Clintonville Downtown Revitalization Plan
Clintonville, WI
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Table of Contents

Executive Summary  4
Introduction  6
Clintonville Today  10
  Market Analysis  10
  Land Use and Circulation  19
  Infrastructure and Building Conditions  30
  Environment and Safety  34
  Organizational Assessment  35
  Relevant Trends  37
Key Issues and Opportunities  42
Vision, Goals and Strategies  46
  Revitalization Strategies
Implementation Plan  54
  Roles and Responsibilities  54
  Action Plan  57
  Funding  57
Appendices
  Armory Building Assessment
  Downtown Clintonville Market Study
  Downtown Clintonville Community Survey
  Downtown Clintonville Funding Summary
  Downtown Clintonville Implementation Matrix
Executive Summary

The overall goal of this plan is to develop a strategy for revitalizing downtown Clintonville.

Key challenges facing the downtown include: condition of buildings and infrastructure, business retention, an underdeveloped waterfront, quality and availability of housing, activities for youth, fiscal and organizational capacity to implement improvements, and the overall image of the downtown.

Downtown Clintonville possesses a number of assets which can be leveraged to support business growth and retention, new housing construction, and improved quality of life for the entire community. These assets include but are not limited to a diverse business mix, Olen Park, the Pigeon River, the Clintonville Public Library, City Hall, Police and Fire Stations, historic buildings, and extensive educational and recreational facilities.

The downtown is also well connected to other parts of the community and region, including adjacent neighborhoods and employment centers. Proximity to STH 45 and STH 22 provide good traffic volumes and access to adjacent townships, villages, cities and metropolitan areas in the region.

To address these issues, the following goals were identified:

1. Provide easily accessible, clean, safe, attractive, and welcoming downtown
2. Support downtown businesses, organizations, residents, and property owners
3. Provide resources to support downtown business and property owners
4. Enhance public infrastructure, historic buildings, parks, and the Pigeon Riverwalk
5. Create a stronger identity for downtown
6. Expand housing opportunities in and near downtown
7. Position downtown Clintonville as a preferred destination within the regional trade area
8. Develop an organizational framework and funding mechanisms to support plan implementation

VISION

Based upon community input and stakeholder meetings, an overall vision for downtown Clintonville, was identified:

“Downtown Clintonville is a great place to shop, eat, and explore”

Downtown Clintonville possesses a number of historic buildings.
**Implementation Strategies**

1. Develop a Downtown Clintonville Revitalization Team
2. Develop crowdfunding strategies to support downtown revitalization projects
3. Create a Mix of Downtown Business Retention and Expansion Programs
4. Evaluate an Incubation/Accelerator Program to Support Downtown Business Startups & Co-Working
5. Develop a Downtown Marketing Plan
6. Redevelop the Armory Building Site
7. Redevelop the Mercantile Building
8. Turn the Pigeon Riverwalk into a Destination
9. Establish Economic Development Programs to Support Downtown Businesses and Redevelopment
10. Develop Partnerships with Community Organizations to Provide Additional Downtown Programming for Youth and Adults
11. Develop Partnerships with Large Employers (public and private) to “adopt” Portion of Downtown
12. Improve Downtown Housing Conditions
13. Promote Downtown Living Opportunities
14. Expand window display program to fill vacant space
15. Develop and Implement Public Art Projects (murals, benches, etc...)
16. Support Additional Outdoor Seating Areas
17. Clearly Identify and Steer Visitors to Downtown
18. Expand Menu of Kid & Senior Friendly Downtown Activities
19. Support Growth of Business Niches Downtown
20. Improve Downtown Accessibility
21. Maintain and Improve Downtown Infrastructure and Historic Buildings
22. Provide Dedicated Funding to Support Downtown Revitalization Efforts
23. Update City Plans and Codes to support Plan Implementation

**APPENDIX**

The appendices include the following PDF files:

- Armory Building Condition Report & Recommendations
- Downtown Clintonville Market Analysis
- Downtown Clintonville Community Survey Results
- Downtown Clintonville Funding Summary

Action plans, timelines, and funding strategies are identified to support plan implementation.
Introduction

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN
The overall goal of the plan is to develop a strategy for revitalizing downtown Clintonville. Discussion with City staff and input from a July 17 2017 meeting with the Clintonville Redevelopment Authority (RDA) identified the following priorities for this study:

1. Develop a long-term vision for downtown
2. Provide housing for the elderly
3. Enhance the river area, both upstream and downstream of downtown
4. Identify partnerships and organizational strategies for plan implementation
5. Identify strategies to fill empty storefronts downtown
6. Identify opportunities to retain and expand existing businesses downtown
7. Identify redevelopment and adaptive re-use opportunities downtown including the old mercantile site
8. Analyze and make recommendations regarding use of TIF

PROJECT APPROACH
To prepare the Downtown Revitalization Plan for Clintonville, the City and its consultant team worked collaboratively over a period of approximately nine months. Throughout the planning period the City and its consultant team (the “project team”) met regularly via phone and in-person to review existing conditions, gather public input, develop alternatives, and draft the plan itself.

Between June 2017 and February 2018 the following tasks were completed:

Task One: Existing Conditions
The consultant team reviewed existing plans and studies, and conducted an analysis of existing conditions in the district.

Task Two: Market Analysis
A market study was completed to address the potential for downtown housing and commercial opportunities.

Task Three: Vision, Goals, and Objectives
Through stakeholder meetings, community meetings, a community survey, and an open house, an overall vision for the downtown district was identified. Goals and objectives were developed based on public input and staff discussion.
Task Four: Armory Building Assessment & Planning

This task included multiple site visits and walk through inspections of the facility to verify and document current state of HVAC, electrical, plumbing, structural and architectural building features. A stand-alone report (See Appendices) outlining the current conditions of the facility in comparison to current State code requirements and applicable handicap accessibility standards was prepared along with a recommendation that the building no longer be used for larger programming events.

Task Five: Business Retention and Expansion

A set of strategies were developed to help guide business retention, expansion, and attraction efforts appropriate to the conditions within downtown Clintonville.

Task Six: Redevelopment Areas

The consultant team prepared a concept plan for the Pigeon River identifying infill development and waterfront enhancement opportunities intended to catalyze private sector investment in downtown.

Task Seven: Draft Plan

The City Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Code, Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and TIF records were reviewed and pertinent information compiled. Land use, building conditions and circulation patterns were analyzed and summarized into an opportunities and challenges graphic for the downtown area.

The consultant team then evaluated existing land use plans in the context of an updated community vision, anticipated market opportunities, and recommendations in order to prepare a draft revitalization plan for downtown.

Task Eight: Alternatives Open House

The consultant team organized an open house to provide the public an opportunity to view and offer feedback on:

- The vision, goals, and objectives coming from the Vision Workshop
- Strategies related to downtown revitalization
- Redevelopment areas including an expanded Pigeon River Walkway concept

Task Nine: Implementation Strategy

Individual implementation measures were identified for a number of partners such as various City departments, Chamber of Commerce, and other organizations. Funding strategies were identified to support plan implementation.

This plan was partially funded through a $25,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) obtained by the City
PREVIOUS DOWNTOWN PLANNING
This plan also takes into consideration and supports the objectives of several previous planning efforts undertaken by the City, several of which are summarized below.

The **City of Clintonville Comprehensive Plan Year 2030** is in the process of being updated. The current plan identifies several relevant goals for downtown including:

- Goal 7: Preserve a small town atmosphere including attractive community entrances, small businesses, a vital downtown, and community culture and events.

- Goal 2: Maintain and improve the utility, communication, and transportation infrastructure systems that promote economic development.

- Goal 2A: Maintain a vital downtown and provide adequate pedestrian areas and aesthetic features that encourage consumer activity and enhance community character.

The comprehensive plan also identifies several community facility improvements:

- Expansion or relocation of City Hall, Fire, and Police Station (completed)

- Storm water Management improvements including repair of failing catch basins and on-going maintenance of storm sewer mains and catch basins

The City’s **Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (2014-2018)** includes several relevant recommendations for the downtown as well including:

- Address parking lot runoff by adding in bigger flat stones to direct water to river or curb and gutter. Add signage and a kiosk explaining the site (Senior Center/Riverwalk)

- There is a need for a bike and pedestrian plan to accommodate users

- Seek out opportunities to create off-road routes and trails. Accessibility should be by vehicle, biking, and on foot. These parks should be linked to the public transportation system, existing and future trail network and sidewalks (larger parks including Olen Park)

STUDY AREA
Clintonville is situated in northern Wisconsin 40 miles west of Green Bay, 35 miles northwest of Appleton, and 45 miles east of Stevens Point. While any of these metropolitan areas are within a one-hour drive and are a viable option for work or shopping, both Shawano and New London are much closer (15 miles) and have a greater variety of businesses, including Walmart Superstores and other chains that vie for residents of Clintonville and its trade area.

Several smaller cities, villages, and hamlets surround Clintonville, spaced at fairly regular intervals. The most significant of these are Marion, Tigerton, Bear Creek, and Embarrass. Marion, with a population of 1,207, is the largest of these. Aside from a Dollar General, gas stations, and a few eateries, and some personal services, there are few businesses in the community. The remainder of the area is largely comprised of farmland that is lightly populated, along with some forest or wetland areas.

