notable investments. The following table provides a summary of common state and federal recreation grant programs and is not an exhaustive list.

Funding Programs by Category	Maximum Award	Typical Due Date	Granting Agency
Natural Heritage Trust Grant (NHLT)			
A non-profit conservation organization that buys land and hold conservation easements. Conservation easements are voluntary agreements between a landowner and an ease holder (NHLT) to protect land by restricting certain uses. Conservation easements are voluntary and permanent.			
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON)			
• This fund is used to implement projects are identified by both the local and the state Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan • In general, land acquisition, development, and renovation projects for public outdoor recreation purposes are eligible for LWCF projects. LWCF does not include the "nature-based outdoor recreation" restriction that the Stewardship Local Assistance Programs do.	50% local match required	May 1	DNR

Recreational Trails Program Grant			
• Eligible projects include: maintenance and restoration of existing tails, development and rehabilitation of new trails, and acquisition of easements or property for trails. • May only be used on trails which have been identified in or which further a specific goal of a local, county or state trail plan included or reference in a statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan required by the federal LAWCON.	Up to 50% of the total project costs of a recreational trail project.	May 1	DNR
Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program			
The Stewardship Program was established in 1989 to preserve Wisconsin's most significant land and water resources for future generations and to provide the land base and recreational facilities needed for quality outdoor experiences. These goals are achieved by acquiring land and easements for conservation and recreation purposes, developing and improving recreational facilities, and restoring wildlife habitat. This is an umbrella program that funds the following grants:	50% local match required	May 1	DNR
Aids for the Acquisition and Development of Local Parks (ADLP) • Acquire land or easements and develop or renovate local park and recreation area facilities for nature-based outdoor recreation purposes (trails, fishing access, and park support facilities)			
Urban Green Space (UGS) • Acquire land or easement in urban or urbanizing area to preserve the scenic and ecological values of natural open spaces for nature-based outdoor recreation, including non-commercial gardening			
Urban Rivers (UR) • Acquire land or easement to river flowing through urban or urbanizing areas to preserve or restore the scenic and environmental values of rivers for nature-based outdoor recreation			
Acquisition of Development Rights Grants (ADR) • Acquire development rights (easements) fort he protection of natural, agricultural, or forestry values, that would enhance nature-based outdoor recreation			
Statewide Multi-Modal Improvement Program (SMIP)			
Transportation Enhancements Program (TE) Provides facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists, including rehabilitating and operating historic transportation building and structures, streetscaping, and landscaping near transportation facilities	Funded through TEA-21 20% local match required (funds are not awarded upfront, but are reimbursed) Construction up to $100,000 Non-Construction up to $25,000		DOT
Surface Discretionary Grant Program (STP-D) Provides flexible funds, which can be spent on a wide variety of projects, including roadway projects through the Federal-aid highway system, bridges, transit facilities, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities; any project that fosters alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle trips.	20% local match required (funds are not awarded upfront, but are reimbursed) Construction up to $100,000 Non-Construction up to $25,000		DOT
Urban Forestry			
Provides technical service and financial assistance to communities for developing urban forestry programs. Priorities include:	50% local match required. Grants range from $1,000 to $25,000	October 1	DNR
1. Communities needing to develop an urban forestry plan;			

2. Communities needing worker training; and 3. Communities needing to conduct a street tree inventory. Eligible projects include: (1) Undertaking a street tree inventory; (2) Training for City tree workers; (3) Developing urban open space programs; (4) Developing urban forestry plans; (5) Developing a tree ordinance; (6) Developing a public awareness program; (7) Tree planting and maintenance			
Lake Protection and Classification Grants			
Designed to assist lake users, lake communities and local governments as they undertake projects to protect and restore lakes and their ecosystems. Eligible projects include: • Purchase of property or conservation easement • Restoration of wetlands • Development of local regulations or ordinances • Lake classification projects that allow counties to design and implement local land and water management programs tha tare tailored to specific classes of lakes in response to various development and recreational use pressures • Lake protection projects recommended in a DNR-approved plan including watershed management, lake restoration, diagnostic feasibility studies, or any other projects that will protect or improve lakes	25% local match required. $200,000 maximum per project	May 1	DNR
Recreational Boating Facilities Grant			
• Capital improvements to provide safe recreational boating facilities and for feasibility studies related to the development of safe recreational facilities • Also includes purchase of navigation aids, dredging of channels of waterways, and chemically treating Eurasian water milfoil	50% local match required	Quarterly	DNR
NRPA Fund Your Park			
• Crowdfunding platform service designed for park and recreation agencies	Service is free, tax deductible donations	Varies Yearly, typically two periods annually	IRPA

Private Development

As introduced in the Introduction, the public realm and the performance of public space is intimately connected to the character and arrangement of private property. As people occupy or travel through public space, be it as a motorist, cyclist, pedestrian, or other means, most of what is observed is upon private property. This condition, guided by regulations and standards, and aggregated across hundreds or thousands of properties, shapes our perception of the community and how we experience it.

