

INTRODUCTION

De Pere, with its traditional central district, owes its development to a strategic location at a falls along the Fox River, just five miles from its mouth into Green Bay. Jean Nicolet, the region's first European explorer, camped here in 1637 during an expedition to find a trade route to China. While these rapids stymied this quest, they also created an ideal location for a trading post between Native American Tribes and French fur traders. Here, Father Jean-Claude Allouez founded the St. Francis Xavier Mission in 1671, which became a military, spiritual, and economic outpost, and caused the area to be known as Les Rapides des Pères (The Rapids of the Fathers). Sixteen years later, the mission burned, temporarily ending settlement in the immediate region.

By 1830 the construction of two Military Roads along the Fox River between Fort Howard at Green Bay and Fort Crawford on the Mississippi River again focused attention on the Fox River rapids. They provided a source of energy to power mills and marked the point of transition between ocean-going vessels and smaller steamers and paddle wheelers that could traverse a system of inland canals. In 1836, the De Pere Hydraulic Company built a dam at the rapids, and by 1850, the growing settlement boasted several mills and a shipyard along the river. In 1857, the Village of De Pere was incorporated on the east bank, with its primary business district paralleling the river. Yet, the construction of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad on the west bank already threatened the primacy of inland water transportation and eventually led to the development of the Village of West De Pere, incorporated in 1870, and its distinct business district along Main Avenue. In 1890, the need to build a bridge across the river encouraged the unification of the two towns, which celebrate 120 years as a consolidated city in 2010.



De Pere Historical Society / White Pillars Museum

The unified De Pere is a vital and economically strong community with a solid employment base, a growing population, and such educational and cultural resources as St. Norbert College, connected by the striking Claude Allouez Bridge, the third span over the Fox River at "Les Rapides des Pères." The river, together with its rapids, remains the city's defining feature and greatest natural resource, and continues to present tremendous opportunities. But it also creates a physical division that separates Downtown De Pere into two distinct districts, each with individual qualities, strengths, and challenges. This chapter investigates the structure and physical characteristics of De Pere's dual downtown, providing the basis for a strategic program to create a unique, united central district for De Pere and the entire Green Bay Metropolitan Area.



De Pere Historical Society / White Pillars Museum

THE SUBAREAS

Downtown De Pere's two riverbanks have individual characteristics and areas of specialization and are also made up of connected subareas. The subareas, illustrated in Map 2.1, provide a tool that helps describe the character of each riverbank.

EAST BANK

- Broadway/Wisconsin Core District
- George Street Corridor
- East Shore
- City Campus
- Historic Neighborhoods

WEST BANK

- Main Avenue
- Reid Street Redevelopment Areas
- St. Norbert Campus
- Wilson Park
- Industrial Riverfront

Map 2.1 Development Character



THE EAST BANK

Distinguishing features of Downtown De Pere's East Bank include:

- Substantial mainstream retail uses, some of which are destination retailers in the Green Bay metropolitan area.
- ShopKo, Downtown's only mass retailer.
- A substantial core of sit-down restaurants, including fine-dining establishments.
- Substantial housing development in both contemporary and adaptive reuse settings.
- The city government center.
- The Fox River Trail, a 20-mile regional trail that connects Downtown Green Bay, De Pere, and Greenleaf.
- A major public riverfront, enhanced by two major parks, Voyageur and Wells, and the historic canal district, a conduit for boats around the rapids and dam. The planned RiverWalk will greatly expand public access and use of the riverfront and canal area.
- Limited private offices, largely in storefront settings.
- A multi-lane roundabout at the east bridge landing, distributing traffic to major north-south corridors.

Its constituent subareas include:

- Broadway/Wisconsin Core District
- George Street Corridor
- East Shore
- City Campus
- Historic Neighborhoods



BROADWAY/WISCONSIN CORE

Defining Characteristics

- Traditional commercial core of the east shore, oriented to Broadway and Wisconsin Street from Cass Street (north) to Charles Street (south).
- Early commercial development focused at Broadway and George Street intersection, at the eastern end of the previous Claude Allouez Bridge. With opening of the new bridge in 2007, the former bridge landing is an open grass area at the Broadway grade, with surface parking at the lower Front Street level. Reuse of this strategic site is a high community priority.
- Broadway and George Street are traditional business district streets, lined by one and two-story buildings built to the property line. First floors typically house retail, service, hospitality, and office uses, with commercial and residential uses on upper levels.
- Automobile-oriented site configuration along Wisconsin Street, with single-level commercial buildings set back from the street by surface parking.
- Large-format retailing with ShopKo and associated shops north of James Street. Wisconsin Street continues on alignment as the drive in front of the ShopKo building. Outlot development on the property along Broadway includes a bank and gas station.

- Commercial blocks between Broadway and Wisconsin from the roundabout to James Street include interior parking and a number of rear business entrances. Between George and James, this has the character of an internal business center, with supporting street furnishings.
- Broadway configured as a four-lane arterial with parallel parking. Recent street improvements include thematic lighting, street reconstruction, new sidewalks, and street furniture.
- East-west cross streets include both diagonal and parallel parking. George and James Street are a one-way local pair between Wisconsin Street and Broadway, coordinated with new traffic patterns caused by the bridge and roundabout construction.

Issues

- Utilization of the former George Street bridge landing.
- Linkage between the riverfront and Fox River Trail and the East Bank commercial core.
- Perception of excessive traffic speed on Broadway. Difficulty of pedestrian access across Broadway and through the roundabout.
- Efficiency and quantity of parking supply serving the commercial core, and wayfinding to parking lots.



- Function and driveway connections of the interior of the Broadway/Wisconsin block south of George to the Wisconsin Street roundabout leg, and utilization of land on the south end of that block.
- Bicycle connections from the Claude Allouez Bridge bike lanes and paths to the Broadway corridor.
- Engagement of large retailers sited behind large parking lots to their fronting streets and the rest of the core district.

GEORGE STREET CORRIDOR

Defining Characteristics

- Diminished regional traffic role with the relocation of the Claude Allouez Bridge.
- Secondary mixed use commercial corridor between Broadway and Huron Street, with a combination of “main street” and free-standing building types. Buildings take on a smaller, residential scale east of Michigan Street.
- Recent public realm improvements include street reconstruction, new sidewalks, lighting, and defined crosswalks.



Issues

- Managing the transition between commercial and adjacent residential uses along the corridor to prevent encroachment of parking and non-residential uses into neighborhoods.
- Enhancing the scale and character of George Street with improved parking lot landscaping.

