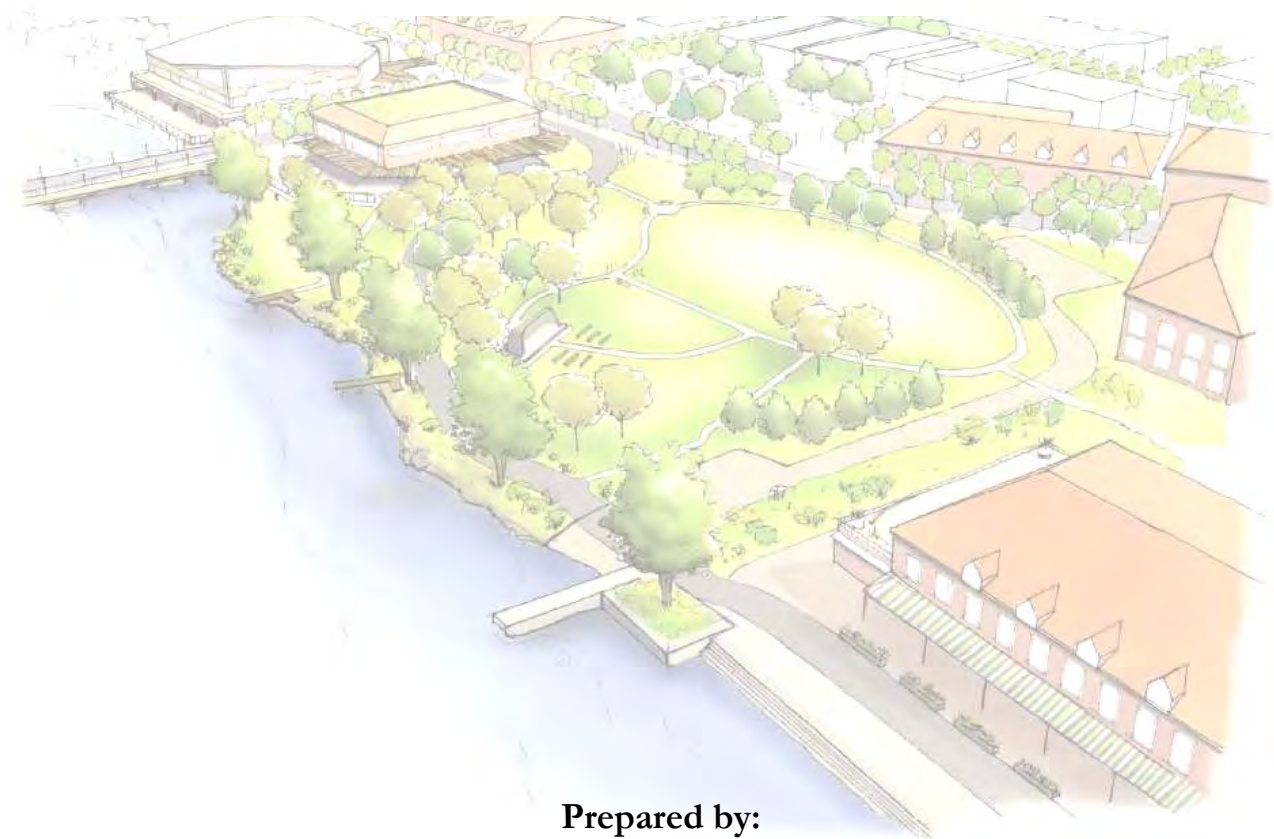




Rhineland Waterfront Redevelopment Plan



**Prepared by:
North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission**

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Photos: NCWRPC
Conceptual renderings: UW-Madison

This plan was prepared at the request of the City of Rhinelander under the direction of Downtown Rhinelander Inc. and the City of Rhinelander by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

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Appendix – Downtown Design Concept

A. Introduction

The waterfront has always played a significant role in the City of Rhinelander. In the 1870's, explorers traveled up the Wisconsin River to the confluence of the Wisconsin and Pelican Rivers in search of timber, and found an ideal location for what would eventually become the City of Rhinelander. Since then the river has been used as a mode of transportation, for commerce and for recreation. Development patterns along the river, particularly in the downtown area, reflect the important role the river has played in commerce. Today, however, the river's role in commerce has diminished to some degree and the need to explore new ways to best utilize the riverfront are necessary.

In 2008, Governor Doyle and the WI Department of Commerce announced the availability of a grant program called the WI Waterfront Initiative. The program was designed to allocate funding to waterfront communities in Northern Wisconsin to plan redevelopment that allows for better use of waterfronts as a community amenity. Downtown Rhinelander Inc. and the City of Rhinelander collaborated to develop and submit a grant application, and upon receiving the grant award hired North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) to develop the plan. NCWRPC designed a planning process that included ample opportunity for community input, and also included assistance from UW-Madison's Landscape Architecture program in the form of a student capstone project. The planning process included the following steps:

- An assessment of existing conditions along the waterfront and in the downtown area in general
- Key stakeholder interviews – conducted in person and by phone
- A series of five focus groups to acquire input from a wide variety of community members and stakeholders
- Redevelopment planning and phasing
- Implementation recommendations

The assessment of existing conditions, the redevelopment plan and plan phasing recommendations are all found in the Appendix, and is attached to the back of this document. Therefore, the Appendix provides the all of the design element recommendations, renderings, plans, and profiles. Project phasing is also addressed in

the Appendix as well. NCWRPC would like to recognize the invaluable contribution to this project provided by UW-Madison's Landscape Architecture program, and particularly the contributions of the intern assigned to the project, Hogan Eidelberg.

B. Focus Groups

This portion of the document includes a summary of the focus group sessions, and provides a series of implementation recommendations. The recommendations include mechanisms to fund portions of the redevelopment plan and identify the appropriate parties to guide and manage the redevelopment process. Plan implementation is a long-term endeavor and it is important to have an appropriate organizational structure in place to guide the redevelopment process.

Downtown Rhinelander Inc. and the City invited stakeholders to participate in a series of focus group sessions to discuss downtown redevelopment and improving the downtown as it relates to the Wisconsin River. A total of five sessions were held, and, on average, twelve participants attended each session. Each session was designed to acquire input from a variety of stakeholders and identify common areas of interest relative to improvements along the city's waterfront in or near the downtown area.

9:00 a.m. Session:

There was discussion of extending the bike/pedestrian trail from the Chamber of Commerce toward the downtown area along the west side of the river. A bridge would be necessary to connect the trail to the downtown. One participant indicated that wooden railroad bridges were available at one time, but it was unknown if the bridges were still available. Discussion of a bike and pedestrian trail broadened to include snowmobile trails into the downtown area, and a number of participants recommended the city explore ways to increase connectivity to the downtown. There was further discussion about Rhinelander being a destination for a broader range of options for tourists and including ATV and snowmobile trails in the mix. The city indicated they are in the process of looking at ATV and snowmobile routes in the community.



The discussion then switched to recreational options on the water itself, including canoeing and kayaking opportunities. Participants indicated an interest in developing a boat launch to provide access to the river. Wausau's use of the river in the downtown area was offered as an example. There are provisions in the Dam permit that allow kayaking, and there is a kayaking group and an outfitter in the community. Some thought that better utilization of the river for canoeing and kayaking would result in more commercial traffic in the downtown area as a whole.



There was substantial discussion about properties on both sides of Davenport St. adjacent to the river on the east side. There was consensus that the property on the north side is currently underutilized and opportunities for better uses exist. There was some discussion of the Mort's Tires property on the south side, but participants indicated that the business has been there for some time and is a cornerstone of the downtown area. The north side of Davenport appears to be the most viable redevelopment opportunity to accommodate a new building and new businesses. People also discussed the corners on the west side of the Davenport Bridge. One recommendation included purchasing the property on the southwest corner for redevelopment.

Participants were asked about ways to improve the aesthetic along the river and in the downtown in general. Some suggested that redevelopment should include a corridor extending from the river to Brown St. that would draw people from the downtown to the river and vice versa. A series of kiosks were suggested that would lead people through the downtown. Some suggested the kiosks could be interactive and possibly web-based. Downtown Rhinelander is also exploring a wireless PA system that would pipe music and messages throughout the downtown area. Overall, the goal would be to create an environment where parks and commerce coexist and use the river as a draw to bring people into the downtown area.



There was interest in locating the farmer's market in the downtown, and some suggested that space could be developed for this purpose through this project. Various sites were discussed, including the northeast corner of Davenport St., property adjacent to the river off of Young St. and the parking lot on the east side of Courtney St. Locating the farmer's market in the downtown would drive additional foot traffic into the area and increase the number of consumers.

Participants also spoke about the need to identify and develop amenities that attract a younger demographic to the community. A number of participants discussed the impact declining enrollment within the school district has



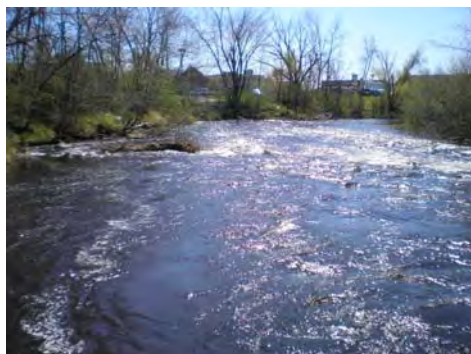
had on the community. Some suggested that any proposed redevelopment along the waterfront should focus on attracting a younger demographic. One participant indicated that other communities similar in size



to Rhinelander have been successful attracting younger residents, and pointed to a study done for Asheville, N.C. A representative from Downtown Rhinelander Inc. discussed their efforts towards developing a community branding and banner program that should be completed within a year. The plan will include banners for the downtown based on a brand designed to indicate community prosperity.

10:15 a.m. Session

People thought the river was a key reason why the City exists today, but that development patterns over the past fifty years have turned the community's back to the river. Participants thought the community would benefit from leveraging the river's history and turning towards the river.



One individual who was familiar with the dam permits indicated that the permit requires river access and a kayak course. The course has been developed, but he indicated that public demand may leverage additional development of the course and the surrounding area. Apparently water levels over the past few years have been lower and the course hasn't been as accessible as a result.

Discussion moved to the west side of the river and focused on the WPS property that is available for purchase. Participants recommended the city consider purchasing easements along the river versus purchasing the entire property. Participants also indicated this area would be ideally suited as part of a looped trail system that would include trail segments on both sides of the river. A trail system along the river could also include a thematic walkway to the downtown area. The City already owns an easement behind Trig's on the east side of the river. One participant indicated that the confluence of the Pelican and Wisconsin Rivers should be part of a broader trail system in the community. A land trust holds a sizable conservancy parcel on the south side of the Pelican River that would be an ideal connection for any trail development. Participants indicated an interest in considering a larger trail system in the community that would include a downtown loop, but would extend to other parts of the community such as the nature conservancy and community parks.



Some also suggested that the City explore additional space for residential development along the water. There appears to be limited developable waterfront lots within the city limits. Two specific areas were identified, including an area along the Pelican River at the vacant nursing home and property on the lake west of the paper mill that was formerly used by the railroad for car storage. Both areas hold potential for residential development, would bring higher property values and require limited infrastructure investment to facilitate development.



Participants also expressed interest in seeing development occur on the northeast corner of the Davenport St. bridge and thought the parcel was currently underutilized. One participant indicated that the western side of Courtney St. from Davenport St. north to Thayer St. could be redeveloped. The existing buildings are showing signs of blight. No specific types of uses were recommended for the area, although there was some discussion of a convention center on the site. Some indicated that this parcel would be key to redevelopment along the waterfront in the downtown area.

People also expressed interest in leveraging the band shell just north of Trig's and improving the park parcel in the vicinity. Some suggested using markers or kiosks to draw people from the downtown to the area adjacent to the river, and leveraging the arts by using the band shell for more performances in the summer. One suggested combining trail development along the river with a historic walkway or walking tour and using natural history as a theme. Suggestions also included a Wisconsin River Historic Museum that would provide an interactive and balanced history of the Wisconsin River.

Participants also expressed concern about the relative lack of green space in the downtown as a whole. One person indicated that besides a small park on Stevens St. there are no green spaces in the downtown area. The lack of green space means there are no strong public spaces in the downtown area where people can gather,

hold events or host a farmer's market. Some thought the downtown as a whole would benefit from developing a community green space. Some also suggested that pedestrian access would be the key to increasing sales in downtown stores, and a gathering place would benefit downtown merchants by increasing foot traffic in the area.



Participants also encouraged any redevelopment efforts to balance community interests with the desire to tailor redevelopment efforts towards the tourism market. Some expressed the importance of developing community assets that improve the quality of life for residents, and indicated that Rhinelander has historically maintained a diversified economic base for residents who live and work in the community year round. People indicated that tourism is becoming a larger segment of the economy, but the core economic base is still manufacturing and a growing, regional retail market.

11:30 a.m. Session

Participants indicated that the map showing the redevelopment focal point as the downtown and the downtown segment of the Wisconsin River is too small. Planning should include a broader area and additional waterfront. The consensus appeared to be focusing on waterfront improvements from the beach and the beach house in Hodag Park to the north, to the confluence of the Wisconsin and Pelican Rivers to the south.

This group expressed significant interest in locating a convention center in the community, and using the waterfront as a feature for convention center development. Some recommended locating a convention center at or near the beach house in Hodag Park, while others wanted to see a convention center located closer to the downtown area.



People suggested that the community has a number of assets, but that they are scattered, difficult to find and somewhat misplaced. Participants felt that the community had turned its back to the water, and expressed the need to identify a

unified community theme that would reorient community development towards leveraging the waterfront as a natural asset. A unified theme could concentrate community volunteers, and some thought it may result in relocating existing community assets such as the railroad car, the Chamber of Commerce building closer to the downtown area.

This group also spent considerable time discussing the changing demographics in the community and the need to identify quantifiable metrics to use when making decisions about future community investments. One recommendation included applying sales tax data from the WI Department of Revenue to understand retail sales patterns, and another suggestion included identifying metrics to understand the changing population base in and around the community.



Participants expressed interest in locating a farmer's market in the downtown area. One specific suggestion included redeveloping the area near the band shell to accommodate a market. This would place the market close to Trig's and allow people to do all of their grocery shopping in one location. Some also recommended inviting Trig's to use a portion of their space for an outdoor food court in the summertime.

Trail development behind Trig's was also a topic for discussion, and some thought it would be ideal to see Trig's develop a dual storefront, including on front that would face the trail. Some indicated that Oneida County has developed a bike and pedestrian trail plan that includes trail segments in Rhinelander, and someone also indicated that the engineering firm MSA had previously developed a riverwalk plan that included a segment behind Trig's in the downtown area. People indicated that Trig's has been supportive of developing a trail system along the river in the past.

Participants indicated that events downtown can attract people to the area, and suggested that Downtown Rhinelander Inc. focus on bringing events to the area. When asked specifically where in the downtown events should take place, people suggested the area near the band shell or at Pioneer Park. There was interest in developing a fishing pier near the Davenport St. Bridge as well.

Developing a convention center was also a topic of discussion, and some expressed interest in conducting a market study to determine a convention center's feasibility. Many indicated that there are limited options in the community for large gatherings such as weddings, conventions and trade shows. Suggestions for a viable convention center location included the current location of the band shell and the parcel on the northeast corner of the Davenport St. Bridge.

Overall, the group suggested that change is needed in the community as a result of changing demographics. People indicated that the downtown would benefit from greater accessibility, and increasing pedestrian traffic would have a positive impact on downtown retailers. Some suggested that Rhinelander's position as a regional retail center has driven retail sales from the downtown to the east side, but there is potential to bring people back downtown to shop if the proper amenities are provided.

1:00 p.m. Session

This session began with discussion of the confluence of Sheppard Park and the Holcombe Preserve as an important part of the community's waterfront. Participants expressed interest in seeing better connectivity of the parks system, and thought that developing pedestrian trails would be beneficial. One specific recommendation included using the sewer line easement from Shepherd Park to Sutliff Ave. leading into Pioneer Park. From there some suggested connecting into the conservancy area on the south side of the Pelican River, along with identifying connections to the downtown area.



Participants indicated that the river lacks visibility in the downtown area. Reorienting downtown development and flipping to face the river would add an amenity to the downtown according to some. People also suggested that adding park space and a bike/pedestrian trail along the river is not enough of a draw to bring people downtown. Participants recommended implementing a plan that includes a combination of park space, retail activity and some residential development. One specific suggestion relative to residential development included developing a senior living facility close to

the downtown area. People thought that increasing the number of residents living in close proximity to the downtown area would increase retail sales, and having a grocery store and pharmacy in the downtown and within walking distance benefits consumers.

There was some discussion of the WPS property on the west side of the river. Participants expressed interest in a museum of some sort, but no specific theme was recommended. Additional discussion of residential development included an interest in redeveloping railroad property west of the paper mill along the lake. Participants indicated this would be an ideal location for single-family housing and could be an extension of the type of single-family development that has taken place just west of the property.

Participants also indicated there is a need to have some connectivity from the lake to the downtown area. People suggested that it would be ideal to have a place to dock on the lake and then walk to the downtown area on a dedicated pedestrian path. There is an existing boat landing on Norway St. but no connection from there to the downtown.

People also expressed interest in more restaurants downtown, and one suggested that a floating restaurant in the river would be an option. People suggested that a restaurant with a patio facing the river would bring people into the downtown area, provide a place to gather and would have the added benefit of using the river as an amenity. There was also some discussion of redeveloping property the property on the northeast corner of the Davenport St. Bridge, and some suggested that extending the redevelopment north along the west side of Courtney St. would add value to the downtown area.

People were concerned with connecting the river to the downtown; particularly the core part of the downtown along Brown St. There was some discussion of adding features to the parking lots east of Courtney St. and adding a path that would lead people from the downtown to the river. Participants also indicated that it would be important to have a reason for people to move towards the river, which would require some addition development such as a restaurant or other retail-oriented facilities. One suggestion included developing a gaming facility along the river to attract tourists, and

another suggestion included a convention center near the area where the band shell is currently located.

Additional recommendations included reorienting Hodag Park to accommodate a minor league baseball facility, and relocating some of the park's amenities downtown. People also indicated that the Country Club is struggling, and suggested that redevelopment plans could improve the club's standing.

2:15 p.m. Session

This session began with a discussion of public versus private redevelopment along the river. Overall, the consensus was that redevelopment options needed to include both public spaces and private development. Some suggested that Rhinelander lacked an identifiable sense of community due to the lack of a 'third place', which is generally defined as a gathering place besides the home and one's place of employment. Redevelopment along the riverfront should emphasize developing a third place for the community.



People indicated that visually seeing the river is important and is currently lacking downtown. Some suggested that developing a restaurant along the river would attract people towards the riverfront and stimulate additional redevelopment. There was also discussion of incorporating the riverfront in a convention center development. People also expressed the need to develop a plan that takes into consideration the needs and interests of multiple generations.

Participants discussed interest in redeveloping spaces on the east corners of the Davenport St. Bridge. Both the northern and southern corners were discussed, and some indicated the community would benefit from relocating Martell Tires and redeveloping the entire southern corner for different uses. Participants also indicated that redeveloping the corner would create an opportunity to create a corridor along Davenport St. from Brown St. west to the river.

Like the other sessions, there was interest in seeing a bike/pedestrian trail along the east side of the river extending south from Davenport St. Some also suggested that the trail could extend north to a marina located above the dam to accommodate boaters on the lake. People also discussed using the river as a part of a city-wide snowmobile trail in the winter. Summer kayaking can only occur when the water is high enough, and that has been an issue over the past few years according to some.

Downtown residential development was also discussed, and some expressed an interest in seeing more residential development in or near the downtown area. Participants also expressed interest in redeveloping the former hospital site on the Pelican River for residential uses. Some also suggested that the city explore residential development of the property west of the paper mill that was formerly used to hold railroad cars. The general sense was that both sites offer opportunities to increase the amount of residential development in the community with access to the water.

Participants were also supportive of efforts to bring people into the downtown area. One specific recommendation included a banner program from the HWY 8 on the west side into the downtown area. There was also interest in developing a series of kiosks downtown that would identify stores and store locations. People also expressed an interest in relocating the Chamber of Commerce to the downtown, and encouraged more collaboration between the Chamber and Downtown Rhinelander Inc. Some also recommended the community consider developing assets that draw people to the downtown area. Specific suggestions included parks, a museum and a convention center.

Focus Group Summary:

Although all of the focus groups emphasized different issues and were unique in their own right, a number of common themes emerged from the sessions. In particular, the following issues appeared to be more prevalent to the focus group attendees:

- Interest in implementing a bike & pedestrian trail along the river near the downtown. This would provide connectivity to other parks and areas of interest in the community, but would also draw people into the downtown area.
- A desire to see better utilization of properties along the riverfront, and making the riverfront an asset that draws people into the downtown area.
- Interest in increasing the amount of green space downtown, and incorporating the riverfront into newly developed green space.
- Support for expanding recreational options that use the river within the downtown. Including expanding the kayak course and creating places for boats to access the river.
- Interest in establishing a downtown farmer's market.
- Interest in conducting a feasibility study to place a convention center in the downtown area.
- A desire to see additional residential development in the downtown.
- Support for Downtown Rhinelander Inc.'s initiative to incorporate more pedestrian amenities downtown, and develop a branding strategy for the downtown area.
- Interest in stronger pedestrian connectivity between the river and commercial businesses along Brown St.
- Support for residential development on the former hospital site adjacent to the Pelican River.
- Support for residential development on excess paper mill property west of the mill along the lakefront.

C. Implementation Recommendations

Appendix 1 outlines four phases for redeveloping the downtown and improving access to the waterfront along the Wisconsin River. As indicated previously, the phases are designed to be implemented over a significant period of time. In order to effectively manage a redevelopment process of this scope and over a fifteen to twenty year time horizon, it is important for the community to implement an organization structure capable of coordinating the redevelopment process. The following recommendations identify the most appropriate structure for the community, and address funding mechanisms to cover all or part of the costs associated with redevelopment.

1. Submit this Plan to Commerce for Funding Review

Part of the WI Waterfront Initiative Grant includes a multi-agency review of each plan to identify plan recommendations that may qualify for State or Federal grant funding. In particular, the Department of Natural Resources manages grant programs that provide matching funds for property acquisition and site redevelopment that could be used by the community to offset costs associated with implementing the plan.

2. Create Redevelopment Authority

A Redevelopment Authority is an independent entity created by the City Council in accordance with state statute 66.133. The Redevelopment Authority is created by the City Council, and includes a total of seven members who are appointed by the Council President. Two members must be City Council members, and the remaining five members come from the community at large. The Redevelopment Authority acts as an independent body that is capable of purchasing and selling property, preparing property for development, and can generate funds through the issuance of bonds. However, the Redevelopment Authority may only act in a manner consistent with a Redevelopment Plan, which must be approved by the City Council by a two-thirds majority.

Based on the information gathered through the focus group sessions, there are three separate areas that would require their own Redevelopment Plans, including the Downtown, the former hospital site on the Pelican River and the unused railway staging area adjacent to the lake and west of the paper mill. Each site has a different redevelopment focus and should be treated independent of the other redevelopment efforts.

The value of a Redevelopment Authority is two-fold. First, it designates an entity that is accountable to the City to guide and manage redevelopment, and second, it establishes an entity that will be available for the community throughout the entire redevelopment process. As Rhinelander has grown to become a community with a

diversified economic base and a regional retail destination, it is important to have adequate organizational tools in place to manage improvements in areas of the community where the existing infrastructure no longer meets community needs.

3. Establish a Downtown Tax Incremental Finance District

Tax Increment Financing allows the community to finance improvements within a designated area with funding acquired by diverting the tax revenue generated in the district. Tax Increment Financing is arguably one of the most powerful financial tools a community can use to finance redevelopment and downtown improvements. The City should employ a consultant to evaluate the use of tax increment financing in conjunction with implementing the proposed redevelopment as outlined in this plan.

4. Continue Support for Downtown Rhinelander Inc. (DRI)

DRI should play an important role in the redevelopment process by continuing its initiatives in branding and improving pedestrian amenities. DRI can also play a critical role in informing the community and developing support for the redevelopment process. Outside funding sources may also be more available to DRI, and should be considered as a part of DRI's mission relating to the redevelopment process. Finally, DRI will play an important role in developing community programming in the new spaces created through redevelopment. Examples include coordinating a downtown farmer's market and other community-related activities.

5. Conduct a Convention Center Feasibility Study

Numerous individuals in the focus group sessions and in the interviews indicated there is substantial interest in the community to establish a convention center in or near downtown. Many cited the lack of available spaces in the community that can accommodate larger groups for community events, weddings and could accommodate conventions that would attract people to the area. A feasibility study was beyond the scope of this project, although you will note in the Appendix that a tentative site was identified that could accommodate a center as large as 20,000 sq. ft.