Development regulations that control how and where development occurs and how property is arranged are commonplace and integral to local government. Examination of the City's zoning and subdivision ordinances are primarily focused on how the use and improvements upon a property relate to the public and to adjoining properties.

The arrangement and features of private property effect our travel mode choice, and in turn, relate to how our public ways are designed and managed. If I desire to walk or bicycle to my destination, does that destination welcome my arrival by that mode? Is it safe, convenient, and enjoyable?

The Place Plan focuses primarily upon the arrangement, character, features and management of public space and public properties. However, to approach space as a whole system, private property must be included as it is

integral. The City's polices controlling or guiding development and management of private property should be viewed through the lens of how these policies advance excellence in public space, and the City's related goals of equity, sustainability, social and economic vibrancy. The core stated purpose of regulatory tools such as zoning are to advance the public health, safety and welfare of the community. If we recognize that the condition of our public space as central to that mission, then our zoning standards should respond to that purpose.

ALTOONA PLACE PLAN - CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

Category	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040
Buildings																				
10th Street - Ballfield Restrooms & Concessions					$80,000															
Hobbs-Altoona Sports Center Rehabilitation																				
Renovation & Occupation of Eau Claire County Highway Facility																				
Parks Improvements																				
Tower Park (TID 3) - Finish Parking Lot; Park Sign; property markers; walking trail; birding features		$75,000																		
Clubview Conservation Park (TID 3) - Simple sign; property markers; tree management		$15,000																		
10th Street Playground Phase I (Toddler & Swings)															$35,000					
10th Street Playground Phase II (Primary Equipment)	$225,000															$300,000				
Devney - Playground Fall Surface Refurb/Replace								$20,000										$30,000		
Devney - Playground Replacement														$150,000						
Highland - Playground			$130,000															$200,000		
Highland - Court Refurb/Replacement			$30,000																	
Highland - Pavilion Electrical & Rehab			$7,500																	
Fairway Park - Playground Replacement					$50,000										$60,000					
Fairway Park - Pavilion & Court Refurb					$10,000															
Cinder City Park - Playground Replacement				$50,000																
Centennial Park - Playground Replacement										$100,000										
Centennial Park - Phase II																				
Windsor Park - Planning & Design																				
Windsor Park - Implementation																				
Lakefront Park																				
Prairie View Ridge Park - Playground; simple pavilion; tree planting		$125,000															$150,000			
South Neighborhod Park																				
East Neighborhood Park																				
River Prairie Park Feature Refurb/Replace																				
Woodington Park																				
Trail Connections																				
Centennial Park - S.Willson Trail (TID 3?)		$75,000																		
Eau Claire River Trail - River Prairie to Eau Claire (TID 3)			$200,000																	
Beach Road (TID 3)																				
N. Hillcrest - 10th Street to McCann																				
Forestry																				
Emerald Ash Borer Mitigation Program	16,000	16,000	16,000	16,000	16,000	16,000														
Tree Planting	60,000	61,500	63,038	64,613	66,229	67,884	69,582	71,321	73,104	74,932										
Boulevard Tree Inventory																				
Urban Forestry Plan																				
Parks Maintenance Equipment																				
Replacement Utility Vehicle										$30,000										
Ballfield Drag Replacement Program	$14,566	$14,857	$15,154	$15,458																
60 Inch Lawn Mower Replacement Program		$13,000		$13,000		$13,000		$13,000		$13,000										
Vehicles																				
Replace 1 ton with 2 ton/plow/sander																				
Light Truck Replacement Program		$35,000																		
Water Truck with generator and pump	$45,000																			
Total Annual	**$360,566**	**$430,357**	**$461,692**	**$159,071**	**$222,229**	**$96,884**	**$69,582**	**$104,321**	**$73,104**	**$217,932**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$150,000**	**$95,000**	**$300,000**	**$150,000**	**$230,000**	**$0**	**$0**