For the purpose of this analysis, the downtown is defined to extend along Main Street (State Route 22) from the Highway 45 intersection north to 13th Street. There are few regional attractions that might draw visitors to the area. Navarino State Wildlife Area/Natural Area is the largest of these, although several smaller natural areas or wildlife areas surround the city including the Pigeon and Embarrass rivers. None are sufficiently well-known or developed to generate significant traffic from outside of the immediate area, however Clintonville’s location within the trade area as well as its position along STH 45 and STH 22, contribute to high traffic volumes in the downtown study area.
Clintonville Today

The following section of the report provides an inventory and assessment of present conditions, strengths, weaknesses, and special issues facing downtown Clintonville. The overall purpose of the assessment is to identify key challenges and opportunities impacting downtown Clintonville, an important basis for developing a realistic vision, goals, and strategies for the future. The following topics are covered in this section of the report:

- Market Analysis
- Land Use and Circulation
- Infrastructure and Buildings
- Environment and Safety
- Organizational Assessment

Market Analysis

Clintonville faces significant challenges as it seeks ways in which to sustain the vitality of its downtown. The community has the same demographic concerns as most other rural small cities in northern Wisconsin. For retail, dining, and services, the city and its trade area have a small population base that is continuing to shrink over time. The population is also growing older, and older consumers tend to spend less than younger households. Meanwhile, most retail is realigning from dispersed locations to fewer regional centers. In addition to this competition, internet sales continue to absorb another one or two percent of the market every year.

Demographic concerns also impact the potential for housing development. Younger households buy homes, but their numbers are in decline. Meanwhile, there is a greater number of older households who will be moving to other types of housing. For some, this will be detached or condominium homes that are on a single level and are easier to maintain. Others will move into apartments, some of which will be age-restricted. While both of these options present an opportunity for new development, the flip side of the equation is that there will be fewer potential buyers of existing housing, which is typified by older, two-story homes.

Aside from demographics and competition, Clintonville’s downtown businesses are failing to capture market share due to issues of selection, quality, customer service, and marketing – especially utilizing the internet. These businesses will benefit from targeted training and one-on-one technical assistance to help them more effectively reach and serve households in the trade area. These programs will also help to support new businesses, a majority of which will be independent or franchise operations established by people living in the area.
There are opportunities for residential and business growth in the downtown. Aside from improving the condition of existing businesses, the market can support additional restaurants and some specialty retail. New housing can offer products not well represented in the market, such as condominiums and senior-oriented housing. These can be sited in the downtown, adjacent to the river and Olen Park, which will act as amenities to help sell or lease units.

Together with citizen priorities gathered through public engagement exercises, the results of the market analysis will be used to inform strategies that prioritize real estate development, business improvement, business attraction, infrastructure investments, civic and social programming, and other elements of the plan.

**METHODOLOGY**

Any market analysis will incorporate a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches in coming up with its findings. For this project, the consultant team visited Clintonville to inventory and observe its businesses, while approaching workers and customers to discuss their reasons for coming to downtown Clintonville, and their perceptions of the district. Additionally, nearby communities were visited to assess potential competition for existing or new businesses that might locate in Clintonville.

Data was derived primarily from US Census Bureau and Bureau of Economic Analysis sources. Definition of the trade area was aided by transaction data for a major credit card provider, that showed 67 percent of sales originating in four zip codes, for Clintonville, Marion, Tigerton, and Bear Creek. Population, household, and demographic characteristics were projected using an age cohort-component method incorporating county-level rates of birth and mortality. The results for the trade area were compared to, and found to be consistent with projections from the Wisconsin Department of Administration at the city and county level.

The next step in the process was to estimate spending by product line using data from the annual Consumer Expenditure Survey, adjusted for income and age of the reference person. Product line expenditures were then assigned to store type (or restaurant type) based on each store type’s market share of the product line.

Housing needs were projected using a combination of data sources, beginning with the projections above, and allocating demand based on regionally-adjusted housing preferences from the National Association of Realtors’ Annual Housing Survey and other sources. Estimates of the number of buyers are based on prior trends reported by the Wisconsin Realtors Association.

**MARKET ANALYSIS**

The market analysis assesses future opportunities for real estate and business development within Clintonville, with a specific focus on the downtown district. Existing conditions both within the community and in competing areas strongly influence what may be accomplished, and suggest advantages that may be highlighted, or disadvantages that can be addressed to improve future outcomes. These qualitative aspects of the market are accompanied by a projection of data trends related to population, housing, and purchasing behavior.

In the final analysis, Clintonville has limited opportunities for downtown housing development. These are dominated by, but not limited to single
family homes, condominiums, and apartments targeting an aging buyer or renter. No category of retail store or service shows a sufficient gap to suggest an outright need for new businesses. The market will continue to produce new businesses started by independent operators, in the sector in which they are most comfortable. Rather than pursue efforts to attract new businesses, the City and its partners will be better served by investing in training and one-on-one technical assistance to existing businesses to help them improve their offerings, attract new customers, and capture a greater market share. These same techniques will prove useful, and an incentive for newly started businesses.

**TRADE AREA**

Clintonville’s primary trade area was defined using aggregated credit card transaction data, showing that two-thirds of customers to the city’s businesses are drawn from just four zip codes – Clintonville, Marion, Tigerton, and Bear Creek. The city’s businesses draw their workers from a similar area, with the addition of Shawano. While workers from that city may spend minor sums in Clintonville during the work day, by and large, they do their shopping elsewhere. Shawano residents account for only about three percent of Clintonville’s sales. A similar percentage is drawn from New London and Shiocton.

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

The trade area has a current estimated population of 15,292 people living in 6,534 households. These are split between 5,187 homeowners making up 79.4 percent of the total, and 1,347 renters (20.6 percent).

The population has been declining for many years and is projected to trend lower at a fairly rapid pace. Over the next decade it is projected to decrease by 13.2 percent, to 13,278 residents. That population loss will not be distributed evenly across age groups. Nearly all age groups under 50 will become smaller, those over 50 will grow, and the greatest increases will be among those over 65 years. This has significant implications for the housing market and for consumer expenditures, as households headed by seniors tend to be retired with lower incomes, and make fewer purchases.

Some of these changes can already be seen in the local workforce, which shrank by about two percent between 2004 and 2014, the most recent years for which the data is available. In that time there was a significant increase in the number of workers over 55, while there are fewer younger workers. Some shifts have also occurred in the sectors in which Clintonville residents are employed, with increases in health care and social services (+71) and manufacturing (+68). More sectors saw a decrease in employment, including educational services (-56), retail trade (-41), accommodation and food services (-31), and professional, scientific, and technical services (-31).

While the population is expected to decline at a rate of about 201 persons per year, the number of households is projected to drop by an average of 37 per year. This slower pace is due to a decline in the number of people per household as one spouse may pass, couples may separate, younger adults marry later and have fewer children, and for other reasons. That dynamic does help to buffer the housing market from a more precipitous decline, although there are already a significant number of unoccupied housing units in the trade area. Housing used only seasonally accounts...
for 6.1 percent of the total, while those that are simply vacant (unused, not available for rent or sale) make up another 2.5 percent.

Households headed by seniors 65 and older will increase through 2027. The greatest increases will be among those 75 and older. Households in these age brackets are typically transitioning to retirement housing, which often consists of rental housing and special needs housing. The greatest declines will be among younger renters and first-time homebuyers, and in the 35 to 54 year old bracket of buyers seeking to purchase trade-up housing.

**HOUSING MARKET**

Because the area is losing population, Clintonville and surrounding communities will see a demand for 181 fewer housing units than currently exist, during the next five years. 124 of these will be owner occupied while 56 will be rentals. From 2022 through 2027 there will be a further decline in demand of 190 units, split between 140 owner occupied units and 50 rentals. Because they include existing residents, the tables in this section – for both buyers and renters – reflect households in the market and not reflective of growth in demand.

Declining numbers do not mean that there is no need to build new housing. There may be mismatches between units that are available and those the market desires, some housing may become obsolete or unmarketable, and there is simply the ability of new housing to compete with existing homes and apartments. Through households moving into or within the area, the market is expected to see 103 home buyers in 2017, gradually declining to 81 in 2027. The following table breaks these buyers out by their expected preferred style of home, though all of these may not be available in the market.
The next table projects the number of buyers at the maximum purchase price they would normally be expected to afford, based on household income. At the lower price points, there are a large number of homes in the market. Some of these may not be considered desirable due to their condition, size, location, features, or other issues. Moving toward the higher end of the market, there are fewer homes that may meet expected demand.

Age will also influence the market for particular design features. Older buyers will prefer homes all on one level, designed for easy maintenance, and perhaps incorporating accessibility features. Increasingly, these features are preferred by younger buyers, along with attached garages, a first floor laundry, and smart home technology. The city’s existing housing stock largely falls short on many of these characteristics.
As noted earlier, a decrease in the number of renters will not be as sharp as expected for home buyers. There will be an overall increase in the number of older renters. As with home buyers, they have special concerns related to apartment selection. Some portion of the total will be seeking assisted living arrangements. Among others, there will be a need for elevator access to upper floors, along with accessibility features, and greater demand for amenities like enclosed parking.

Examining the ability of renters to afford apartment units, it is clear that the area’s income profile has many households that can afford rents well in excess of what is currently offered in Clintonville. With these higher rents, tenants have an expectation for in-unit and community amenities. Higher-end units will have better quality finishes along with in-unit laundry, dishwashers, fireplaces, private patios or balconies, and attached garages. Apartment communities will feature clubhouses and fitness centers, and may be located adjacent to greenspace or other neighborhood assets.

Even while the number of households in the market is decreasing, the mismatch between market desires and the existing housing supply should create opportunities for new housing development. This can include detached homes priced from $150,000, and condominiums, at least a portion of which can be built on redevelopment sites in the downtown. Opportunities for apartment development should focus on market rate and low income senior apartments, and higher end apartment communities, all of which would be suited to a downtown location.
RETAIL GOODS AND SERVICES MARKET

The table on the following two pages contains estimates of the retail market potential generated within the primary trade area, the potential originating outside of that area (such as from worker spending or visitor spending), the total market potential, aggregate sales of existing downtown businesses, and the percent of the market being captured (market share). These figures are broken out to retail industry group.

Overall, downtown Clintonville captures about 4.1 percent of available spending. There are several reasons for this low percentage, and the most obvious is that there are relatively few retail businesses in the district. This, in turn, can be attributed to the relatively small market potential, strong competition in nearby larger cities, and the reliance – because of the small market – on independent businesses instead of chains.