6. Implement the Bike & Pedestrian Trail Plan

One of the design amenities recommended in the plan includes a bike & pedestrian trail along the east shore of the Wisconsin River. This is only one segment of a larger bike & pedestrian trail plan that was developed by NCWRPC for the City of Rhinelander. A city-wide bike and pedestrian trail can add value to the community and will improve access into the downtown area.

D. Conclusion

Implementation should be viewed as a fifteen to twenty-five year event horizon, and will require coordination between the City Council, a newly created Redevelopment Authority and DRI. The project phasing outlined in the Appendix should afford some flexibility in implementation timing, and provides relatively focused redevelopment opportunities.



APPENDIX

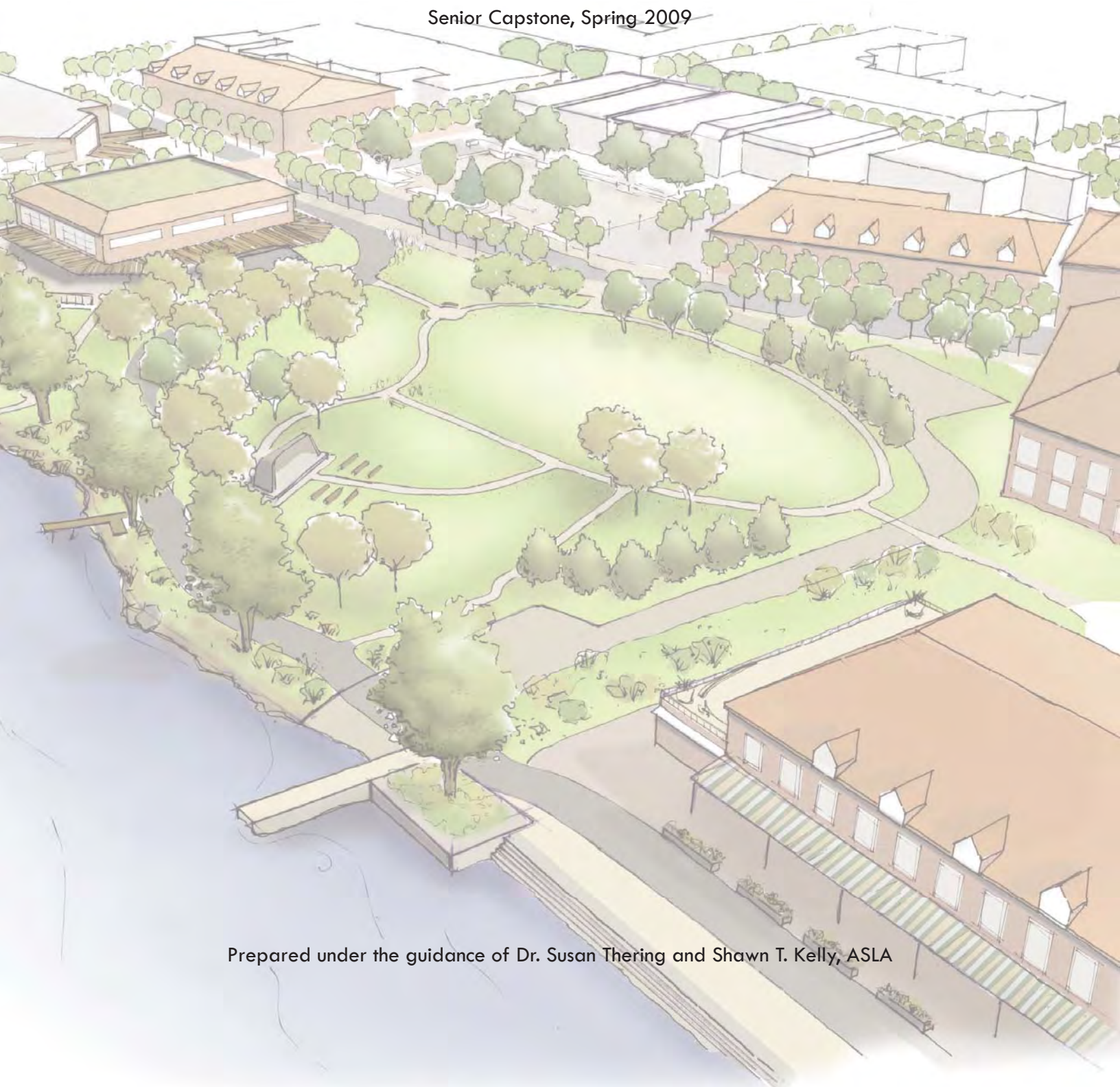
Downtown Design Concept

RHINELANDER, WI

Fostering Downtown Revitalization Through Community Oriented Design

Hogan Edelberg

UW Madison Department of Landscape Architecture
Senior Capstone, Spring 2009



Prepared under the guidance of Dr. Susan Thering and Shawn T. Kelly, ASLA



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■ INTRODUCTION : RESEARCH

This project combines the current research in the fields of main street and downtown revitalization to guide a riverfront development & downtown streetscape and open space improvements. These ideas for downtown revitalization and river front development will be guided by the goals stated in the Waterfront Initiative plan assembled by Downtown Rhinelander Incorporated (DRI), and the assistance of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. In the best interest of the community impacted by the scope of the project, focus will be given to sustainable development & community interests.

Many studies have been done on the growth and revitalization of small city centers. Recent studies on economic growth have focused on the relationship between the traditional main street areas, where the original community development is focused, and the outlying sprawl of larger retail. In all cases of economic development, the downtown main street is seen as a symbol of economic well being. While the outlying sprawl has brought much needed revenue to many small communities, the emphasis on development has been so strong that the quality of life has been neglected (Burayidi et al, 2001: 249).

In 1977, the National Trust for Historic Preservation launched the Main Street Project. Their aim was to study and identify the problems facing main streets. That study was the basis for the current Main Street Program, an accreditation and funding system for communities who meet certain requirements for their main street. The main street approach to downtown revitalization is now "the most widely used and heralded method of downtown revitalization" (Burayidi et al, 2001: 10) and has successfully restructured and restored hundreds of downtowns across the country. Kent Robertson, who has written extensively on the Main Street Program and its success and failure, outlines eight principles that define a successful Main Street approach:

1. A strong public—private partnership is important for joint support. This is often found in the form of an active downtown community organization working with the town or city government
2. A developed vision plan. This will guide individual developments and maintain a sense of purpose through difficult economic times.
3. A multi—functional downtown with a range of activities to benefit all members of the community
4. A focus on the heritage and history of the area. This is particularly important in smaller communities.



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5. A strong link between the downtown and waterfront of the community. Since so many communities are located on waterfronts, this is a nearly universally applicable principle.
6. Create a pedestrian friendly environment in the downtown. Traditional downtowns evolved as walkable districts and should take advantage of that structure.
7. The establishment of design guidelines for the community. These will aide in the preservation of sense of place and regional cultural heritage.
8. Do not over emphasize parking. Robertson writes: "surface parking lots are especially damaging to downtowns. They impede pedestrian circulation, constitute an unsightly use of land, add less to the tax base than most alternative uses, reduce downtown densities, and usually serve to detract from downtown's overall value and appeal." (Burayidi et al. 2001:19)

The National Main Street Center uses a four point approach to downtown main street revitalization. The creation of the four point program "went hand in hand with the creation of the National Main Street Center" (Robertson, 2004: 4). The four point program is the starting point for communities to build on and it includes:

1. Organization. Fundraising, committee structure, membership recruitment, and consensus building & cooperation amongst the many businesses, individuals, institutions, and government offices with a stake in the downtown.
2. Design. Enhancement of downtown's physical assets and visual qualities (buildings, streetscapes, open spaces, and waterfronts).
3. Promotion. Marketing the downtown to the public, working to enhance its image, and hosting events and activities to bring people downtown.
4. Economic Restructuring. Strengthening and diversifying the downtown's economic base.

This program is meant to simply guide a community through their individual process. The Main street program has developed a number of principles that aim to guide a community to the successful implementation of the four point program.

- A. The Main Street approach is comprehensive approach and must integrate all four of the above elements.



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- B. A strong working coalition between the private and public sectors must prevail for a successful revitalization to occur.
- C. A full time Main Street Manager is essential to oversee the effective use of this approach.
- D. Each community must take advantage of its assets. The four point program must be applied differently depending on the community.

The Main Street Approach is a focused method of guiding a downtown revitalization. The name "Main Street" is misleading because often it will focus on much more than just the main street to complete a successful revitalization. The Four Point Approach above lists things that are implemented far off of the main street. For example, enhancing the physical assets of the community will reach past the scope of main street and into the rest of the downtown and even large corridors leading users into the downtown or main street area.

As we can see, there are many aspects that go into a successful revitalization, and they must be weighed with varying degrees of urgency based on individual project needs. While a multi faceted approach is widely suggested, "most cities still view commercial development as the most vital part of a downtowns health." (Burayidi et al, 2001: 5) Commercial development is a part of a successful revitalization, but much more emphasis needs to be placed on revitalizing the infrastructure as well as the use. If we look back to Robertson's eight guiding principles, he states that small cities need to take advantage of their downtown heritage. In his own words "arguably the greatest asset intrinsic to most small city downtowns is their close relationship to the city's heritage." (Burayidi et al 2001: 15) This principle has nothing to do with expanding upon the commercial base, it has to do with maintaining and recognizing the "streets, parks/squares, water front, and many of the older buildings" (Burayidi et al, 2001: 15)

Pedestrians have a much more intimate experience with the space around them than do passengers in an automobile. The amount of time spent looking and listening, wayfinding and exploring, as a pedestrian is much higher than a driver or passenger. If pedestrian oriented downtowns would like to increase their pedestrian traffic, this must be taken into account. Once a community has been successful in attracting people to their downtown, "they must have a positive experience: the first element of that experience is a pleasant environment." (Burayidi et al, 2001: 94) This positive pedestrian experience is as much, if not more, affected by the infrastructure as it is by the amount of commercial in the area. This infrastructure not only serves as the setting for a positive experience, it also creates the image that visitors to the downtown will remember.



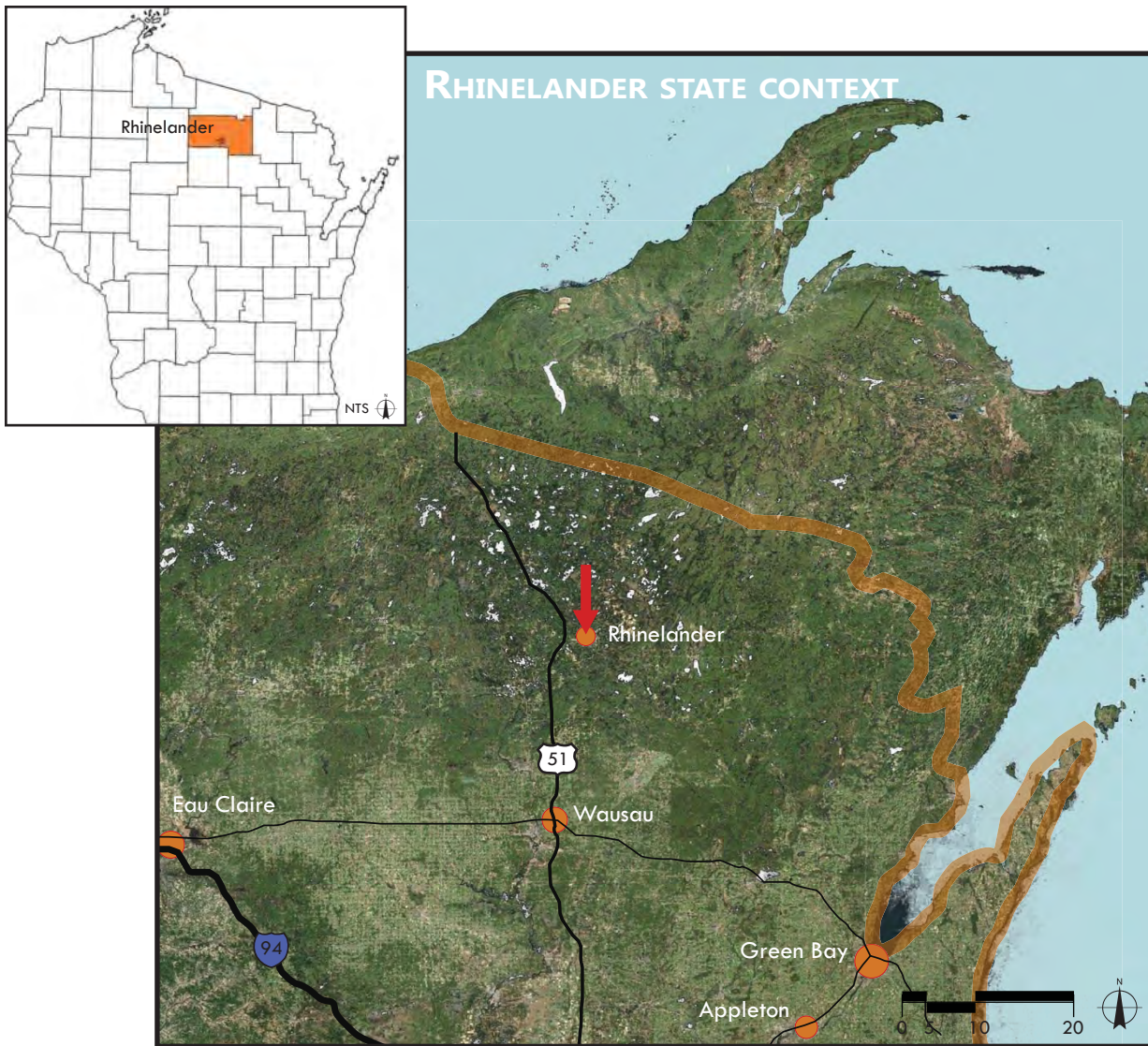
■ INTRODUCTION : RESEARCH

I argue that the four guiding principles to the Main Street Approach should be modified to include more emphasis on the infrastructure. Simply "enhancing the downtowns physical assets" is not enough. Each downtown has a unique pattern of development that occurred for some reason historically individual to each place. To truly capitalize on the heritage of a small community, while at the same time responsibly preparing the community for the future, the infrastructure of their downtown needs to be reexamined as a priority.

Rhineland is a textbook example of a community who has neglected their waterfront and broken a number of Robertson's principles for downtowns. This is a great constraint on their community, but at the same time offers the possibility to improve greatly. There are a number of features that create this situation.



■ INTRODUCTION : SITE



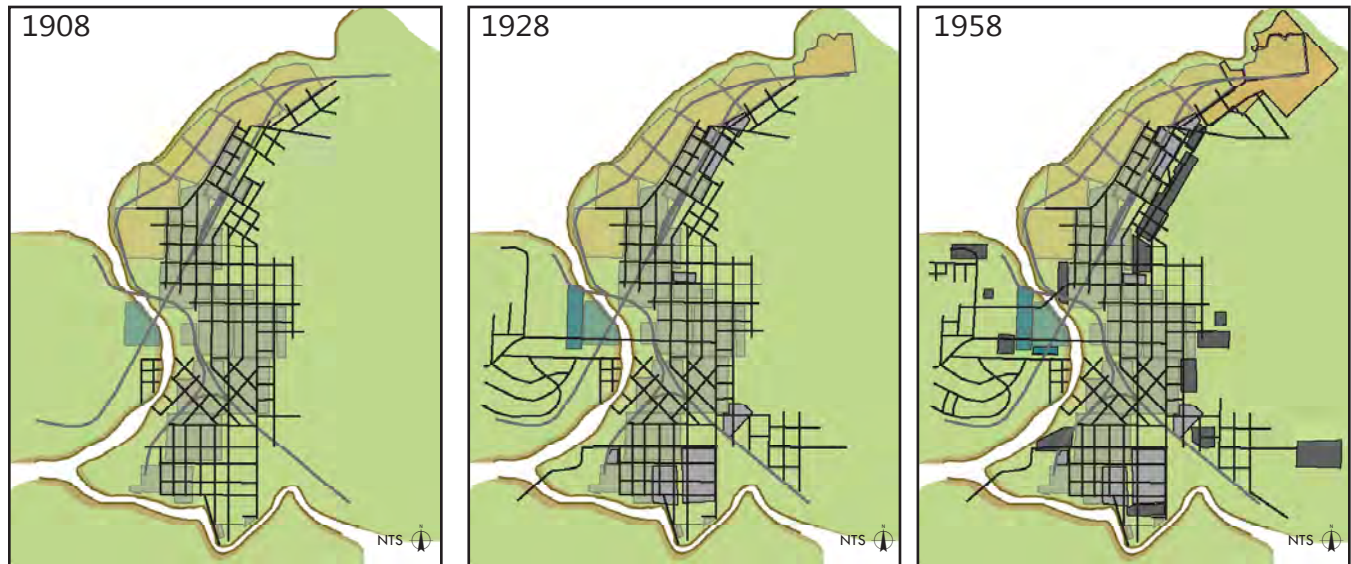
Rhinelander is located in northern Wisconsin, roughly 3 1/2 hours driving distance from Madison.

The city of Rhinelander was located because of its proximity to both the river as well as a large lake that the river flows out of. Located in the heart of a fertile timber belt, Rhinelander has been dependent on the logging industry for much of its history. The large lake created a staging point for logs floating downstream, and the river provided power for the paper mill which operated on the west banks. The other areas of waterfront in the city were originally taken up by different mill and timber companies, and the waterfront space was used entirely for industry.



■ INTRODUCTION : SITE

RHINELANDER GROWTH ANALYSIS



The next step for a community interested in transportation of goods is to become a link on the railway, and Rhinelander did this early on. The downtown of Rhinelander has been constricted by the railway ever since it arrived.

Two intersecting rail lines left a large gap of space in an otherwise dense downtown, as well as preventing the traditional grid system to reach the waters edge in the area closest to the main street. Since its inception, the railroad tracks have left the immediate downtown. This leftover space was transformed into large parking areas, and a mega grocery store.

Because of the development pattern, the new development faced away from the waterfront and towards their main street. However, this connection has never been made as the main street is cut off from this waterfront property by the swath of land historically used for transportation needs: first the railway, now a large road and surface parking. The two most important features in a downtown are separated by large footprint buildings, extensive asphalt, and a busy four lane street.



■ INTRODUCTION : SITE

Rhinelanders was founded in 1882 at the confluence of the Wisconsin and Pelican Rivers. The working community used the large lake, to be named Boom lake, as a staging point for lumber traveling down the Wisconsin River as well as ending its journey at the paper mill that still operates on the banks of the Wisconsin river.

Rhinelanders was ideally situated for the logging industry, sitting on a belt of nearly 700 million square feet of pine and many other trees. This industry virtually vanished at the time of World War I.



Rhinelanders has been slow to accept tourism as a part of their economic growth, and has been overshadowed by communities such as Minocqua and Eagle River who have defined themselves as tourist communities.

The area surrounding Rhinelander is rich with recreation, including fishing in the over 1200 lakes, hiking and snowmobiling on one of the dozens of trails, and hunting in the large amounts of controlled game land nearby.



■ INTRODUCTION : CLIENT & GOALS

Throughout this process I have been working with two groups in particular: Downtown Rhinelander Incorporated, and the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

In the extent of my work with the city of Rhinelander we have conducted a series of community visioning sessions. In these sessions, we asked community member what the problems were that they saw facing their downtown currently, and what they would do in an ideal world. The answer was resounding: connectivity and wayfinding needed to be improved. The assets of Rhinelander are sporadically placed, and hidden from the view of residents and visitors alike.



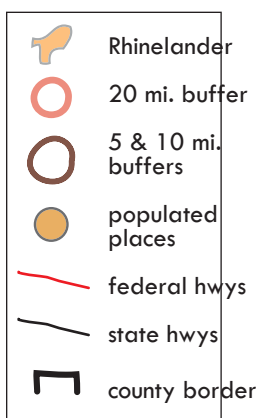
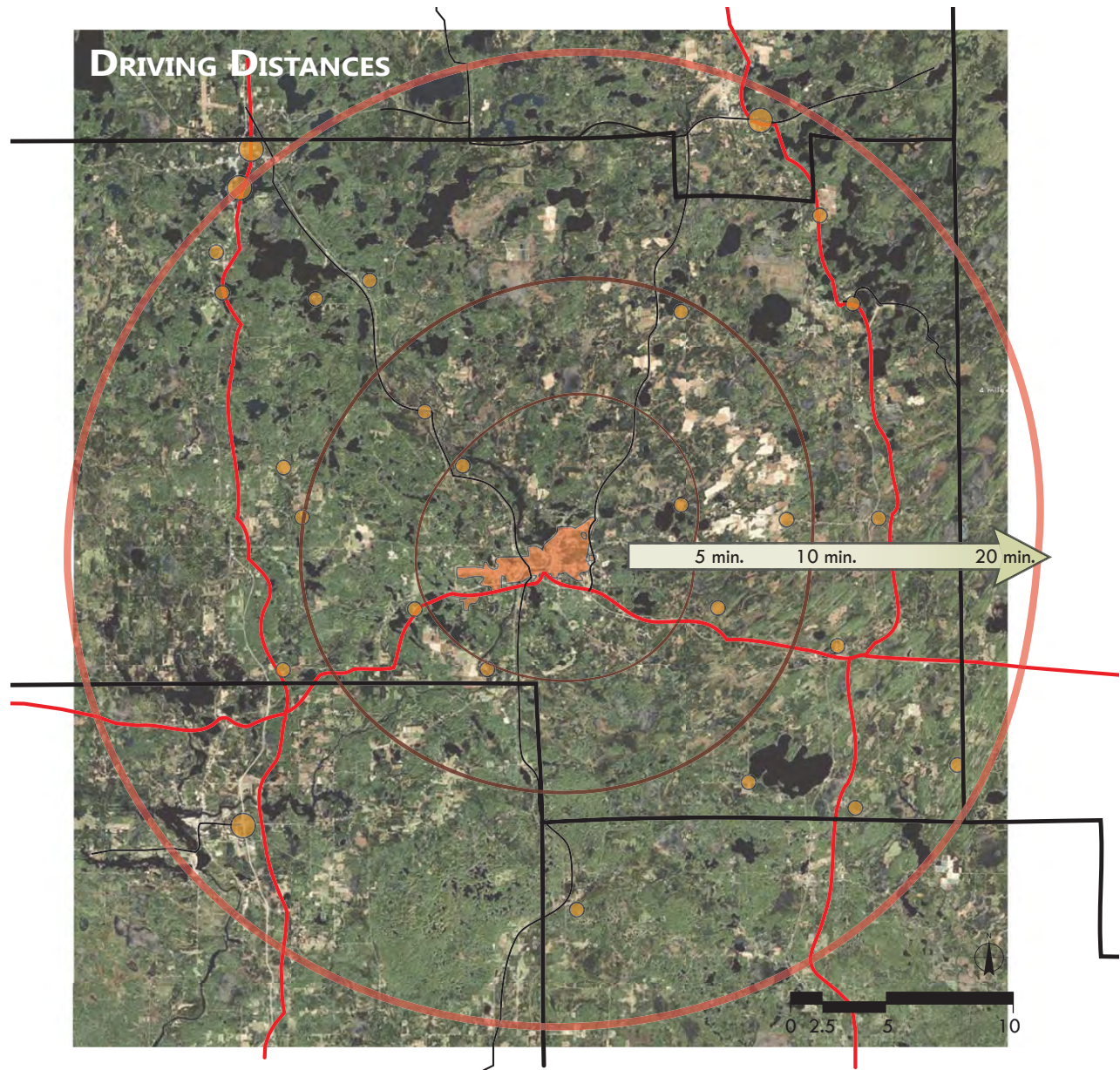
The conditions for improvement in Rhinelander rest on four main points:

1. The riverfront needs to be reopened for recreational use. The plots of land along the waterfront can no longer be ignored as previously important dilapidated areas, but need to be viewed as what they are: an enormous asset to the community that needs to be used.
2. The main street needs to once again become the focus of the downtown, and a new life needs to be brought to the streetscape.
3. A plan for the inter connectivity of these and other elements needs to be implemented. This plan will address the pedestrian experience in the downtown of Rhinelander, including the views, information, and wayfinding cues available.
4. The downtown needs to become more visibly important on the scale of the whole city. Because of the railroad, the street pattern hides their main street from the main entrance into Rhinelander, and because of the shift of commercial development to the fringe of town, it is difficult to follow the correct route into the historic downtown.

In developing a plan for the downtown of Rhinelander, there will be many elements to consider. Open space, streetscapes, views, materials, parking, and the connectivity of multiple kinds of movement, to name a few. This project will be looking into the practices of urban design to thoroughly address the issues at hand. Urban design "brings together man different parts and pieces of an environment to create a place." (Gindroz et al, 2003: 17) Urban Design Associates has a long history of creating places and helping communities to develop their downtown districts. Their principles and process will guide some of the work in this capstone.