EAST SHORE

Defining Characteristics

- Fox River shore with about one mile of primarily public riverfront, including Voyageur Park.
- Primary transportation access provided by Front Street and the parallel Fox River Trail. The 20-mile multi-use trail is a major regional feature connecting Washington Street in Downtown Green Bay with Greenleaf, and is paved through De Pere.
- Major riverside public features include Voyageur Park, the De Pere lock and canal; James Street walkway, Wells Park, and the Bomier Street boat ramp.
 - Voyageur Park's 21 acres, developed on a former landfill site, include picnic areas and shelters, restrooms, public fishing, extensive green space, in-



terpretive features, parking, and pathways with trail access.

- The lock and canal, providing boat passage around the dam and rapids, includes the historic lock tender's house and will be incorporated into the De Pere RiverWalk, beginning at Voyageur Park, continuing through the historic canal area, and continuing to a new pier extending about 300 feet into the Fox River.
- The James Street walkway follows the bank of the boat canal south from the James Street Inn to the Fox River Trail, and included overlooks and seating areas.
- Wells Park is about a one-acre linear open space south of the Claude Allouez Bridge, bounded by Broadway and Front Street. The parksite slopes from Broadway to the river, and provides parking off Front Street.
- Bomier Boat Ramp, accessible from Broadway by way of Bomier Street with frontage along the Fox River Trail.
- Private land uses in the East Shore subarea include a condominium development with boat access south of Voyageur Park, the historic James Street Inn, and adaptive residential reuse of the historic Lawton Foundry.

Issues

- Improved linkage of the riverfront and Fox River Trail to the Broadway business core. Critical to this is the re-utilization of the former bridge landing site at George Street in common with the Broadway core, the nucleus of this necessary connectedness.
- Using the RiverWalk to enhance the East Bank business environment.
- Greater public use of and neighborhood access to Voyageur Park.
- Increasing development intensity along the riverfront, consistent with market potential. The Downtown market analysis suggests a continued strong demand in Downtown De Pere for medium-rise housing with river views.
- Promoting productive public use of Wells Park. This park is a sloped lawn between Broadway and Front Street, but offers little public accommodation other than parking.

CITY CAMPUS

Defining Characteristics

- City Hall complex including facilities for administration and public safety services on block between Broadway, Wisconsin, Lewis, and Merrill /Chicago Street. Recent construction has rebuilt city hall parking and improved Chicago Street access to Broadway.
- Redevelopment site, proposed for new dental offices, on south side of the Claude Allouez Bridge roundabout.
- Notre Dame Middle School on east side of Wisconsin Street.
- Major traffic pattern changes created when bridge and roundabout relocation tied the Claude Allouez bridge directly to Wisconsin Street.



Issues

- Completing office redevelopment on south side of roundabout.
- Improving comfortable pedestrian access through the roundabout.

THE WEST BANK

Distinguishing features of Downtown De Pere's West Bank include:

- Small-scale retail and restaurant/bar/entertainment uses, with some orientation to the campus community.
- Major mixed use redevelopment, including substantial office, senior and condominium residential, hotel, and first floor commercial uses.
- Contiguous St. Norbert College campus includes the entire area east of 3rd Street, with campus expansion occurring to the west.

- Major industrial riverfront dominated physically by the Thilmany paper plant.
- East-west one-way pair of major streets that moves traffic rapidly through the district.
- No public park or property on the west shore of the river within the Downtown area proper. Public access is permitted through the St. Norbert campus.

Its constituent subareas include:

- Main Avenue
- Reid Street Redevelopment Areas
- St. Norbert Campus
- Wilson Park
- Industrial Riverfront



MAIN AVENUE

Defining Characteristics

- Traditional “main street” district with one- and two-story commercial buildings built to the property line.
- “Main street” character is strongest on both sides of the street between 3rd and 4th Streets, and on south side between 4th and 5th Streets. Most buildings here date from late 19th and early 20th century, built in commercial vernacular styles.
- Despite significant retailing along the street, eating and drinking places are dominant storefront occupants.
- Many south side storefronts also have back entrances, opening out to off-street parking lots. Parallel alley on the south side has some characteristics of a public street.
- Main Avenue section provides two west-bound through lanes, a west-bound bike lane, and parallel parking on both sides. Traffic tends to accelerate off the Claude Allouez Bridge, and moves through the district relatively quickly.
- Streetscape shows some signs of age.



Issues

- Traffic speeds along Main Avenue, making the district difficult for motorists to “read” as they move along the street and degrade the pedestrian environment.
- Improved local circulation and pedestrian access across the street.
- Upgrading and revitalization of the downtown streetscape.
- Improved public connection between Main Avenue entrances and parking areas behind buildings.
- Façade and building reinvestment and more readable business signage.
- Improved utilization over time of properties on the north side of Main between 4th and 5th Streets.

REID STREET REDEVELOPMENT AREAS

Defining Characteristics

Major contemporary redevelopment projects have largely rebuilt the south part of the West Bank district. Uses incorporate street-level retailing, office, hotel, and residential uses. Specific project areas include:



- Nicolet Square (north side of Reid Street from 3rd to 4th). Least intensive of the Reid Street projects, consisting of a large surface parking lot and a free-standing commercial building on the east side of the site with two restaurants spaces. Some Main Avenue businesses maintain a second entrance oriented to the adjacent alley and Nicolet Square parking lot.
- Reid Street Crossing (north side of Reid Street west of 4th Street). Street-oriented, two-story mixed use project defining the Reid Street frontage. First floor is designed for retail and service uses, with office occupancy on the upper floor. Architecture reflects traditional business district forms, using brick facades and historic details. Reid Street businesses and some Main Avenue businesses have second entrances from an interior parking lot.
- Marquette Centre (north side of Reid Street east of 5th Street). Contemporary three-story office building with traditional architectural elements, including brick facades and details with historic references. Surface parking is located on the balance of the site, extending to Main Avenue. Site was designed to accommodate a second office structure.
- Nicolet Professional Arts block (Reid to Grant Street from 3rd to 4th). Redevelopment site includes three-story contemporary office building housing Humana



Dental; three-story Kress Inn Hotel, owned by St. Norbert College; and a restaurant. Office building is set back to the southwest part of the block, separated from Reid Street by a large surface lot. Hotel shares a St. Norbert parking lot across Grant Street. Building design is consistent with other architecture in West Bank redevelopment areas, with brick facades and traditional details. Large surface lot south of College Avenue immediately east of the railroad tracks provides overflow parking for Humana.

- Residential Redevelopment Blocks (4th Street to Thilmany spur, Reid to College Streets). Projects include Nicolet Highlands, a three-story, senior apartment project over parking in a street-oriented quadrangle configuration between Reid and Grant Streets; and Joliet Square Apartments between Grant and College Streets with two buildings, planned for five structures at full build-out. Site immediately west of Nicolet Highlands across 5th Street includes two free-standing restaurants. Fourth Street frontage of the Joliet Apartment block includes Wisconsin International School and Crosspoint Church.



