



Beloit Downtown Redevelopment Plan

City Council Adoption: March 3, 2008



Prepared by
Vandewalle & Associates
Madison • Milwaukee

Acknowledgements

Downtown Planning Committee

Jeff Adams
 Jim Agate
 Brad Austin
 Dan Boutelle
 Doug Eddy
 Peter Gabriele
 Andrew Janke
 Tim McKearn
 Martha Mitchell
 T.J. Nee
 Joel Patch
 Betsy Schmeichen
 Mike Slavish
 Dawn Stadelman
 Don Tinder

City Council

Martin Densch, President
 Kevin Leavy, Vice President
 Douglas Eddy
 Terrence Monahan
 Chad Murry
 Joel Patch
 James Van De Bogart

City of Beloit Plan Commission

Henry Clement, Chairperson
 Marlene Erickson, Vice Chairperson
 Daniel Boutelle
 Rory Owens
 Kenneth Ware, Sr.
 Charles Ramsden
 James Van De Bogart
 Mardell Jacobson

City of Beloit Community Development Authority

Stephen Gregg, Executive Director
 Sheila DeForest-Davis
 Doug Eddy
 James Faragher
 Effie L. Garrett
 Charles Losinske
 Thomas J. Nee
 Joel Patch

Downtown Beloit Association

Kathleen Braatz, Executive Director
 Levi Cousin, Office Coordinator

500 Public Avenue
 Beloit, Wisconsin 53511
 (608) 365-0150
www.downtownbeloit.com

Board of Directors

Brad Austin
 Samira Bourkadi
 Jason Braun
 Aron Bussan
 Doug Eddy
 Jim Egan
 Peter Gabriele
 Andrew Janke, Ex-officio
 Tim McKearn
 Eric Newham
 Elaine Ribarich
 Betsy Schmeichen
 Jeff Sennett
 Don Tinder

City of Beloit Staff

Julie Christensen, Community Development Director
 Andrew Janke, Economic Development Director

Planning Assistance Provided by:**VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES**

120 East Lakeside Street
 Madison, WI 53715
 (608) 255-3988
www.vandewalle.com

Greg Flisram, AICP, Principal in Charge
 Colleen Johnson, Assistant Planner
 Jeff Maloney, Lead Designer
 Dean Proctor, Principal Designer
 Mark Roffers, AICP, Principal Planner
 Jessica Schmiedicke, Assistant Planner
 Melissa Huggins, AICP, Urban Assets

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Table of Contents	3
Introduction	5
Historical Context.....	5
Purpose of this Plan.....	6
Downtown Planning Area.....	6
<i>Downtown Planning Area Map</i>	7
Planning Process	9
Steering Committee.....	9
Background Research.....	9
Stakeholder Interviews.....	10
Downtown Vision Workshop.....	10
Public Open House.....	10
Plan Adoption.....	10
Opportunities Analysis	11
Regional Context.....	11
Key Regional Assets.....	11
<i>Regional Assets Map</i>	15
Downtown Redevelopment Opportunities.....	17
<i>Downtown Opportunities Map</i>	23
Downtown Redevelopment Plan Recommendations	25
Priority Opportunities.....	25
Preservation and Redevelopment Analysis.....	29
<i>Preservation and Redevelopment Analysis Map</i>	31
Future Land Use.....	33
Public Improvements.....	34
<i>Future Land Use and Public Improvements Map</i>	37
Districts.....	39
<i>Districts Map</i>	43
Implementation Strategy	45
Implementation Partners and Roles.....	45
Implementation Phasing.....	45
<i>Implementation Partners and Roles Chart</i>	47
<i>Implementation Phasing Map</i>	49
<i>Implementation Area 1 Map</i>	51
100 East Grand Avenue Reuse Concepts.....	53

100 East Grand Avenue Reuse Concept Option 1.....55

100 East Grand Avenue Reuse Concept Option 2.....57

100 East Grand Avenue Reuse Concept Perspective Illustrations59

Implementation Area 2 Map61

West Grand Avenue / Fourth Street Reuse Concepts.....63

West Grand Ave. / Fourth St. Reuse Concept Option 165

West Grand Ave. / Fourth St. Reuse Concept Option 1 Perspective Illustration67

West Grand Ave. / Fourth St. Reuse Concept Option 269

Implementation Area 3 Map71

Implementation Area 4 Map73

Appendix A: Visioning Workshop Results Summary **A-1**

Downtown Visioning Exercise A-1

Downtown Mapping Exercise A-5

Downtown Modeling Exercise A-7

Visual Preference Survey A-9

Appendix B: Open House Summary **B-1**

Large Group Discussion B-1

Written Comments B-1

Introduction

Historical Context

The City of Beloit's beginnings are rooted in its downtown. Beloit was originally settled at the present day intersection of State Street and Shirland Avenue by French fur trader Joseph Thibeau in 1824. Beloit grew as a hub of industry along the Rock River with Fairbanks Morse and the Beloit Corporation anchoring each side of the river. Beloit College was founded in 1846— just ten years after the City was incorporated—defining downtown's northern boundary as a hub of learning and culture not only for Beloit but for the Midwest.



Downtown Beloit has historically been a center of activity in Beloit—acting as a primary destination for shopping and services, a civic center, and an employment center. Beginning in the 1960s, Downtown experienced a substantial loss of activity as shopping moved out to the Beloit Mall and other commercial areas and then further to the Interstate. Downtown activity was also impacted by the substantial loss of jobs at Fairbanks Morse between the 1960s through the 1980s.

Downtown Beloit has experienced a renaissance over the past two decades as reinvestment has taken place in

Downtown and along Beloit's riverfront. This reinvestment can be attributed to the work of many organizations including the Downtown Beloit Association, Beloit 2020 (formerly Beloit 2000), the City of Beloit, and private sector leaders.

Today, Downtown Beloit maintains some of its historical roles but also functions as a modern-day downtown. Downtown Beloit today is:

- ◆ *A Civic Center*, including City Hall, Police Department, the Beloit Public Library, and Post Office
- ◆ *A Center of Community Celebrations and Events*, boasting a highly successful and growing summer Farmer's Market, Friday's in the Park, ArtWalk, Celebrate Weekend, the Beloit International Film Festival, and many other annual events
- ◆ *An Employment Center*, with over 2,000 employees
- ◆ *A Retail and Entertainment Destination*, with a concentration of niche businesses and services
- ◆ *A Gateway to Beloit*, as a major entrypoint to Beloit from I-90 begins in Downtown and entrypoints from Illinois via IL-51 and IL-75 also begin in Downtown
- ◆ *A Connector of Historic Urban Neighborhoods*, providing shopping, services, and entertainment within walking distance of Beloit's historic homes

- ◆ *A Gateway to Beloit College*, offering services and shopping for the campus community and providing an entrypoint to the College for the greater Beloit community
- ◆ *A Focus of Renewed Investment*, evidenced by the Beloit Inn, rehabilitation of the historic Hilton Hotel into the Turtle Creek Bookstore and housing, the Heritage View Condominiums, and many other projects

Purpose of this Plan

This Plan provides a vision and an implementation framework to guide redevelopment activities to shape the future of Downtown Beloit. This plan builds on Beloit's successful revitalization initiatives in Downtown and along the riverfront, identifying opportunities to strengthen Downtown as a thriving center of activity based on its unique assets. This Plan provides recommendations for building preservation, redevelopment, urban design, public improvements, and Plan implementation.



The Downtown Redevelopment Plan has been undertaken concurrently with the Beloit Comprehensive Plan and will be proposed for adoption both as a stand-alone document and as a component of the Comprehensive Plan.

Downtown Planning Area

The Planning Area for the Downtown Redevelopment Plan is illustrated in the *Downtown Planning Area* map on the following page. This area is predominantly concurrent with boundary of the Business Improvement District (BID) in which the Downtown Beloit Association focuses its efforts. In the Downtown Business Improvement District, a special assessment is levied on properties as a revenue source for downtown reinvestment.