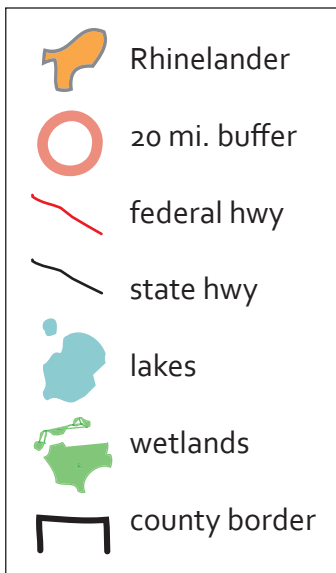
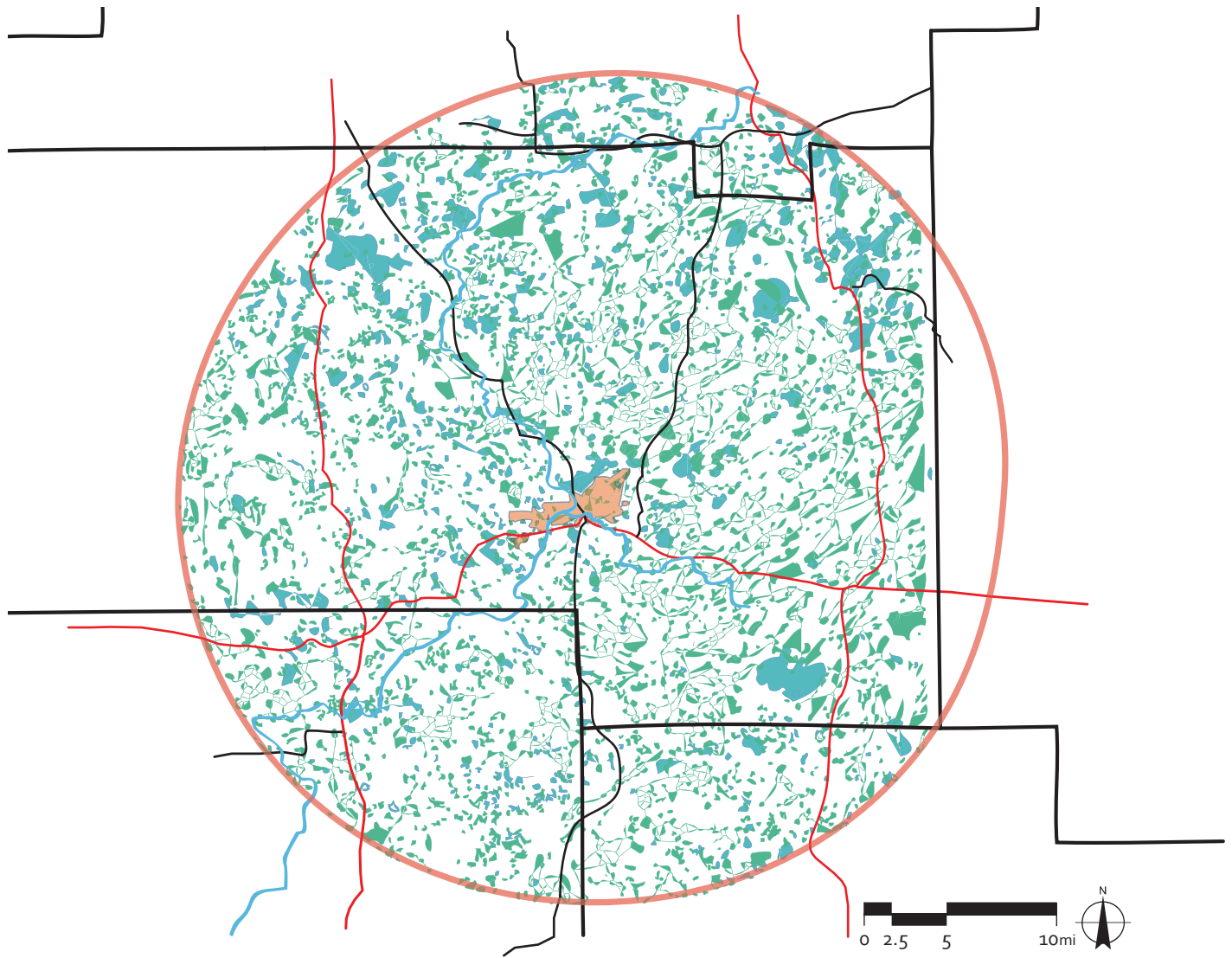


EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS : REGIONAL



Buffers were created around Rhineland at the relative distances of five, ten, and twenty minutes driving distance around the downtown of Rhineland.

These distances are used to show the existing conditions in the region surrounding Rhineland. Within these distances, Rhineland is the main source of most goods and services and can be considered the center of this region.

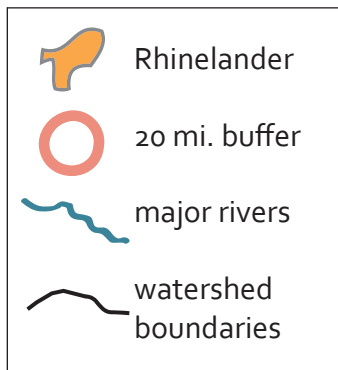
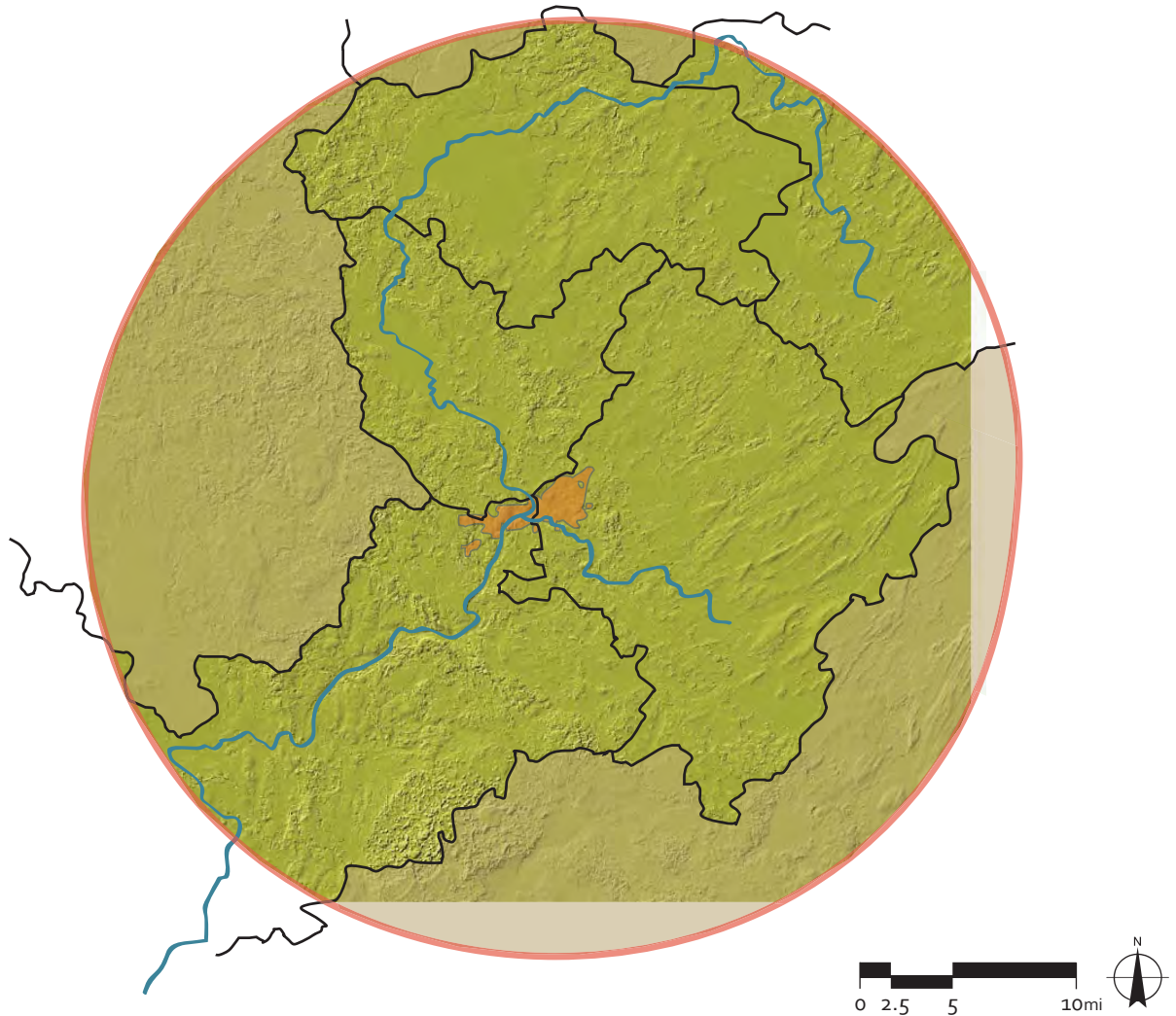


LAKES AND WETLANDS

The large number of lakes and wetlands in the greater Rhinelander region means that land use planning is especially important.

The amount of waterfront property is finite and serves an important role in the tourism and recreation industries, as well as being an amenity for full and part time residents of the area.

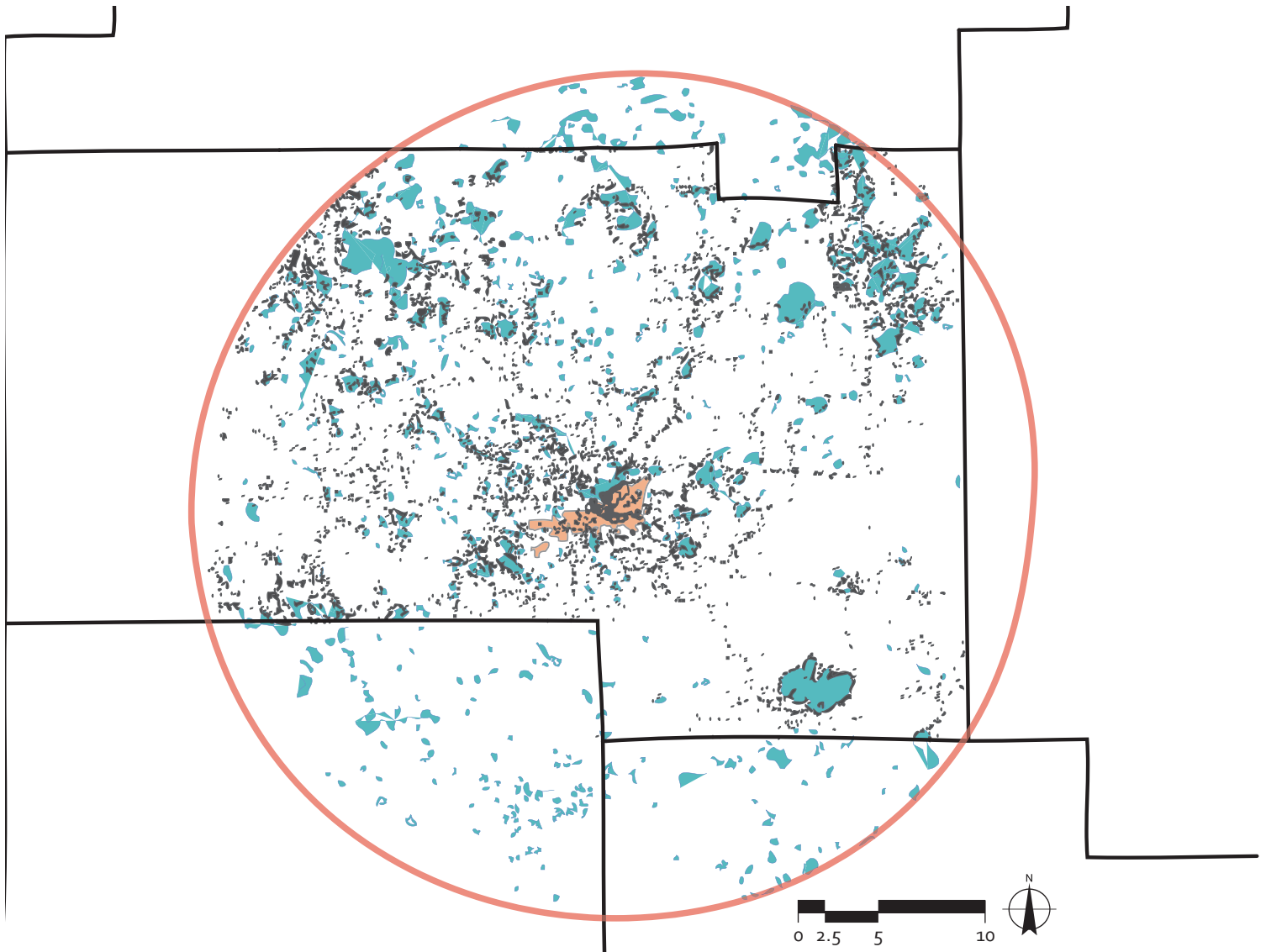
Wetlands are ecologically sensitive areas that need to be preserved to sustain biodiversity. They also serve as aquifer recharge areas and help maintain water quality.



RHINELANDER WATERSHEDS

The Wisconsin and Pelican Rivers, both major drainage corridors in northern Wisconsin, meet in the city of Rhinelander.

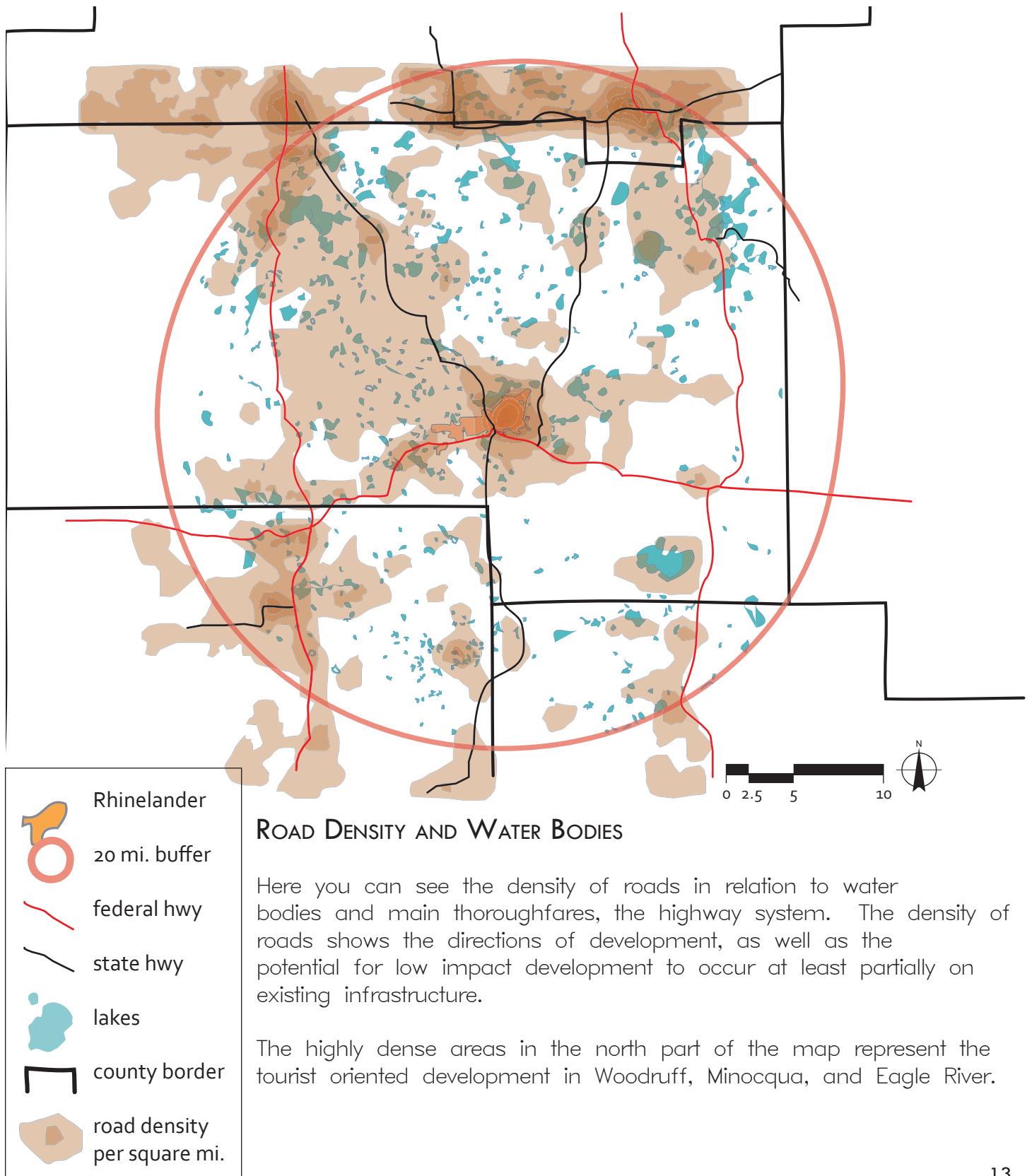
Roads and development follows the path of the rivers, and much of the sensitive land on the banks and in the floodplain have been developed. The rivers historically are the reason for the creation of Rhinelander and play a major part in the sustinance of the city.

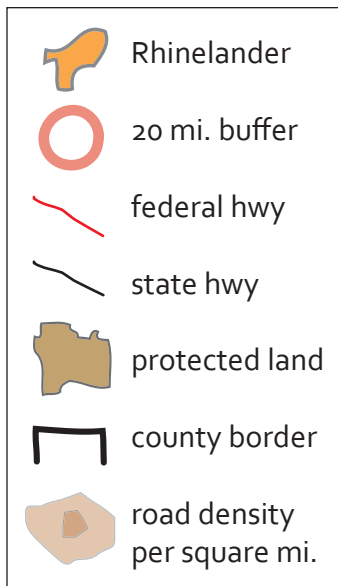
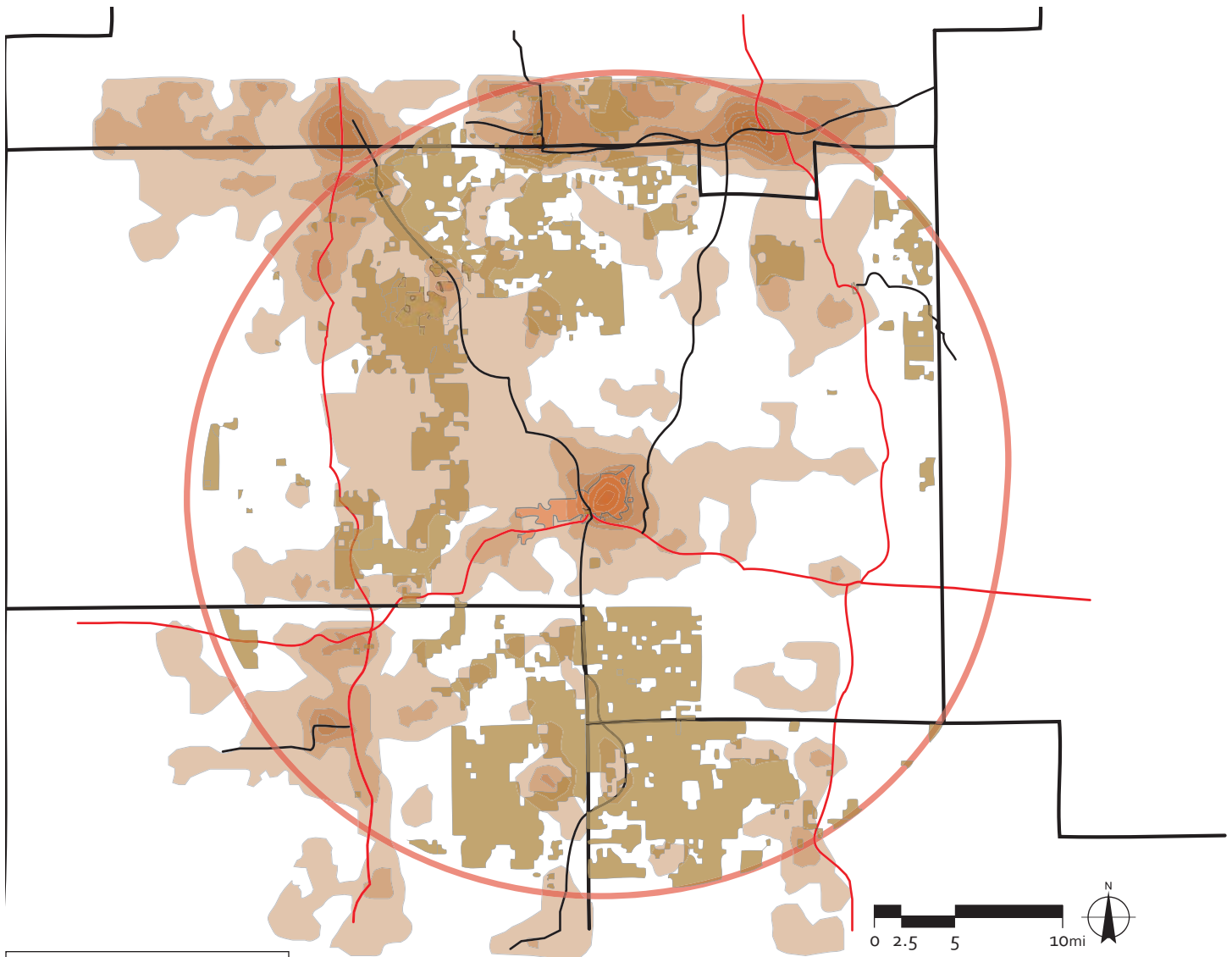


EXISTING BUILDING FOOTPRINTS AND WATER BODIES

This map shows the large number of buildings that are located on lake front property. 41% of the residential water in Oneida County is a 2nd home, showing the large draw that these properties have.

The extensive privatization of waterfronts has led to relatively unchecked development in relation to waterbodies, as well as restricting the use of many lake fronts.