Given the available market and competition, there are no specific categories of retail that stand out as unmet opportunities for retail business attraction or startups. That does not mean that Clintonville’s downtown cannot support additional retail stores. New businesses will be started, mostly by local individuals, and the choice of industry group will be based more on the personal interests and expertise of the owner, rather than market size. It is worth noting, too, that in the age of internet sales, it is possible for a well-run business to reach much more than the households in the immediate area.

The issue of business management does need to be addressed. Local businesses could be capturing a greater share of the potential market by improving their merchandising, providing better customer service, adopting effective marketing techniques, extending business hours, and taking other actions to develop the customer base. Improved business practices have the greatest potential to increase the overall market share captured by Clintonville’s downtown.

MARKETING STRATEGIES

Only a fraction of the businesses are effectively using internet marketing resources such as Google and Bing maps, Urban Spoon, Yelp, and other sites.

The Village Hearthstone Restaurant in downtown Hilbert, Wis. has become a destination despite its rural location in Calumet County.
**EATING AND DRINKING MARKET**

As with retail, Clintonville is not capturing a great deal of the available market for dining out. Downtown businesses are estimated to capture an aggregate $3,050,000 in annual sales, or about 20 percent of the $14,971,000 spent by trade area residents and others on dining out. The market potential is shown below.

![Graph showing market potential for eating and drinking in Clintonville over 2017, 2022, and 2027.](image)

- **Full Service Restaurants**
- **Limited Service Restaurants**
- **Other venues**

![Image of Lucy's Deli in Downtown Chippewa Falls, Wis.](image)

Lucy’s Deli in Downtown Chippewa Falls, Wis. attracts visitors with its well designed window displays and transparent entrance.

![Image of a simple “folly” like an over-sized chair](image)

A simple “folly” like an over-sized chair can help lure drivers out of their cars to take a picture.
Some factors naturally lead to fewer diners. Older and less affluent households tend to spend less on eating out. Only a small portion of the labor force, which is itself not very large, is drawn from outside of the trade area. As a result there is not a substantial bump in lunchtime traffic. The industry distribution, with as large proportion of blue collar and service jobs, is also not favorable for spending during the work day. But all of these considerations are already addressed in the estimates of market potential.

The fact that three of four fast food chains are located outside of the downtown may account for some of the low breakfast and lunchtime performance of the downtown restaurant scene, but the fact remains that two-thirds of the restaurants in Clintonville are located downtown, and in total, they are performing below expectations.

Business hours, customer service, menu choices, and quality are at the heart of the poor performance. While some of the downtown’s restaurants perform well, many are failing to meet the desires of their potential customers. Additionally, only a fraction of the businesses are effectively using internet marketing resources such as Google and Bing maps, Urban Spoon, Yelp, and other sites.

**OPPORTUNITIES/CONCLUSIONS**

Clintonville has a difficult environment in which to develop housing or new businesses serving the local population. The city’s businesses have a limited trade area with a small population that is continuing to shrink at a significant pace. Additionally, area incomes are below average and the aging population spends less than younger households. The city is not located on a major traffic route and there are no significant attractions in the vicinity which might draw visitors. The same conditions are faced in similarly situated rural cities throughout northern Wisconsin.

**HOUSING**

Despite some unfavorable conditions, downtown Clintonville is not without opportunities. Desires for modern housing, as well as different unit types, will enable new home construction. A small number of single family homes and condominiums can be absorbed. The downtown area would be a suitable location for the condominium units, many of which would appeal to “empty nest” buyers who want the independence of home ownership while simultaneously reducing the need for maintenance. There is also a demand for new apartments that can be met in the downtown district. A portion of these can be age-restricted and may include assisted living arrangements. New apartments should be built to a higher design standard and with more amenities than units currently existing within the city.

It should be noted that because of its decreasing population, Clintonville will see a growing number of unoccupied housing units even without the addition of new units. In many cases, these will be units that are obsolete because of issues like age and condition, location, and design. The City may need to consider strategies to counter the blight that can be created by these vacant units if they are abandoned or not maintained.

**COMMERCIAL USES**

The most effective strategy for the City to pursue to build its downtown commercial base will be investments in training and technical assistance to help existing businesses capture a greater share of the market.
Home furnishing stores draw customers from a broad geographic area to your downtown.

number of these retail and dining establishments would benefit from improved practices (such as merchandising or hours of operation), better customer service, more effective marketing, and other improvements. With a large share of the market potential not being captured, there does appear to be the opportunity to add more eating and drinking establishments. These might be in any of the general categories of full or limited service restaurants, or snack and beverage shops like coffee shops and bakeries. The same business improvement programming that targets existing businesses would be of advantage to startups. In addition, the City may consider developing incentive programs to assist with facades and signage, interior build-out, and marketing for the business opening.

No specific category of retail store stands out as an unmet opportunity. A business attraction program will therefore have minimal results, if any. New businesses started in the downtown will be independent businesses started by people living in the area. Many of them will be related to the owner’s personal interests (ex., a hobby shop or antique mall). The same forms of assistance provided to restaurants would apply to these businesses.

Land Use and Circulation

The study area includes a diverse mix of existing land uses including offices, lodging, retail, restaurants, service businesses, educational, single family and multi-family residential. The study area is located nearby several large industrial uses as well, which provide a strong manufacturing base for the City. In addition to these uses, the study area contains a significant amount of waterfront and park space.

The downtown district includes a combination of highway-oriented and traditional commercial buildings, with the core downtown from 7th Street north to 13th Street. Aside from 11th and 12th Streets, the district is generally a single lot deep along the east side of Main Street. On the west it extends to Hemlock Street in the core area. All of the retail and dining uses are located on Main Street, while public uses, offices, and banks are interspersed with housing on the inner blocks. The armory takes up an entire block along 12th Street between Lincoln Avenue and Garfield Avenue.

Pigeon Lake is a 163-acre impoundment on the Pigeon River located directly northwest of Clintonville. The eastern portion of the lake is adjacent to the corporate limits of Clintonville. The Pigeon River drains the lake, flowing in a southeasterly direction through the center of Clintonville to the Embarrass River approximately two miles east of the city.

The Pigeon River has the potential to become a focal point. At the moment there is a simple path between the river and a parking lot on the southwest quadrant of where it passes under Main Street, and the other three quadrants are developed with structures. The city’s primary recreation site, 27 acre Olen Park, is adjacent to the east side of downtown (East of Main Street). It has a playground, lighted tennis courts, Frisbee golf course, softball diamond, basketball court, open and closed shelters, an ice skating rink, warming house, and restrooms. The Clintonville Athletic Field includes a lighted baseball diamond, a youth baseball diamond, bleachers, concession stand, ticket booth, locker room and restrooms.
LAND USE

CHARACTER ZONES

The downtown possesses a number of strengths yet lacks a strongly-defined character. The district includes several different character zones, which are described below.

**STH 45 to 8th Street is more auto oriented than the historic downtown area. Key observations include:**

- There are poor visual cues for motorists approaching Clintonville from the south. The lack of a well-defined gateway and clear wayfinding signage directing visitors downtown makes it difficult to pull STH 45 motorists off Main Street and direct them downtown.
- Land use is more oriented toward auto oriented destinations including Kwik Trip and Walgreens, with several bars and some services located north of STH 45. Culver’s is a major traffic generator at the northeast corner of Main Street and 7th Street.
- Because there is such a diffuse presence of commercial uses this section of downtown lacks the ability to share much customer traffic among different businesses.
- This stretch of downtown also includes a few properties in need of maintenance or repair.
- There are two primary redevelopment opportunity sites. One is located adjacent Walgreens on the east side of STH 45 just north of E. Third Street. The other is located on the west side of STH 45 south bounded by W. 4th Street on the south and Modoc Street to the west. Both sites are highly visible, with high traffic volumes and provide opportunity to continue building off of the success of Walgreens and Kwik Trip.
- There is a pleasant streetscape including nice trees, decorative lighting, and seasonal flower baskets.
8th Street to 12th Street is Clintonville’s core downtown area. Key observations include:

- There is a relatively intact street wall in the core area, comprised of one- and two-story, early 20th Century commercial vernacular buildings.
- Many historic buildings have been significantly altered from their original design.
- The ability to park once and visit several stores, bars, and restaurants make this part of Main Street feel more like a traditional downtown compared with other parts of Main Street.
- Solid blockfaces provide a good sense of enclosure and create a more comfortable and interesting pedestrian environment.
- Some facades need improvement; however some are in relatively good shape.
- Portions of the downtown lack charm and activated public spaces, in particular along the Pigeon River, which is a tremendous natural asset in the heart of the core downtown area.
- There is a pleasant streetscape including nice trees, decorative lighting, and seasonal flower baskets.
- This section of downtown is not adequately defined visually in any manner, making it unclear to visitors that “they have arrived” somewhere and should stop, park, and stroll around the downtown.
- Olen Park is hidden from S. Main Street, and many visitors travelling through the area may not be aware of its natural beauty and the myriad of activities it provides.
- The best redevelopment opportunity in the core downtown is at the location of the former mercantile building, south of 11th Street along the Pigeon River. This area could be redeveloped to take advantage of the waterfront and proximity to downtown shopping, services, and Olen Park.

Just north of 12th Street is the northern entrance to the core downtown. Key observations include:

- This area transitions from residential uses to the north to a mix of commercial and institutional uses as one enters the core downtown.
- There are few visual cues alerting visitors they are approaching the historic downtown area.
- Large surface parking lots along Main Street detract from the character of the area, including at the southeast corner of 12th Street and Main Street.
FUTURE LAND USE

The City’s Comprehensive Plan, which is currently undergoing an update, shows much of the downtown study area as Community/Downtown Commercial. Surrounding this core area is single family residential on the western edge and northern edge of downtown, planned commercial to the south, and public institutional and parks/recreation to the east. Based on national trends and the amount of land currently identified as commercial, the City should consider updating their official Future Land Use Map to show more residential use in the downtown district. Portions of the downtown currently identified as Community/Downtown Commercial and Public Institutional may be better developed as residential uses, in particular in and adjacent to the priority redevelopment sites identified in this plan.