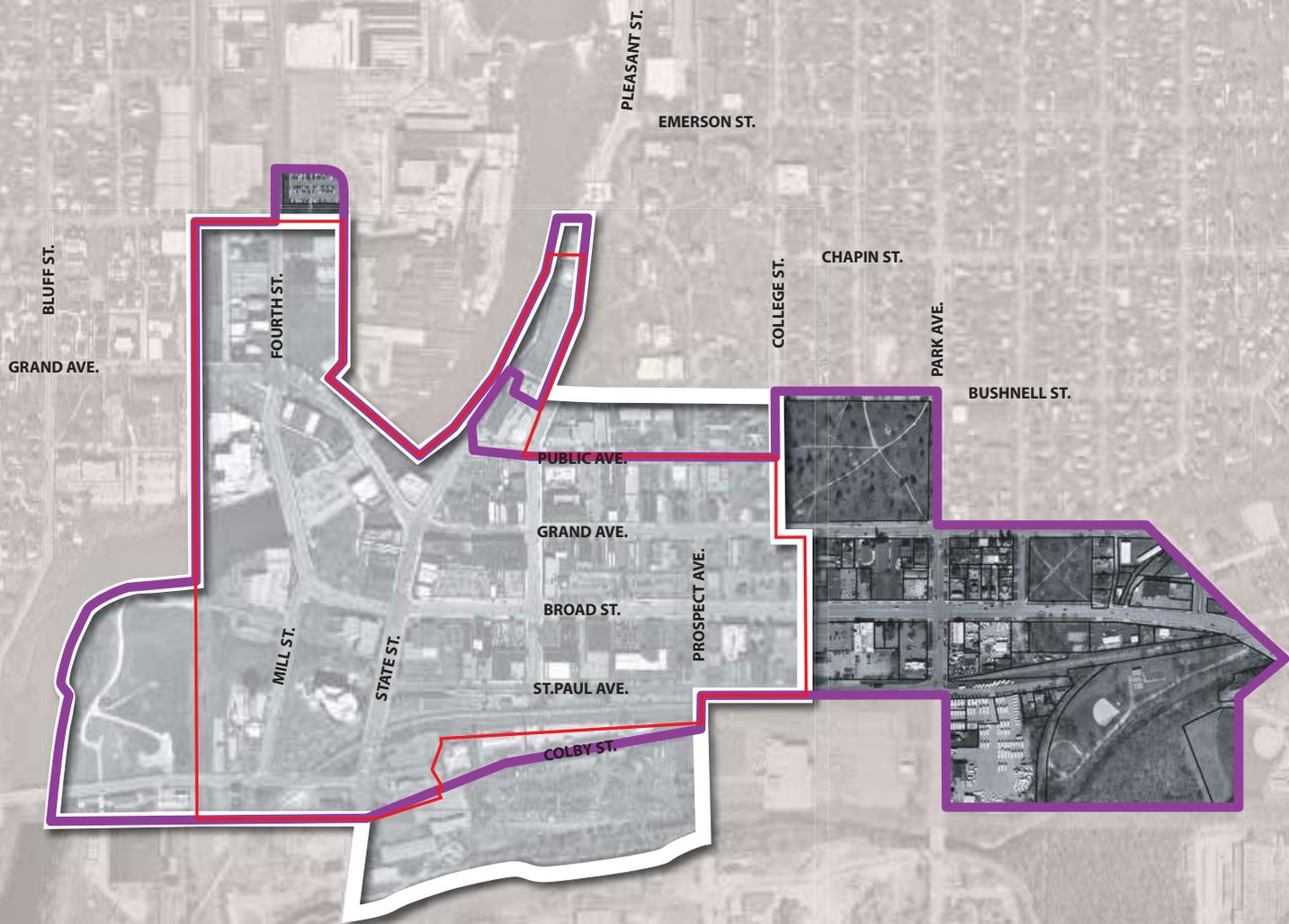
The Downtown Planning Area was also slightly expanded beyond the BID boundaries to include three additional areas due to their natural connectivity to the Downtown: (1) the Riverbend Project site, (2) the area between the railroad tracks and Turtle Creek, and (3) two blocks between Downtown and Beloit College between Bushnell Street and Public Avenue.

Also illustrated on this map is the boundary of Tax Increment Finance District #5 which encompasses Downtown.

The Planning Area boundaries are also mostly concurrent with the boundaries of the Grand Avenue District from the *2020: A Vision for the City Center* plan developed by Beloit 2020. The Planning Area also includes a northern portion of the City Center Turtle Creek District as this fringe area of Downtown has considerable potential to better connect with and impact Downtown in the future.

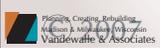
DOWNTOWN PLANNING AREA

DOWNTOWN BELOIT



Map Legend

-  Downtown Planning Area
-  Downtown BID
-  Downtown TIF District



Created: 10.18.07
Revised: 01.04.08

Planning Process

The Downtown Beloit Association (DBA) commissioned the Downtown Redevelopment Plan in 2006. While the plan is to be used as a stand-alone document, it is also a component of the City's Comprehensive Plan, and consequently the planning process took place concurrently with the update of the Comprehensive Plan. The following is a description of the planning process for the Downtown Redevelopment Plan.



Steering Committee

The Downtown Redevelopment Plan Steering Committee met five times during this planning process. The Committee represented a diverse cross-section of Downtown interests and includes representatives of local government, education, business, real estate, and tourism. The Steering Committee provided invaluable insight as the Plan was being developed and helped to shape the draft and final plan.

Background Research

The following background research was conducted as part of the planning process in order to understand past and concurrent planning efforts, market trends, challenges, and opportunities for Downtown:

- ◆ The following plans were reviewed to understand the Downtown in context of past and concurrent planning and implementation efforts:
 - Beloit 2020 City Center Plans
 - City Center...on Common Ground (1995)
 - From Vision to Reality, The RiverFront Project (1998)
 - 2020: A Vision for the City Center (2005)
 - Rock River Parkway Master Plan (2006)
 - Downtown Beloit Design Guidelines (1993)
 - Beloit College Campus Master Plan (2004)
 - Stateline Area Bike and Pedestrian Plan (2004)
 - Rockford Council of 100 Regional Vision Project: A Regional Analysis of the I-90 Corridor (2001)
 - City of Beloit Comprehensive Plan (1998)
- ◆ VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES conducted a visual assessment of Downtown to analyze existing site conditions and verify base map information.
- ◆ VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES evaluated the demographic and economic context of Beloit and its Downtown to set a framework for Downtown planning. This evaluation included data from ESRI Business Information Solutions and Claritas, Inc.

- ◆ Additional research conducted for the Plan included a review of various market surveys conducted in Downtown over the past decade, an evaluation of demographic information, and an analysis of current regional trends.

Stakeholder Interviews

In September 2006, VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES conducted several individual and focus group stakeholder interviews. The goal of these meetings was to gather information and insight from people representing a variety of Downtown interests including businesses, major employers, local government, economic development, tourism, education, and real estate. Interviewees commented on Downtown trends, plans, future visions, as well as on broader opportunities for the community and region. These confidential interviews greatly enhanced the consultants' understanding of Downtown and influenced the redevelopment opportunities identified in this Plan.

Downtown Vision Workshop



On March 31, 2007, VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES facilitated a downtown visioning workshop with approximately 25 Beloit residents. The workshop included individual and group exercises aimed at identifying residents' preferences for the character and scale of design of buildings and public spaces in Downtown as well as the challenges and opportunities facing Downtown. The workshop and exercise results are described in detail in Appendix A.

Public Open House

The draft Plan was presented at an Open House on December 13, 2007 at the Vision Beloit Center in the City Center Building in Downtown. The Open House offered an opportunity for residents to comment on the draft plan and included a presentation of the plan as well as displays of the plan graphics. A summary of the input provided at the Open House is included in Appendix B.

Plan Adoption

The draft Plan was recommended for adoption by the Downtown Planning Committee on December 13, 2007. The plan was then presented to the Beloit Plan Commission and Beloit Community Development Authority on January 23, 2008. Both bodies approved the Plan and recommended its adoption to the City Council. The plan was then adopted by City Council on March 3, 2008.

Opportunities Analysis

The purpose of the Opportunities Analysis is to explore Beloit's untapped economic potential and evaluate how this potential can be advanced through Downtown redevelopment. Although focused specifically on the City of Beloit, the Opportunities Analysis considers the City's current and potential economic role in the region in order to identify opportunities and challenges for Downtown redevelopment.