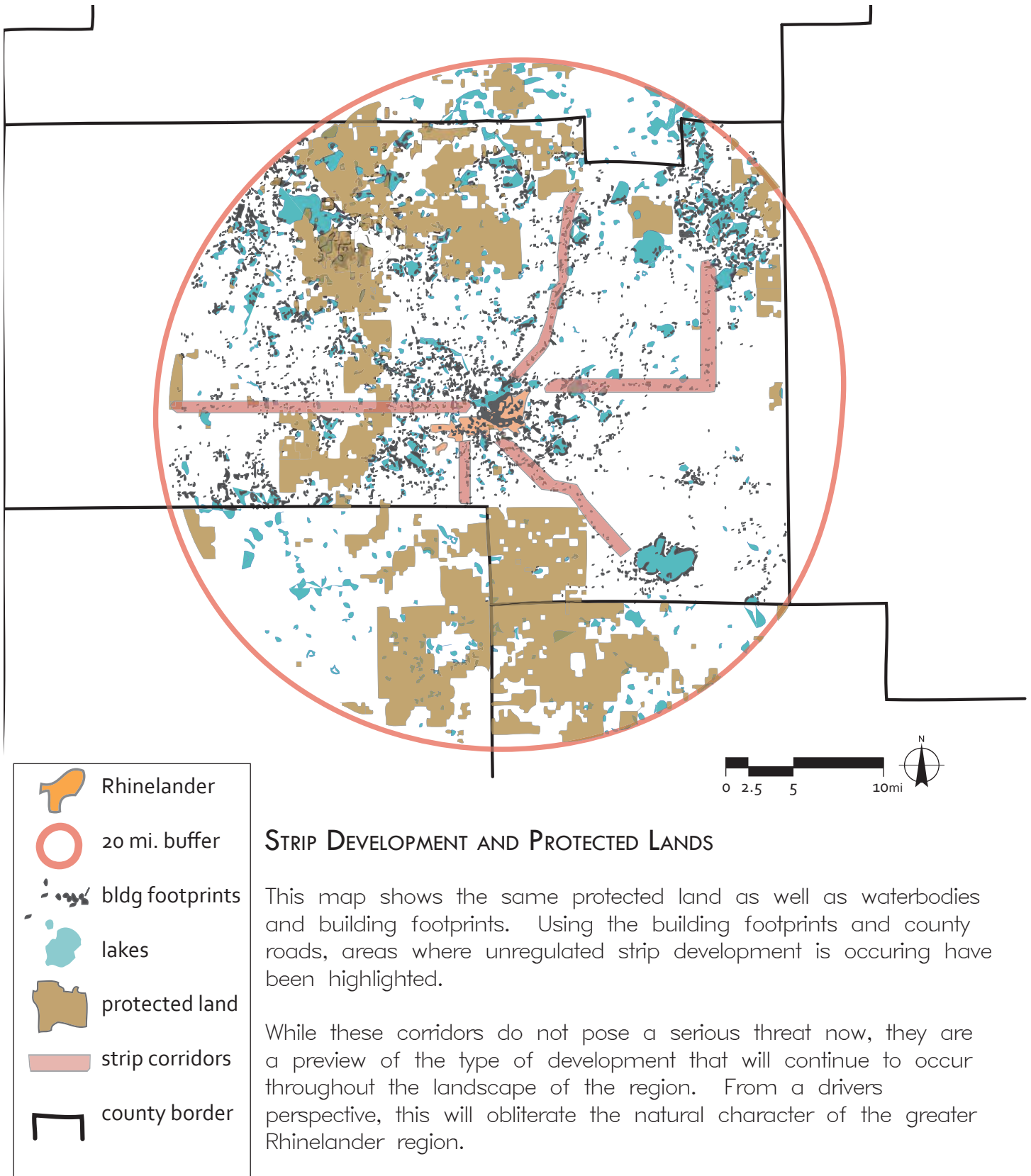


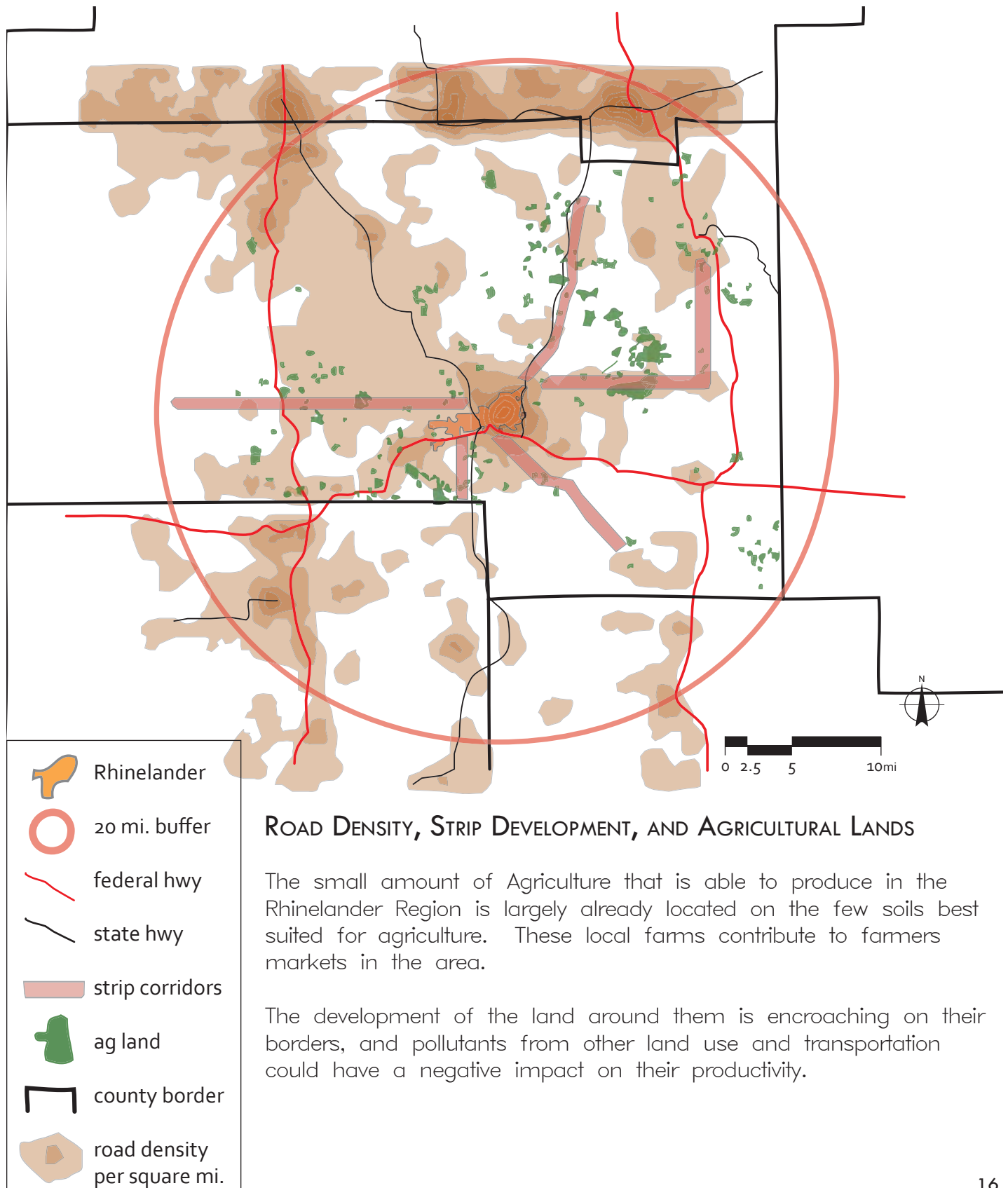
ROAD DENSITY AND PROTECTED LANDS

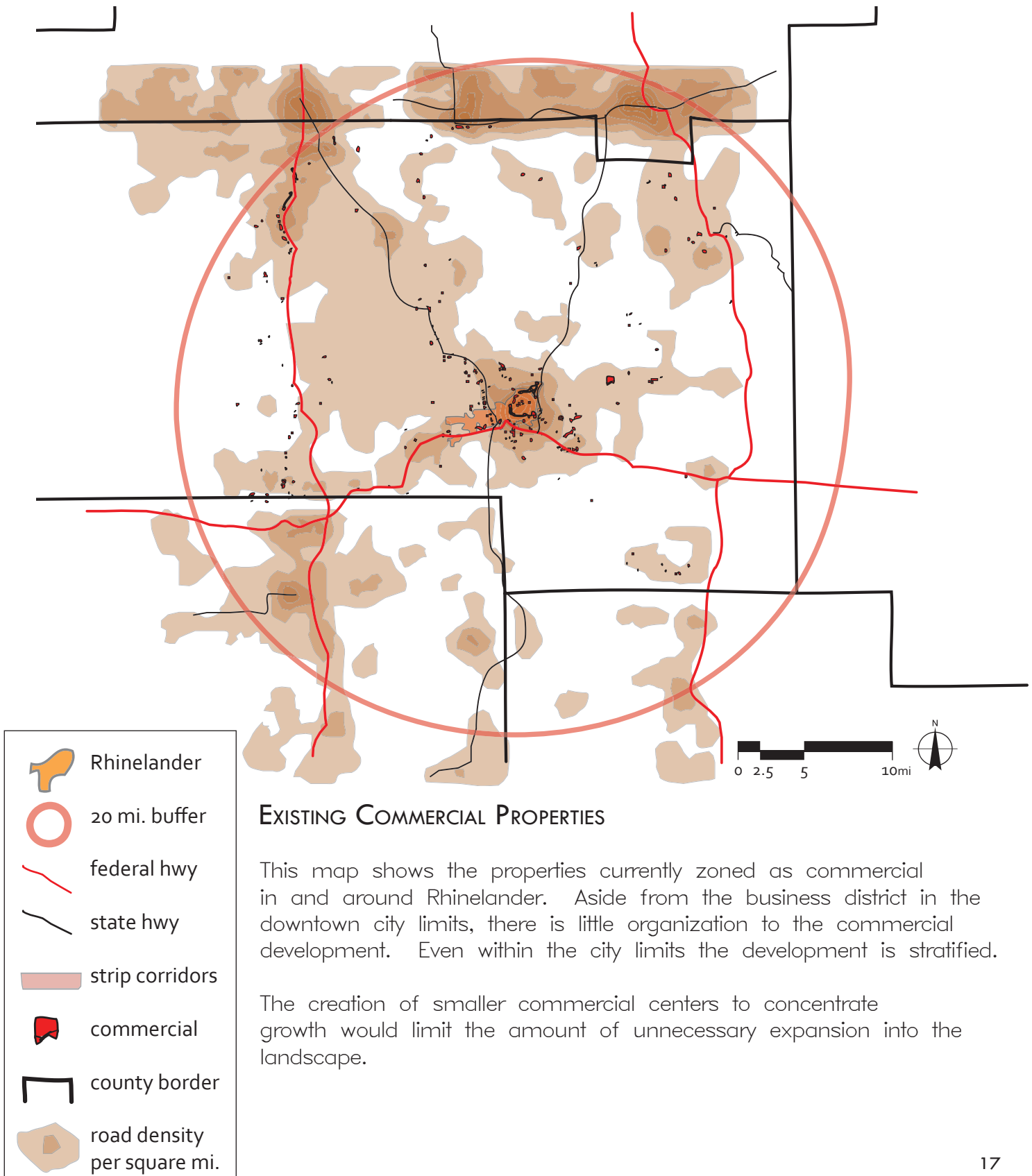
There is a large amount of protected forest land in the greater Rhinelander Region. This includes parts of the Nicolet National Forest, and forest land held by Oneida County and the Wisconsin DNR.

This land is used for recreation as well as wildlife management, and therefore plays a pivotal role in the economic and biologic well being of the region.

This map shows how road development is encroaching on the boundaries of this land.

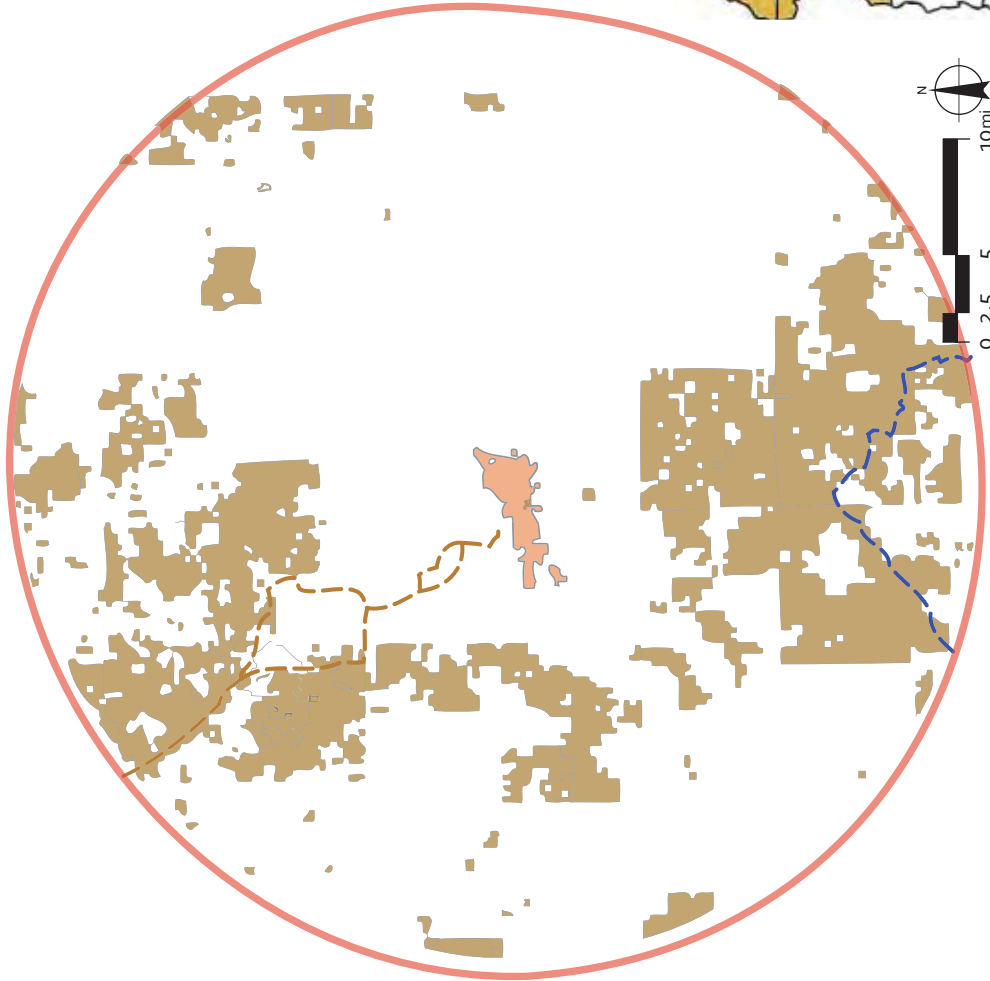




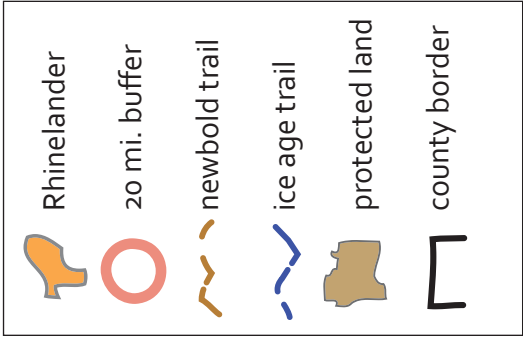




■ **EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS : REGIONAL**



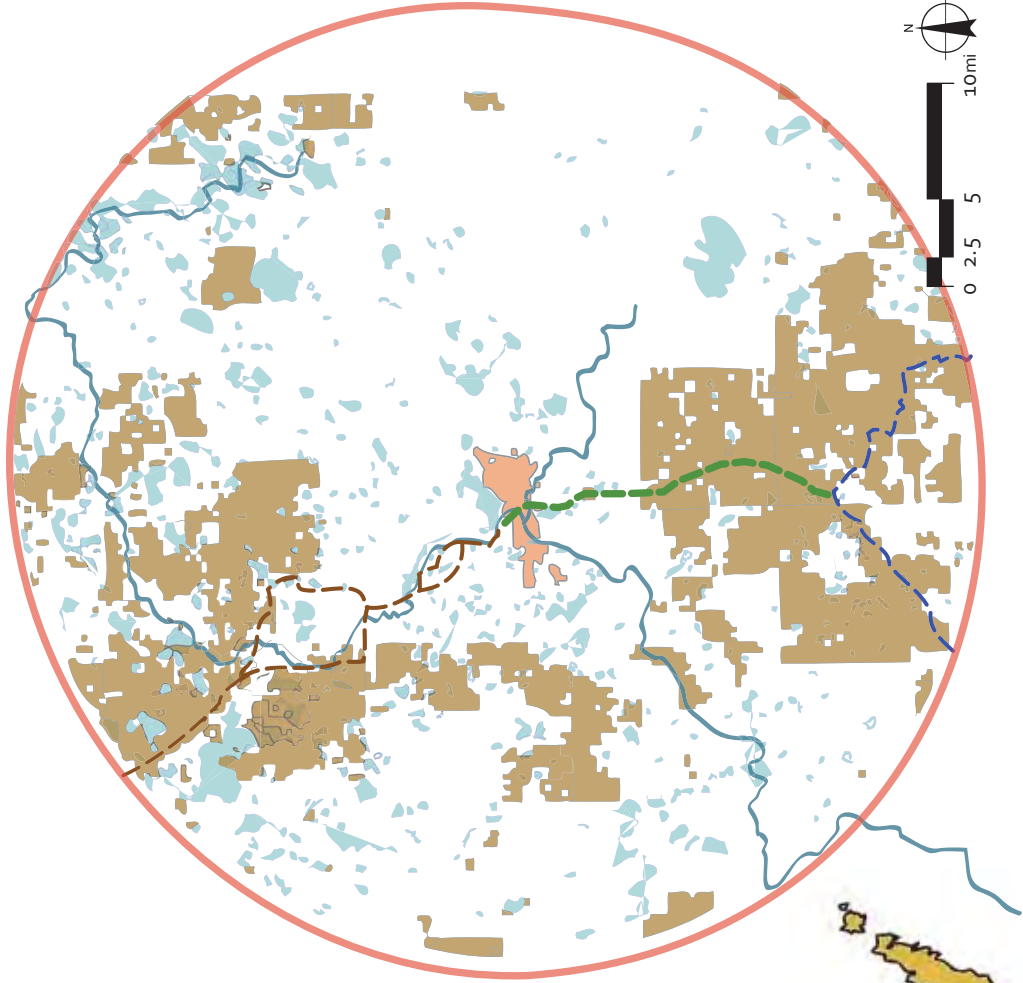
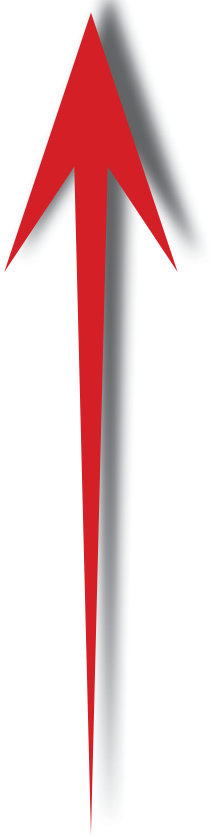
EXISTING MAJOR HIKING TRAILS



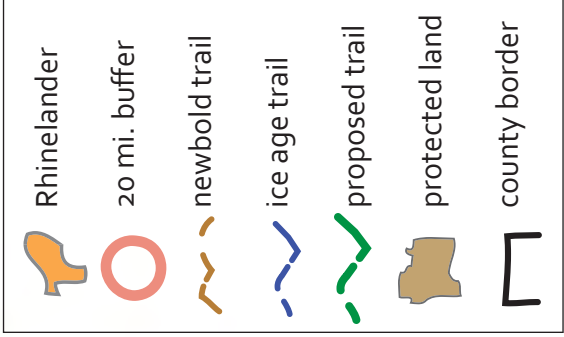
The Newbold and Ice Age Trails both run within close proximity to Rhinelander.

The Newbold trail is ideal for biking and hiking, and connects to Wisconsin River recreation.

The Ice Age Trail is a collection of smaller trail segments that can be visited separately or through-hiked, crossing through many Wisconsin Landscapes. There are eight national scenic trails in the Ice Age Trail system, which recieved National Trails recognition in 1980.



PROPOSED TRAIL CONNECTION

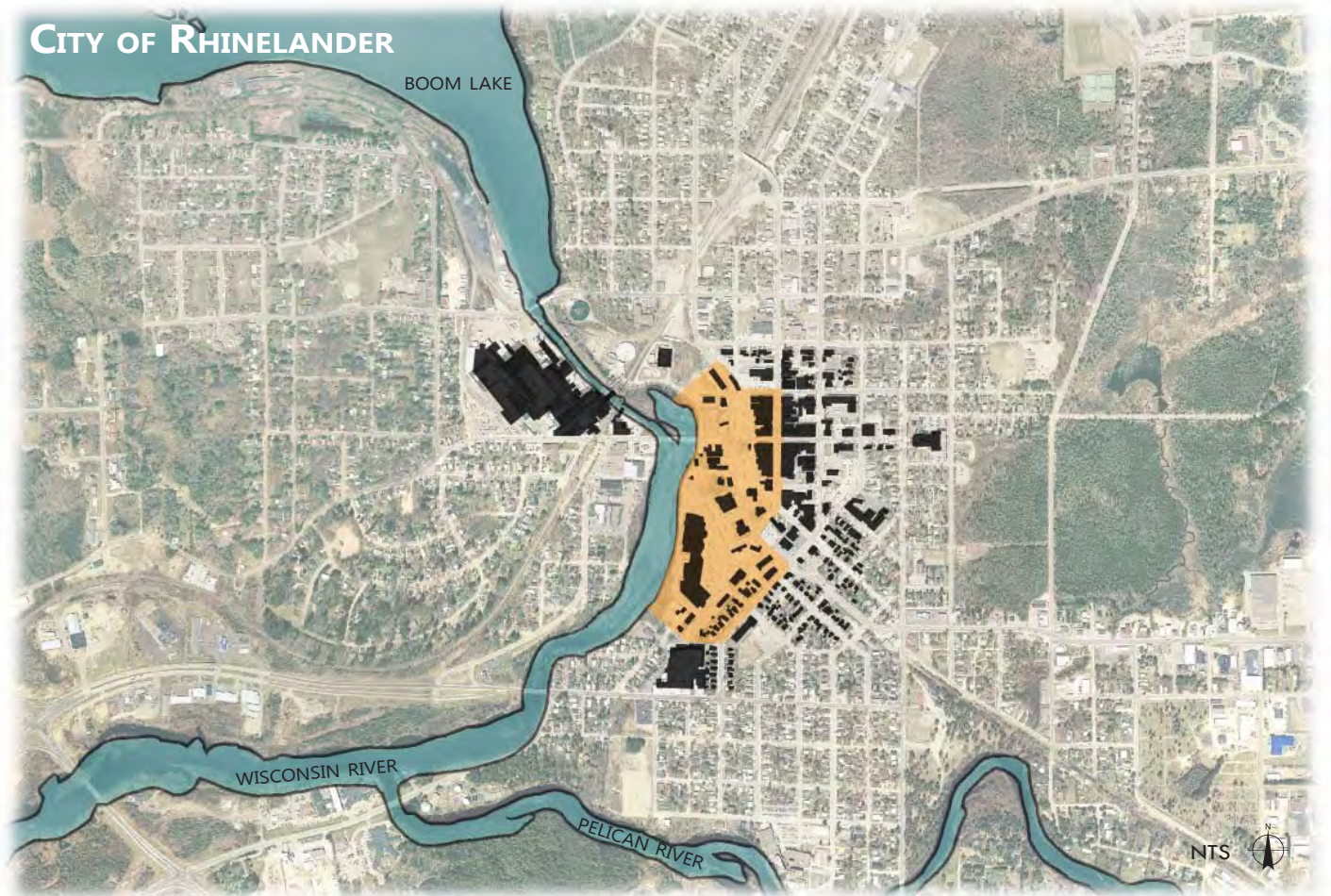


A connection between the Ice Age and Newbold Trail systems would expand the appeal of the region.

This would allow hikers on the nationally recognized Ice age Trail to visit Oneida County, and give through hikers a chance to rest in Rhinelander.



■ EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS : MASTER PLAN



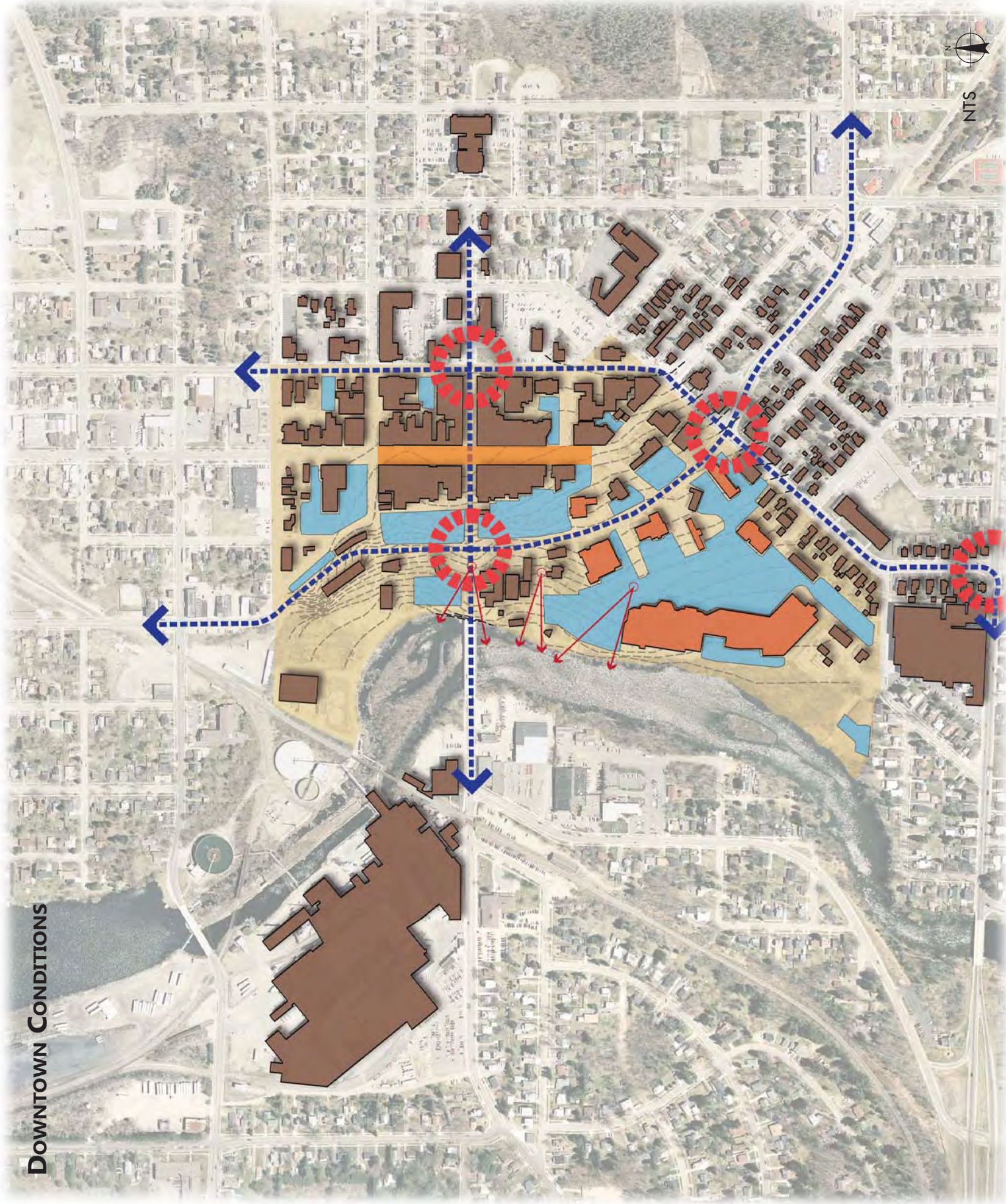
■ MASTER PLAN BOUNDARY

The master plan comprises roughly 39 acres in downtown Rhinelander adjacent to the waterfront. It is bounded by the river on the West, an major entry road on the South-East, Rhinelander's Main street on the East, and the rough boundary of residential housing to the North. This area was chosen by the elements existing on site and the primary interests of the community members in Rhinelander, along with guidance from the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

This area contains some of the biggest issues facing Rhinelander and accurately represents problems facing the city in other areas as well, such as strip development and a focus on off-street parking. Beginning with this area will act as a catalyst for surrounding development.



■ EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS : MASTER PLAN



existing buildings

existing buildings detracting from streetscape experience

off street surface parking

major thoroughways in downtown

main street

viewsheds to riverfront

major intersections

1' contour intervals

This diagram shows the existing buildings and connectivity in downtown Rhinelander. The blue spaces show the existing off street parking which currently dominates the downtown.

The buildings shown in color are ones which detract from the overall pedestrian experience for at least one of the following reasons: large setbacks from the street, automobile oriented design, and facades facing parking lots instead of existing streets. As you can see, some of the buildings are not located on streets at all.

The major intersections show potential points of conflict or confusion, because of wayfinding issues or pedestrian & vehicular traffic.

One of the biggest issues illustrated by this diagram is the lack of connectivity due to surface parking, street layout, & views, from the main street to the riverfront in the downtown.



■ EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS : COMMUNITY VISION SESSIONS

A series of 5 Community Visioning Sessions were held in Rhinelander on December 3rd, 2008. These meetings were publicized by Downtown Rhinelander Inc. and facilitated by James Hanke of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and myself.

During the meetings we presented the attendees with the master plan boundary and the task at hand, how to improve the waterfront and downtown. The discussions ranged far out of the master plan boundary but all comments were helpful. I asked each group to describe what they could imagine their downtown, what goals would be ideal for them.

The meetings helped generate interest not only with the public in Rhinelander but with myself as well. Below are a few of the many opinions we heard.

- Boat launch facilities in the downtown south of dam, channel is navigable, provisions open for kayaking
- need strong public/private uses "downtown expanded"... relocation of farmers market, expand events base
- need strong connection to downtown from highway bypass to south
 - intuitive wayfinding
 - informational kiosks
 - increased green space
- plans to acquire empty mill properties (seen in River Corridor Plan)
- need amenities for elderly, reflect population base in Rhinelander. easily walkable, many amenities
- need to draw families back— safe streets, amenities, connections to schools
- current branding them in progress
- river trail should connect with existing parks further down river, historical context
- events center to draw economic interest
- creation of Wisconsin river history museum (previous idea) celebrate proximity to headwaters
- need river oriented commercial development



■ EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS : MASTER PLAN

Photograph 1 shows the abundance of off street parking in the downtown. This large block of parking breaks up the downtown by separating the main street from the riverfront, and creating a void space for pedestrians and development.

The large parking lots and wide streets, combined with the lack of street trees and other pedestrian amenities creates an undesirable experience for pedestrians in the downtown. **Photograph 2** shows the existing space allotted for pedestrians along Courtney St., a main thoroughfare in the downtown.



Photograph 3 is a view towards the river facing an existing commercial development. This type of development neglects the waterfront directly behind it and disconnects the downtown and its residents from the river.

Directly behind this building, in **Photograph 4**, utilities are located along the riverfront. This further blocks access of pedestrians and contributed to higher water pollution. The river is directly to the right, but the only amenity is the picnic tables in a small strip of grass.





■ EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS : MASTER PLAN

Photograph 5 shows a the main axis running from the main street to the riverfront. This road crosses the only downtown bridge and is the most pedestrian friendly existing axis in the downtown.

Close to the riverfront, these existing brick buildings shown in **Photograph 6** are architecturally interesting and remain from Rhinelander's industrial period. The current use of these buildings is not ideal but the structures could be reused in a positive way.



The conditions in Rhinelander create a generally unhospitable environment for pedestrians. Some of these same conditions present a confusing experience for visitors to the downtown, who are often misled due to lack of intuitive layout and wayfinding.

These conditions are a result of unfocused planning and quick development, without a comprehensive vision for the development of the downtown. Because of this, the current downtown has evolved as it is today.

However, the downtown of Rhinelander still has many of the elements that can make up a successful downtown revitalization project. An active and enthusiastic community group (DRI) working in partnership with the city government, a riverfront on which to capitalize, a Main Street Community accredited by the state of Wisconsin, and rich heritage and recreation to generate interest.



■ **DESIGN SOLUTIONS : INTRODUCTION**

This design will consist of a few major elements, including streetscape, public space, and the riverfront. A successful streetscape will offer amenities to pedestrians, such as informative signage, seating, a sense of place and scale, and visually stimulating surroundings. There will be a pleasant mix of retail available at the street level. The streetscape will not be monotonous and will not be hard to cross. It will be lively, populated, and descriptive of the setting.

The public spaces will be linked to the streetscape experience, the spaces will work together and flow in both directions. The public space will be the backdrop for community events, and will be located close to necessary elements such as bathrooms and parking. The riverfront will anchor the rest of the design into place. The design will celebrate the river's history and future, and be open to everyone. There will be strong views to and from the river, and the circulation of pedestrians will connect the river with both other elements. The natural environment will be a major but not overpowering part of the experience.

The design of all three must be unified to be successful. Without overarching design guidelines, one of the elements in Robertson's eight principles, the sense of place would be compromised. The experience of the downtown must be a cohesive experience in order to send the clearest message and project the clearest image. This image will be one that is based on the heritage of Rhineland and its riverfront, with respect to Downtown Rhineland Incorporated's slogan: "the river is our past and future, and we embrace it".

The setting for this capstone offers unique design opportunities to address the needs of the community and my client. The area directly adjacent to the riverfront is not visible from the downtown and has no amenities along the banks. There are many obstructions in between the riverfront and the downtown, including buildings, parking, roads, grade change, and trees. These all in one way or another separate the two elements. However, the things that separate the two elements can also be used to unify the two. The large areas of parking are located along the backside of the buildings on the riverside of main street. This large parking area will be rethought, and offers an ideal setting for the location for a public space. The parking can be condensed and more space will open up to allow for a more expansive pedestrian experience. This space will invariably be along the link from the main street to the riverfront, and along those lines will need to contain corridors for travel as well as opportunities to stop. This area offers the unique opportunity for "back door" retail, as the majority of buildings backing the parking lot already have double facades.

A successful design solution must address the connectivity of the downtown. The visual connectivity needs to be greatly improved as it is not easy to see where elements of the downtown are located to an untrained eye. The spatial connectivity needs to be



■ **DESIGN SOLUTIONS : INTRODUCTION**

improved. The connectivity of scale needs to be improved. In the existing conditions, the scale changes drastically from one side of the side to another, changing from the historic pedestrian scaled downtown to the automobile scaled mega grocery on the other. The connectivity should be reinforced mainly by the built environment, a good design needs little signage and direction, the space in a good design will flow without interruption and users will travel from one part to another and back again with little confusion.

Above all, a successful design will give Rhinelander the infrastructure it needs to continue being successful into the future. The design will learn from the mistakes already made in the space and emphasize exposing the assets that have historically been present. Currently the infrastructure supports the needs of one element: the car. A successful design will not focus on just one type of element but contain multi-faceted accommodations. Most importantly, the design will allow for a certain plasticity to accommodate changing and unseen needs in the future.

The program for this proposed capstone is derived from a couple different sources. First and with precedence, the goals of the Waterfront Initiative from Downtown Rhinelander Inc. bring focus to the programming. Second, the information gathered during stakeholder interviews and the community visioning sessions was invaluable in determining what was desired by the community, the existing users of the downtown. Last, the educated opinions of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has informed the program as well.

Downtown Rhinelander Incorporated worked tirelessly and recently their efforts have been paid off, as Rhinelander received support as part of the National Main Street Program. This has brought a renewed spirit into their organization and prompted them to turn attention to another problem facing their community: their riverfront. DRI launched their riverfront development by working with the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission on their Waterfront Development Plan. This plan aims to review the current uses of the waterfront and develop ideas for better uses along these properties. In addition, they aim to design and implement a river walk system, which will link the downtown to a larger network of trail systems that exists in the area.

My work will help bring a focus to their development goals and unify their downtown with a design, which will serve their community well into the future. I will focus on three things. First, creating a pedestrian friendly and environmentally sensitive plan for development along their waterfront. Second, improving the quality of the pedestrian experience on their main street, including the preservation of historic character. Last, the creation of linkages between their main street and waterfront, and rethinking the use of space between these two elements. In all aspects of their downtown, the green



■ **DESIGN SOLUTIONS : INTRODUCTION**

infrastructure needs to be greatly improved, as well as the environmental function of their gray infrastructure. While developing the three goals I stated above, I will also address those issues. In order to create the best solution possible for the community, I will use Kevin Lynch's principles of designing space (edges, nodes, corridors, etc..) and the current research into sustainable development and materials to inform my design decisions.

The analysis of the existing conditions in Rhineland and the surrounding region make it clear that there needs to be a multi-scaled solution. A comprehensive design solution that creates a vision for future development as well as isolating specific issues in the downtown is the best way to clearly illustrate the type of change that needs to happen.



■ **DESIGN SOLUTIONS : PRECEDENTS**

The city of Waterloo, Iowa underwent a downtown revitalization effort, including development along their waterfront. There are a one main difference between their project, and the issues facing Rhinelander. Waterloo was motivated to undertake a downtown development project by the relocation of a large employer into their city. The employer mandated that improvements be made to the downtown. The city of Waterloo hired Vandewall and Associates, of Madison to create a plan for development.

Vandewall looked at land uses along the river front and created centers of development along the Cedar river. Vandewall based their plans of research done by Richard Florida, who has helped define what a community needs to do to recruit the new generation of workers. His 2002 book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, addresses these issues. The riverfront center that Vandewall proposed contained high density residential, markets, mixed use retail, and open space plazas.

While the riverfront centers are designed well to attract a new working class, their plans to not address the rest of the city as well as they could. The plan is based of the clustering of venues in appropriate settings along the waterfront and throughout the city, but little attention was given to the pedestrian experience outside of the new developments. Greater focus could have been given to the interconnectivity of the space that they were creating, as well as the connections between separate developments. Without this kind of focus, the developments run the risk of being stratified from the existing city and disconnected from each other.

The city of Kalamazoo, Michigan underwent a study on their waterfront. This was a large scale study, which broke the waterfront up into separate districts for analysis and suggestions. The suggestions were in the form of zoning decisions with the purpose being to create gradual change over time. The entire area was dubbed the Riverfront Overlay district, and can be viewed as a whole with separate elements being the specific zoning districts.

The zoning districts include commercial areas, residential areas, park areas, and mixed use areas. Existing development will not be affected but any new development would have to conform to the new zoning. The districts seemingly do not take into account their borders with other districts, or the major roads and corridors that pass through their boundaries. My concern would be the disconnectedness that will occur over time when the zoning codes are adhered to. The plan does not take into account connections between different areas and is purely policy based. A combination of this policy based work as well as master planning looking at connections between districts and their individual assets.



■ DESIGN SOLUTIONS : CITY PLAN



- River corridor boundary
- Wetlands
- Civic buildings
- School buildings
- Buildings in Master Plan
- Existing Buildings
- Existing parks
- Proposed parks
- River Trail
- Green Boulevards
- Master plan boundary

- 1 Hodag Park
- 2 Unused mill property
- 3 Confluence of Wisconsin & Pelican rivers
- 4 Holmboe Conifer Forest Land Trust
- 5 Pioneer Park



■ **DESIGN SOLUTIONS : CITY PLAN**

The River Corridor Plan links together major open space and land preservation elements in the region immediately surrounding Rhinelander. The boundaries of the river corridor serve as an edge to development that would heavily impact the functioning natural systems surrounding the river & wetlands. Steps for restoration can take place on existing development within corridor boundaries.

This will serve as a conceptual reminder of the proximity to these sensitive natural areas. It also lays out the river as a series of linkages, connected by the planned regional trail connection. Some of the major elements to be connected are:

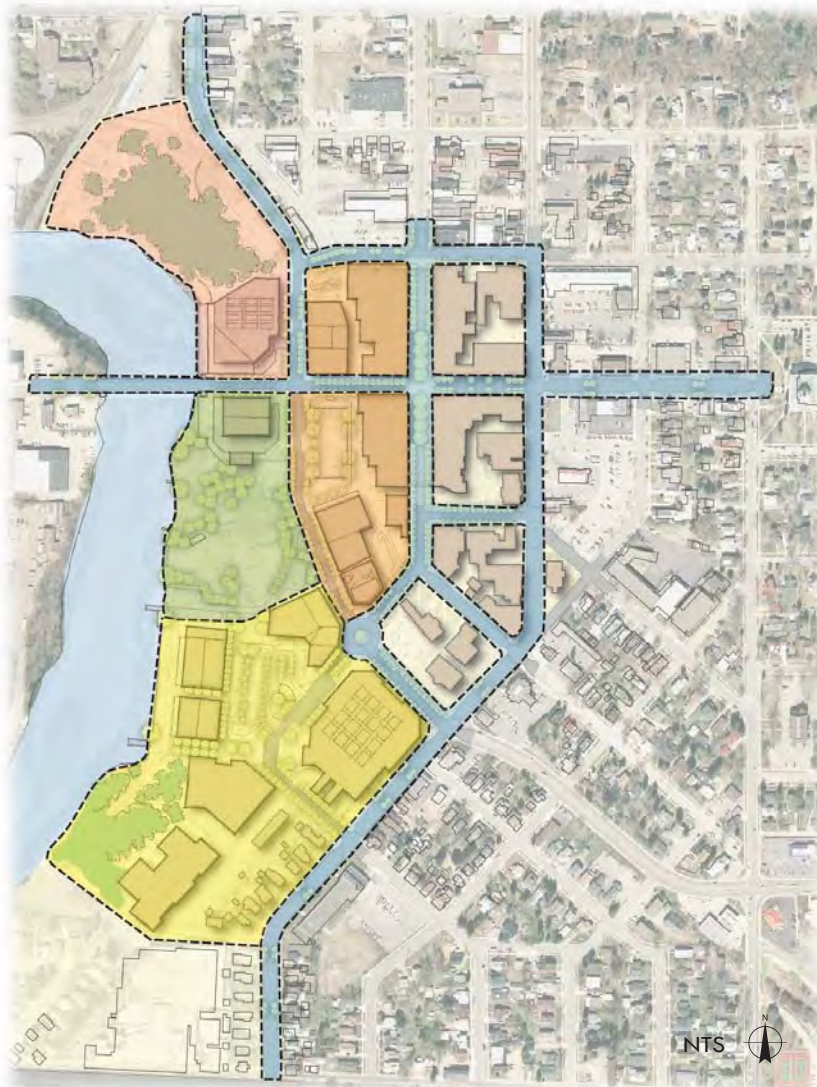
- 1 **HODAG PARK.** Located on the southeast shores of boom lake, this large recreation park offers boat launches, sports fields, changing rooms and beach access during the summer. Its proximity to both elderly housing and the local High school make it appealing, as well as the stunning views of the Lake.
- 2 **UNUSED MILL PROPERTY.** Formerly used as a timber staging area by the adjacent mill, this large swatch of land is already being targeted by developers. It is essential that a portion of the waterfront be made entirely public, through the creation of a north–west recreation park. While the property may be developed, the river trail will run its course along the shores here and provide an important alternative connection to the downtown.
- 3 **CONFLUENCE OF WISCONSIN & PELICAN RIVERS.** The Pelican river flows west to meet the Wisconsin at this point directly south of Rhinelander. This site marks the spot where Europeans first settled the Rhinelander area. Currently marked by a plaque, this site is on the crossroads of the river trail and has historical value to the region.
- 4 **HOLMBOE CONIFER FOREST.** Part of the Northwoods Land Trust, this preserve spans 32 acres and consists of wetlands, preserved forest, & many wildflowers. The land preserved has historical value for both European settlers and the Indigenous people living in the area. There are existing trail loops on the property, including boardwalks.
- 5 **PIONEER PARK.** This park is the current staging area for the local farmers market, as well as the Logging History Museum. The master plan calls for these uses to be pulled into the downtown, freeing up this space for future uses.



■ DESIGN SOLUTIONS : PHASING

The number of components in the master plan for downtown Rhinelander has been phased in order to best address the needs of the community. Phasing the master plan allows the community members to better understand the plan in its entirety, and how each element will separately enhance the downtown. The phasing highlights the multifaceted approach of the master plan, which has been proven important to successful downtown's and downtown revitalizations. It also focuses on the end result, the creation of a continuous positive experience for all residents and visitors. The phases work in two ways.

First, each phase comprises a separate element from the others. While some components of the plans overlap, the phases have their own individual character, each contributing something different to the downtown. Second, the phases build upon each other in a way that will facilitate the difficult process of restructuring the downtown.



Phase 1

- Increased civic space
- Downtown winter activities
- Increased pedestrian oriented development
- Existing commercial relocation
- Chamber of Commerce relocation



Phase 2

- Community & events center
- Riverfront restoration area



Phase 3

- Downtown recreation park
- Increased waterfront access
- Wisconsin River History museum
- Relocated Rhinelander Historical Society



Phase 4

- Improve pedestrian experience
- Traffic calming measures



Phase 5

- Downtown riverwalk with boat moorings
- Mixed-use riverfront development
- Increased commercial space
- Existing business relocation



■ MASTER PLAN: PHASE I

The Master plan begins with the creation of civic open space and new commercial mixed use infill development. The civic plaza mimics the form of a naturally occurring town square, and will serve as the heart of the downtown. Its location will link the main street to the riverfront by creating a number of pedestrian connections reinforced by visual sight lines.

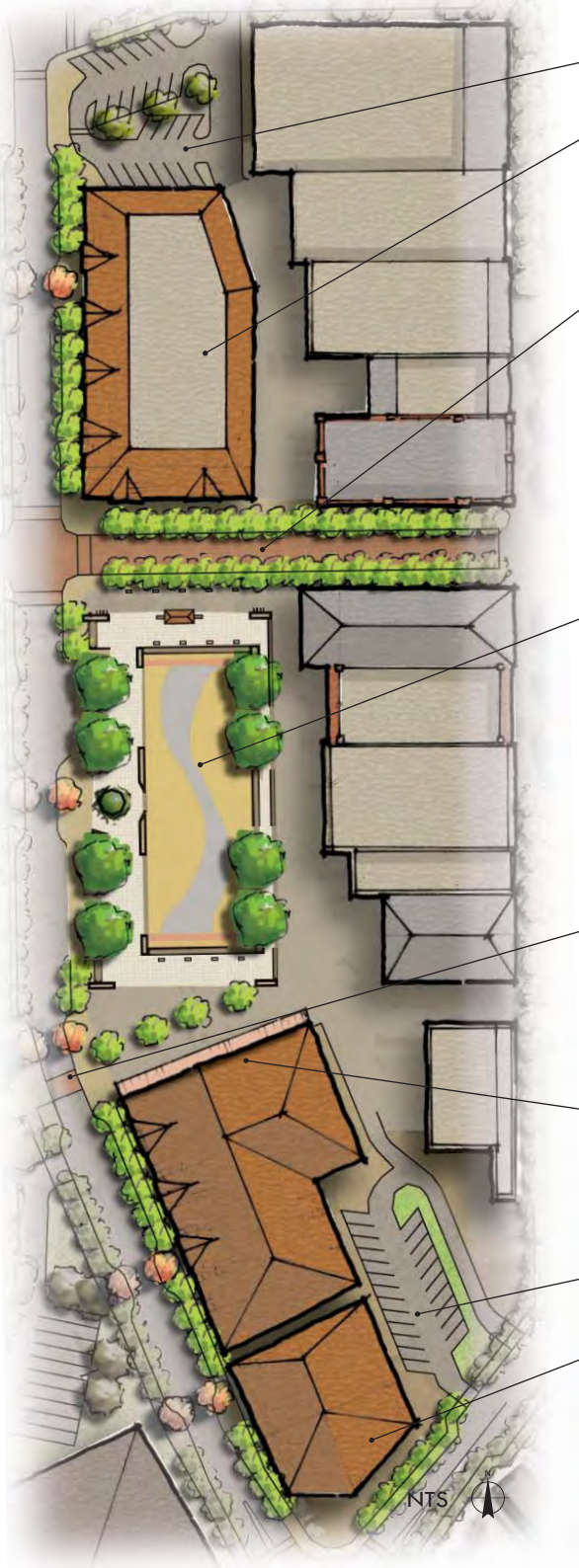
Its location serves another purpose by continuing access to the rear entrances of the buildings located on the main street. This will help transform the buildings into a more permeable boundary allowing the flow of pedestrian traffic to be less hindered by the large conglomerate building footprint.

The new commercial infill creates space for the relocation of business's displaced in future phases, in addition to the creation of new ones. The immediate inclusion of mixed use infill into the downtown serves the project on a number of levels; namely to increase density, provide development with existing pedestrian connections, and to increase the diversity of development in the downtown.





■ MASTER PLAN: PHASE I



OFF STREET PARKING

NEW MIXED USE BUILDINGS

- 3000 s.f commercial
- 2500 s.f residential

PRIMARY ACCESS TO RHINELANDER'S MAIN STREET

- increased canopy cover
- widened sidewalks
- street seating & planters
- traffic calming paving materials
- increase lane width to accomodate bicycles

DOWNTOWN TOWN SQUARE DEVELOPMENT

- outdoor seating
- limited vehicle access for business owners & utility access
- information kiosks
- bicycle parking
- backdoor retail

PEDESTRIAN AXIS TO RIVERFRONT PARK

- visual axis to waterfront
- amenities for safe street crossing

NEW RETAIL FACING TOWN SQUARE

- pedestrian oriented development
- encourages window shopping

OFF STREET PARKING

RELOCATED RHINELANDER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- welcomes visitors to downtown
- tourist information
- strong visual presence in downtown



■ MASTER PLAN: PHASE I

SITE DESIGN

The town square revitalizes an existing underdeveloped space in the downtown. Currently a parking lot, this space would remain empty of buildings but be transformed into a multi-functional public plaza. The need for a unifying space in the downtown for wayfinding and other purposes, as well as expressed interest in a location for downtown events from participants in the community vision sessions informed the creation and programming of this space.

Located on the north end of the plaza, adjacent to the primary pedestrian axes, is an informational kiosk with news and events, as well as maps for wayfinding and orientation. This end is the 'entrance' to the town square and also contains bicycle parking and seating. The north end of the town square has a strong visual connection across the intersection to the Community center located on the opposite corner (phase II). These two elements work together to bring a sense of civic community to the downtown.