Issues

- Enhancing the Main/Reid Alley as a local business street complementing the more heavily trafficked Main and Reid corridors.
- Improved local circulation and access across Reid Street.
- Completing planned build-out of existing projects, including Marquette Centre and Joliet Apartments.
- Maintaining necessary parking supply while reducing the visual exposure of surface parking along Reid Street.
- Continuing the precedent of street-oriented contemporary development along Reid, established by the Reid Street Crossing and Nicolet Highlands developments.
- Accommodating the International School at its current location. The school's site is relatively small, parking is inadequate, and students use adjacent Wilson Park for recreation, requiring them to cross 4th Street.



ST. NORBERT COLLEGE CAMPUS

Defining Characteristics

- Primary campus of St. Norbert College, a leading Catholic liberal arts college founded in 1898, occupies a contiguous site between 3rd Street and the Fox River north of Stewart Street.
- Campus sphere of influence, reinforced by substantial property ownership, now extends west to 4th Street, emerging as the campus boundary. Substantial new campus construction is occurring along the west side of 3rd Street.
- Campus commands a substantial amount of the west shore of the Fox River and has developed some features to increase public access to the riverfront.

Issues

- With campus expansion, defining the future traffic role of 3rd Street in the city's transportation system.
- Expanded campus and public access to the west shore of the Fox River.



- Improved physical connections and expanded interaction, including business development, between the campus and Downtown De Pere.
- Campus parking as adjacent parking lots are developed with college facilities.
- Implementation of projects envisioned by campus master plan.
- Policy changes at St. Norbert College, requiring students to live on campus, affecting the area's rental market.
- Determining the location and character of the boundary between the neighborhood and the campus.
- Possible traffic changes through the neighborhood if 3rd Street is increasingly internal to the college.

WILSON PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

Defining Characteristics

- Residential neighborhood south of the commercial district with single-family houses and tree-lined streets, with both owner- and renter-occupied units. Student rentals affected the neighborhood's residential character.
- Wilson Park, a small but well-used neighborhood park at 4th and College.

Issues

- Neighborhood stabilization, with some community residents perceiving neglect of rental houses by property owners.

INDUSTRIAL RIVERFRONT

Defining Characteristics

- Thilmany paper plant dominates the view of the west bank of the Fox from the Claude Allouez Bridge, and is De Pere's primary waterfront industry. US Paper Mills also located along the river on Ft. Howard Avenue, north of the downtown area.
- Thilmany complex is located behind Main Avenue buildings from the river to 4th Street, and includes several additions, with historic wings overhanging the river. Access is from 4th and 5th Streets.
- Much of the riverfront behind industries and houses along North 6th Street is open space with significant tree cover. However, these areas lack public access.



- City ice rink, boat launch, and Brown County Fairgrounds are located about 0.4 miles north of the US Paper plant along the river, separated by a residential area with private river access.

Issues

- Possible public riverfront access and utilization of open land between 5th Street and beginning of private residential river access, with linkages north to the Fairgrounds and Ashwaubonay Park.
- Long-term future of the Thilmany plant. Plant appears economically stable for the foreseeable future.

LAND AND BUILDING USE

Table 2.1 presents building use information for the Downtown study area, compiled individually for the East and West Banks. These calculations exclude St. Norbert College and concentrate on buildings in commercial use. Gross floor area in Downtown is about 773,000 square feet, with about 519,000 square feet at street level. Key findings include:

- **A preponderance of retail space east of the Fox River.** The East Bank has about twice the retail space as the West Bank (about 240,000 square feet and 128,000 square feet respectively). ShopKo contributes substantially to the relative retail dominance of the east side of the river.
- **A relatively even distribution of office space on both sides of the river.** Contemporary redevelopment projects have given the west side slightly more office space than the east side (140,000 square feet against 125,000 square feet).
- **Primary use of street level storefronts for retail goods and services.** About 70% of all street level space in the entire study area is in retail use. About 21% of street level space is used for offices.
- **Vacancy rates are relatively manageable through the study area.** Street level vacancy averages 7.4%, with higher vacancy on the west side. On the other hand, vacancy in contemporary office buildings on the West Bank is very low, less than 3%.

Map 2.2 identify street-level building use, while GIS database includes upper story uses..

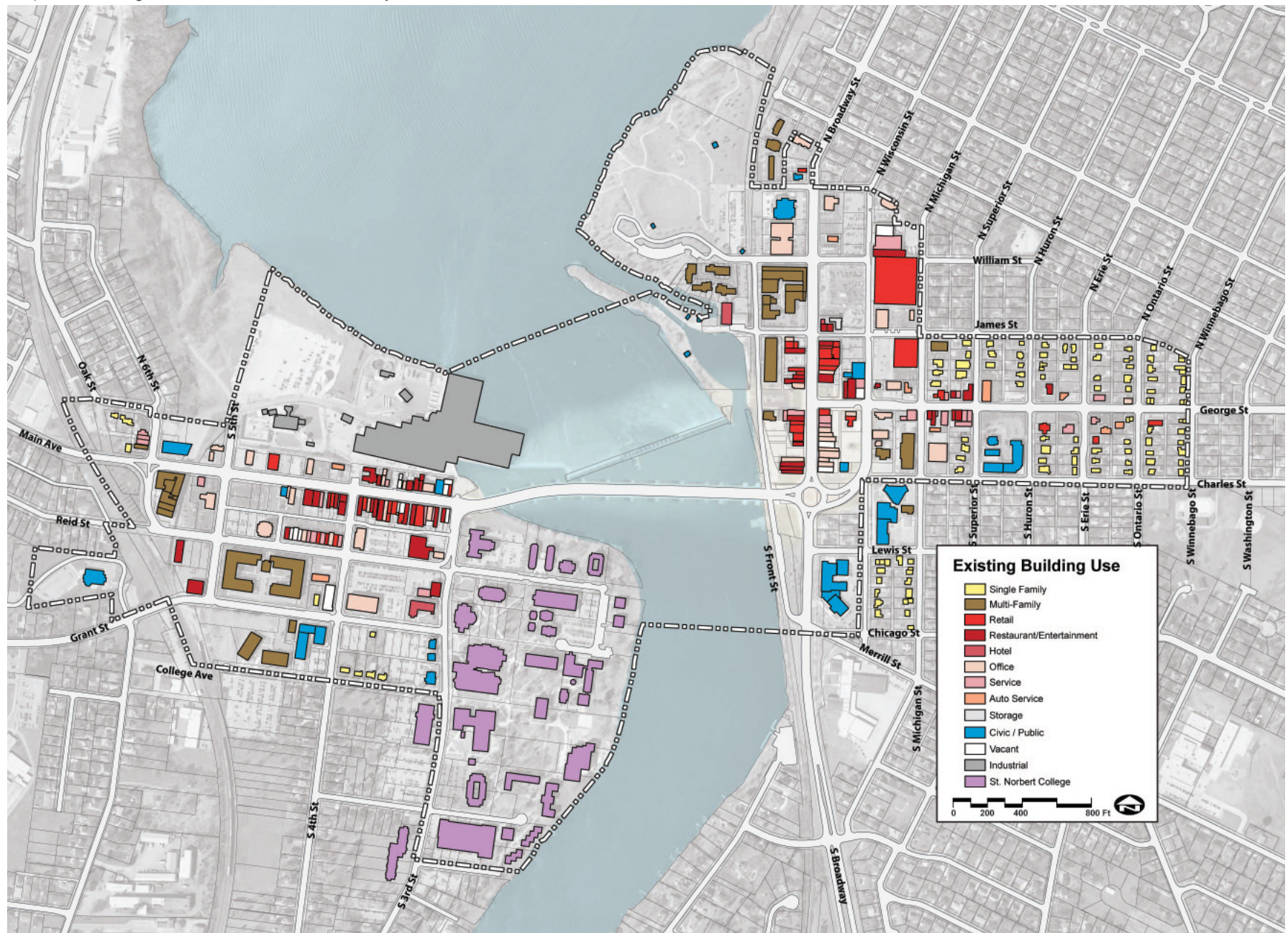
Table 2.1: Distribution of Space by Location then Category, Downtown De Pere