A large supply of commercially-zoned property can depress land values.

Decreasing demand for retail and office space are leading many communities to revisit their zoning codes to encourage more residential development in and adjacent their downtowns.
CIRCULATION

An effective transportation system is critical to local development. It provides business access and makes parcels attractive for development. It creates linkages and connectivity between existing neighborhoods and commercial nodes. It provides alternative routes within a community and alternative modes of travel including safe biking and walking routes.

The transportation system in Clintonville is well developed, with US Highway 45 and State Routes 22 and 156 connecting to US Highway 10 and State Route 29 (both four-lane highways) leading to the larger metropolitan areas.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES

Clintonville’s location within the trade area as well as its position along STH 45 and STH 22, contribute to high traffic county in the downtown study area. Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) traffic counts are reported as the number of vehicles expected to pass a given location on an average day of the year. “Annual average daily traffic” (AADT) provide an estimate of typical daily traffic on a road segment for all days of the week, Sunday through Saturday, over the period of one year. Figures for Clintonville are shown on the traffic count map below.

High AADT counts suggest that the City and its partners should identify and implement strategies to get people out of their cars as they pass through town. In addition to providing desirable types of shopping, restaurants, and services that attract visitors, other strategies should be explored. For example, some communities have created destination attractions in the heart of their downtown. Other communities have used public art, murals, and visual displays to lure passerby out of their vehicles.
DOWNTOWN MOBILITY

The consultant team did not identify any critical gaps in the local roadway network within the City of Clintonville, however attention should be made to enhancing non-motorized improvements to the local transportation network to support downtown development including additional residential development. Other observations related to downtown mobility include:

- Downtown Clintonville is very walkable. It is interesting, comfortable, useful, and safe. There are many reasons to come downtown, including for community events, shopping, eating, recreating, and visiting cultural sites. Downtown Clintonville is rated as highly walkable by walkscore.com. The Community Center at 30 Main Street receives a rating of 75, meaning most errands can be done on foot.
- There is a significant amount of parking downtown, both off street and on street. However, there is little wayfinding directing visitors to public parking.
- Truck routes are not currently marked. The City would like to enhance truck routes within the City.
- Downtown Clintonville’s walkability is an asset to leverage and expand through investments such as the Riverwalk. Walkable downtowns are attractive destinations for visitors, and an important amenity for retirees and others looking to downsize and relocate to more urban environments where most errands can be accomplished on foot.

What are the characteristics of highly walkable downtowns?

1. They provide a mix of useful activities within walking distance of each other so that visitors can park once and visit multiple destinations on foot.

2. Pedestrians feel safe. Parked vehicles on the street create a buffer between walkers and drivers. Street design and regulations encourage slower vehicle speeds.

3. Pedestrians are comfortable. Awnings and tree-lined streets provide shade during the summer, buildings come up to the sidewalk, creating a sense of enclosure.

4. They provide an interesting environment to stroll and explore. Window displays encourage visitors to stop and look.
CONNECTIVITY OPPORTUNITIES

Enhancing connectivity between downtown destinations including Olen Park and the Pigeon River should be a priority. Connections can be both physical and visual.

River Falls is using murals to bring awareness to its riverfront, coupled with new trail development along the Kinnickinnick River. Trailheads can also provide a point of departure and social gathering nodes for residents and visitors.

The City has a bike route system in place within the downtown, connecting neighborhoods north of the river to those south of the river, and extending across US HWY 45/E Madison Street to Bucholz Park.

There is no bicycle or pedestrian plan for the downtown study area, however there are trails within Olen Park. The Pigeon River provides a logical focal point for expanding the trails system downtown.
Well designed trail system can provide walking opportunities for local residents and daytime workers while also creating a unique destination for visitors.

Downtown Clintonville possesses a number of trails, parks, and special areas which can provide year-round activities to draw visitors to the area.
WAYFINDING

The City has a wayfinding signage program in place, including directional signage to some key downtown destinations. However, gateways to downtown are poorly identified, undermining efforts to steer travellers off of STH 45 into downtown from the southern entrance to the City. Artistic features marking the north and south entries in the City’s downtown would give visitors a sense of the community’s identity and signal they are entering a special place.

Secondary points of arrival identification at locations including the intersection of North Main Street and 7th Street, the Pigeon River bridge, and the museum district (4 Wheel Drive Museum) would help define the core historic downtown district.

The wayfinding opportunities diagram below should be used as a starting point for developing a comprehensive wayfinding strategy for downtown Clintonville. Key aspects of a comprehensive strategy should include:

Elevation of defining features

- The Pigeon River and Olen Park are significant environmental features which help define Clintonville. Both can be leveraged to support wayfinding objectives.

Highly visible murals can function well as gateway or signature signs reinforcing the community’s identify.

Highly visible corner in downtown Clintonville provides opportunity to use wayfinding to guide visitors to nearby Olen Park off of STH 22.

Existing vehicular directional signs provide directions at key decision points downtown. Letter height should be increased on future wayfinding signage directed toward vehicular traffic.
Key arrival gateways and wayfinding locations

- Locations such as Clintonville’s museums, the Veterans Memorial, and the Community Center can serve to orient visitors while reinforcing community identity. These are often landmarks that people readily associate with the community.

Historic buildings and walking tours

- Historic buildings provide a strong impression on visitors entering the downtown. Murals depicting local history, historic plaques, and walking tours can help orient visitors and reinforce the community’s sense of place.

Streetscape elements

- Downtown Clintonville has a well defined streetscape. Lighting, street furnishings, hanging flowers, wayfinding signage, street design, and other tactics can be used together to define distinct and memorable places within the community, which in turn helps visitors more effectively navigate.

Gateway Identification or Signature Signs

These are designed to provide at trail and roadway entry points to the community (primary and secondary points of arrival). The primary function of this sign type is to reinforce the name recognition and identity in a form and to a scale that is easily readable throughout the day and night. The sign may be applied to or combined with streetscape and landscape features. The design may also be a literal gateway or applied as public art.

Static Vehicular Directional Signs

These signs are designed to provide vehicular directions at decision points or intersections along public roadways. These applications will range from a single message panel applied to a light pole to free-standing structures with several destination listings. Directional signs should follow a consistent style designed to reflect the character of Clintonville.

Primary and Secondary Pedestrian Information Kiosks

These sign types provide orientation mapping, services, locations and directional information. Primary kiosks are typically located within public plazas and open spaces such as the Pigeon Riverwalk or Olen Park. Secondary kiosks are typically located along street frontages at street intersections.

Pedestrian Directionals

These sign types are oriented toward walkers and provide directional information at decision points throughout the site. Olen Park and the Pigeon River provide ample opportunities for visitors to explore downtown Clintonville.
Infrastructure and Building Conditions

INFRASTRUCTURE

Overall, infrastructure conditions in downtown Clintonville are good, however there are some areas of concern. Key observations include:

- Portions of 15th Street and 16th Street will need to be reconstructed in the near future.
- 11th Street is in poor condition, including 6” pipe from approximately 1915. The Water Main and Sanitary Sewer both need to be replaced.
- The Main sewer line to Wastewater Plant runs along 12th Street. It has been updated within the last 20 years. Storm water is adequate but may need a study to eliminate some longer-term issues with redevelopment.
- There are two utility river crossings downtown, including at Hemlock Road (water crossing) and Lions Street (Sanitary sewer crossing and water)
- The City’s wastewater plant, located on the Northeast side of Clintonville has adequate capacity and has just completed an upgrade.
- The water utility is in good shape. A new well be required in about 5-10 years on northwest side of City. The City has an arsenic plant currently. In terms of storage, there is one water tower, a 500,000 gallon tank.
- Stormwater runoff is a concern in portions of the downtown, including surface parking lots adjacent the Pigeon River and the northern portion of the downtown district, where occasional flooding has been an issue.
- Bridge structures are generally in good shape and have been replaced. There is a pedestrian bridge and dam crossing for pedestrians. The pedestrian crossing (foot bridge) needs to be rehabilitated. The dam crossing is in need of concrete and gate repair required for 2019. No pedestrian traffic is supposed to be on it but it is used for walking across and fishing.

BUILDING CONDITIONS

The downtown possesses a large number of older buildings, some of which are in poor physical condition. There is a desire to maintain and preserve older historic structures when feasible.

Commercial storefronts are often the most critically important aspect of maintaining the historical integrity of a downtown. The majority of historic Clintonville’s buildings date back to the late 1800’s or early 1900’s. These types of buildings were constructed with similar design elements that create a unified visual look and feel. The basic façade is made up of three parts: 1) the storefront with an entrance and large display windows, 2) an upper masonry façade with evenly spaced windows, and a decorative cornice along the top of the building.

Building facade treatments should address the top, middle, and lower portions of the building.
Historic building facades have well defined openings that the original storefront filled. Most historic storefronts were made up almost entirely of windows to display goods and allow light inside the building. Identifying, retaining, and preserving storefronts are important for reinforcing the overall historic character of the building. Improvements should be in keeping with the time period within which the buildings were constructed. Key recommendations include:

- Storefronts should retain large window displays if possible.
- Entryways should be maintained or restored to their original configurations.
- Transom windows that are covered should be reopened and restored.
- Storefront bulkheads should be restored or renovated
- Unique elements including storefront cornices, entry doors, and lighting fixtures should be restored
- Signage, lighting, and awnings (if applicable) should be integrated into the storefront design
- Color schemes should reflect the time period of construction
- Appropriate storefront materials should be used when doing building repair

HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Mercantile Building. The mercantile building is vacant and its location makes it a desirable adaptive reuse or redevelopment project. However, the building is believed to have significant asbestos and mold issues. Flooding may be an issue as well. Additional coordination with the owner is required to determine the potential for reuse of the building or if it should come down to make way for a new infill development.