Over the past twenty years, Downtown Beloit and the broader City Center riverfront have been the stage of an urban renaissance. Capitalizing on the City's many assets including the Rock River, base of skilled workers, and access to markets, the City, the Downtown Beloit Association, Beloit 2020, and many other strategic partners have taken significant strides to revitalize Beloit's City Center and Downtown. As this momentum continues, capitalizing on key local and regional economic opportunities will be vital to continuing this success.

Regional Context

Beloit is positioned within a region that includes several important attributes: large metropolitan markets, high quality farmland, well-connected transportation routes, world-class educational and research institutions, and exceptional recreational and tourism opportunities, to name a few. Beloit is located at the center of an area that is home to over 20 million people bounded by the Twin Cities, the Fox Valley, Chicago, and the Quad Cities, coined the "Circle City" by renowned regional planner and landscape architect Dr. Phil Lewis. Beloit's location at the center of the Circle City offers access to exceptional regional services, amenities, and markets, and greatly influences the future of Beloit's economic growth. The following regional attributes in particular play an important role in shaping Beloit's future economic opportunities, and these are illustrated on the Regional Opportunities graphics that follows this section.

Key Regional Assets



Food Economic Cluster

Agricultural production remains an important part of the regional economy, and is the dominant land use in the towns surrounding Beloit. The farmland that surrounds the Rock River is some of the most fertile in the upper Midwest. Additionally, to the west and north of Beloit is the driftless area which is characterized by scenic rolling topography, smaller-scale farms, and agri-tourism centered around organic and specialty foods including beer and cheese producers.

Beloit's access to these rich agricultural resources, its position along major shipping routes, and its proximity to major metropolitan markets has, and will continue to contribute to its concentration of food producers—Frito Lay, Hormel Foods, Kerry Ingredients, Kettle Foods, and Genencor (which, in addition to food based bio-technology, also researches renewable fuel technology). The Greater Beloit Chamber of Commerce has been working in partnership with the State of Wisconsin and the State of Illinois to advance this cluster in Rock, Green, Walworth, and Jefferson Counties in Wisconsin and in Winnebago, Ogle, Stephenson, and Boone Counties in Illinois. Their initiative has included interviewing CEOs and plant managers from different food production businesses to identify key issues and hosting a Food Processing Expo to bring food producers and resources together. In addition to continuing to attract food producers to Beloit, related businesses that rely on agricultural raw products, such as bio-based food packaging and more energy production, would also help to strengthen this cluster.

Transportation Connectivity

Beloit is very well served by interstate highways I-90/39 and I-43 which connect the City to Milwaukee, Madison, Chicago, the Twin Cities, the Fox Valley, and the Quad Cities. This access greatly contributes to its ability to attract businesses as well as residents.

Additionally, Beloit is easily accessible to major shipping routes and transshipment facilities including the Northwest Chicagoland Regional Airport at Rockford, the intermodal facility in Rochelle, the Port of Milwaukee, and the Port of Chicago. Additionally, Beloit

residents and businesses are just over an hour away from O'Hare International Airport—connecting Beloiters to virtually anywhere in the world. Beloit is also working to reduce automobile-dependent travel and improve its connectivity to Chicago by participating in the Rock Commuter Rail initiative which is working to extend Chicago's Metra line currently ending in Harvard to Beloit.



Access to Technology Education and Research

Nationally recognized for excellence in undergraduate liberal arts education, Beloit College cultivates technology education and research through its interdisciplinary programming. Beloit College is also expanding and strengthening its sciences curriculum through the new state-of-the-art Center for the Sciences. Beloit is also served by University of Wisconsin-Rock County which is currently expanding its engineering program which will greatly strengthen area employers' ability to recruit high tech engineering positions.

In addition to these local assets, Beloit is proximate to universities, research institutions, and corporations



in the major metropolitan areas of the Circle City developing cutting-edge research, particularly in technology and agriculture-based industries. Beloit is physically well connected to these centers along I-90 and I-94, and it is the midpoint of what has been dubbed the “IQ Corridor”—a concentration of centers of research, education, capital, businesses and entrepreneurs bookended by Chicago and the Twin Cities.



Recreation and Tourism

The City of Beloit was formed around a major regional asset, the Rock River, which offers opportunities for boating, bicycle and walking trails, and tourism of the historic towns along the river throughout the Illinois and Wisconsin, including Beloit. Downtown Beloit will soon be a starting point for river padding activity as a boat launch is planned to be constructed adjacent to the Chester Square parking lot on the West bank of the river.

As a gateway to Wisconsin, Beloit is also close to other major recreation/tourism draws

including Lake Geneva, Wisconsin Dells, the Ice Age Trail, and several State parks and forests. Particularly close is Lake Geneva and surrounding lake communities where potential investors in new Beloit businesses and initiatives may be recruited.

Waste-to-Product Economy

With growing national concern over issues of climate change and sustainability, and with transportation costs continuing to trend upwards, there is a large and growing movement among communities, corporations, and consumers to reduce the national carbon footprint. With its access to major transportation networks, large urban markets, and leading bio-science research; together with committed corporate leadership, Beloit is positioned to assume a leading role. This opportunity could manifest itself in several ways from major production and logistics to a new products development center.

Metro Area Opportunities

Beloit is a part of a sub-region of state-line communities including Rockford, Janesville, Whitewater, and Delavan, among others that operate within an interconnected market and share a labor pool. Beloit’s retail market area of 100,000 people within a 10-mile radius is a major asset to Beloit as it works to attract additional shopping, dining, and entertainment activity in the stateline area. As Beloit advances its own economic development initiatives, partnerships with these other communities should be developed for the benefit of the region as a whole.

REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

BELOIT, WISCONSIN

MADISON

- State Capital
- University
- Bio-agricultural research center

To Twin Cities

Dane County Airport

Southwestern Agricultural Region

- Regional scale food system/organics
- Dairying and smaller farms
- Driftless Area/Ag-Tourism

World-Class Farmland

- Large production farms
- Cropland of national significance
- Bio-ag economy

To Fox Valley

MILWAUKEE

- Major Metro Market
 - Corporate Relationships
 - Port City
 - Production Hub
- General Mitchell Int'l Airport

Lake Michigan

Janesville

BELOIT
Wisconsin's Gateway

Williams Bay
Lake Geneva
Fontana

Lake District

- Recreation
- Summer homes
- Venture capital

Interstate Highway Systems

- IQ Corridor
- Transshipment

WISCONSIN
ILLINOIS

CITY OF BELOIT

- Regional midpoint of the "Circle City"
- Half way point of the Rock River
- Convergence of Interstate Highways
- Centerpoint of the bi-state region

Rockford

Greater Rockford Airport

CHICAGO METRO

- Global City
- Cultural Center
- Major Research Institutions
- Access to Capital & Entrepreneurs
- Technology Center
- Port City

O'Hare Int'l Airport

Rochelle

Nation's Breadbasket

- Grains
- Large Farms
- Global Food Supply

Quad Cities

IOWA
ILLINOIS

Downtown Redevelopment Opportunities

Beloit's next steps in promoting Downtown redevelopment should be informed by the key economic opportunities and demographic trends present in the region and the community. This analysis considers housing, riverfront development, the arts, food-related uses, and connections with Beloit College as key opportunities for transforming Downtown Beloit in the future. These opportunities are also illustrated on the Downtown Opportunities graphic that follows this section.



Housing Development

As Beloit continues to promote job growth in and around Downtown, the DBA and the City should concurrently focus on increasing and diversifying Downtown housing options. Increasing housing opportunities in Downtown and along the riverfront creates a more “24-hour” environment and supports the viability of Downtown businesses.

Downtown Beloit's many assets can be used to market Downtown housing to new residents. In particular, access to river views and recreation, the Downtown's historic character, Beloit College, and the Downtown retail district should be touted as key benefits of Downtown living.

Downtown rental housing units continue to be at or near 100% occupancy, demonstrating a need for additional units. The development community has also demonstrated the potential for downtown housing in Beloit, evidenced by the new residential units at 444 E. Grand Avenue in the historic Hilton Hotel above the Turtle Creek Bookstore, the new Heritage View condominium development, and the proposed housing development at the Riverbend Site. While downtown housing development is not without its challenges—including parking, elevator access, and rehabilitation costs—a downtown housing initiative focused on igniting and expanding the market can work to overcome these barriers.