Table 2.1: Distribution of Space by Location then Category, Downtown De Pere

Location/ Category	West Downtown		East Downtown		Total	
	Square Feet	Percent of Category by Level	Square Feet	Percent of Category by Level	Square Feet	Percent of Category by Level
Street Level Space						
Retail	128,818	67.2%	240,447	73.6%	369,265	71.2%
Office	44,333	23.1%	66,565	20.4%	110,898	21.4%
Vacant	18,674	9.7%	19,875	6.1%	38,549	7.4%
Subtotal	191,824	100.0%	326,887	100.0%	518,711	100.0%
Upper Level Space						
Retail	14,111	24.5%	12,713	16.6%	26,824	20.0%
Office	22,328	38.8%	29,467	38.6%	51,795	38.7%
Vacant	21,075	36.6%	34,194	44.8%	55,269	41.3%
Subtotal	57,514	100.0%	76,374	100.0%	133,887	100.0%
Office Buildings						
Occupied	72,282	97.4%	30,000	64.5%	102,282	84.7%
Vacant	1,914	2.6%	16,500	35.5%	18,414	15.3%
Subtotal	74,196	100.0%	46,500	100.0%	120,696	100.0%
Total	323,534		449,761		773,294	

Source: City of De Pere; AECOM, 2009

Map 2.2 Building Use, Street Level, 2009 (subsequent levels in GIS)



HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

De Pere's rich community history is reflected by a significant number of historically significant commercial and residential buildings and districts. Many of downtown's commercial buildings are excellent examples of late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial vernacular architecture, many of which appear eligible individually for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. While some structures have undergone major alterations, continued investment, guided by the city's Main Street Program, has produced a visually appealing and pleasant district.

NATIONAL REGISTER LISTINGS AND ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES

The following inventory of Register and Register-eligible properties summarizes relevant material from the Intensive Survey Report prepared in 2001 by consultant Tim Haggland for De Pere.

National Register Listings

- Union House Hotel, 200 N. Broadway
- Lawton Foundry Apartments, 233 N. Broadway
- Old De Pere Public Library by Foeller, Schober, and Berners, 380 Main Avenue
- Main Hall by W.C. Reynolds (St. Norbert College campus), 3rd and College

National Register Eligible Buildings

- J. Steckart & J. Falck Double Block, 112-116 N. Broadway
- State Bank of De Pere Building by Henry Foeller, 127 N. Broadway

- Julius Krause Store Building, 106 S. Broadway
- J. Baeten Building, 620 George Street
- Hotel Roffers by Alfred Fleck, 500 Grant Street
- Shattuck & Babcock Co. Paper Mill by D.H. & A.B. Tower, 200 Main Avenue

HISTORIC ASSESSMENT

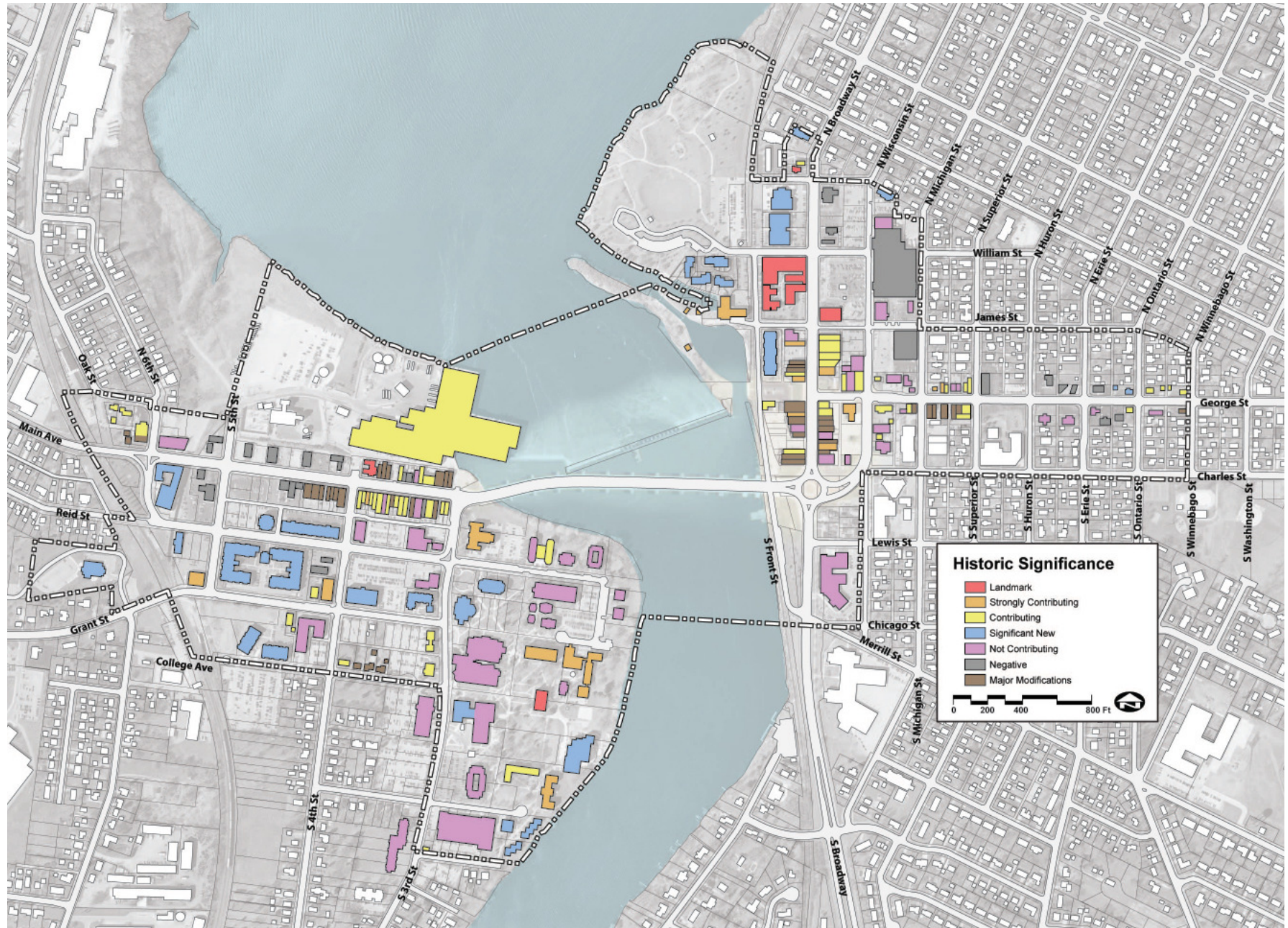
Map 2.3, the Historic Assessment Map classifies downtown buildings in the following categories.