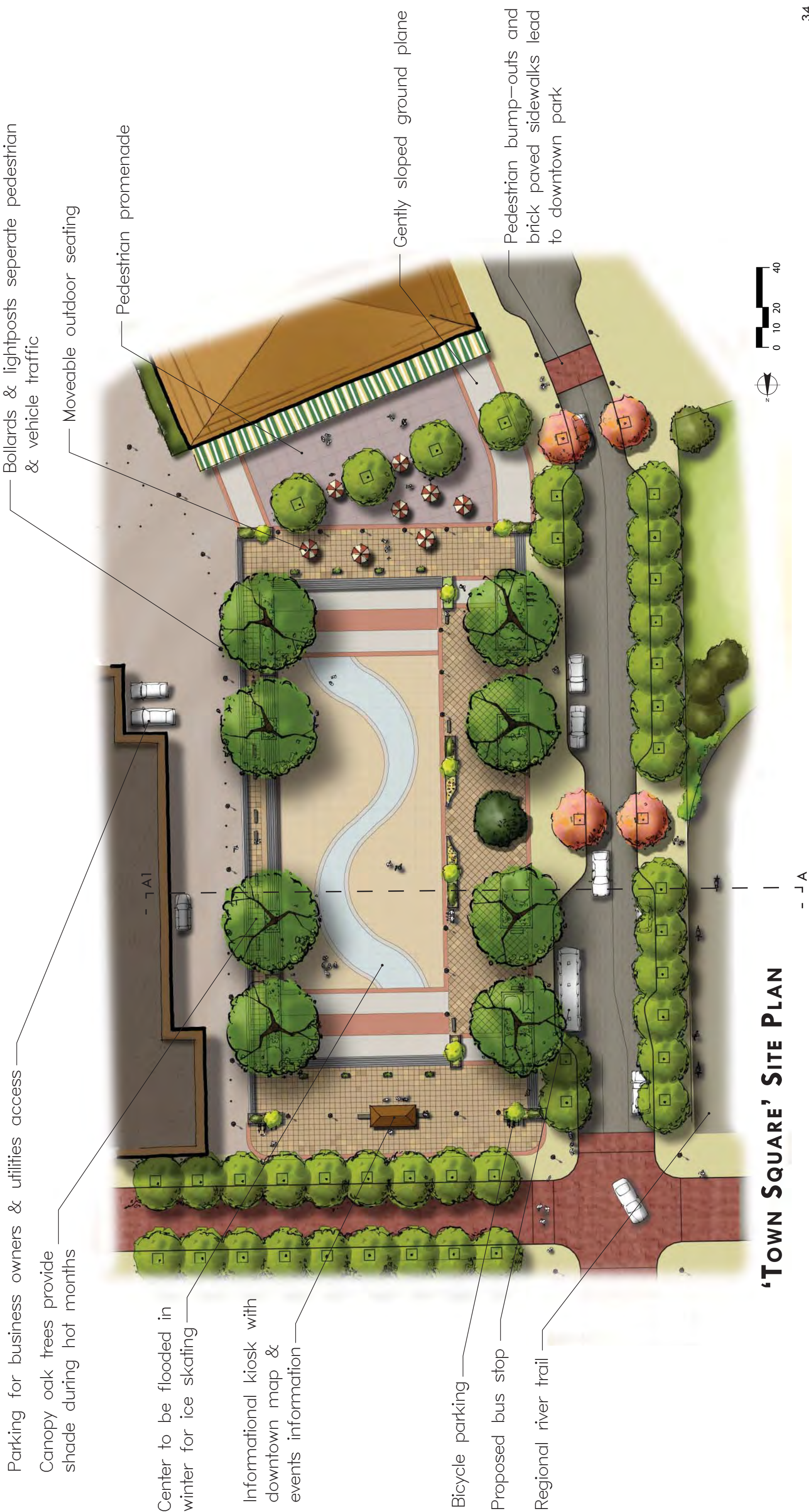
The center of the plaza is flush with Courtney street but 4' below grade from the east side of the square. This grade change is traversed through a series of stairs and ramps, assuring unbiased universal access throughout the site. Large canopy oaks shade this section of the plaza, fed from stormwater collected and stored sub-surface on site. A colored concrete pattern in the center reflects the river history of Rhinelander and the North/South flow of the Wisconsin River. this area paved in concreted and sporadically edged by planters on the west side has the ability to be flooded in the wintertime, and used as a skating rink. The dimensions are 5' shy of a regulation hockey rink, more than enough space for games to be played by members of the community and even local teams. Seating along the second level in the form of steps and benches provide space for spectators.

On the southern end of the town square, commercial infill provides a backdrop to the civic space, and mimics the natural creation of a pedestrian mall that one might find in a small European town. Outdoor seating and the linear placement of trees mimic sidewalk seating but without the constraints. The linear pattern of trees follows a secondary pedestrian axis that runs between buildings from the main street all the way to the downtown recreation park (phase III), directly across the street. This secondary axis provides a pedestrian only opportunity for traversing the downtown, further reducing a dependence on vehicles and vehicular circulation patterns, and creating a clear advantage for foot traffic.

Flowering street trees mark the traffic calming bump outs in between the new on street parking. Pedestrian crossing areas are finished in brick pavers, a continuous design detail throughout the master plan.



■ **MASTER PLAN: PHASE I**



'TOWN SQUARE' SITE PLAN



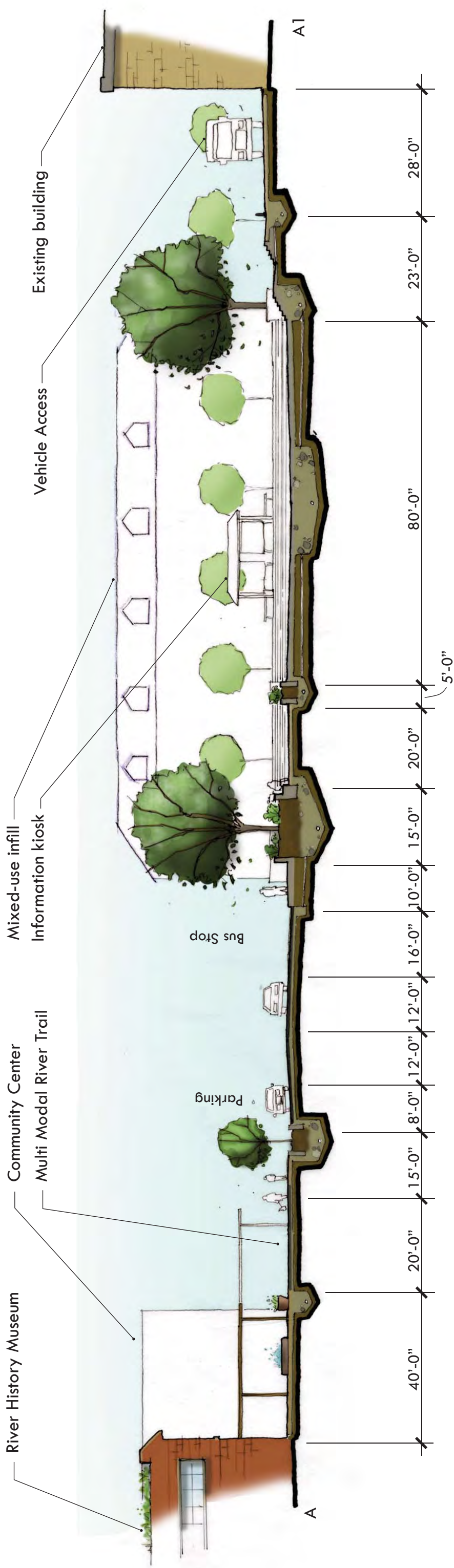
■ MASTER PLAN: PHASE I



TOWN SQUARE DURING FARMERS MARKET



■ MASTER PLAN: PHASE I



SECTION A-A1

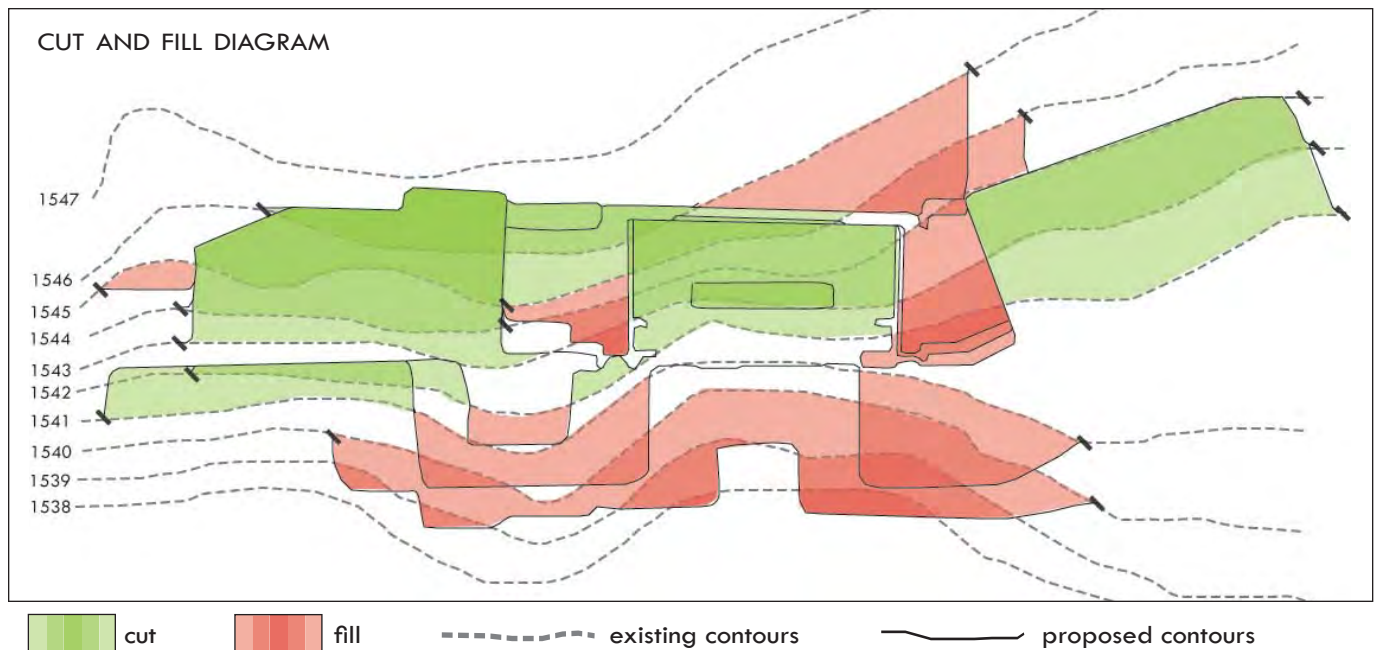


■ MASTER PLAN: PHASE I

GRADING AND DRAINAGE

Grading was done in and around the site plan to take into account the proposed building footprints. The diagram below shows how the buildings and town square will be cut into the existing grade roughly 2–5 feet depending on the area. The fill is mainly raising the roadway to the south up to the level of the new sidewalks. The grade change will be mitigated entirely in the town square by a series of steps and ramps, which are visible in the site contours.

The total cut, shown in green comes out to 217,644 cubic feet of soil. The total fill, in red, equals 103,791 cubic feet. The excess cut that is left over after using it on site can be used during phase III in the downtown recreation park to regrade that area as needed.





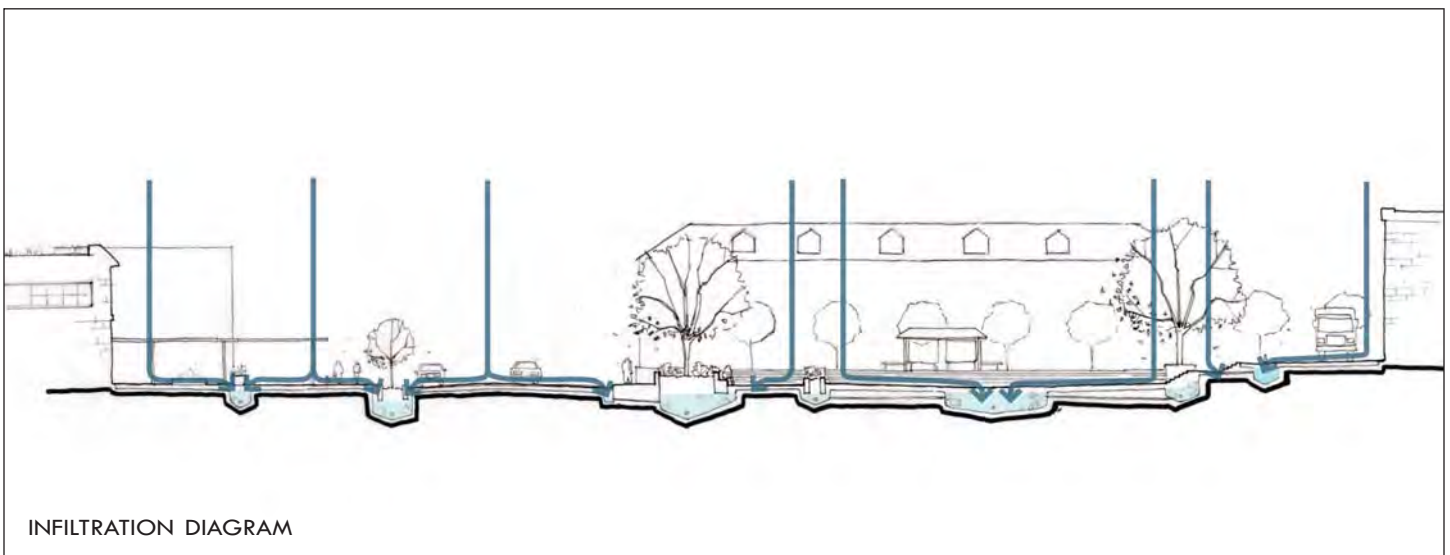
■ MASTER PLAN: PHASE I

GRADING AND DRAINAGE

The materials on site will be mainly permeable pavers with little exception. This will allow stormwater to infiltrate in most areas of the site. Since the site has been graded to be mostly flat, the site will drain using micro grading. The small changes in grade direct water to infiltration points which allows the excess runoff to infiltrate into the substrate. There will be a small layer of substrate continuous below the paving, with larger aggregate located in strategic points to store larger quantities of water.

There are 6 major subsurface detention basins located on the site. The diagram below highlights their location in the town square. Two of the larger basins are located underneath the soil in large planters holding the oaks. The stormwater captured here will infiltrate back up as the water is drawn into the root system, keeping the trees watered even in this urban environment. The basins shown in section below are continuous in the north south direction for the majority of the central part of the site design.

Spread out over the basins is 83,882 cubic feet of retention space, which at 40% pore space is enough to hold the delta Q of 33,553 cubic feet.





■ **MASTER PLAN: PHASE II**

Phase II of the master plan continues the community oriented development with the creation of a community & events center. This center is located on the waterfront of the Wisconsin river, on the prominent intersection of Courtney and Davenport. It will be a highly visible building with a large river overlook and deck.

The river overlook deck is a wooden structure that runs the entirety of the building length on the river side. There will be a matching deck running in the opposite direction across Davenport, connected to the river history museum in phase III. The completion of these two decks will continue the public waterfront access.

The community center will serve two main purposes to create a space for community events and activities, and to have the facilities to hold larger conferences, banquets, or performance.

The community center combined with the town square directly opposite will bring a focused sense of community to Rhineland, and provide residents with spaces to use in their downtown.





■ MASTER PLAN: PHASE II



MULTI MODAL RIVER TRAIL

- regional trail connection
- connects directly with downtown recreational park (phase III)

RIVERBANK RESTORATION AREA

- increased canopy cover
- naturally occurring canopy trees
- dense understory along banks to prevent erosion
- walking paths through forested area from community center & river trail

COMMUNITY CENTER

- nearly 10,000 s.f of space
- 300 person theater/150 person banquet space
- community kitchen
- rentable meeting rooms
- solar panels to offset energy costs
- public access to waterfront via viewing deck
- second story wrap around terrace
- bicycle parking
- bus stop
- adjacent off street parking
- 5 minute walk to the main street
- strong visual presence downtown



■ **MASTER PLAN: PHASE III**

Phase III developed naturalized open space in the downtown of Rhineland, while celebrating its history. The downtown recreation park is a reclaimed site that will bring activity into the downtown which right now is located in the outskirts. This park is designed to maximize the number of uses in this relatively small space in the downtown.

A large open space in the middle of the park will serve as a sports field, and is large enough to accommodate a number of pick up games of different types, or a larger organized game. The plantings, grading, and pathways are designed to maximize the number of views to and from the river.

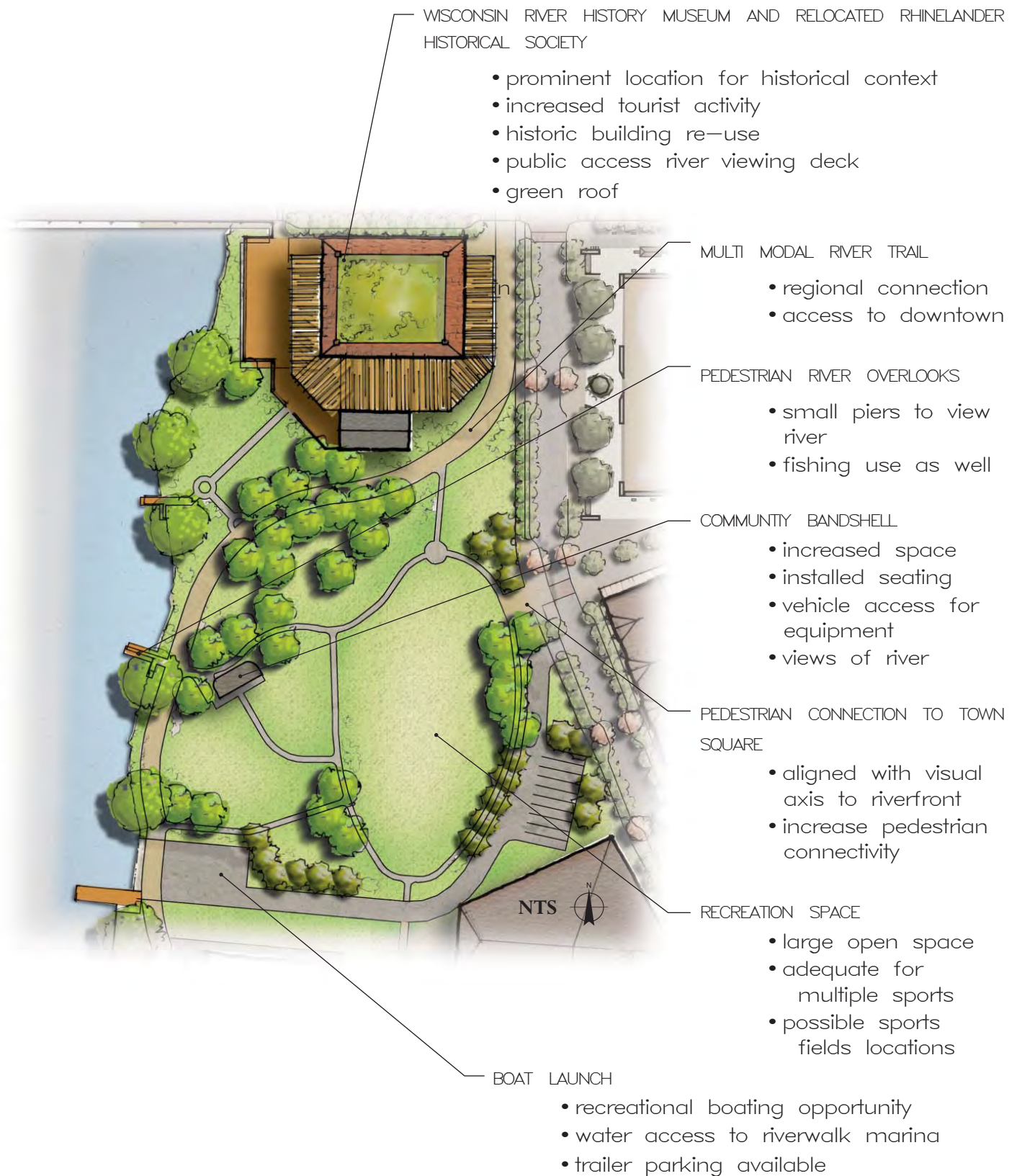
In addition to recreation space, the park also offers a larger bandshell with more seating, picnic tables with grills near the bandshell for family or others use, river overlooks to bring a strong connection to the park, and a boat launch area complete with trailer parking.

Phase III also encompasses the creation of the Wisconsin River History Museum in Rhineland, along with the relocation of the Rhineland Historical Society into the same complex. This complex would include a new building connected to a reused brick structure already on site. This building is constructed across Davenport from the community center, to add a historic element to this prominent downtown location.









■ MASTER PLAN: PHASE III



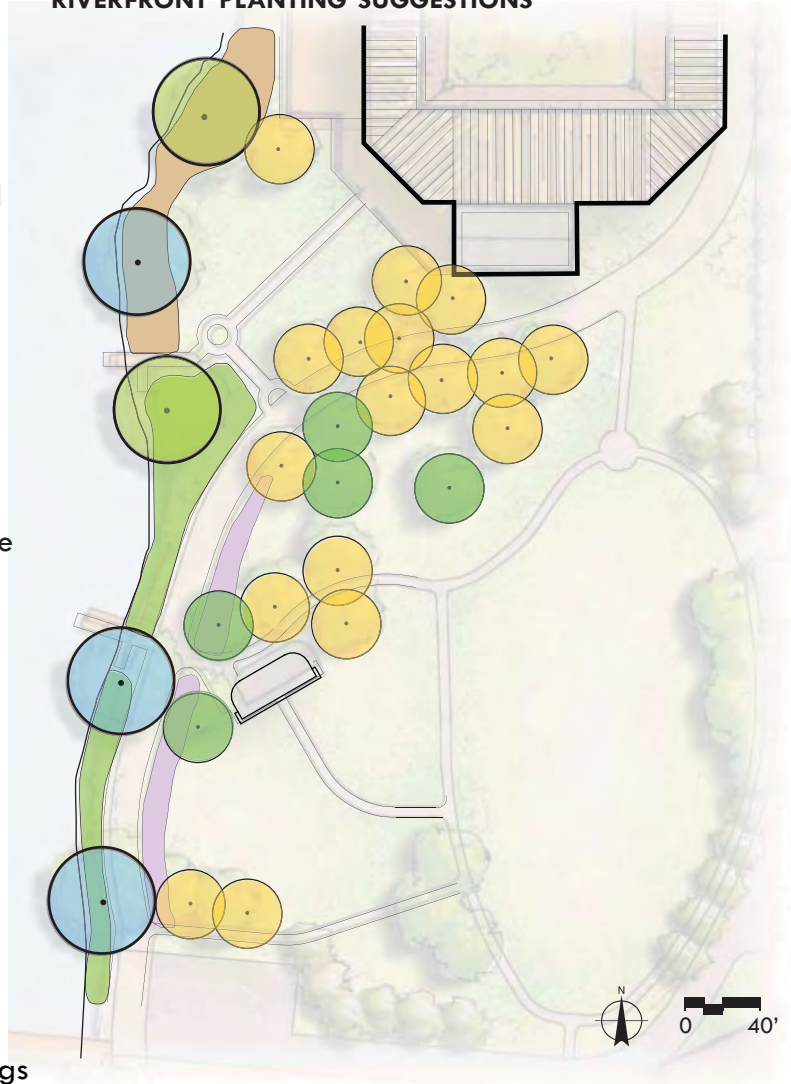


■ MASTER PLAN: PHASE III

Along the western edge of the riverfront park the river trail will be edging the waterfront as well as collecting the stormwater surface runoff from the uphill turf. These planting suggestions for the area will help stabilize the sensitive slopes along the waterfront as well as absorbing some of harvested water.