In addition to a focus on expanding housing opportunities in Downtown itself, this effort should be complemented by the City's and Beloit 2020's efforts to revitalize urban neighborhoods throughout Beloit City Center.

The following five groups have demonstrated success in calling Downtown home in communities across the country, and also have potential to strengthen Beloit's Downtown housing

market.

- ◆ *Artists and Creative Professionals:* Housing units geared toward artists can help kick-start a Downtown housing market. Units should be completed with minimal finishes, designed to accommodate live/work space, and offer affordable rents. Additionally, artist living in Beloit would help to strengthen the Downtown arts cluster.
- ◆ *Young Professionals:* Beloit employers are often challenged in recruiting young professionals, in part due to a lack of a vibrant 24-hour Downtown. Retrofitted Downtown units would attract young professionals eager to live in a more urban environment. Beloit College's younger faculty, for example, has demonstrated interest in more Downtown housing options.
- ◆ *Empty Nesters and Retirees:* As the Baby Boom generation ages, many desire housing options that require less upkeep and provide easy access to services, shopping, entertainment, recreation, and social networks. Downtown's proximity to Beloit College also offers retirees enriching opportunities for continuing education, an amenity that many aging adults are actively seeking.
- ◆ *Downtown Employees:* Over 2,000 people work in Downtown Beloit which is a considerable employment base for a Midwest City of this size. This concentration of employment should be capitalized on to grow Beloit's Downtown housing base by offering a housing alternative within walking distance and/or connected by transit or bicycle paths. Additionally, employers benefit from reduced parking demands from employees living Downtown.
- ◆ *Extended Stay:* Downtown housing would be an attractive option for new and temporary residents and the demand for this in Beloit has been noted by the Chamber of Commerce and others. Employers and organizations in need of extended stay units should be sought after as partners to help finance/lease these units.

Riverfront Redevelopment

Beloit has experienced tremendous success in redeveloping brownfield properties into thriving greenspace areas throughout the City Center. Now that Downtown's amenity base has grown, there is an opportunity to redevelop some riverfront properties to capitalize on these strengths. Riverfront uses should capitalize on river views and access—retail, residential, and entertainment uses in particular should be targeted. Projects such as the Riverwalk, the Ironworks redevelopment and mural, Heritage View condos, Beloit Inn and riverside dining at Café Belwah, and the planned launch from the Chester Square parking lot illustrate a momentum already in place to move more people and activity to the river. Unique riverfront uses will help to make Downtown Beloit more of a destination for residents and tourists alike. The boat launch, once implemented, also creates an incredible opportunity to attract bring people from throughout the region to Downtown Beloit as a starting point for a river paddling trip.



Strengthening Connections with Beloit College

Beloit College is one of the City's clearest assets, yet historically the College has provided for so many of students' needs that the campus community has been somewhat insular.

However, the College is refocusing its efforts on "taking the college off the hill," opening the campus to the Beloit community and vice versa. The College has successfully begun bringing the campus community Downtown by investing in the CELEB Center (an arts entrepreneurship center), Gallery ABBA, and the Turtle Creek Bookstore on Grand Avenue. Additionally, the College has expressed interest in moving some fine arts classrooms and offices Downtown to the existing library when the library moves to the Beloit Mall.



The City, the DBA, and Downtown business owners should capitalize on the College's efforts to connect with the community by doing more to attract Beloit College students, faculty, and staff Downtown, and encourage additional Downtown development adjacent to the College.

A greater variety of "third places" (informal gathering places) in Downtown would help attract students and staff alike off campus. These places might include restaurants/pubs; coffee shops/cafes with evening hours, wireless access, and an atmosphere that promotes lingering, studying, and live entertainment. As part of this effort, the DBA/City should continue to consider implementing a program for universal WI-FI access in Downtown.

Retail uses geared to the Campus community would also help strengthen the draw of Downtown. Such retailers may include stores that carry: specialty/health foods, pharmaceuticals, computers/electronics, used books, clothing, music, eyewear, and art supplies. Students interviewed for this Plan indicated that existing Downtown stores would better attract students by improving marketing on campus and offering special promotions for students. Students also indicated that because the Beloit College meal plan does not include meals on Sunday evenings, Downtown restaurants should actively work to attract students by staying open Sunday nights and offering Sunday dinner specials.



In addition to enhancing Downtown as a destination, the pedestrian route to Downtown from campus should be made more inviting through streetscaping and infill development. Specifically, Public Street offers opportunities for infill redevelopment that builds off of the strengths of the existing urban character.

Arts Community

Beloit has been actively working to build its arts community and market its arts amenities. As an example, the American Industrial Art Gallery has put Beloit on the map as a center of industrial art. Beloit's arts initiative should continue to grow, focusing on enhancing Beloit's "arts infrastructure" to develop an environment conducive for artists to create, exhibit, or

perform. The DBA, City, Visit Beloit, Beloit College, and other strategic partners can help enliven Downtown and support its retail and residential base by expanding the Downtown arts cluster. Current arts assets in Beloit include:

- ◆ *Visual Arts:* Beloit College Wright Art Museum of Art, Lincoln Center Museum, American Industrial Art Gallery, Gallery ABBA, Angel Museum, ArtWalk, Holidazzle, and gallery space in downtown businesses
- ◆ *Theatre:* Beloit Civic Theatre, New Court Theatre, Beloit College student performances and International Performing Arts Series
- ◆ *Music:* Beloit/Janesville Symphony Orchestra, Music at Harry's Place, Friday's in the Park, Wednesday night Jazz at Café Belwah
- ◆ *Film:* Beloit International Film Festival
- ◆ *Dance:* Streetdance, as part of Celebrate weekend
- ◆ *Arts Business:* The Beloit Fine Arts Incubator, Beloit College's Gallery ABBA and CELEB Center
- ◆ *Public Art:* Over twenty pieces of public art on display in Beloit
- ◆ *Arts Education:* Beloit College International Performing Arts Lecture Programs



Food-related Downtown Uses

Food production and processing is a key component of Beloit's economic base. Food industries have clustered here based on several key assets including Beloit's connectivity to major markets including Milwaukee and Chicago and its location in the heart of rich agricultural resources. Downtown offers a venue for celebrating this part of Beloit's heritage and economy. Specific opportunities include the following:

- ◆ *Public Market:* Beloit's Downtown farmer's market has demonstrated clear success as it has doubled in size—both in number of vendors and square footage—from 2004 to 2006 and showcased over 70 vendors in the last season. This success illustrates the demand for local foods and offers an opportunity to offer local foods year-round in a public market. Such a market could also showcase artisan wares and other merchandise. Additionally, the market can help to grow local businesses that participate in the market. The food offerings at a public market should represent the array of fresh food and value-added products available in the region. The market could also provide an opportunity to showcase local food manufacturers' products, such as through a "tasting room" where public market visitors could sample new products before they



are marketed nationally.

- ◆ *Regional Food Restaurants:* Downtown Beloit can enhance its attraction to residents and tourists by expanding its cluster of restaurants and feature regionally-produced foods. Such restaurants would help to draw food-related tourism activity that is already occurring in places such as New Glarus and Monroe. Restaurants featuring regional foods would also help to support the sale of these foods at a Public Market. Potential restaurateurs could be identified from Blackhawk Technical College's Culinary Arts Program.
- ◆ *Food-related Retail:* Expansion of food-related Downtown businesses would not only showcase Beloit's food economy but also support Downtown retail and residential activity as a whole. Food retailers may include a specialty grocery (e.g. health foods, organic foods, and/or ethnic foods), butcher, bakery/pastry shop, kitchenware store, ice cream parlor, wine/spirits store, or a microbrewery/brew-pub.

Site-Specific Downtown Opportunities

In addition to the broader economic and redevelopment opportunities described above for Downtown, this Opportunities Analysis identifies specific areas and sites within Downtown with clear potential to catalyze additional Downtown reinvestment. These areas, sites, and public improvements are illustrated on the *Downtown Opportunities* graphic on the following page.