Armory Building. A building assessment was conducted of the historic Armory Building (See Attachment Armory Building Assessment). The structure is the only building on a city block with East 12th Street to the south, Wilson Street to the north, Garfield Avenue to the east and Lincoln Avenue to the west. The remainder of this city block contains a parking lot on the southern section of the lot and a skate park with newly planted grass to the north.

This existing facility likely met the code requirements that were in place when it was originally constructed and therefore is not considered to be in violation of current day codes which have changed over the years to make buildings much more accessible. Correction to areas that do not comply with current day codes would only be required if significant remodel work or additions were to be done to the building.

During the April 28 visit to assess the structural condition of the old armory building, Short Elliott Hendrickson (SEH) identified a number of items of structural concern. To address these and other building deficiencies, SEH developed cost estimates for building repairs. Depending on the scope of required repairs and amount of remodel work chosen to be done, we estimate making repairs to existing building without any interior layout changes and not making the building accessible would run approximately $1,100,000. To update the building to be fully accessible, make all repairs and update mechanical system fully we estimate the cost to be approximately $2,500,000.
PRIORITY REDEVELOPMENT AND RE-USE AREAS

Based on results of the market study, field observation, discussion with developers, and public input, the following three priority redevelopment sites and adaptive re-use opportunities were identified for the study area:

1. **Pigeon Riverwalk (~4,000 Linear Feet)**. Publicly and privately owned property adjacent Pigeon River including portions of Olen Park. Potential uses include farmer’s market/flea market, recreation, outdoor seating and dining areas, community gathering areas.

2. **Old Mercantile Building (~.65 Acres)**. Privately owned property with city-owned property abutting. Potential uses include housing and office space.

3. **Armory Building Block (~1.3 Acres)**. Owned by the City, includes Armory Building and skateboard park. Potential uses include housing.
PIGEON RIVERWALK CONCEPT
The Pigeon Riverwalk concept would create a destination in the heart of downtown Clintonville, attracting shoppers, tourists, and residents. It would leverage one of the City’s key assets to support business and residential development. The concept includes opportunities to address stormwater management while creating a unique destination for the trade area. Amenities would include farmer’s market stalls, pedestrian plaza and seating areas, a nearly mile long trail, public WI-FI, and other enhancements. Programming would include summer concerts and other become a focal point for community events.

ADAPTIVE REUSE OR MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING CONCEPT
The old Mercantile building would be adaptively re-used if technically and financially feasible. Potential uses include housing and office. If not feasible, the parcel and adjacent property could be developed as multi-family residential, taking advantage of the site’s proximity to the Pigeon Riverwalk, Olen Park, downtown, and the Community Center.

POCKET NEIGHBORHOOD CONCEPT
The Armory Building block would be redeveloped as a single family pocket neighborhood. Individual homes would be located on smaller parcels organized around one or more common areas.
Environment and Safety

ENVIRONMENT
There is only one open Redevelopment and Remediation (RR) Site with ongoing contamination clean-up efforts within Clintonville. This is listed as the 100 Block of N. Main Right of Way – and is identified as being a Leaky Underground Storage Tank, or LUST. Consultants working with the City and WDNR on the closure report submitted an Abandonment Report with recommended closure to the WDNR in late July 2017.

Much of the downtown area is in or near the floodplain, which may complicate redevelopment efforts. For example, new construction may need to occur at a higher elevation than existing structures along the Pigeon River.

Due to the proximity of the waterway, there may also be endangered or otherwise protected species, including animals and habitat. If reviews are required for these due to state or federal funding being involved with projects, there may be additional regulatory requirements to clear prior to being authorized to make improvements.

SAFETY
According to the City, all pedestrian crossings in the downtown area are adequate, well-marked and seem to be in the correct places. The consultant team did observe a few areas of sub-standard sidewalk in the downtown, including along 12th Street and the intersection of Lens Court and 10th Street, where there is a significant grade differential between the sidewalk and street surfaces.

Stormwater management can provide water quality improvements while enhancing the overall image of downtown.
Organizational Assessment

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Successful downtown revitalization is largely a function of individual business success. Thriving downtown businesses attract residents and visitors, contributing to a vibrant downtown. However, most successful downtowns exist because businesses, residents, volunteers, municipal staff, and a variety of organizations come together to help create the conditions for success.

The **City of Clintonville** and **Clintonville Area Chamber of Commerce** (Chamber) both provide a range of programs and investments in support of downtown. These include but are not limited to:

- Events such as Fall Fest; Business networking events; Farmer’s Market
- Street and Utility infrastructure and repairs; Police and Fire
- Community Center; Parks and Recreation

**Clintonville Industrial Development Corporation** is a non-profit whose mission is to support economic development throughout the City of Clintonville. It’s primary focus is on the creation and retention of manufacturing jobs.

**Private business owners and property owners** also contribute to the vitality of downtown through their on-going operations and investments. In addition, there are volunteers and other organizations that provide programming and resources to downtown including but not limited to:

- Phantom Art Pop-Up: Flower Baskets
- Four Wheel Drive Museum; History Museum

**What make sense for Clintonville?**

There are many different models for implementing downtown improvements. Clintonville was formerly a “Main Street” community, a program now administered through the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC). “Main Street” communities are designed around The Main Street Approach®, which provides a holistic framework for downtown revitalization focused on four key points:

1. **Organization** establishes consensus and cooperation by building partnerships among the various groups that have a stake in the commercial district.

2. **Design** works to create a safe, inviting environment for shoppers, workers and visitors while preserving a place’s historic character.

3. **Economic Vitality** works to build a commercial district that responds to the needs of today’s consumers while promoting economically pro table businesses and properties.
4. **Promotion** communicates unique characteristics, cultural traditions and community pride to create a positive image and attract interest in and traffic to your district.

In order to join the program communities under 5,000 in population must demonstrate a commitment to an annual budget of $40,000 or greater. In exchange they receive access to a variety of educational resources as well as more intensive training and technical assistance.

For many smaller communities and those just initiating new downtown improvement projects, the Main Street program may not be the best fit because of the funding requirements. Instead, WEDC has created a second program, “Connect Communities,” which is designed for communities beginning new revitalization efforts, those looking to provide additional resources to support local commercial district businesses and property owners, and individuals interested in networking with other professionals and gaining useful information on strategies and techniques to address common revitalization challenges. Main Street and Connect Communities can both take advantage of regional workshops, annual conference programming, webinars, case studies and best practices, regional networking events, manager/board orientation/training, and toolkits on relevant topics such as market analysis, volunteer management, event production, design guidelines, marketing, etc. With several dozen Connect Communities across the State and limited staffing support, the program offers significantly less hands-on support than the Main Street program.

At the local level some communities choose to implement their downtown improvement programs through a hybrid approach. For example, Future Omro Chamber | Main Street Program addresses both downtown, community-wide, and industrial park initiatives. According to their website “The organization works to enhance the quality of life in Omro and strives to make it a place people and employers are proud to call home. Other purposes include recruiting and retaining commerce and industry, revitalizing and restoring our downtown business district, promoting retail and tourist activities, improving the area’s overall visual quality, developing the waterfront areas and most importantly: Carrying the proud traditions of Omro forward for future generations!”

Other approaches to downtown organization include establishment of a downtown non-profit not affiliated with Main Street. Examples include Appleton Downtown Incorporated (ADI), whose mission is “to make Downtown Appleton a vibrant and accessible destination for business, learning, living and leisure!” These types of non-profits often receive some level of base funding from the municipality but the bulk of their funding is privately raised.

Still other communities organize downtown projects and programs through a variety of business associations, tourism councils, service organizations, and volunteer networks. Each community is different and therefore Clintonville will ultimately need to establish an organizational framework that is right for the community.

Downtown focused organizations and partnerships have been critically important in the revitalization of downtown districts in both smaller and larger communities across the United States.
While there are many individuals, businesses, and organizations working to enhance downtown Clintonville, there is no coordinated strategy in place to align the people and resources needed to tackle the key challenges facing the downtown.

**RESOURCES TO SUPPORT DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION**

**REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS**

The purpose of the City revolving loan fund is to make loans to businesses wishing to expand or locate in the City of Clintonville.

**TAX INCREMENT FINANCING**

The City of Clintonville has rapidly closed all of their TIF Districts in the first half of calendar year 2017. TID’s 3, 4, 5 and 6 have all been terminated since January 1, 2017.

Prior to that, the City had been “TIF’d out” – meaning the City would not have been able to create additional TIF Districts unless a significant amount of valuation was removed from their existing TIDs. The City is essentially “starting from scratch” without any TIF Districts. Currently – up to 12% of a community’s equalized value can be contained within TIF Districts – which will result in flexibility for the City to react and respond to potential future development opportunities in a manner best suited at the time. Currently – that would amount to approximately $26.8 million worth of possible TIF capacity.

**POLICIES, PROGRAMS, STAFFING**

While there are a number of resources focused on downtown, there are few policies, programs, or staff people focused explicitly on downtown revitalization. This gap will need to be addressed as part of the plan implementation.

External resources to leverage include Waupaca County Economic Development Corporation, UW-Extension, Fox Valley Technical College, SCORE, and UW-Green Bay Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

**Relevant Trends**

Downtowns reflect our history, our values, and the overall image we have of ourselves as a community. Downtowns have evolved through many phases, including serving as centers of trade, desirable locations for professional office and services, and more recently places where people want to live. As the role of downtown continues to change, communities must think strategically about how they leverage their assets (strengths) to address their key issues (challenges) in order to achieve their goals. Against this backdrop it’s important to understand the broader trends impacting smaller downtowns across Wisconsin and the United States.

**CONSOLIDATION OF RETAIL TRADE**

Over the past 25 years retailing in small and rural communities has suffered. Big box retail stores have consolidated in larger “small” towns between 5,000 and 25,000 population, causing a sharp decline in retail commerce in smaller towns such as Clintonville. This trend is especially acute when the smaller town is within commuting distance of a larger regional center (as is the case with Clintonville). This and related trends are having profound effects on the retail industry resulting in significantly reduced demand for retail space. For example:
• Retail chains have closed many stores (e.g., 4,500 just in “post-recession” 2012) and now look for fewer locations that average about 25% less space than their existing stores.