-  Platanus Occidentalis, American Sycamore
-  Betula Nigra, River Birch
-  Acer Saccharum, Sugar Maple
-  Tilia Americana, American Linden

RIVERFRONT PLANTING SUGGESTIONS



Shallow slope river plantings

Scientific Name	Common Name	Type	Notes
<u>Betula Nigra</u>	Riverbirch	b&b	plant to plan
<u>Cephalanthus Occidentalis</u>	Buttonbush	b&b	sporadic plantings (20-25' spacing), spring planting
<u>Cornus Amonia v. Schueteana</u>	Sily Dogwood	b&b	plant 20'25' spacing, mass around trees
<u>Platanus Occidentalis</u>	Sycamore	b&b	plant to plan

Swale plantings

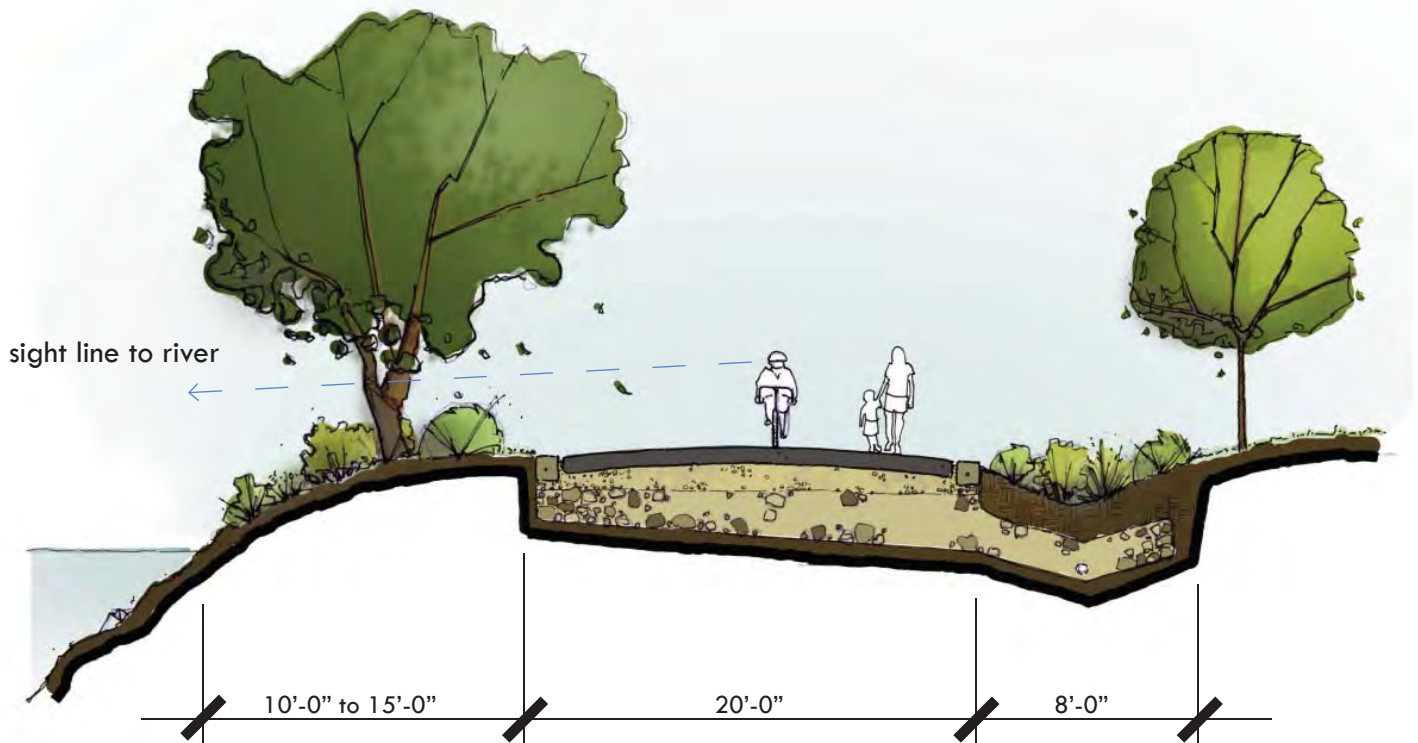
Scientific Name	Common Name	Type	Notes
<u>Carex spp.</u>	Prairie Sedge Mix	Seed	
<u>Panicum Virgatum</u>	Switchgrass	Seed	
<u>Physocarpus Opulifolius</u>	Ninebark	b&b	dense along sloped areas, plant in spring
<u>Schizachyrium Scoparium</u>	little bluestem	Seed	

Steep slope plantings

Scientific Name	Common Name	Type	Notes
<u>Carex Larida</u>	Bottlebrush Sedge	seed	
<u>Glyceria Striata</u>	Fowl Mana Grass	seed	
<u>Hibiscus Moscheatas</u>	Swamp Rye Mallow	seed	
<u>Lobelia Siphilitica</u>	Great Blue Lobelia	seed	
<u>Spirea Alba</u>	Meadowsweet	b&b	5-10' spacing

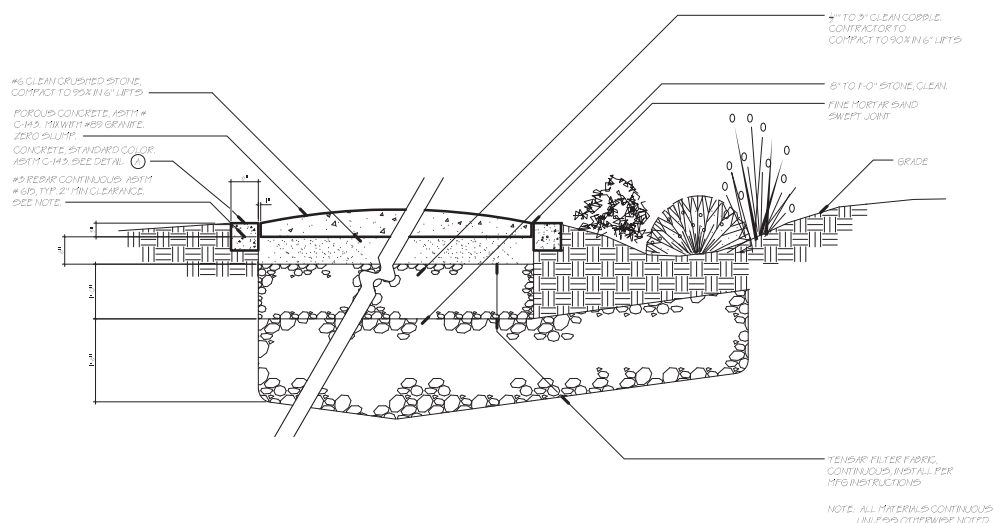


■ MASTER PLAN: PHASE III



SECTION THROUGH RIVERWALK IN RECREATION PARK

- porous asphalt captures rainfall
- bioswale harvests overland flow
- coarse aggregate stores stormwater to allow for infiltration & prevent excessive runoff into river





■ MASTER PLAN: PHASE III



RIVER TRAIL SOUTH FROM RECREATION PARK



■ MASTER PLAN: PHASE IV

The roads and roadway experience in Rhinelander is the focus of Phase

The goals of this phase are to improve the wayfinding, improve the pedestrian experience, and to decrease the vehicular congestion in the downtown. This will be achieved by creating a clear hierarchy of roads and improving the connectivity.

The experience of entering and traveling through Rhinelander will change as you become closer to or farther away from the downtown. Amenities for shared roadways are suggested, such as wider sidewalks for pedestrians, and wider

driving lanes to accommodate Street trees are added to create a human scale on the sidewalks and their frequency increases as you near the downtown.

Pedestrian bump-outs are added to slow the design speed of traffic moving through the downtown, again with increasing frequency as you near the downtown.

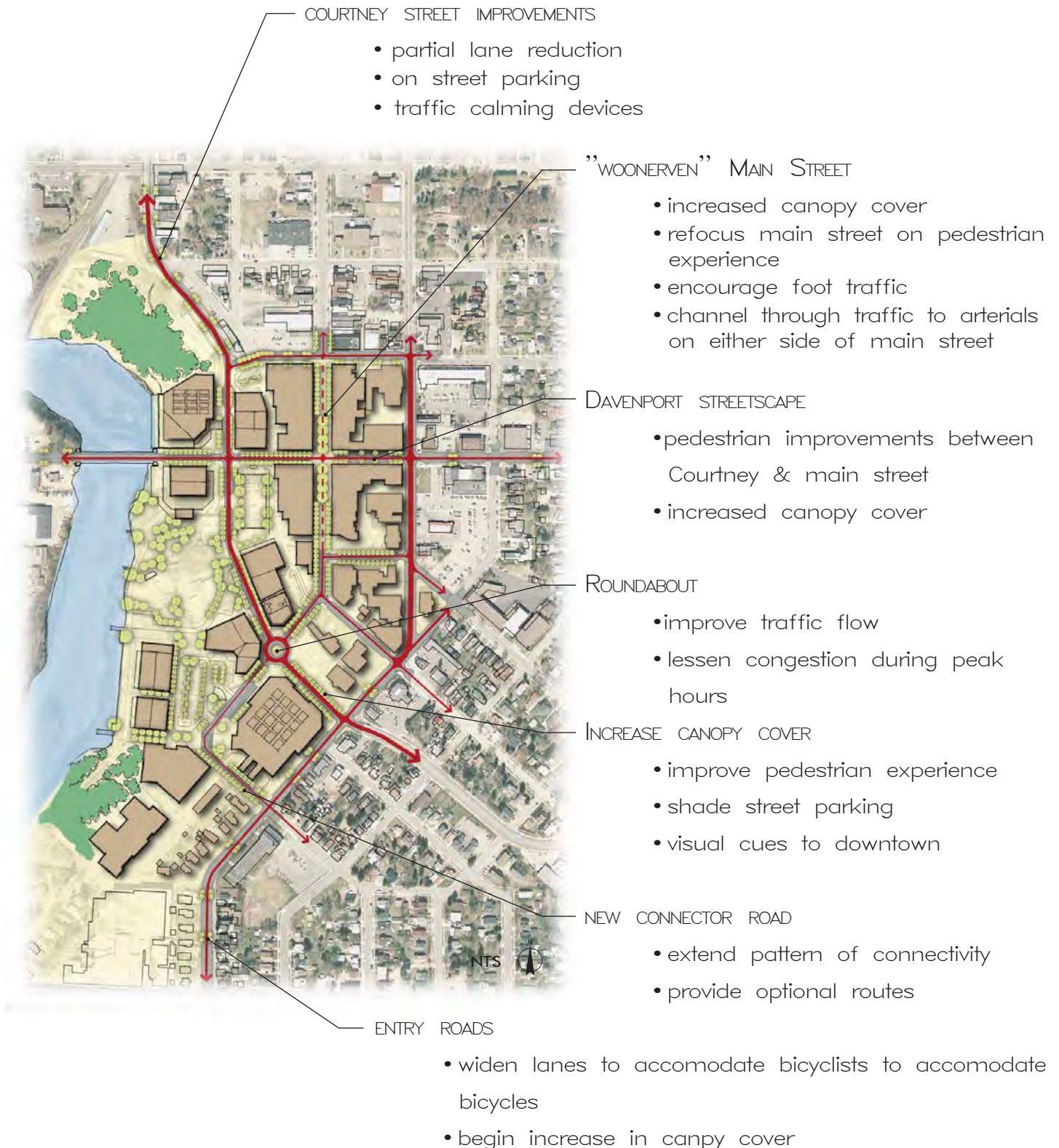
On street parking is also added in many cases to mitigate the loss of offstreet parking that would occur in phases I and V.

The roads in phase IV become more than just streets, they become shared routes for pedestrians, bicycles, and motor vehicles.





■ MASTER PLAN: PHASE IV





■ **MASTER PLAN: PHASE IV**

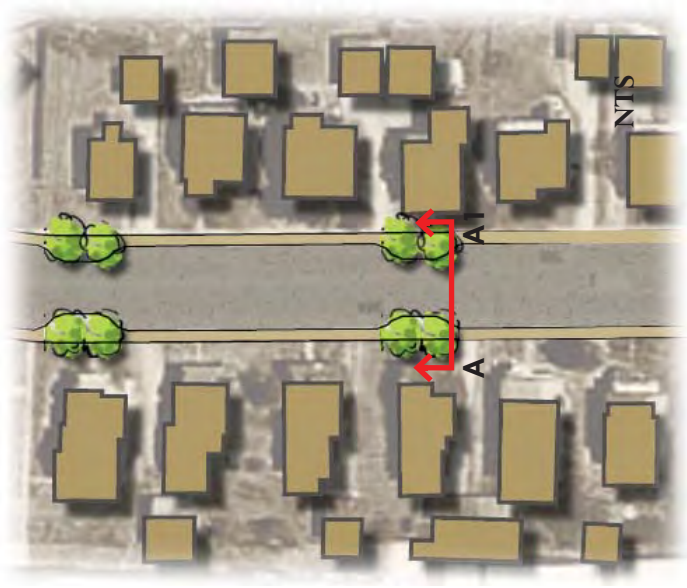


- ① The streetscape improvements begin on the major entryways into the downtown.
- ② Courtney Street running through the downtown handles large amounts of traffic & pedestrians
- ③ Main street "Woonerven" is used by cars and vehicles equally



■ **MASTER PLAN: PHASE IV**

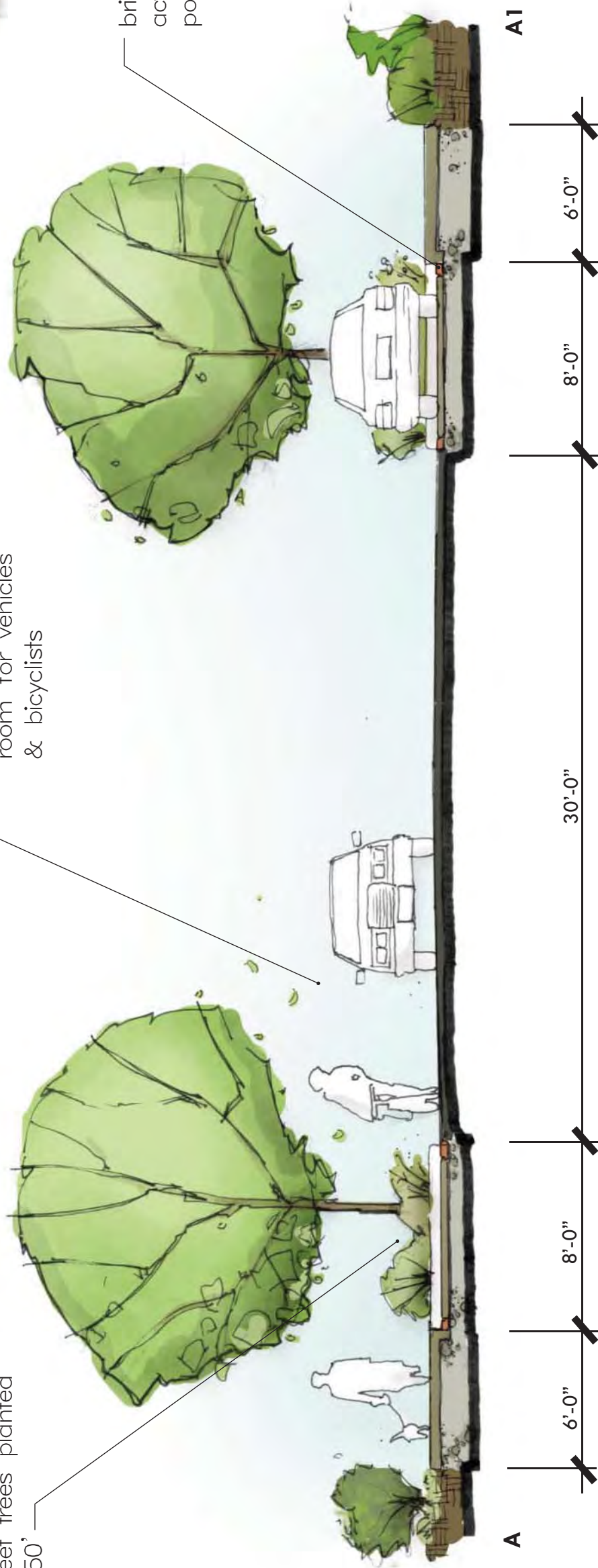
The entry roads coming into Rhinelander will start to exhibit the features of the roadways in the downtown. This will mentally cue visitors and residents alike of their entrance into Rhinelander, as well as raising awareness on the road. Street amenities like this will help the presence of the downtown be felt even 5 minutes outside of town.



pedestrian bump outs
with street trees planted
every 150'

15' lanes leave
room for vehicles
& bicyclists

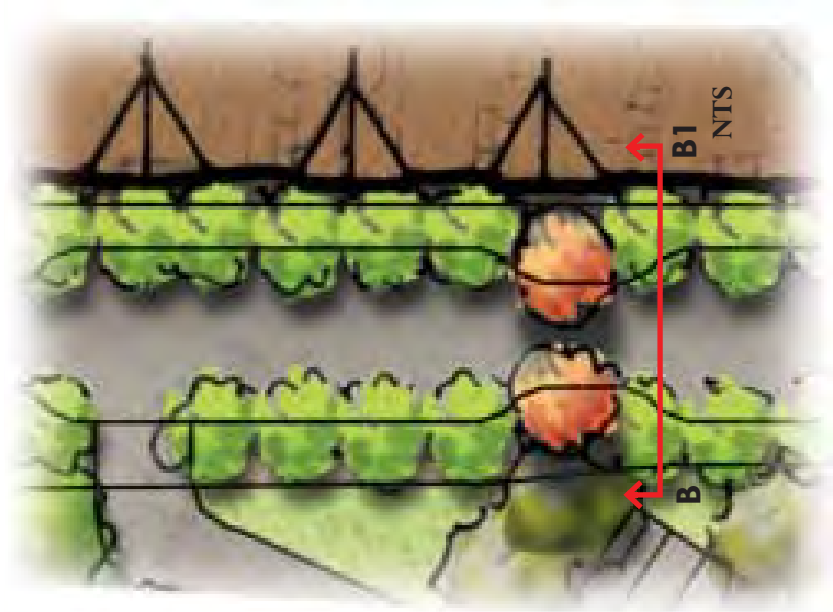
brick headers on parking lanes
act as stormwater infiltration
points



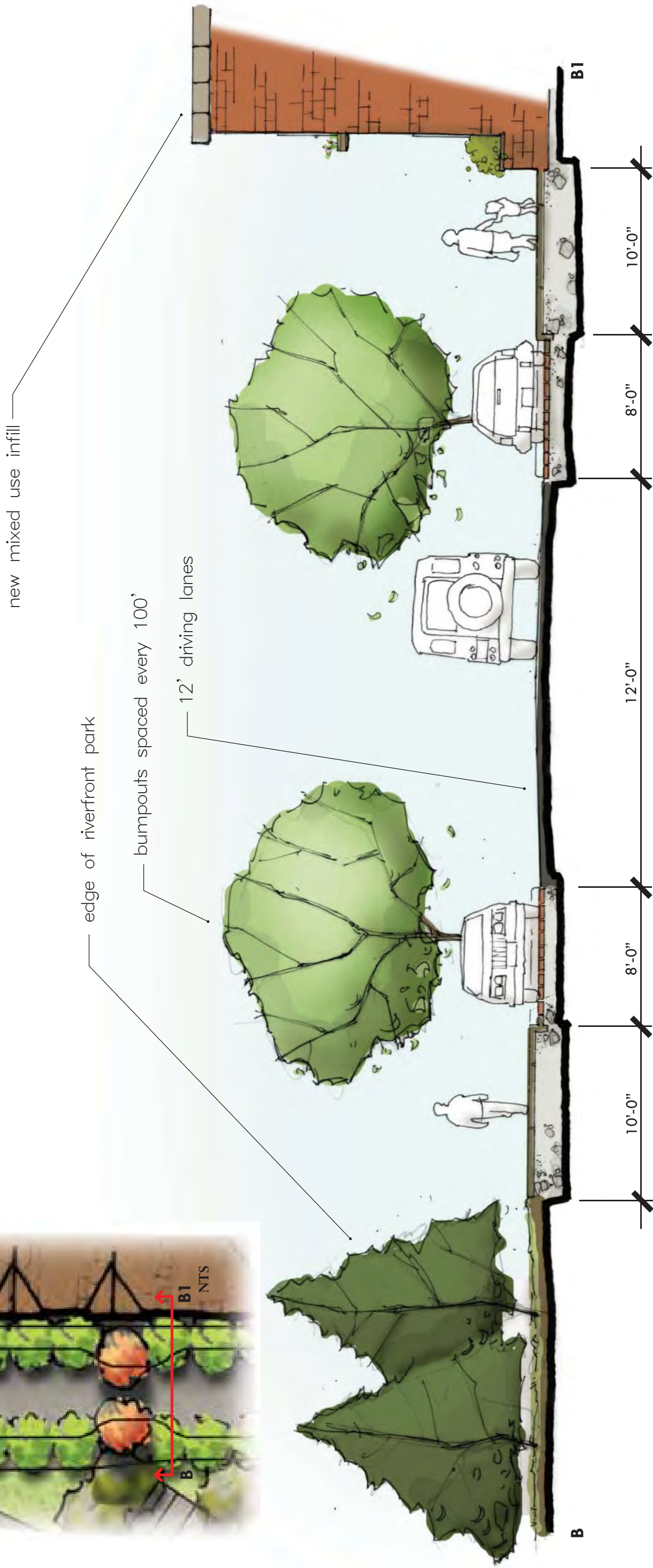
ENTRY ROAD SECTION



■ MASTER PLAN: PHASE IV



Courtney Street traveling through the downtown is edged on one side by the riverfront recreation park, and on the other by commercial mixed use infill. This section shows the change in lanes, from 4 ten foot lanes to 2 twelve foot lanes to accomodate both bikes and on street parking. The wider sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian bumpouts (spaced more frequently), and buffer created by on street parking makes a much more enjoyable experience for pedestrians.

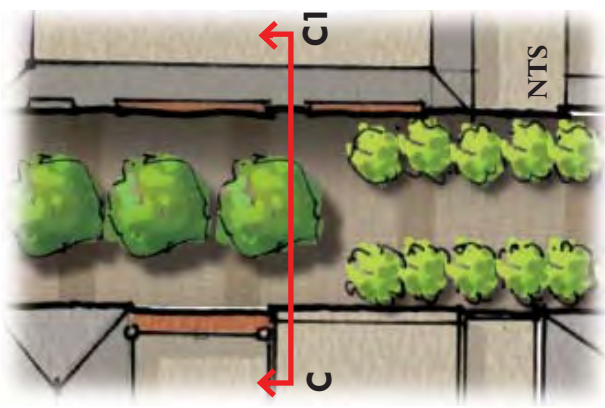


COURTNEY STREET SECTION



MASTER PLAN: PHASE IV

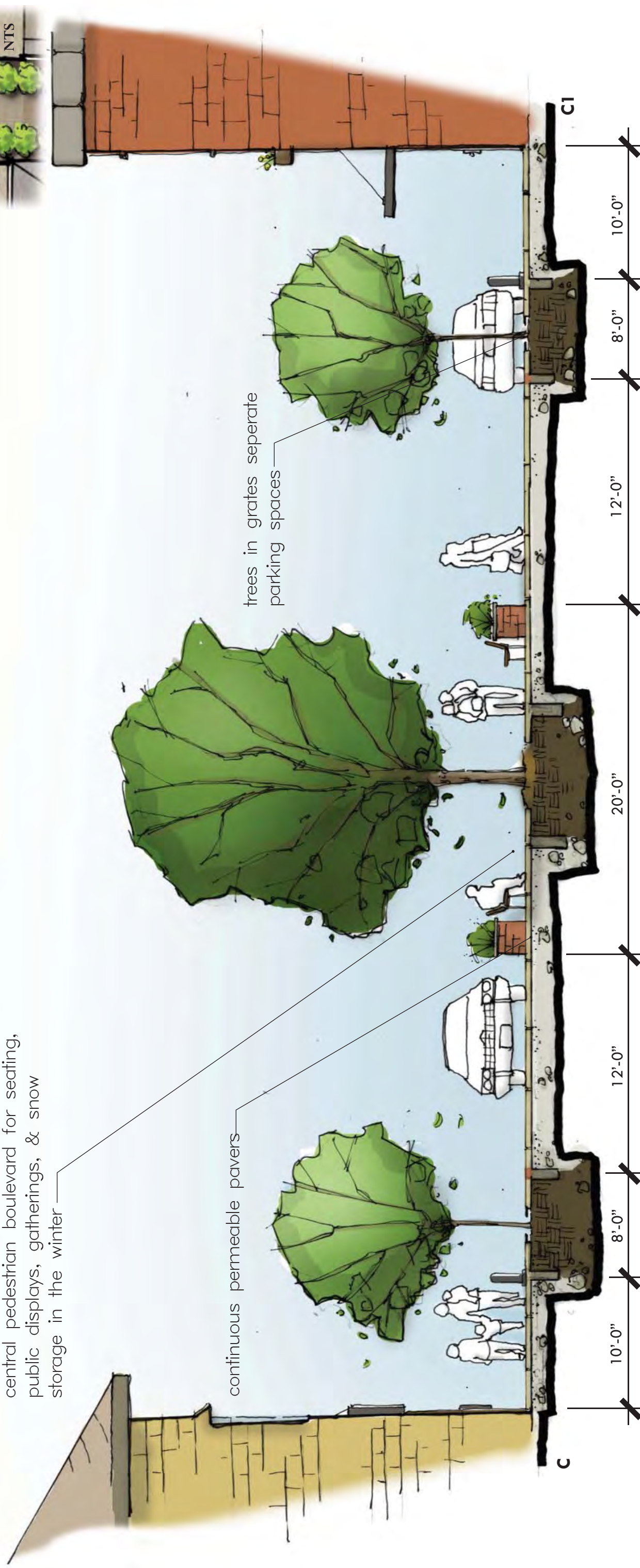
Brown street, Rhinelander's Main street, is constructed as a 'street for living'. This configuration gives pedestrians constant right of way. There is continuous parking throughout the street and many places for pedestrians to sit or relax. Because of the narrow lanes & presence of pedestrians on the same plane, the design speed is only 5–10 mph. This will encourage shoppers to either park and walk around the neighborhood, or park somewhere else into the downtown and walk through the riverfront park and past the town square to get here.



central pedestrian boulevard for seating, public displays, gatherings, & snow storage in the winter

continuous permeable pavers

trees in grates separate parking spaces



WOONERVEN MAIN STREET SECTION



■ MASTER PLAN: PHASE V

The last phase in the master plan of downtown Rhinelander is the redevelopment of the commercial center located along the riverfront adjacent to the newly created downtown recreation park. This development would bring even more increased variety of land use and open up another section of the waterfront to the public. Existing business's would be relocated with the addition of mixed use commercial and residential buildings.

These buildings are located around a pedestrian mall leading towards the redeveloped riverfront. A new road designed to extend the connectivity of the grid system runs through the site giving access to a pedestrian oriented parking lot serving the new development.

The riverwalk marina would run along the length of the two buildings facing the river. This would be a commercial section of the regional river trail, with outdoor seating, refreshments, and boat moorings.

The four phases preceding this development would create increased interest and land values for Rhinelander, making a project of this scope more feasible.