DOWNTOWN OPPORTUNITIES

DOWNTOWN BELOIT

ROCK RIVER PARKWAY

- Recreation via river & riverwalk
- Park & public gathering spaces
- Proposed boat house
- Extended Riverwalk

IRONWORKS

- Office and industrial uses
- Privately driven redevelopment
- American Industrial Art Gallery

DOWNTOWN ACTIVITY AREA

- Historic building stock
- Arts district
- Regional food/restaurants
- Entertainment
- Upper Floor Housing
- Riverfront lifestyle housing
- Proposed Transit Center
- Public Market

WEST BANK

- Ethnic & arts focused redevelopment & infill

Enhance connections between main east & west side activity gathering areas, including bridge enhancements

Continue successful riverfront redevelopment

Enhance streetscapes & provide a connection between Beloit College, the riverfront & downtown

KEY REDEVELOPMENT CORRIDOR

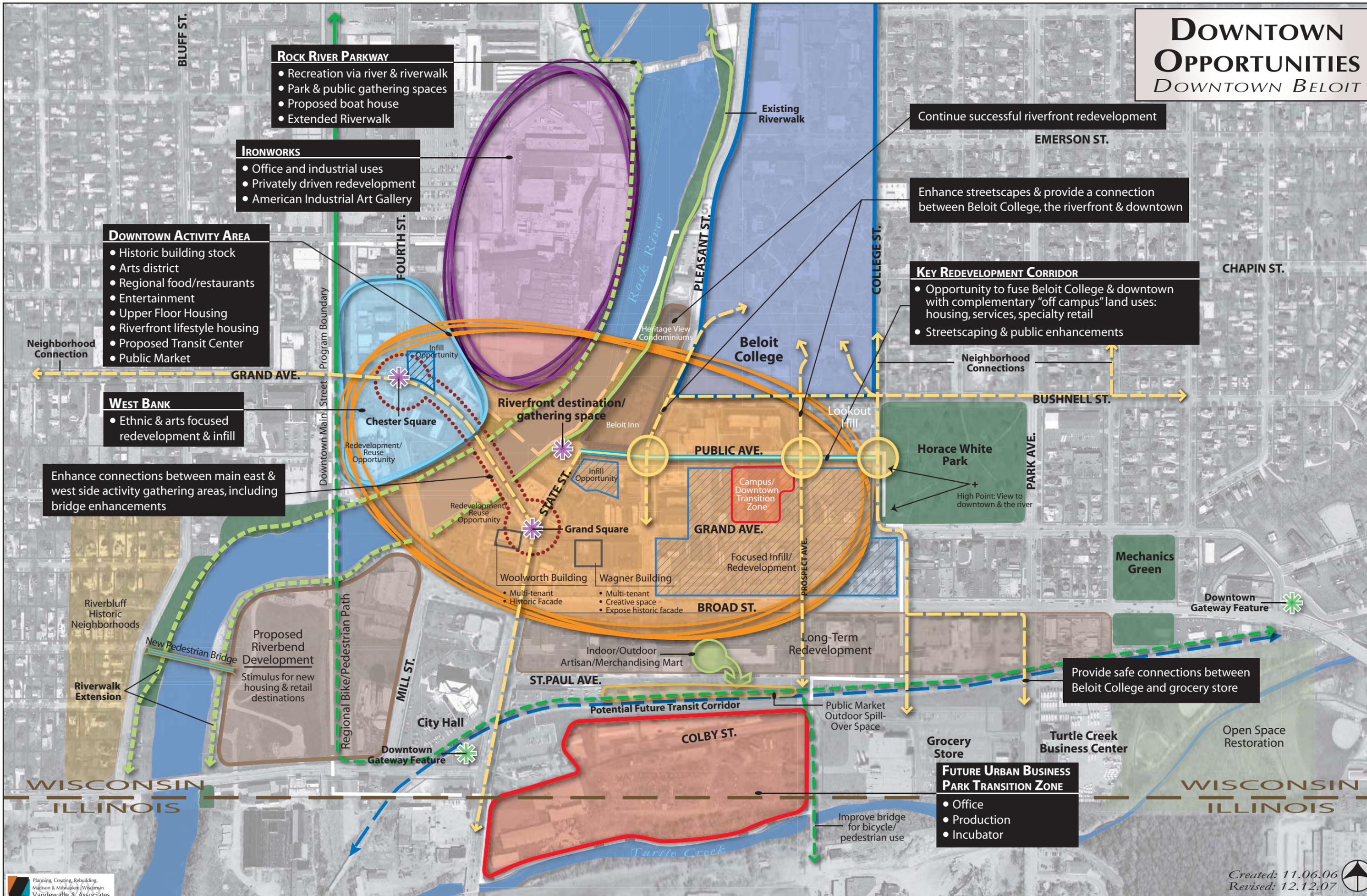
- Opportunity to fuse Beloit College & downtown with complementary "off campus" land uses: housing, services, specialty retail
- Streetscaping & public enhancements

High Point: View to downtown & the river

Provide safe connections between Beloit College and grocery store

FUTURE URBAN BUSINESS PARK TRANSITION ZONE

- Office
- Production
- Incubator



Downtown Redevelopment Plan Recommendations

The Downtown Redevelopment Plan Recommendations outlines a vision for the physical redevelopment of Downtown as well as defining its economic and social role in the community. This section is organized into the following sections:

- ◆ *Priority Opportunities:* Key elements of the Downtown's role that can be strengthened
- ◆ *Preservation and Redevelopment Analysis:* A building-by-building analysis of opportunities for historic preservation, rehabilitation, and infill redevelopment
- ◆ *Future Land Use:* A future land use plan with land use categories appropriate for the mixed-use nature of Downtown
- ◆ *Downtown Districts:* Definition of eight core sub-areas of Downtown that should be marketed and developed to highlight the unique character and assets of the area

Priority Opportunities

Before identifying specific Downtown redevelopment opportunities at the site level, it is important to identify the key elements that should be the focus of Downtown redevelopment efforts as a whole. These issues then dictate priorities for the physical redevelopment recommendations described in this Plan. Four key Focus Areas are described below.

Urban Housing

Attracting more residents to Downtown is a critical part of enlivening Downtown activity. Beloit offers an affordable cost of living which should be promoted as part of the Downtown housing initiative. Downtown housing redevelopment should focus on:

- ◆ Expanding housing choice to satisfy a wide range of incomes and lifestyles;
- ◆ Redeveloping the Riverbend Site as a catalytic Downtown housing project;
- ◆ Continuing to build the housing market with projects that use creative financing, such as historic and affordable housing tax credits, to create high-quality and affordable units;
- ◆ Continuing efforts to convert Downtown buildings' upper floors to housing;
- ◆ Promoting corporate-sponsored walk-to-work programs such as forgivable loans/grants to promote Downtown reinvestment (as well as encouraging renters to locate Downtown);
- ◆ Promoting other infill housing development; and
- ◆ Coordinating with the City, Community Development Authority (CDA), and other organizations focused on housing rehabilitation in adjacent historic urban neighborhoods



Business Recruitment and Retention

Downtown has historically served the community as Beloit's Central Business District (CBD). While the mix and concentration of businesses has changed over the past decades, reflecting national trends of many retailers moving out of the CBD, Downtown still offers a unique, advantageous location for many businesses, including specialized retailers that can draw from a retail trade area of 100,000 people within a 10-mile radius. Additionally, Downtown has a unique market opportunity to serve the Beloit College community, of which approximately 2/3 of students do not own vehicles.

One of the DBA's core service areas has been bolstering the Downtown business community. This role will continue to be vitally important to maintaining a healthy, vibrant Downtown retail district. Specific opportunities for expanding downtown retail are identified in the *Downtown Retail Opportunities* section.

The DBA, City, and other strategic partners should continue to play an active role to facilitate business recruitment and retention. Areas of focus should include:

- ◆ Providing continued outreach and assistance to new and existing businesses;
- ◆ Building entrepreneurship capacity and business planning;
- ◆ Establishing a business mentoring program;
- ◆ Recruiting developers and tenants;
- ◆ Facilitating opportunities for businesses to self-organize and co-market;
- ◆ Developing a business plan for a public market and/or arts merchandising center;
- ◆ Promoting the use of business financing tools, such as offered through the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) and the Small Business Administration (SBA); and
- ◆ Developing partnerships with organizations and businesses that can provide small business development services, including:
 - UW Extension
 - UW Whitewater Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
 - UW Rock County
 - Blackhawk Technical College
 - Service Core of Retired Executives (SCORE)
 - Center for Entrepreneurship Liberal Education at Beloit (CELEB)
 - Beloit Fine Arts Incubator
 - Mentors from the Beloit business community (either currently employed or retired).