- **Landmarks.** These are buildings judged to be of essential historic significance and are either listed on or eligible for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Examples include the Hotel Roffers Building, Union House Hotel and State Bank of De Pere Building.
- **Strongly Contributing Buildings.** These individual structures contribute to the character or fabric of the National Register district. Some may also be eligible for individual listing. Examples include 106 South Broadway and 371 Main Avenue.
- **Background Contributing Buildings.** These buildings were typically built before World War II and represent examples of vernacular commercial architecture. While probably not individually eligible for Register listing, they generally contribute to the character of their overall context through having similar construction materials and setbacks.
- **Significant New Buildings.** These are relatively contemporary buildings that represent substantial capital investments. Examples include Reid Street Crossing and the Nicolet Professional Arts Building.
- **Not Contributing.** These are structures that do not contribute to the structure or fabric of a significant historic or design district.



- **Negative.** These are typically structures that detract from the fabric of a district because of deteriorating condition or appearance. However, these structures could be adaptive reuse candidates.
- **Major Modification.** These represent structures that have undergone major modifications and do not contribute to the integrity of the district in their current form. Some of these buildings have been modified with a screen or façade treatment that may be reversed.

Map 2.3 Historic Assessment, 2009



HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Downtown De Pere and immediately surrounding areas include six historic districts, including:

- **Fox River Lock and Dam (East Bank).** These structures are an important link to the city's heritage and connection to the Fox River. Many local industries used hydropower, and were built directly over the dam. The lock was an important connection in the shipment of goods between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River via the Fox/Wisconsin canal system. While no longer used for the production or shipment of goods, the canal continues to accommodate small boats. The proposed RiverWalk will incorporate this unique district the riverfront park and recreational system.
- **Main Avenue District (south side of the 300 block of Main Avenue, West Bank).** When railroad service came to the region, West De Pere quickly developed along Main Avenue as the primary route of access between the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad and De Pere. This eighteen building district contains the most intact concentration of nineteenth and twentieth century commercial buildings on the west side of the river. These buildings range from one to two stories in height, and all but one is faced with brick. Among its commercial vernacular styles, the district also includes the neoclassical Bank of West De Pere building at 371 Main Avenue.
- **South Broadway District (east side of the 100 block of Broadway, East Bank).** This district consists of six, one- and two-story brick buildings on the east side of South Broadway's 100 block, built rapidly after a devastating fire in 1882. Because of their virtually simultaneous construction with the same material, these building facades blend seamlessly with the one adjacent to it.
- **North Broadway District (East Bank).** The district has long been home to some of De Pere's most af-

fluent families. Architectural styles within the district vary, but many buildings are attributed to the late Victorian style.

- **North Michigan Street/ North Superior Street District (East Bank).** This historic residential district is located to the north of downtown East De Pere, and is comprised of small to medium-size homes. Examples of nearly every architectural style and vernacular form are present within the district, and were generally built between 1860 and 1950.
- **Randall Avenue District (East Bank).** Development patterns within the district were some of the first to be shaped by the introduction of the car as a part of American culture. The majority of homes within the district date from the inter-war years of 1920 to 1940 and the district include examples of Colonial, Georgian, and Tudor Revival styles.

In addition, other multi-building districts that could produce additional National Register listings include:

- The balance of the Broadway commercial district, from the Bridge roundabout to James Street.
- The balance of the Main Avenue commercial district, from 3rd to 5th Street, excluding the north side of the 400 block.
- The St. Norbert College campus.

Importance of Historic Designation

The Lawton Foundry Apartments and James Street Inn demonstrate the importance of historic preservation as part of a downtown development strategy. Listing on the National and State Registers of Historic Places make substantial investment tax credits available to developers and owners. Federal tax credits are typically directed to income producing properties, while state credits are also available to individual owners, including owner-occupants.

BUILDING CONDITIONS

Map 2.4 identifies the condition of structures throughout the downtown district, tabulated in a survey conducted during the summer of 2009. Structures were placed into one of five categories, including:

- **Excellent.** New or rehabilitated structure with no discernible deficiencies.
- **Good.** Well-maintained structure with three or fewer minor non-structural deficiencies.
- **Fair.** Structurally sound building with minor repair or rehabilitation needs.
- **Poor.** Structure with one major deficiency and minor non-structural needs. Typically these buildings are deteriorating and show evidence of significant rehabilitation needs.
- **Dilapidated.** A structure that appears to be too deteriorated for feasible rehabilitation.