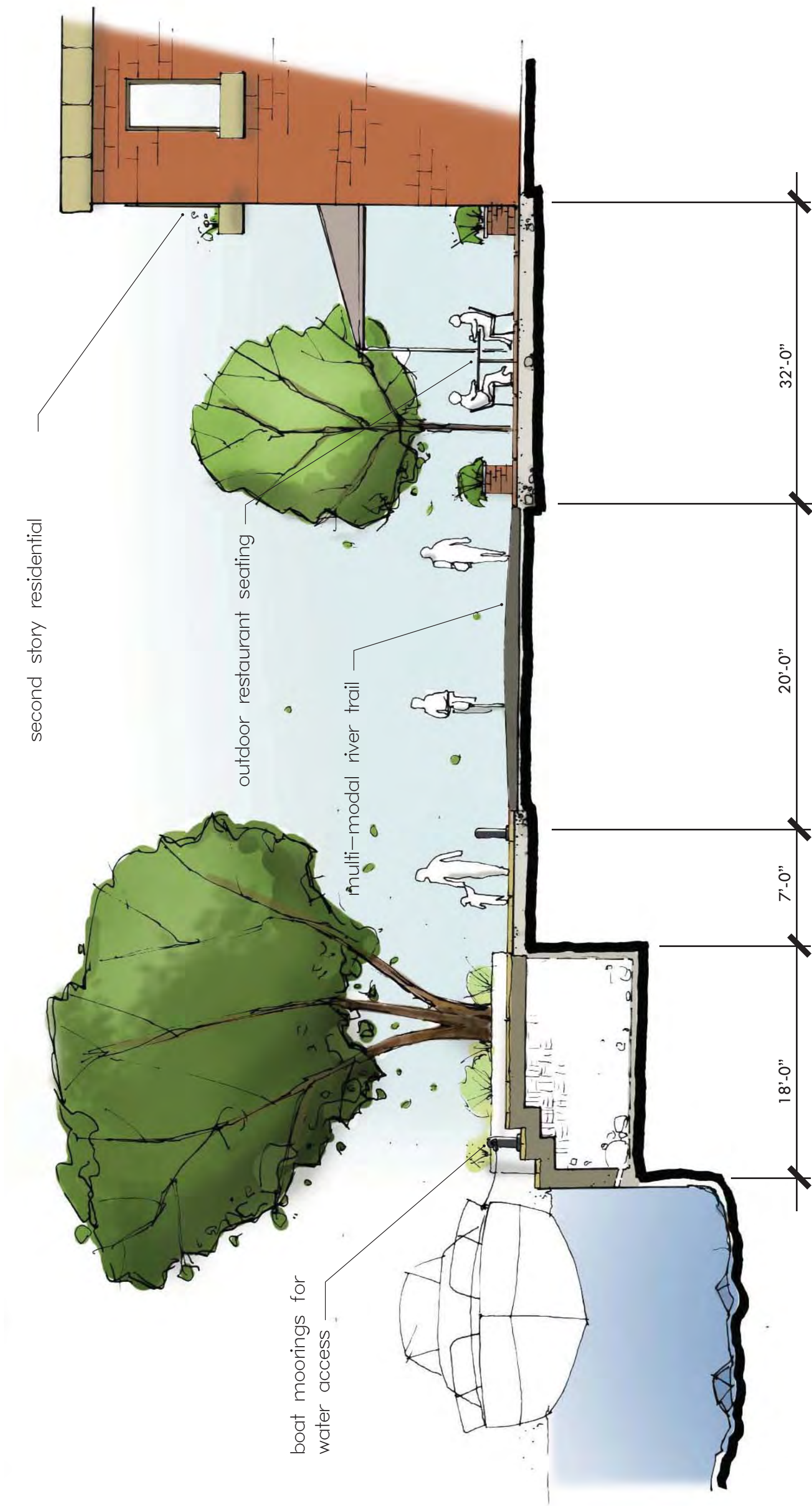
■ MASTER PLAN: PHASE V





■ MASTER PLAN: PHASE V

The marina riverwalk is a small section of the river trail that connects to the commercial development in the southern part of the master plan. This area is directly adjacent to the downtown recreation park and would offer refreshments and food. High density riverfront residential units on the second floor would open a new market for homeowners in Rhineland.





■ MASTER PLAN

RESTORATION AREA

- brownfield restoration
- slope stabilization

COMMUNITY CENTER

- 300 person theater
- events center
- community activities space

DAVENPORT BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS

- widen lanes to accommodate bicyclists
- improve lighting

WISCONSIN RIVER HISTORY MUSEUM &

RHINELANDER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

- existing building re-use
- strong sense of place
- tourist draw

DOWNTOWN RECREATION PARK

- bring green space to downtown
- community bandshell
- passive & active recreation space

REGIONAL RIVER TRAIL

- connection to regional interests
- provide transportation options
- connect to green boulevards

RIVERWALK MARINA

- outdoor restaurant space
- boat moorings
- river front retail

MASTER PLAN

COMMERCIAL INFILL

- relocate existing displaced business
- increase downtown density

WOONERVEN STREETScape

- improve pedestrian experience
- increase main street tourist draw

TOWN SQUARE

- summer & winter activities
- open civic space for residents
- informational kiosk

MIXED USE INFILL

- increase retail in downtown
- promote window shopping
- desirable residential location

RHINELANDER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- welcome visitors to downtown
- prominent location

INCREASED OFFICE SPACE

- 5 minutes to basic amenities
- proximity to riverfront & park

STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

- improve wayfinding
- improve pedestrian experience
- improve traffic flow

TRIGS RELOCATION

- improved facilities
- prominent location
- underground parking





■ **MASTER PLAN**





■ SUMMARY

Currently Rhinelander is in a position to turn around the character of development occurring in and around the city limits. Working with the community in Rhinelander was an inspiring experience that made apparent the impact that a small group of community members can have on the greater good. The current conditions in Rhinelander do not reflect the current interests of the community. The plans that I have prepared for Rhinelander have been developed in a way to best influence their future decisions in the redevelopment of the downtown.

During the process of gathering information and working with the community members it became apparent to me that Downtown Rhinelander Incorporated was an intelligent and informed group of dedicated individuals. Reflecting their interests in these final plans was and continued to be one of the main goals in the project.

The community visioning sessions held in Rhinelander and facilitated by James Hanke of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and myself brought many elements to my attention that informed the final design and brought a new focus to the project.

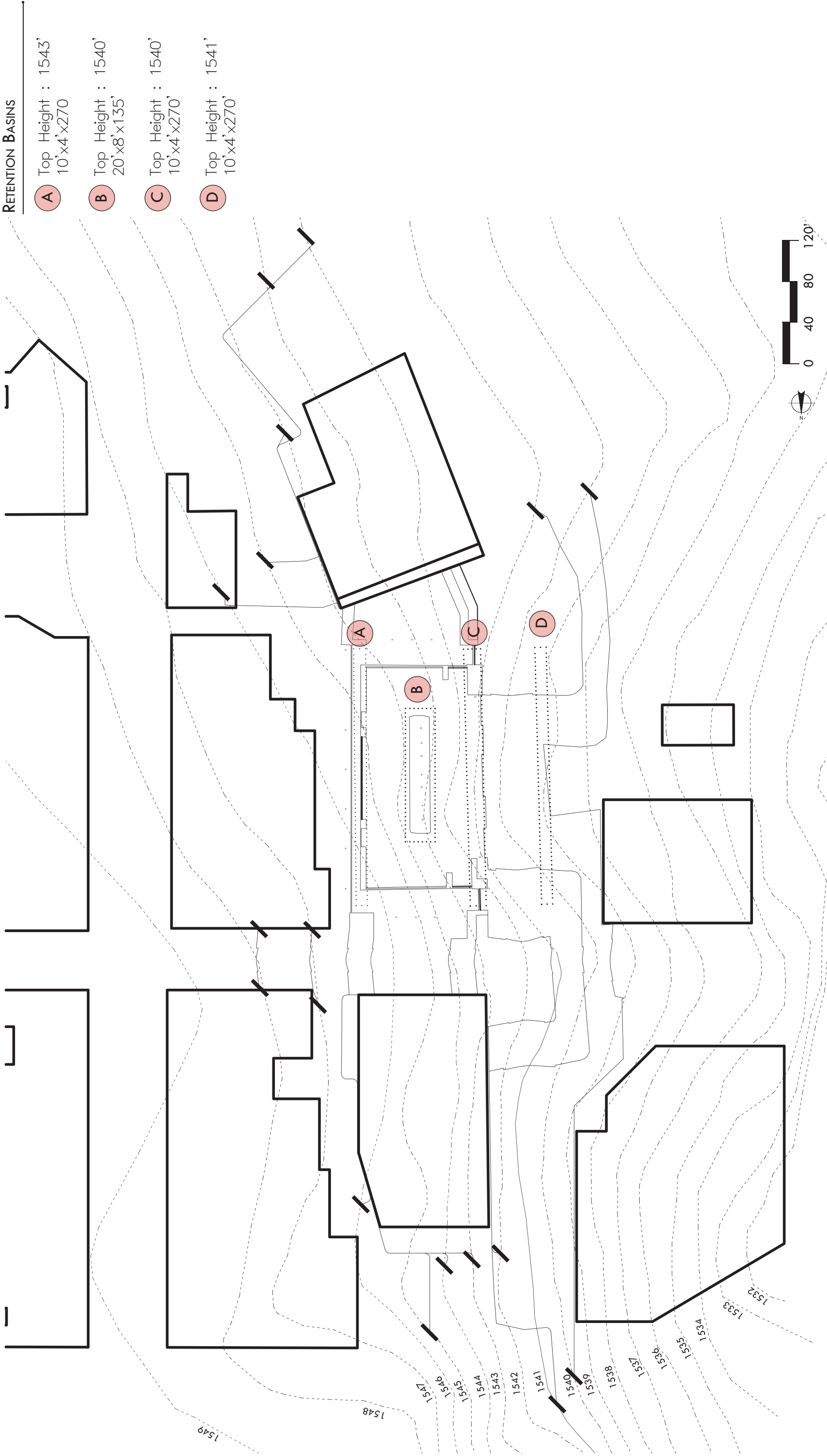
In the best interests of this project I chose to focus on the master plan scale the most during this process. I believe the master plan offers the best chance of influencing Rhinelander's design decisions in a meaningful way. The location and programming of site design is included in the master planning, but individual designs need to be done on a project by project basis. The master plan can help sustain a vision for the community that will outlast any individual construction projects.

Choosing to phase the master plan was a decision made with the best interests of the community in mind. Breaking up the large plan into smaller more manageable pieces will not only help with construction project phasing, but more importantly can help the community isolate and chose which elements of the master plan are of the most interest to them. All the major elements in the master plan are derived from the community visioning sessions and precedent studies conducted during the fall semester of the project, yet the specific combination is something that is subject to change.

If Rhinelander decides to undertake the restructuring of their downtown, I believe these plans will help them undertake a successful venture. The combined master plan provides the best option for development, and each element would be beneficial on its own. The best thing I learned from this experience is the importance of recognizing the needs of the client, and the final plan today reflects very much the interests that were apparent from the beginning.



■ APPENDIX : GRADING PLAN





■ APPENDIX: STORMWATER CALCULATIONS

RUNOFF VALUES									
PRECONSTRUCTION CONDITIONS									
Enter Landcover Type	Area (sq. ft.)	Area (acres)	Choose Correct C Value	Design Storm (10/100)	Q (GPM) 10 yr	Q (CFS) 10yr	Q (GPM) 100 yr	Q (CFS) 100 yr	
bidg roof	31800	1	0.95	2.50	784.8384	2.3750	941.8061	2.8500	
asphalt	75212	2	0.65	2.50	1270.0769	2.8058	1524.0923	3.3669	
		0		2.50	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	
		0		2.50	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	
		0		2.50	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	
		0		2.50	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	
		0		2.50	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	
Total Area	107012	3		Q Total (per hr.)	2054.9153	5.1808	2465.8984	6.2169	
				Total CF @ 2hr.		37301.5702		44761.8843	
POSTCONSTRUCTION CONDITIONS									
Enter Landcover Type	Area (sq. ft.)	Area (acres)	Choose Correct C Value	Design Storm (10/100)	Q (GPM) 10 yr	Q (CFS) 10yr	Q (GPM) 100 yr	Q (CFS) 100 yr	
permeable paving	72792	2	0.15	2.50	283.6641	0.6267	340.3970	0.7520	
pervious paving	2120	0	0.20	2.50	11.0153	0.0243	13.2183	0.0292	
planters	300	0	0.30	2.50	2.3381	0.0052	2.8058	0.0062	
		0		2.50	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	
		0		2.50	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	
		0		2.50	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	
		0		2.50	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	
Total Area	75212	2		Q Total (per hr.)	297.0176	0.6562	356.4211	0.7874	
				Total CF @ 2hr.		4724.2975		5669.1570	

Delta Q = 33553 CF
Total = 44891 CF

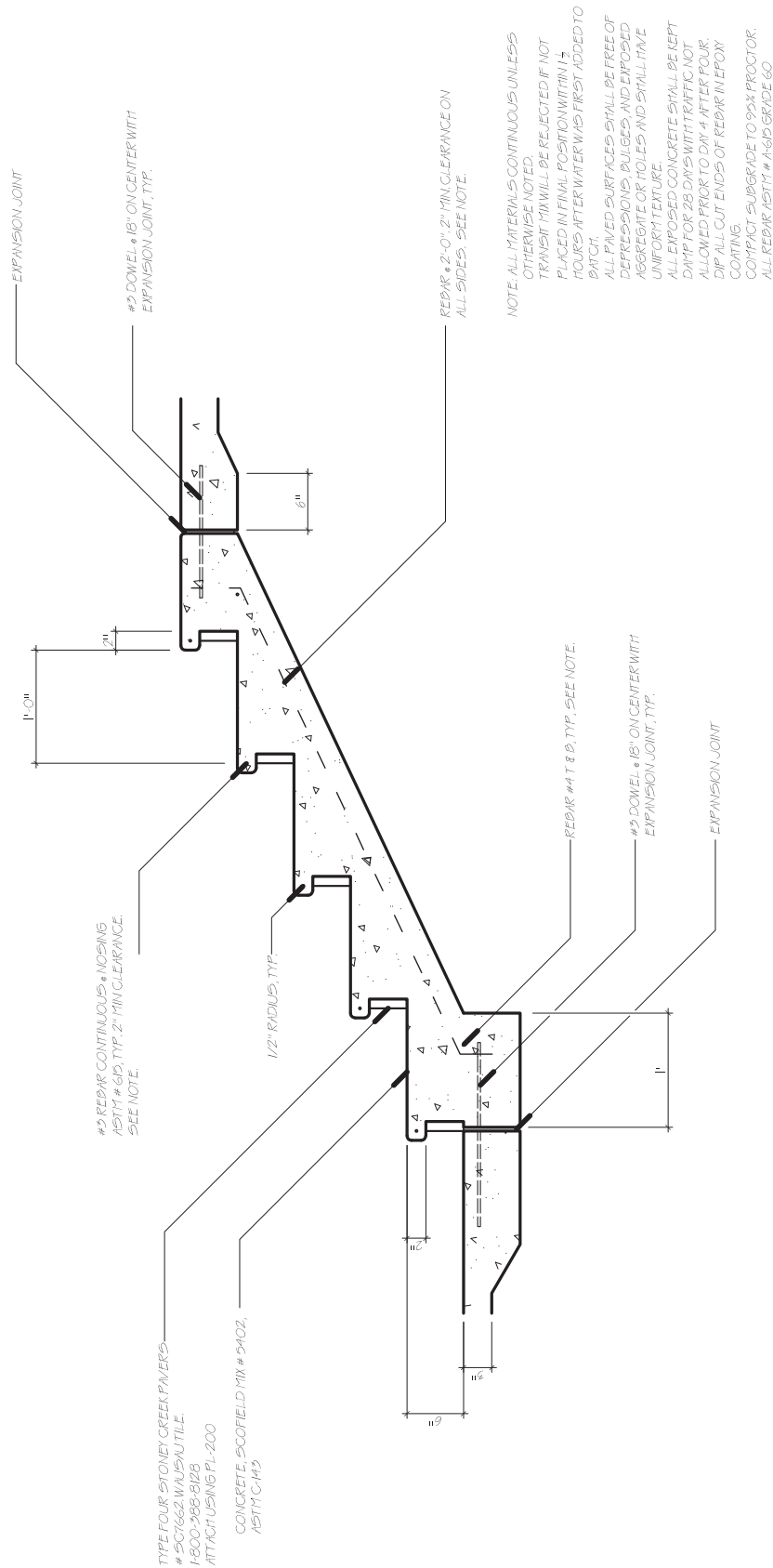
3353 CF/ .40 Porous space = 83.882.5

*retention space spread evenly over 4 retention basins in town square



■ APPENDIX: DETAILS

Detail of concrete stairs in town square plaza. See phase I.

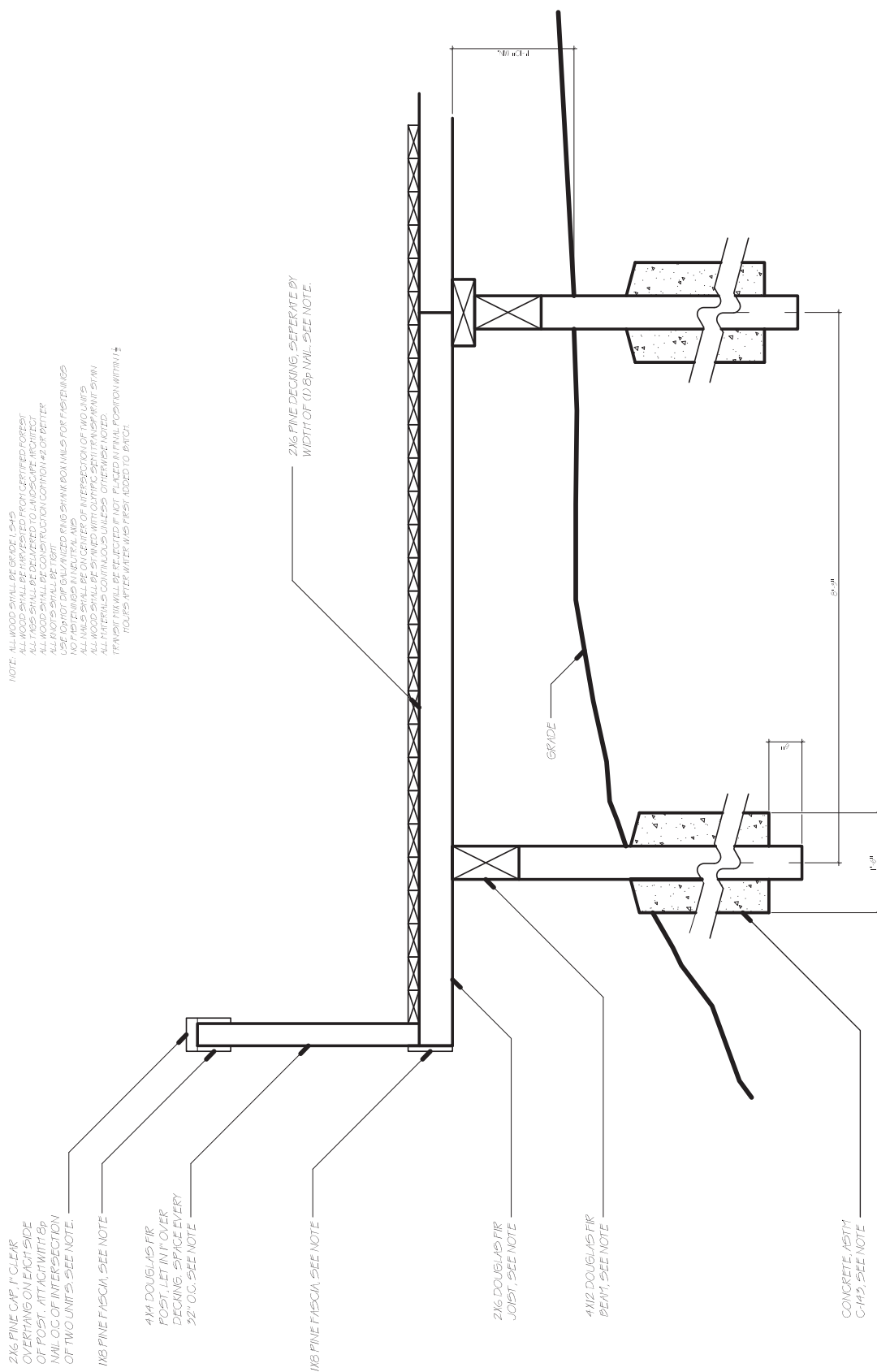


A CONCRETE STAIRS
3/4" = 1'-0"



■ APPENDIX: DETAILS

Wooden decking detail for River overlook deck. See phases II & III.

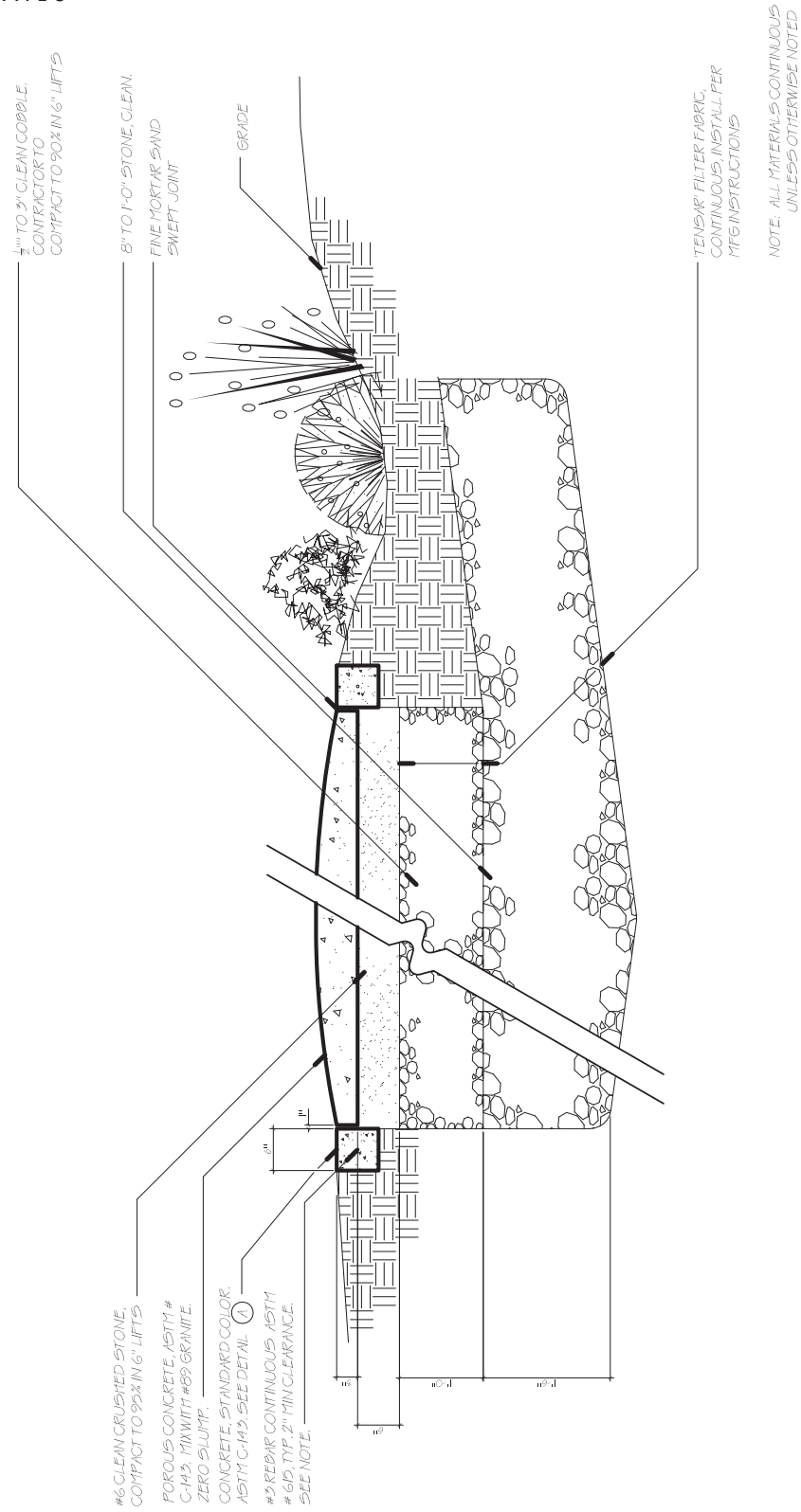


WOODEN DECK
1/2" = 1'-0"



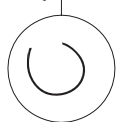
■ APPENDIX: DETAILS

Detail of river front trail in downtown recreation park. See phase IV.



PERMEABLE RIVER TRAIL

1/2" = 1'-0"





■ **APPENDIX: REFERENCES**

Burayidi, Michael (Editor) 2001. *Downtowns: Revitalizing the Centers of Small Urban Communities*. Routledge, NY, NY.

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Gindroz, Ray 2003. *The Urban Design Handbook: Techniques and Working Methods*. W.W Norton Publishing. NY, NY.