DOWNTOWN RETAIL OPPORTUNITIES

Downtown Beloit draws from a retail market area of 100,000 people within a 10-mile radius, and its proximity to major population centers creates significant opportunity for Downtown to continue to grow as a regional destination.

The following opportunities for expanded retail in Downtown are based on an analysis of current retailers within a 15-mile radius of Downtown and identified retail leakages (sources: Claritas, Inc. and ESRI Business Information Solutions)

- ◆ *Home Decor Retail:* Downtown Beloit has recently grown a cluster of home décor retailers which has gained considerable momentum in making Downtown Beloit as a regional retail destination. This niche should continue to be strongly supported, grown, and marketed throughout the region.
- ◆ *Food, Beverage, and Kitchen Supply Retail:* Downtown currently does not offer any food-related retailers, reinforcing the need for more specialty food, beverage, and kitchen supply retailers to serve everyday needs in Downtown.
- ◆ *Office, Stationery and Used Book Retailers:* Beloit has very few office and stationery retailers—this niche could grow in Downtown. Used book retailers could also fill a gap and build around the success of the Turtle Creek Bookstore. Both would serve the needs of Beloit College students and a growing non-student population.
- ◆ *Clothing Retail:* Downtown should focus on niche clothing retail, building on the two existing Downtown clothing/shoe retailers.
- ◆ *Music Retail:* Music retail could be expanded, particularly aimed at Beloit College students, as current retailers are on the edges of Beloit.
- ◆ *Art Retail and Destinations:* A concentration of art dealers and destinations (e.g. galleries, studios, and museums) demonstrates the cluster of arts-related activities in Downtown which could be further expanded and marketed to include art suppliers and other retailers.
- ◆ *Other Specialty Retail:* Downtown could expand its offering of specialty retail that would attract tourists including gift, hobby, specialty boutiques, and outfitters—building from the home décor niche currently in Downtown.



Strengthening Connections with Beloit College

The DBA and City should build upon their strong relationship with Beloit College by partnering with them to forward the following initiatives:

- ◆ Promoting Downtown housing for faculty;
- ◆ Engaging the College as a partner in enhancing the vibrancy of Downtown so that Downtown can be marketed as a major asset to the College as it recruits new students and faculty;
- ◆ Developing a re-use plan for the Public Library building that serves the College and also incorporates public uses/spaces to encourage interaction between the community and the College;
- ◆ Investigating the potential to recruit Beloit alumni to invest or retire Downtown next to campus; and
- ◆ Exploring future opportunities to site additional Campus facilities Downtown.



Increase Corporate Involvement

Much of Beloit's success to date in redeveloping Downtown is attributable to private sector leadership in partnership with organizations including the DBA, City, Beloit 2020, and Beloit College. Beloit corporations should continue be sought as long-term partners to advance Downtown initiatives that benefit both the participating businesses and the community as a whole. Areas of focus should include:

- ◆ Seeking investments from corporations and corporate foundations for Downtown redevelopment initiatives;
- ◆ Working with the Chamber of Commerce to formalize its work with the regional food cluster by establishing a regional food manufacturers consortium focused on marketing, networking, event sponsorship, infrastructure development, and promotion of food-based activity and venues in Downtown; and
- ◆ Encouraging "walk-to-work" employer incentives to employees who purchase homes within walking distance (benefiting the employer by improving the immediate working/living environment and area property values as well as reducing the amount of parking needed for the business). Additionally, for employees looking for rental housing, employers can work with the DBA to promote living Downtown.

Preservation and Redevelopment Analysis

In order to illustrate a vision for the future physical redevelopment of Downtown, a thorough understanding of existing building stock and urban form is necessary. VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES conducted a visual survey of Downtown and identified the following preservation and redevelopment opportunities which are illustrated on the *Building Preservation and Redevelopment Analysis* map on the following page.



Preservation: Historic Buildings

Downtown Beloit contains a number of significant historic buildings, primarily characterized by early 20th century commercial buildings. The majority of significant historic buildings are located in the 400 and 500 blocks of East Grand Avenue, the 300 block of State Street, and the 100 block of West Grand Avenue. The *Building Preservation and Redevelopment Analysis* map identifies a number of properties that should be priority targets of historic rehabilitation/façade improvements. The *Downtown Beloit Design Guidelines* should be used to guide rehabilitation of buildings in these areas.

Preservation: Significant New Buildings

Contemporary buildings that contribute to Downtown are identified on the following map. These buildings have been the subject of recent investment and contain uses appropriate for Downtown and are therefore not redevelopment targets.

Priority Redevelopment / Infill Areas

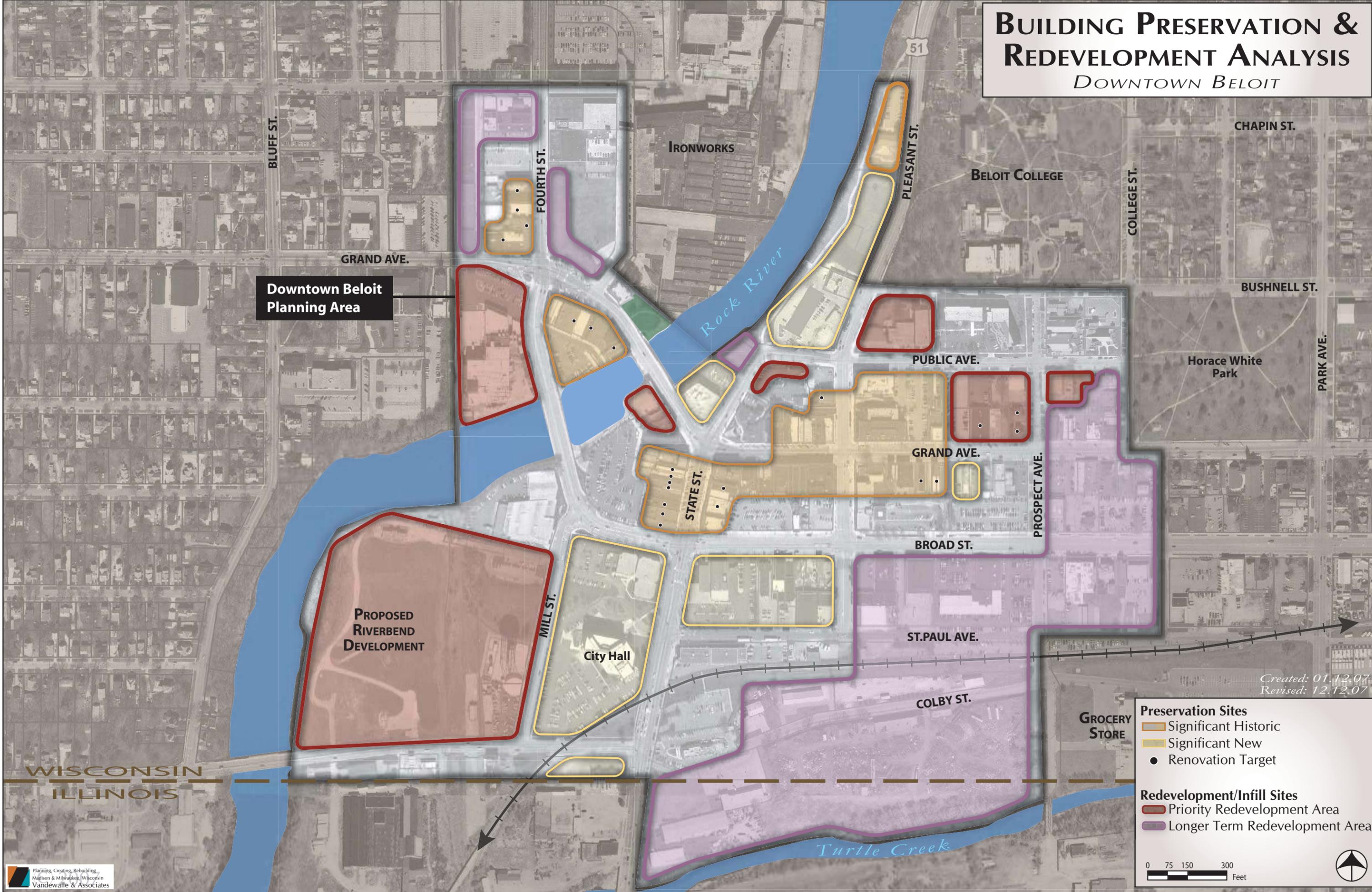
Eight areas of Downtown are identified as priority redevelopment areas due to their potential to contribute to a more cohesive and functional Downtown if redeveloped. Many of the uses contained in the existing buildings at these sites fit well in Downtown but would benefit from a new or significantly restored building. The DBA and City should focus the greatest amount of resources to these areas in the near term. The “New Construction” section of the *Downtown Beloit Design Guidelines* should be followed for redevelopment of these areas. Additionally, the *Conceptual Plan for the Beloit Riverbend Site* illustrates design recommendations for new residential construction at the Riverbend Site which would also be applicable to other new residential areas on the edges of Downtown.