• Nationally, the amount of retail space decreased by 259 million SF between 2001 and 2011 and is expected to drop by another 210 million SF by 2016. The number of real estate experts who recognize that the nation has far too much retail space has grown substantially.

Downtowns face a future in which having a robust retail sector is certainly possible, but it has become much more challenging to achieve and maintain than it was in the 15 years prior to the Great Recession. Most downtowns that want their retail to be strong will have to work harder and more proactively than they have in decades to get it.

Many downtowns continue to report that when storefront vacancies are filled, the likely new tenants are personal and professional service operations, not retailers. Downtown food related operations (e.g. groceries and restaurants) and personal services have been comparatively strong post recession. In many downtowns, they provide the spine for the district’s revitalization. However, their importance is too often underestimated and far too little attention is paid by retailers to leveraging the customer traffic they draw to the district.

DOWNTOWNS AS THE CENTRAL SOCIAL DISTRICT (CSD)

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

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

In particular, public squares and urban parks, not expensive subsidized projects, are increasingly seen as a smart investment to make downtowns more livable. Public squares and riverwalks like the Pigeon River can yield economic rewards by offering a place for informal commerce to occur (farmer’s markets, flea markets, etc....). However, they also offer people a comfortable spot to gather for a variety of social and recreational activities. They often become destinations within a community and a place where visitors as well as residents often congregate. In so doing they help support downtown businesses while also enhancing the overall image of the downtown.

THE AGING OF AMERICA

In Waupaca County, the aging population is growing, and people over 65 are projected to comprise a significant portion of the total population by 2030. Meanwhile, the population of working age adults (25-64) is projected to decline while the population of youth (0 to 19) is also projected to decline.

Waupaca County Age-Sex Pyramid Population Projections

The rapid aging of the population will create additional opportunities for housing, health care, and other services in communities such as Clintonville where there is access to health care. In addition, many seniors over 50 are looking to reboot their careers and lives. Smaller communities like Clintonville with access to good healthcare, as well as natural amenities such as parks and trails, can be attractive locations for older people looking to start a new career, work part-time, or become active in local organizations.

ATTRACTING AND RETAINING YOUNG PEOPLE

Rural communities across Wisconsin are seeing aging populations, school closings, declining downtowns, and other signs that youth out-migration and brain-drain are real issues. The demographic research from a recently completed study (Gaining and Maintaining Young People in Wisconsin Communities Final Report, December 2017) yielded three important findings:

• Only about 15% of Wisconsin communities are gaining and maintaining young adults.
• Communities in Wisconsin’s most urban area—Milwaukee county—fare as bad or worse than many rural areas in losing young adults.
• Communities that are gaining and maintaining young adults are much more likely to be near cities and freeways.

The case study research yielded five important qualities of communities that are important for attracting young adults:

1. Perceived quality of schools - Maintaining high quality schools is essential for attracting and maintaining young adult populations.
2. Perceived appropriate affordability of housing—young adults at different life stages may define affordability differently. Different communities need to provide different mixes of housing for different families at different life cycle stages.
3. Outdoor amenities such as parks and trails, with appreciation for both motorized and silent (skiing, hiking, etc.) outdoor recreation. Public outdoor amenities for a diversity of recreation activities will be valued by young adults.
4. A small town sense of community and civic engagement - Rural and small town development may be tied together with urban development. Youth are looking for ways to get involved in their communities and make an impact.
5. Proximity to cities that offered employment, entertainment, and shopping - Communities need to address the tensions created by the need for volunteerism to maintain the small town feel, while people spend large amounts of time in cities for jobs, entertainment, and shopping.

WISCONSINITES ENJOY OUTDOOR RECREATION

According to the 2011-2016 Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, over 87% of Wisconsinites enjoy some form of outdoors recreation. The top 5 outdoor activities by participation rate (16 and over) are:

1. Walk for Pleasure (88%)
2. Gardening or landscaping (65%)
3. View/photograph natural scenery (65%)
4. Attend outdoor sports events (65%)
5. Family gathering (64%)

Downtown Clintonville has all of the above ingredients in the heart of its downtown. Deliberately meshing these assets into a destination that supports downtown businesses and new housing should be a priority.
Emergence and Growth of Community Supported Enterprises

The following write up is adapted from an article published by the Center for Governmental Studies at the University of Northern Illinois.

Many rural areas are experiencing population decline as young adults leave the area for higher education and better employment opportunities. This has a negative impact on local economic development.

In terms of downtown revitalization, while many retail stores and establishments may remain profitable, the return on equity on businesses in rural areas may not effectively compete in the capital markets for new investment. As a result, small stores such as restaurants and grocery stores that for many years have been mainstays in the community are closing due to pending retirements with no successors, shrinking markets, and lack of investment.

Therefore, community leaders are looking for other ways to stimulate and finance business investment in downtowns and other areas through new avenues for financing local businesses with locally generated funds. These new approaches are distinct from traditional approaches including low interest loan and grant programs.

Part of what distinguishes these new approaches is the innovative direct participation by residents in both the financing and management aspects of the business venture or enterprise.

Many of these businesses offer products and services in the community such as food, dining, entertainment, or other essential local services which raises residents’ interest in retaining them. Residents see the investment as serving both a financial and a social purpose—to build social capital and add to the future viability of the community.

Community Supported Enterprises include:

Social Enterprises, which seek broader community benefit such as employment and training, job creation, or new strategies to generate revenue for a “parent” nonprofit organization.

They are distinguished by the founding entity and/or “owner” usually launched by a “parent” nonprofit or an individual social entrepreneur with an idea to achieve a social goal through a business venture. They are often funded by direct contributions or donations from residents in the community with no expectations of financial remuneration.

Community Supported Businesses, which include businesses with more of a profit incentive. They continue to have common elements of CSEs, such as the integration of social and/or environmental initiatives and a goal to advance local economies, but financial objectives take a more forward role than a social enterprise.
A common characteristic of Community Supported Enterprises is direct community support and involvement. In addition to the traditional financing methods including bank loans, revolving loan funds, and SBA programs CSEs lend themselves to use of creative financing strategies shown in the figure.

Crowdfunding is a relatively recent, but popular, method that has gained momentum in recent years and can be defined as “a collective effort by people who network and pool their money together in order to invest in and support efforts initiated by other people or organizations.”

Often thought of as an on-line platform, the concept of crowdfunding can be applied at the community scale to support each of the other six creative financing strategies shown in the figure and can take on several forms including:

- **Donations-based crowdfunding** involves the public gifting money to a specific business or project without expecting a tangible return
- **Rewards-based, equity-based crowdfunding activity** involves selling shares of a company to individuals and, in effect, making them owners or stockholders in the company
- **Rewards-Based Crowdfunding** is a commonly recognized approach where investors contribute a specific dollar amount to a campaign and receive a pre-determined reward based on the amount invested.
- **Peer to Peer lending** represents the largest share of the crowdfunding industry, though rewards and equity-based methods are the most widely-known

Population decline and economic stagnation can have significant negative impacts on the viability of smaller communities as the populations continue to age in place. Especially critical are establishments that contribute significantly to local social capital, quality of life, and the overall image of the community. Residents are often interested in engaging in local community development initiatives and CSEs represent a direct and relatively low-cost for the community to come together and support each other’s positive vision of the future.

*For the full article visit: https://cgs.niu.edu/Reports/Emergence-and-Growth-of-Community-Supported-Enterprises.pdf*
Key Issues and Opportunities

INTRODUCTION

The downtown planning process engaged business owners, residents, elected officials, and staff through a mix of meetings, surveys, open houses, and presentations. Through these activities a set of strategic issues for future action were identified by the community and are summarized below:

BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- There is concern over the condition of historic buildings downtown, including exterior facades, signage, and overall appearance.
- Some people would like to see severely deteriorated buildings (such as the Armory Building) torn down. Others would like to see a stronger effort made to maintain and restore historic buildings downtown.
- The idea of offering incentives for downtown building owners to maintain and rehabilitate their buildings was mentioned repeatedly.
- People are concerned with the number of vacancies downtown. There is a perception that many of the downtown buildings are unoccupied or underutilized.
- The pedestrian bridge over the Pigeon River and the condition of the dam were cited as concerns.
- Activating the empty lot next to Bluebird cafe on Main Street was identified as a priority.

Elements of the Façade

- The storefront should entice customers into the building and promote the business in an effective way.
- A successful façade has the following elements:
  - It expresses individuality as well as unity with the commercial area.
  - It is closely aligned with neighboring buildings.
  - It supports sidewalk activities such as window shopping.
  - It is pedestrian-friendly.
  - It is composed of quality materials with fine detailing.

Windows

- Do not block windows with signs or other materials.

Lighting

- Use subtle gooseneck lights to illuminate signs and building features.

Sign

- Keep sign wording simple and clear.
- Use consistent lettering and limit the number of colours used to two or three.

Transom Sash

- Avoid filling this space with an air conditioner, which can drip and harm the surface of your store’s entrance.

Cornice

- Central architectural element that tops the façade. Do not cover with signage.

Awning

- Use sturdy fabric or canvas awnings.
- Avoid vinyl waterfall awnings, which deteriorate quickly.

Street Number

- Make the street number easy to read and locate over entrance to help customers find you.

Display Window

- Make an excellent window display the centerpiece of your storefront. Avoid blocking display with signs.

Fall Frenzy, September 16th, 2017

Youth and adults shared their hopes and concerns for downtown Clintonville at a November 2017 open house in the Community Center.