The evaluation considers the condition of the foundation, exterior walls, fascia and eaves, windows, and doors. In general, the building stock within the traditional downtown is in good to moderate condition, although some buildings require rehabilitation. The survey is intended only to suggest patterns for rehabilitation needs. Major findings include:

- **West Bank.** Structures ranked lower for the Main Avenue corridor than other parts of the study area. Generally, Main Avenue structures ranked in the middle of the condition scale, with some variances. As discussed earlier, much of the West Bank has experienced significant redevelopment during the last 20 years, producing a large number of structures in excellent condition.
- **East Bank.** Rehabilitation of the Lee Building, Lawton Foundry and James Street Inn are major achievements for east side restoration. As a rule, older buildings on the East Bank appear to be in better condition than

Map 2.4 Building Conditions, 2009



their counterparts across the river. Buildings immediately north of the roundabout had lower condition ratings than buildings farther north. Some of these structures are pending grant approval for façade improvements.

MOVING AROUND DOWNTOWN

This section summarizes key patterns for motor vehicles, transit, and pedestrian and bicycle transportation in and around downtown De Pere. Map 2.5 illustrates these patterns and identifies key areas for improvements.

THE STREET NETWORK: KEY ELEMENTS

Regional Circulation

The regional road network links De Pere to communities in northern and southeastern Wisconsin.

- **Interstate 43, US Highway 41, and Wisconsin 172.** These routes provide regional access to De Pere and connect the city to Green Bay, Milwaukee, Appleton and the Fox Cities.
- **Wisconsin Highway 57 (Broadway) is the main thoroughfare north/south for traffic traveling to communities between Green Bay and Milwaukee east of the Fox River.** Highway 57, as Broadway through the East Bank of Downtown De Pere, is one of the district's main shopping streets and passes through the roundabout on the east end of the new Claude Allouez Bridge. Broadway is a four-lane facility with parallel parking through the business district north of the roundabout, with four lanes without parking south of the bridge.
- **Wisconsin Highway 32 (Main Avenue/Reid Street) connects the two banks of Downtown De Pere to each other over the Claude Allouez Bridge, and continues west to an interchange with US 41.** This highway forms an important regional connection between northern Wisconsin, Ashwaubenon, and Sheboygan along Lake Michigan.

East Bank

- **The East Bank is served by a modified grid of streets.** Its principal north-south streets are Broadway and Wisconsin, which now converge at the multi-lane roundabout at the east end of the Claude Allouez Bridge. George Street was the traditional east-west corridor through this part of the district, but its role has changed with new traffic patterns created by the relocated bridge. Recent modifications to the grid include:
 - **A direct connection between Wisconsin Street and the bridge through the roundabout.** This also links the two major north-south corridors, but breaks Wisconsin Street continuity south to Chicago and Merrill Streets.
 - **Conversion of George and James Street to a single-lane one-way pair between Wisconsin and Broadway.** Both streets provide diagonal parking on one side and are generally not used by through traffic.
 - **Traffic signals on Broadway at William Street, serving the ShopKo development and Merrill/Chicago Street, serving the City Hall area.** Front Street, the local service street along the riverfront, also intersects Broadway at this intersection.
 - **Continuation of Wisconsin Street north of James Street as a service drive within the ShopKo development.**

West Bank

The West Bank of Downtown De Pere is oriented to the Main/Reid one-way pair between 6th Street and the west approach of the Claude Allouez Bridge. Both streets provide two one-way moving lanes with parallel parking (Main Avenue westbound, Reid Street eastbound). In addition, Main Avenue's wider right-of-way also accommodates a westbound bike lane. Third and Fourth Streets provide principal north-south access through the West Bank area. To the south, 3rd and 4th converge south of



Lande Street, and 3rd continues as Lost Dauphin Road along the east shore to Wrightstown. Both streets are two-way collectors providing a single lane in each direction. Other features and issues presented by the West Bank street network include:

- **Grant Street.** Grant is a two-way collector serving the south side of the district, and continues west with a grade crossing at the railroad, connecting Downtown to the community center. Grant Street also includes painted bike lanes from 3rd Street to the community center.
- **Main Avenue and 6th Street/Fort Howard.** This intersection combines a free-flow movement at the Main/Reid divergence and an intersection with Fort Howard Avenue, a regional minor arterial that serves the Fairgrounds and continues north as Broadway to major destinations in Ashwaubenon and Green Bay. This creates potential conflicts between movements that present challenges for all modes.
- **Third and Reid Streets.** This signalized intersection provides a double left-turn that directs eastbound travelers to the Fox River Bridge, and permits a return onto westbound Main Avenue. While relatively efficient, the design creates some difficulties for pedestrians traveling between the St. Norbert campus and the Main/Reid districts.

[illegible]

- **Main/Reid Alley.** The alley serves as a two-way local circulator route to access businesses and parking. The alley has some of the characteristics of a local street, including storefront entrances and some pedestrian access, and is used for counterflow movements by motorists. For example, westbound customers bound for stores on the south side of Main Avenue may pass their destination on the one-way westbound street, returning via the eastbound alley.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Safe, pleasant, and seamless pedestrian access is vital in human-scaled business districts like Downtown De Pere. Downtown offers significant features to pedestrians, including:

- A complete sidewalk system in generally good condition.
- The new Claude Allouez Bridge, providing generously scaled pedestrian and bicycle paths on both sides.
- The Fox River Trail along the east bank of the river.
- Parking and secondary pathways internal to key commercial blocks, including the Main to Reid blocks from 3rd to 5th Streets on the West Bank (Nicolet Square and Reid Street Crossing); and the Broadway to Wisconsin blocks between the bridge approach to James Street on the East Bank (Mission Square).

However, the combination of a wide river separating two banks of the central district and traffic flow characteristics also create significant issues and potential obstacles to smooth and comfortable pedestrian access. The distance between the two banks of Downtown De Pere, approaching a half-mile between business areas, is a significant factor that has been addressed as well as possible for pedestrians through a thoughtfully designed and commodious bridge. However, it does discourage casual travel between the two sides of the district. Other significant issues include:

- **Pedestrian access at the bridge approaches.** The west approach provides a pedestrian crossing near a chicane designed to calm traffic as it comes off the bridge into the Main Avenue business environment. The crossing is marked by a blinking pedestrian sign and dedicated crosswalk. However, traffic tends to accelerate both entering and exiting the bridge, and motorists do not expect pedestrians to cross Main Avenue at this transition point so near the bridge throat. Traffic is distributed at the east approach by a multi-lane roundabout, and this provides a smooth pedestrian path from the north bridge pathway to northbound Broadway and the south pathway to southbound Broadway. Other pedestrian movements are much more complex. The south pathway provides a switch-back loop to the Front Street/Fox River Trail level, continuing north under the bridge. Other movements require pedestrians to negotiate the roundabout at surface level.
- **Crossing Main Avenue.** On the West Bank, the most intensive two-sided business development occurs on the long 300 block. The 4th Street intersection is signalized, but the existing crossing at the bridge throat is uncomfortable for many users for the reasons mentioned above. In addition, traffic flow tends to be relatively continuous with few gaps because of the efficiency of the roundabout at the east approach. As a result, many pedestrians attempt to hurry across Main at midblock between the defined crosswalks, creating a potentially hazardous situation.
- **Access to Main Avenue businesses from parking lots.** While Main Avenue provides parallel parking, much of the parking supply serving these businesses is located behind commercial buildings, either in the alley between Thilmany and Main Avenue commercial businesses on the north side or in the Nicolet Square and Reid Street Crossing blocks on the south side. Pedestrians use gaps in the building line to create informal paths between parking areas and Main Avenue storefronts.
- **Crossing Broadway.** Broadway is unsignalized along the two-sided commercial blocks between the roundabout and William Street. As a result, pedestrians have difficulty crossing the four-lane arterial. The George and James Street intersections provide well-defined crosswalks and have experimented with an orange flag system that pedestrians are encouraged to use to increase their visibility to motorists. While state law requires motorists to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk, relying on this law and the visibility provided by the flags requires a leap of faith that most pedestrians avoid.
- **Negotiating the Roundabout.** The multi-lane Broadway/Wisconsin roundabout includes defined crosswalks at its approaches. However, pedestrians crossing at these points must contend with motorists who are concentrating on shooting gaps in a continuous traffic flow and finding the lane that gets them to their destination. This uncomfortable condition causes all but fairly fearless and very able-bodied pedestrians to avoid this crossing.

BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION

De Pere has developed a network of bicycle facilities through the Downtown district that make bicycle transportation a viable option. These facilities include:

- **The Fox River Trail, paralleling Broadway and providing business access through east-west cross connections.** Redevelopment of the George Street Landing and surrounding areas should include bicycle access between the trail and Broadway levels of the East Bank. The Fox River Trail continues north to Green Bay's Washington Street district north of the Mason Street Bridge.
- **The Claude Allouez Bridge, providing both wide multi-purpose sidepaths on both sides of the bridge and on-road bike lanes.** The eastbound bike lane provides a good transition to a southbound bike



lane on Broadway and a switchback ramp to the Fox River Trail. The westbound bike lane continues along Main Avenue to Fort Howard Avenue.

- **Main Avenue/Fort Howard/Broadway (Green Bay) bike lanes and route.** As mentioned above, the westbound bike lane of the Claude Allouez Bridge continues along Main Avenue to Fort Howard Avenue (6th Street). This leads to a west shore bike route, using marked bike lanes along Fort Howard Avenue (or for a short distance, a designated northbound bike route on 6th Street) to Broadway in Ashwaubenon and Green Bay. This route connects Downtown De Pere with the De Pere Recreation Center, boat launch, Brown County Fairgrounds, Ashwaubanay Park, National Railroad Museum, and other attractions; and continues north to the Main Street bridge in Green Bay, with access into Downtown Green Bay. The southbound route terminates at Main and Fort Howard, leaving the southbound cyclist with the challenge of negotiating the Main to Reid Street divergence without a defined path.
- **Grant Street Bike Lanes.** Grant Street features painted bike lanes between the De Pere Community Center and 3rd Street. The lane continues north on 3rd Street and merges into the eastbound path and bike lane on the Claude Allouez Bridge.



Potential improvements to be considered in enhancing this already very useful system include:

- Safely connecting the southbound Fort Howard Avenue bike route into the Downtown De Pere system and the Claude Allouez Bridge lanes and pathways.
- Improved connections between the Fox River Trail and the Broadway/Wisconsin core business districts on the East Bank.
- Improved eastbound bicycle access along Reid Street.
- Bicycle connections between St. Norbert College and the rest of the Downtown district.
- Expanded and more convenient bicycle parking.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Bus Transit. Green Bay Metro's Route 17 currently serves Downtown De Pere. This line is a service route that links four local service loops together. The route provides bi-directional service over the Claude Allouez Bridge, with loops on the East Bank that operate along George Street and Broadway and on the West Bank along 3rd Street and westbound Main Avenue. Route 17 operates



on one-hour headways. Its primary purpose is to connect residential neighborhoods with schools, commercial centers, and some employment concentrations in De Pere. It interchanges along Broadview between Libal and Webster with routes serving Downtown Green Bay. While the route provides useful local services, it does not provide an effective shuttle service between the two banks of the river and other related features. Such a service, called "De Bus" was attempted in the past, but did not experience sufficient use to continue operation.

Rail Transit. Downtown De Pere is served by a freight-only Union Pacific (ex Chicago and Northwestern) rail line on its western edge. The possibility of expanded passenger service in Wisconsin, specifically in the Fox Cities corridor between Milwaukee and Green Bay, could open the prospect of rail passenger service on this line.

PARKING DOWNTOWN

The supply, and quality of parking is an important issue for Downtown De Pere, as well as comparable districts. Parking must be available, visible, and convenient without dominating the district and compromising its scale and pedestrian quality. Map 2.6 illustrates the study area's existing parking, and Table 2.2 summarizes the total parking supply for the East and West Banks. The area has about 3,700 stalls and unusually, about 86% of these are in off-street facilities. Parking is relatively evenly distributed between East and West Banks, a potential issue for the East Bank because of its larger retail base. The majority of off-street parking within De Pere is provided by private owners.

Parking Demand. Map 2.6 illustrates the parking demand by block and identifies blocks with deficiencies and surpluses. Calculations are based on demand generated by each 1,000 square feet of use. For example every 1,000 square feet of retail space generates an estimated demand for 3 stalls. Table 2.3 summarizes the parking ratios used for calculating total parking demand by block.

Based on this methodology, the study area demands slightly more than 4,000 spaces, with an East Bank demand for about 2,400 spaces and a West Bank requirement for 1,600 spaces. Map 2.7 compiles this information by block and indicates areas with surpluses and deficits between supply and demand.

PARKING ISSUES

Specific parking issues for Downtown De Pere include:

West Bank

- The 300 Block of Main Avenue has a relative balance between supply and demand. Main Avenue uses generate the majority of this demand. On-street parking along Main is limited and somewhat hard to read because of the geometry of the bridge exit. As a result, a significant amount of parking is provided on the Nicolet Square block.
- The Nicolet Professional Arts (Humana Dental) block generates a large demand for parking. The high employment density in this building generates a minimum demand of 4 stalls for every 1,000 square feet, resulting in a deficit of 81 spaces. This is offset by a remote surface lot adjacent to the railroad south of College between 4th and 5th Streets. Humana Dental currently directs staff to use this remote parking.
- Conventional calculations suggest a deficit of about 80 stalls on the Nicolet Highlands Senior Apartments block, calculating on-street, off-street surface lot, and underground parking. However, senior housing requires less parking per unit and field inspections do not suggest any overflowing into surrounding blocks.
- Future development at Joliet Square Apartments should provide adequate on-site parking to meet current and projected needs.
- Surface parking dominates the streetscape along Reid Street, and these lots provide opportunities for new development. Opening sites for new growth while maintaining required parking supply will require the use of structured parking.