Longer Term Redevelopment / Infill Areas

Four areas of Downtown are identified as longer term redevelopment areas. As Downtown continues to flourish, and the number of people living, working, and visiting expands, there will be an opportunity to redevelop areas that are now considered on the fringe of Downtown. This will help expand the Downtown, improve connections with Turtle Creek and the Rock River, and enhance appearance and perceptions of investment at key Downtown gateways. These areas will accommodate a second wave of redevelopment spreading out from the heart of Downtown and the riverfront. The DBA and City should focus more attention on these areas as redevelopment of priority areas is “completed.”

BUILDING PRESERVATION & REDEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

DOWNTOWN BELOIT



Downtown Beloit Planning Area

WISCONSIN
ILLINOIS

Created: 01.12.07
Revised: 12.12.07

Preservation Sites

- Significant Historic
- Significant New
- Renovation Target

Redevelopment/Infill Sites

- Priority Redevelopment Area
- Longer Term Redevelopment Area

0 75 150 300 Feet



Future Land Use

Land use in Downtown Beloit—as in most downtowns—is characterized by a mix of uses: multi-story buildings that may include retail, office, and residential in one building, as an example. As such, the recommended future Land Use pattern in Downtown reflects this mixed nature.

The Downtown Future Land Use categories are described below, and are illustrated on the *Downtown Land Use and Public Improvements* map following this section. This map is also reflected in the Land Use chapter of the City’s Comprehensive Plan document, and will therefore be a basis for future zoning decisions.

DOWNTOWN FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

Mixed Residential

This category is intended for a variety of residential units focused on multiple family housing (3+ unit buildings), usually developed at densities that exceed six units per acre. Attached single family residences with individual entries (e.g., townhouses, rowhouses) and small public and institutional uses—such as parks, schools, and churches—may also be within lands mapped in this category.

Neighborhood Commercial

This category includes Downtown-scaled commercial-only land uses including restaurants, retail, and service uses. In Downtown, this land use category is used somewhat infrequently as most of Downtown development is planned to be mixed-use in nature.

Office

This category is intended for high-quality office, institutional, research, and office-support land uses with high quality landscaping.

Institutional and Community Services

This category is designed to include large-scale public buildings, schools, religious institutions, and other public facilities.

Planned Mixed Use: Office/Residential Above Retail

This category is intended to facilitate mixed-use buildings with first floor retail and upper-floor residential and/or office uses. This land use is concentrated along East and West Grand Avenue.

Planned Mixed Use: Office Above Retail

This category is intended to facilitate mixed-use buildings with first floor retail and upper-floor office uses. This category is distinguished from the Planned Mixed Use: Office/Residential Above Retail category as it is used for areas that are not targeted for upper-floor housing, such as along Broad Street.

Production

This category is intended for manufacturing land uses with controlled outdoor storage areas and moderate landscaping and signage. In areas where this category is integrated with other land uses in the same block, production should be small-scale.

Urban Business Park

This category is designated for a proposed Turtle Creek Business Park area on the southern edge of Downtown. This area should be master-planned and include small-scale production with front office operations and controlled outdoor storage areas.

Park and Open Space

This category includes park and public open space facilities. In Downtown, this category is designated along the Riverwalk.

Public Improvements

Downtown public improvements are illustrated on the *Future Land Use and Public Improvements* map following this section. This map depicts an integrated streetscape network throughout Downtown that encourages pedestrian activity and creates an inviting Downtown atmosphere.

The following public improvements are suggested for Downtown and are illustrated on this map:

- ◆ *Riverwalk, Streetscape and Crosswalk Improvements:* Improvements should include sidewalk repairs/enhancements, appropriately scaled lighting features, landscaping/planters, and street furniture. Additionally, crosswalks can be enhanced with scored pavement and/or bricks to enhance the pedestrian environment and bring greater attention to pedestrian right-of-way, reducing conflicts with traffic. Streetscaping should also help strengthen the pedestrian connection between Downtown and adjacent urban neighborhoods, helping to promote residents' ability to easily walk to and enjoy Downtown and the riverfront.

Some segments of an extended Riverwalk, particularly along the bluffs on the West bank of the river, pose greater engineering and cost challenges due to topography, so options for those areas should be further evaluated as that segment becomes a greater priority to understand engineering requirements and costs.



- ◆ *Downtown Gateway Features:* Gateway features should be erected at the entrances to Downtown as both a wayfinding tool and to contribute to the Downtown aesthetic. Gateway features should incorporate public art wherever possible.
- ◆ *Bridge Enhancements:* Improving the Grand Avenue bridge offers a great opportunity to define the look of Downtown and unify the East and West halves of Downtown.
- ◆ *Pedestrian Bridge:* The Riverbend Project, when developed, will greatly expand and enhance the Downtown activity area. Additionally, this development will offer the opportunity to connect the historic bluff neighborhood on the West to Downtown via a pedestrian bridge to the Riverbend development. A second pedestrian/bicycle bridge should be created on the current railroad bridge trestle crossing Turtle Creek as part of the expansion of a regional bicycle/pedestrian trail network.

Additionally, the following public improvements, which are not associated with a physical location, are suggested:

- ◆ *Wi-Fi:* The DBA should work with Rock County and the City on their on-going efforts to establish a County-wide Wi-Fi network. Once established, the DBA can work with Downtown business owners including restaurants, book stores, and others to encourage them to set up free Wi-Fi services for customers.
- ◆ *Wayfinding Signage:* To help visitors find Downtown, signage should be enhanced in key places from the Interstate to Downtown and at major entrances to Downtown and back.

- ◆ *Parking Signage:* Signage directing visitors to public parking lots should be increased and enhanced to help visitors to find parking nearest to their destination.
- ◆ *Transit Center:* The City of Beloit has been working to identify a site for a new transit center. As this work continues, the following site selection criteria should be applied:
 - Located near existing transit/transfer points
 - Multi-modal access (pedestrian, bike, parking, etc.)
 - Avoid locations that would create land use/transit conflicts
 - Within walking distance of commercial services
 - Potential to stimulate redevelopment
 - Avoid locations of prime amenities, e.g. waterfront, parks, etc.
 - High visibility

Applying these criteria, the Broad Street/ St. Paul Avenue/ Shirland Avenue area is probably best suited for a potential transit center.