LEFT: Historic building preservation and restoration is a critical component of successful downtown revitalization efforts. Downtown Clintonville still possesses a number of historic buildings, which should be prioritized for restoration and can serve as a defining feature of the downtown for decades to come.
PIGEON RIVER/OLEN PARK
- The river and community park were cited as underutilized assets for downtown. The idea of creating a expanding the Pigeon River Walkway to create a continuous Riverwalk to highlight the waterfront downtown was brought up in the survey and in stakeholder meetings.
- Several people stated they or their family enjoys fishing in the river.
- Some people lamented the closing of the outdoor swimming pool.

HOUSING
- The survey indicated 24% of respondents would consider living downtown. Lofts, apartments, single family homes, and condos were cited as desirable housing options for downtown.
- There is widespread concern over the condition of housing within the City including the immediate area adjacent to portions of downtown. Several people stated that there is not enough quality housing stock to meet demand.
- A survey respondent brought up the idea of creating outreach programs to elderly homeowners that need assistance with maintenance and other tasks.

ARTS, CULTURE, EVENTS
- There should be more events that bring people downtown including events aimed at youth and seniors.
- There should be an outdoor concert area to host events downtown.
- Movies, local art, theater were cited as programming opportunities downtown.
- There is concern over the management of the farmers market (hours of operation, cost for vendors)
- The library was cited as a tremendous asset for the community, one which some people may not be fully aware of.

YOUTH & EDUCATION
- Providing more programs, activities, “things to do” for youth was brought up several times. There is concern over the level of investment in schools and the need to ensure a quality educational system to attract and retain families to the area.

FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY
- There is concern over the ability of the City to finance downtown improvements. Finding cost effective solutions is needed.

IMAGE AND MARKETING
- Several survey respondents referred to the downtown as “boring.” Providing more activities, especially for youth, was brought up repeatedly.
- People expressed concern that the downtown was “dying” in the public survey. Others said they felt the downtown was both “safe” and “clean.”
- The City needs to be known for more than just the birthplace of the 4x4. The City needs a better identity to attract additional visitors. There needs to be a better atmosphere to support tourism development.
- Downtown has a lot of potential, it just needs some “tweaking.” Several people stated that the downtown streetscape looks very good, including the decorative lighting and the flower baskets.

- The downtown needs to be portrayed as cool and trendy to attract more people. Cost effective measures should be taken to attract more people downtown.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

- There is a lack of dedicated resources focused on enhancing downtown. Furthermore, there is no action plan to place to guide future investments.

- Small businesses should come together to strategize and then invest in downtown.

- A small group of volunteers including citizens and downtown businesses should be organized to help guide future downtown initiatives.

BUSINESS MIX/OPERATIONS

- There is concern that downtown Clintonville’s businesses are only open limited hours. Several people also expressed a desire for a greater variety of businesses, including more competition in the general merchandising and grocery categories.

- Several people expressed concern over the rate of business turnover downtown. The quality of service and product mix were also cited as concerns. The cost of groceries and general merchandise were cited as concerns by some individuals.

- Several people also noted that they appreciate and enjoy the existing mix of small independent shops and restaurants downtown.

PRIORITY REDEVELOPMENT SITES

Attendees review the draft Clintonville Downtown Revitalization Plan.
OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES DIAGRAM
DOWNTOWN CLINTONVILLE REVITALIZATION PLAN

- **Underdeveloped Waterfront**: Convert surface parking to other uses. Create interconnected trail network.
- **Historic Downtown Core Lacks Critical Mass**: Concentrate restaurants & drinking establishments; focus preservation efforts to enhance image.
- **Underutilized Riverfront Property**: Identify infill opportunities.
- **Armory Building Unsafe**: Explore redevelopment.
- **Attractive Development Site**: Consider residential infill.
- **High Visibility Corner at Key Gateway**: Opportunity to create additional tax base.
- **Downtown Park with Low Visibility**: Strengthen connections to enhance access and increase downtown visitation.
- **Poorly Defined Entrance to Downtown**: Opportunity to guide visitors to the downtown.

**Legend**
- Commercial or Mixed Use Development Opportunity
- Residential Development Opportunity
- Parks & Green Space
- Gateway Treatments/ Wayfinding
VISION, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES

The Clintonville Downtown Revitalization Plan is organized around the following strategic planning elements:

**Key Issues:** The critical opportunities and challenges facing the downtown, described in the previous chapter

**Vision:** The future of downtown Clintonville

**Goals:** What the community intends to focus on in order to reach its vision

**Strategies:** How to achieve the goals identified in the plan.

**VISION**

Based upon community input and stakeholder meetings, an overall vision for downtown Clintonville, was identified:

“Downtown Clintonville is a great place to shop, eat, and explore”

**GOALS**

A set of goals were identified to guide future revitalization strategies for downtown Clintonville as well. They are:

1. Provide an easily accessible, clean, safe, attractive, welcoming downtown for residents and visitors to enjoy
2. Support Downtown Businesses, Organizations, Residents, and Property Owners
3. Create and maintain a mix of technical and financial assistance resources to support downtown business and property owners
4. Protect and Enhance Downtown Public Infrastructure, Historic Buildings, Parks, and the Pigeon River in order to sustain and encourage private investment and visitor spending in the Downtown District
5. Expand housing opportunities in and near downtown to support existing and future businesses and add to the vitality of the district while meeting a community need
6. Create a stronger identity for downtown through a mix of programming, low-cost placemaking, and strategic capital investments
7. Enhance downtown Clintonville as a preferred destination within the trade area
8. Develop community leadership structure (including business and property owners, Chamber, City, volunteers) to implement the plan and support future investments downtown

**DOWNTOWN CLINTONVILLE’S KEY ASSETS**

- Significant daytime population
- Very High Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts (AADTs)
- Olen Park and Pigeon River
- Proximity to STH 45 & Visitor Traffic
- Strong manufacturing base
- Committed citizens and volunteers that care about the community
- Great library and school
- City and Chamber relationship
- Highly walkable downtown
- Historic atmosphere/quality streetscape

Riverwalk trail combining landscaping, pavers, and stream bank reinforcement.
STRATEGIES

While the challenges are significant, the key to success remains the same: engaging and leveraging as many of the City’s physical, social, and economic assets as possible. The strategies listed below include a mix of recommendations that address physical, organizational, and public policy considerations.

1. **Develop a Downtown Clintonville Revitalization Team**
   a. Identify champions who can help identify and bring in new people.
   b. Compile a list of local residents, business/property owners, City, Chamber, and support organizations willing to help out
   b. Facilitate a downtown coffee and treats dialogue at the Living Room to talk about the future of downtown and engage potential volunteers. Utilize UW-Extension, County EDC, or WEDC staff to provide short-term facilitation assistance as needed.
   c. Discuss, evaluate, and prioritize revitalization strategies
   d. Attend the Wisconsin Downtown Action Council (WDAC) conference as a team to learn new ideas and build professional networks

2. **Develop crowdfunding strategies to support downtown revitalization projects**
   a. First identify 1-2 priority projects through the Downtown Revitalization Team
   b. Solicit business contributions from throughout the community
   c. Create an individual donor program for residents to contribute to downtown projects

3. **Create a Mix of Downtown Business Retention and Expansion Programs**
   a. Consider Business Mentorship program to connect successful businesses with start ups
   b. Develop or partner with existing organizations (SCORE, SBDC, UWEX) to provide training and technical assistance programs to help existing businesses capture a greater share of the market, with focus on improved merchandise/food offerings and better web/mobile presence
   c. Meet regularly with downtown businesses to identify and discuss issues of concern
   d. Maintain an inventory of available building space. Ensure an adequate supply of appropriately sized, code compliant spaces for downtown businesses to occupy

The most critical success factor for revitalizing downtown Clintonville is the need to engage a broad segment of the community to gain a holistic perspective on the key challenges facing downtown and how to go about addressing those challenges.

This effort should include people with different backgrounds and perspectives on downtown development and should not be driven by the City or Chamber. It must be a community driven and community led process.
4. **Evaluate an Incubation/Accelerator Program to Support Downtown Business Startups & Co-Working**
   a. Research existing programs in other similar sized communities
   b. Gauge local interest and seek out potential partners
   c. Consider establishing a small co-working space as part of a business incubator and/or promoting the library as a co-working space for businesses (printer, wi-fi, copier access)

5. **Develop a Downtown Marketing Plan**
   a. Conduct a market survey to understand customer shopping patterns and motivations
   b. Identify what makes downtown Clintonville unique, special, different
   c. Create an identity or common theme that highlights downtown Clintonville’s uniqueness and key points of differentiation.
   d. Develop a communications strategy to reach different target market segments associated with downtown Clintonville (for example, tourists, existing and potential residents, potential businesses, investors, etc...)
   e. Activate sidewalks by encouraging businesses to “claim” the space with outdoor dining, merchandise, sandwhich boards, and decorations

6. **Redevelop the Armory Building Block**
   a. Provide funding to support additional redevelopment planning
   b. Hire a consultant to work with the City and stakeholders to develop a shared vision for the site
   c. Develop cost estimates and concept plans for redevelopment
   d. Seek out and engage area developers

7. **Redevelop the Mercantile Building**
   a. Seek funding to acquire parcel for future redevelopment.
   b. Further evaluate potential for redevelopment of Mercantile building site for senior housing
   c. Prepare cost estimates and concept plans for redevelopment
   d. Seek out and engage area developers

8. **Turn the Pigeon Riverwalk into a Destination**
   a. Prepare master plan to refine riverfront concepts, cost estimates, and prepare an implementation strategy. Identify compatible private development concepts to support riverwalk.
   b. Expand the Riverwalk to create a highly visible and intentional gathering spot for residents and tourists; Create
Legend

1. Farmers Market Stalls
2. Pedestrian Plaza/Planters
3. Overlook
4. Cascading Water Wall
5. Pedestrian Crossing
6. Fishing Overlook
7. Floating Riverwalk
8. Pedestrian Alley/Crossing
9. Redevelopment Opportunity
10. Additional Parking/Bio-swale
11. Expanded Green Space
12. Cantilevered Boardwalk
13. Restrooms/Warming Hut
14. Music Garden/Ice Rink
a covered structure to support events such as the farmer’s market or flea markets; Construct a walking trail alongside the Pigeon River that links to Olen Park

c. Create and adopt the Riverwalk program to connect master gardeners, residents, and volunteers to beautification and maintenance efforts