Table 2.2: Overall Parking Supply & Demand

	East	West	Total
On-Street	242	221	463
Off-Street	1789	1484	3273
Total Supply	2031	1705	3736
Demand	2436	1626	4062

Source: RDG Planning & Design

Table 2.3: Parking Demand Ratios by Building Use

Building Use	Demand Per 1,000 Square Feet
Automotive	3.00
Civic Uses	2.50
School	2.50
Office	3.00-4.00
Public Facilities	2.00
Multi-Family	1.50
Hospitality	3.00
Restaurant/ Entertainment	3.00
Retail	3.00
Services	2.50
Industrial	1.00

Source: RDG Planning & Design

Map of University City Area - Parking Supply and Demand

Legend:

- Green: Supply (Positive)
- Red: Demand (Negative)
- Yellow: Difference (Zero)

Callouts:

- Improve connections from surrounding parking to block
- Add parking to support existing deficiency and new project.
- Add parking to support existing deficiency and new project.
- Redesign lot to improve efficiency.
- Add parking to support existing deficiency and new project.

Scale: 0 to 800 Feet

Streets: Main Ave, Oak St, Keith St, S 5th St, S 4th St, S 3rd St, S 2nd St, S 1st St, S Front St, S Michigan St, S Brodway, S Ontario St, S Erie St, S Huron St, S Superior St, S Wisconsin St, N Superior St, N Huron St, N Erie St, N Ontario St, N Winnebago St, N Washington St, N Wisconsin St, N Michigan St, N Broadway St, N 1st St, N 2nd St, N 3rd St, N 4th St, N 5th St, N 6th St, N 7th St, N 8th St, N 9th St, N 10th St, N 11th St, N 12th St, N 13th St, N 14th St, N 15th St, N 16th St, N 17th St, N 18th St, N 19th St, N 20th St, N 21st St, N 22nd St, N 23rd St, N 24th St, N 25th St, N 26th St, N 27th St, N 28th St, N 29th St, N 30th St, N 31st St, N 32nd St, N 33rd St, N 34th St, N 35th St, N 36th St, N 37th St, N 38th St, N 39th St, N 40th St, N 41st St, N 42nd St, N 43rd St, N 44th St, N 45th St, N 46th St, N 47th St, N 48th St, N 49th St, N 50th St, N 51st St, N 52nd St, N 53rd St, N 54th St, N 55th St, N 56th St, N 57th St, N 58th St, N 59th St, N 60th St, N 61st St, N 62nd St, N 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East Bank

- Some parking lots, such as those located along the west side of Broadway, do not appear to meet the total demand generated by area business. The lot at the old George Street Bridge Landing is rarely at full capacity as customers and employees tend to park in more convenient locations in the district and then walk from store to store. Nevertheless, appropriate signage and a parking structure would help relieve some of deficiency.
- More efficient design of public parking in the “Mission Square” blocks can add some additional parking in strategic demand areas.

Overall District

- Concentrations of private and public offices in the overall plan area creates high parking demands in specific areas, including City Hall, St. Norbert College, and the Nicolet Professional Arts Building.
- Directional information and public access to parking facilities is frequently unclear. While parking lots are evenly located throughout the district, it is not clear whether they are available to the general public or are restricted to specific users. A parking wayfinding system could direct visitors to publicly available spaces and help to utilize existing lots more efficiently.
- Lots located to the rear of businesses and on the periphery that visitors consider inconvenient become more acceptable if the routes between parking stalls and destinations feel pleasant, comfortable, and full of activity.
- Additional parking structures in areas of high den-

sity and demand could relieve parking deficiencies, particularly for the 300 Block of Reid Street and the area near Broadway and George Street.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES

Map 2.7 identifies key development opportunities, which are explored in more detail in Chapter Four:

1. The northeast corner of Main and Fort Howard.

This site, across Fort Howard Avenue from a neighborhood-scaled commercial group and across Main from the 555 West Main Condominiums, now has a commercial building adapted to church uses. Topography of the site and its strategic location suggests an excellent opportunity for mixed-use development, including a significant residential component with river views.

2. Marquette Centre Parking Lot.

Developing a portion of the surface lot with new construction would increase density in the urban environment.

3. The north side of Main Avenue from 4th to 5th Streets.

Land now in relatively low-intensity use should be upgraded, providing greater yield and consistency with the more intensive commercial character of the south side of the street.

4. Reid Street from 3rd Street to 4th Street.

This section of Reid Street is dominated by surface parking serving Main Avenue businesses and the Nicolet Professional Arts Building. Street-oriented mixed use development with adequate parking for existing and new uses would continue the land use precedent established by the Reid Street Crossing project.

5. The Joliet Square project

located on the south side of the 5th and Grant Streets intersection. Initial site plans for this site included the development of a three building apartment complex with underground parking and two retail structures. Completing this development also fills a gap between Downtown and the

De Pere Community Center. An adjacent site, owned by St. Norbert College and used for surface parking, may also be part of a larger development project.

6. Humana Block.

The Humana building is setback from the street and surrounded by surface parking. Improvements for this block should consider development opportunities that strengthen Reid Street's urban feel and address the overall parking deficiency for the area.

7. The former George Street Bridge Landing

at the intersection of Broadway and George Street and Front Street from George Street to the Claude Allouez Bridge. This critical and highly public site is an opportunity for substantial civic and adjacent private development, and is a focus for attention on the East Bank. Development of this site should also incorporate the adjacent public parking ramp that takes up the grade between Front Street and Broadway, and must provide adequate parking to accommodate existing and proposed uses.

8. North corner of the Roundabout,

at the junction of Wisconsin Street and Broadway. This site, with premium exposure to motorists traveling to the east side of De Pere, provides a highly visible and strategic development opportunity. The site is currently used for parking, and may include assembly with some adjacent buildings. A project here would complement the Mac Dental proposal and define the roundabout with high quality private investment.

9. Wells Park.

The open space slopes from Broadway to Front Street, providing public parking for the trail along Front Street. The land is conveniently located in the City and presents excellent access to the Fox River, trail and the downtown core.

10. Mac Dental Project.

This office project, planned for the south side of the Roundabout between Broadway and Wisconsin, is designed as a multi-tenant LEED-certified facility. An office project of substantial scale is a highly desirable use at this important site.

Map 2.7: Opportunity Sites, 2009