9. **Establish economic development programs to support downtown businesses and redevelopment**

   a. Clarify roles and responsibilities of various committees and organizations working on economic development within the City

   b. Evaluate potential for formation of a Business Improvement District (BID) to support downtown revitalization efforts and programming

   b. Set up regular SBDC counseling workshops to provide one on one business counseling assistance.

   c. Establish grant and loan programs for signage, façade renovation, and structural repairs

   d. Provide City funding to Chamber to assist with downtown business development activities

   e. Evaluate use of TIF to support revitalization initiatives throughout the downtown district, including acquisition of vacant and dilapidated properties

   f. Investigate potential use of WHEDA/LRC Wisconsin Business Opportunity Fund to support downtown small businesses

   g. Continue to leverage CDBG programs to support downtown economic development and housing objectives

10. **Develop partnerships with community organizations to provide additional downtown programming**

    a. Identify and discuss opportunities with the Library, school district, arts groups and other community organizations

    b. Explore partnerships to create additional downtown destinations and programs for youth such as a co-working space, events, and public art opportunities that engage kids

    c. Continue to strengthen relationship between the City and the Chamber

11. **Develop partnerships with large employers (public and private) to “adopt” portions of downtown**

    a. Offer opportunities to employers to contribute to placemaking efforts downtown

    b. Turn these into community volunteer events

    c. Identify programming opportunities
12. Improve Downtown Housing Conditions
   a. Research and identify appropriate programs for the Housing Element as part of Comprehensive Plan update
   b. Provide grants and loans for homeowner and rental rehabilitation
   c. Consider updating and enforcing a residential property maintenance code

13. Promote Downtown Living Opportunities
   a. Implement strategies to improve downtown housing conditions
   b. Maintain a list of individuals interested in living downtown
   c. Work with local realtors to identify strategies to make downtown living more appealing
   d. Acquire downtown sites for housing development (including but not limited to key redevelopment sites identified in this plan)
   e. Finalize redevelopment plans for key opportunity sites and prepare profiles of redevelopment opportunities
   f. Utilize a Request for Interest (RFI) approach to identify interested developers
   g. Engage interested developers through a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process

14. Expand window display program to fill vacant space
   a. Continue to program vacant windows through partnerships with Pigeon River Artists group
   b. Identify new opportunities to partner with artists, educational institutions, and others to program vacant window space

15. Develop and Implement Public Art Projects (murals, benches, etc...)
   a. Identify potential public art opportunities such as locating historic murals of what downtown used to look like downtown
   b. Partner with History Center and Pigeon River Artists to develop programs showcasing local history in empty storefront window display areas and other venues downtown
   c. Utilize empty building walls for mural projects which double as wayfinding signage (for example, corner of Memorial Circle and S. Main Street)
16. **Support Additional Outdoor Seating Areas**
   a. Review existing outdoor seating requirements as part of Comprehensive Plan update
   b. Partner with service clubs to design and construct additional public seating benches along the Pigeon River that reflect the character and history of the community

17. **Clearly Identify and Steer Visitors to Downtown**
   a. Gateways can be marked using signage, monuments, landscaping, or public art. They are used to denote an entrance to a particular part of the community, and are often artistic and visually appealing. Opportunities for strengthening Clintonville’s key gateway areas include

18. **Expand Menu of Kid & Senior Friendly Downtown Activities**
   a. Create an outdoor movie night at a park near the river
   b. Create an event or enhance existing events to celebrate and showcase the Pigeon River and Olen Park (Art in the park, duck races, etc...)
   c. Explore opportunities to create additional kid friendly hang out/drop in venues in the downtown

19. **Support Growth of Business Niches Downtown**
   a. Encourage concentration of similar business types in historic downtown
   b. Work with owners to proactively market niche across entire trade area

20. **Improve Downtown Accessibility**
   a. Prepare plans to address concerns identified in 2016 Public Building Accessibility Assessment
   d. Identify and implement improvements to enhance bicycle and pedestrian circulation city-wide

21. **Maintain and Improve downtown infrastructure and historic buildings**
   a. Continue to invest in the maintenance and reconstruction of downtown infrastructure including key linkages to downtown such as 11th and 12th streets
   b. Create a façade renovation/facility improvement grant program (discussed above)

22. **Provide Dedicated Funding to Support Downtown Revitalization Efforts**
   a. Establish priorities of City Council and RDA
   b. Seek out all available grant funding to offset City funding
   c. Evaluate municipal economic development organizational options (CDA, RDA, BID, City Committee, etc...)

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**The Wisconsin Historical Society recently developed a new resource to help building owners understand preservation techniques, financing opportunities, and how to plan a historic rehabilitation project efficiently and cost-effectively. The web resource is available for free at:**

http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/preserve-your-building
23. Update City Plans and Codes to support Plan implementation

   a. Update City's Future Land Use Map to show more residential development in the downtown district. Reduce amount of commercial land uses to support higher commercial land values and create additional housing units downtown.
Implementation Plan

ORGANIZING FOR SUCCESS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Successful implementation requires both individual and coordinated efforts involving many dedicated businesses, volunteers, community leaders, municipal staff, elected officials, and residents. This section provides a framework for working together to implement the plan.

REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The Redevelopment Authority should lead redevelopment efforts and oversee development and implementation of other economic development programs targeted to the downtown district. Relevant powers and duties include:

• Oversee the administration of all approved Tax Increment Finance District Plans
• Design and administer economic development programs and incentives including but not limited to:
  – Tax exempt bond financing
  – Financing enhancements
  – Grants and loans for development/redevelopment, and
  – Development agreements

PLAN COMMISSION

The Plan Commission reviews development proposals against the City’s official Comprehensive Plan, zoning code, subdivision regulations, and other policies. It provides recommendations regarding land use decisions to the City Council.

CITY COUNCIL

The Council is charged with developing local policy through legislative process, and directing the activities of the staff. Through the budgeting process it is charged with weighing investments in downtown against other community priorities – within the fiscal constraints imposed by the State. Its primary role is to support infrastructure improvements in the downtown area.

Effective communication is critical to success. Many different individuals and groups have a “stake” in the future of downtown Clintonville.
including:

- Roads and Utilities
- River quality and natural resources
- Stormwater management
- Streetscape and parking facilities

In addition, many communities support downtown revitalization efforts by establishing low interest loan or grant programs for downtown building renovations. Other communities provide a modest amount of base program funding to support downtown revitalization programs and staffing.

**CLINTONVILLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

The Chamber of Commerce represents business interests including several downtown business members. The Chamber’s role in downtown revitalization may include networking, education, and marketing. In addition, the Chamber can play a key role fostering collaboration with city government, the local technical college, area school districts and businesses.

**REDEVELOPMENT TEAM**

The Redevelopment Team comprises the City Administrator, one or more Department Heads, a financial advisor, redevelopment planner, and other consultants as needed. The composition of the team may vary depending upon the nature of the project. Under the direction of the City’s Redevelopment Authority, this team should provide the following types of services to facilitate redevelopment:

- Prepare and update redevelopment plans and other studies for the downtown district
- Investigate potential brownfields, floodplain issues, and other redevelopment impediments
- Purchase vacant/blighted properties for redevelopment
- Recruit developers and execute agreements
- Research and recommend funding strategies
- Provide legal advice pertaining to all aspects of the development process
- TIF creation and management
- Technical reviews of projects
CLINTONVILLE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION TEAM

In the short term, the consultant team recommends an informal team-based approach be used to guide plan implementation efforts (See diagram below). The team should be led by downtown businesses, community leaders, and volunteers. In other words, it should not be a City-led initiative or committee. City and Chamber staff should play a supporting role.

The team should take leadership in engaging the downtown business community, residents, and volunteers. Roles may include:

• Organizing and hosting events
• Marketing the downtown district
• Advocating for policies and funding that support the downtown
• Organizing educational and business seminars
• Fundraising
• Networking

Decisions regarding long-term organizational capacity can be made once there is a strong sense of direction and a committed group of volunteers and downtown business owners aligned around a shared vision and common goals for the downtown.

Rehabilitating existing housing and building new housing in the downtown area is critical to the long-term health of the district.
ACTION PLAN

See Spreadsheet Attachment “Downtown Clintonville Revitalization Action Plan” for a summary of revitalization strategies, lead and partner organizations, action items, and proposed schedule.

FUNDING

For a summary of relevant grant and loan programs see PDF Attachment “Downtown Clintonville Funding Summary.” In addition to these sources the City and its partners should also consider a more diversified funding strategy that incorporates a mix of the tools described below:

1. City Funding. This is essential. The City must have skin in the game if it hopes to get grants from other government agencies and foundations or significant investments from the private sector. Municipal funding can be especially important in the initial stages of a revitalization process to get the vitally needed organizational and planning work done.

2. Municipality-owned assets. The City owns the Community Center and other assets which can be used to support downtown improvements in a variety of ways.


4. Individual donations.

5. Profit/fee-generating projects.

6. Rents – restaurants, food stands and kiosks, shade at pool, events, birthday and wedding celebrations.

7. Sponsorships. They are always easier to get when significant user traffic has been proven or when a potential sponsor is convinced it is highly probable.

8. Licensing logos and branding.


10. Business Improvement District (BID). A BID is a special taxing district targeted for a defined geographical area within a community – typically downtown.

11. Historic Preservation, New Markets and Low Income Housing Tax Credits. These types of credits can be used in smaller communities as well as larger cities.

12. Crowdfunding. This is a young financial tool, enabled by and birthed on the Internet. Pagosa Springs, CO (population 1,727) used crowdfunding to fund construction of an observation deck downtown.

13. Creative financing strategies. See write up on community-supported enterprises for more information.