FUTURE LAND USE & PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

Downtown Beloit

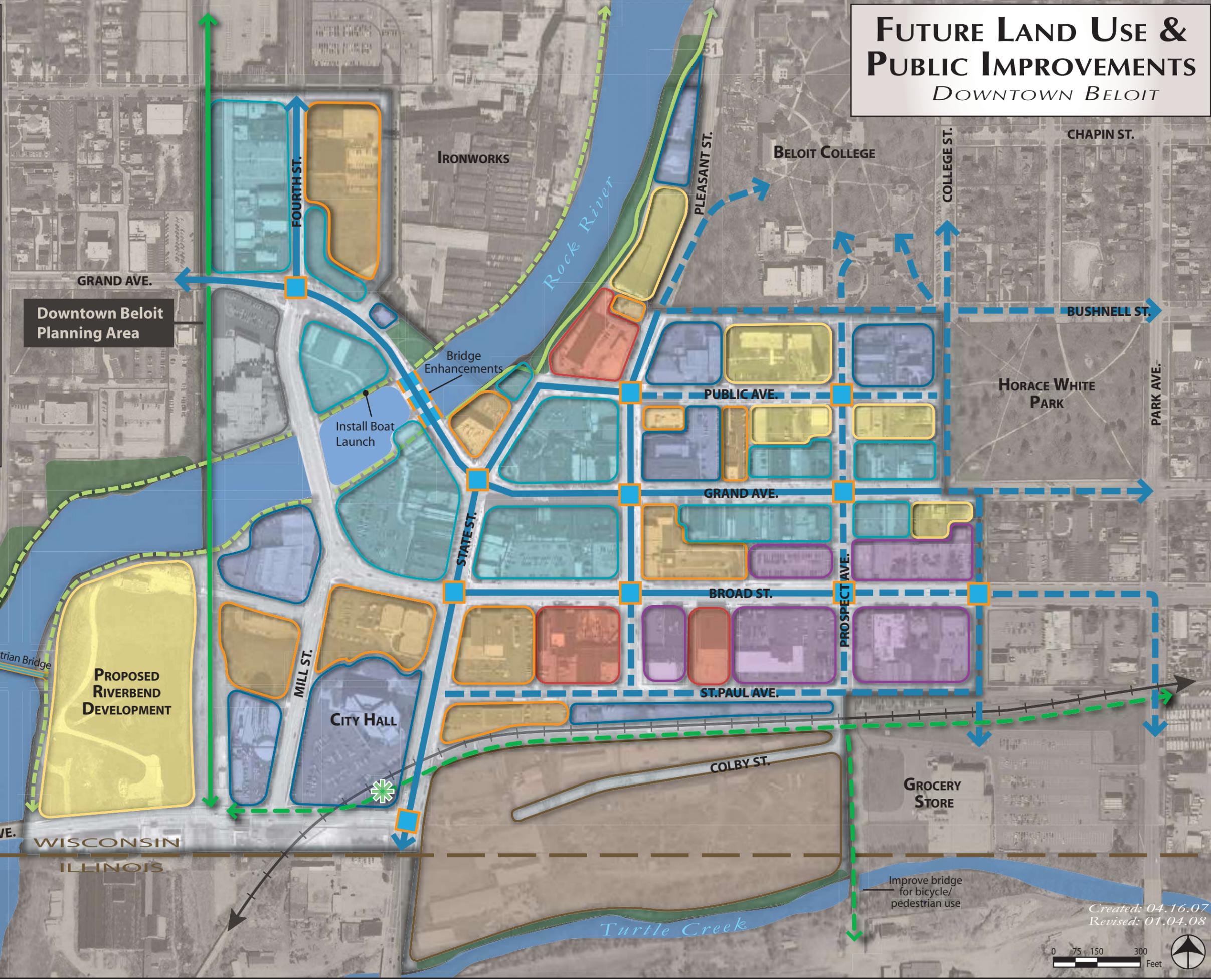
LEGEND

LAND USE

- Mixed Residential
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Office
- Urban Business Park
- Institutional and Community Services
- Planned Mixed Use: Office above retail
- Planned Mixed Use: Office/Residential above retail
- Production
- Park and Open Space

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

- Existing Streetscape Improvements
- Proposed Streetscape Improvements
- Proposed Crosswalk Improvements
- Existing Bicycle/Pedestrian Path
- Proposed Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Improvements
- Existing Riverwalk Improvements
- Proposed Riverwalk Improvements
- Downtown Gateway Feature



Downtown Beloit Planning Area

PROPOSED RIVERBEND DEVELOPMENT

CITY HALL

GROCERY STORE

Created: 04.16.07
Revised: 01.04.08



Districts

Distinguishing among areas of Downtown should be highlighted as a means of “branding” these different areas and encouraging the clustering of complementary uses. Identifying districts within Downtown can be a powerful marketing tool—piquing visitors’ interests to explore a complete Downtown experience.

Grand Avenue

The Grand Avenue District is the hub of Downtown activity, offering the greatest concentration of shopping, entertainment, dining, and upper-floor housing. Building from the success of Downtown’s existing restaurants, the Grand Avenue District should:

- ◆ Expand its dining cluster into “Restaurant Row” which acts as a regional destination, particularly as many of the restaurants highlight regional ingredients and recipes as part of Beloit’s food cluster
- ◆ Act as Downtown Beloit’s Arts District—home to the Beloit Fine Arts Incubator, CELEB Center, Gallery ABBA, and niche arts-related retail
- ◆ Expand the mix of specialty retailers serving residents and tourists alike with a particular focus on continuing to strengthen and promote the home décor niche
- ◆ Continue to host a number of events that bring residents and tourists to the heart of Downtown

West Bank

The West Bank District offers an experience of Beloit’s heritage, having been a past center of Downtown during the height of the industrialization of Beloit’s West side. The West Bank should:

- ◆ Celebrate Beloit’s diversity and the heritage of its many predominant ethnic groups, building from a cluster of Hispanic businesses on Fourth Street and just outside of Downtown, and includes a cluster of ethnic restaurants and specialty food stores
- ◆ Offer retail and services convenient for the large employment base in the neighboring Ironworks
- ◆ Highlight Beloit’s industrial heritage through public art
- ◆ Offer upper-floor housing opportunities with river views and connections to West Side neighborhoods

Rialto

This district is made up of the two historic squares, dubbed in this plan as “Chester Square” and “Grand Square” on opposite sides of the river. Connecting the squares via the Grand Avenue bridge, the Rialto district has the potential to become the major defining feature of Downtown. Aesthetic improvements to the bridge itself (architectural detail, lighting, etc.) would help symbolize its special role in the City. The City and DBA should work closely with WDOT to ensure that future enhancements to the bridge help to make the bridge a central Downtown focal point connecting the east and west sides of Downtown. The Rialto District should be:

- ◆ The heart of cultural activity in Downtown
- ◆ The center or starting point of Downtown events
- ◆ The greatest concentration of specialty retailers and restaurants attractive to tourists
- ◆ Anchored on both ends by striking public art and landmark quality architecture

College Hill

College Hill is envisioned as the transition zone between Beloit College and the Grand Avenue District—offering a concentration of student-oriented businesses and “third places” for students and faculty to gather off campus. College Hill should:

- ◆ Include townhome and upper-floor condo and apartment housing targeted to faculty, staff, retired alumni, and recently graduated students
- ◆ Include a concentration of student-oriented retail, entertainment, dining, and services
- ◆ Offer opportunities for campus expansion in Downtown facilities
- ◆ Bolster Beloit's image as a cool college town
- ◆ Offer multiple clear, attractive, and safe pedestrian routes between campus and Downtown

River East

This District anchors the north end of Downtown and is frequently passed through by the Beloit College community. The District:

- ◆ Offers riverfront housing options with views of the Ironworks murals
- ◆ Is a centerpoint for overnight visitors to Downtown via the Beloit Inn

Civic / Corporate Core

The Civic / Corporate Core is one of Downtown's major employment hubs and also includes a concentration of community services. This District should:

- ◆ Have strong pedestrian connections with the Grand Avenue district to promote the concentration of employees in this District to frequent Downtown businesses over lunch and after work
- ◆ Convey a unique design aesthetic that unifies the individual buildings within the District since they are not as densely concentrated as in the Grand Avenue district

Haymarket District

Capitalizing on the local food and arts scenes, the Haymarket District is envisioned to be centered around an artisan/merchandising mart on or near St. Paul Avenue. This District should:

- ◆ Boast an indoor/outdoor public market/merchandising center that offers artisan wares, antiques, food, and other goods—meeting some of the everyday needs of local residents and offering a unique experience for Downtown visitors
- ◆ Offer low-rent space for artists, furniture makers, micro-breweries/brew-pubs and other niche operations that creates an opportunity for experience-based tourism

Turtle Creek Business Park

The Turtle Creek Business Park should offer affordable commercial space for small-scale production, warehousing, and front office operations. This District should:

- ◆ Attract businesses that can take advantage of the active rail line
- ◆ Be designed as a small-scale, urban, master-planned business park with unified streetscape and infrastructure
- ◆ Offer affordable rents
- ◆ Offer opportunities for economical brownfield redevelopment
- ◆ Include a well-designed, publicly-accessible walkway along Turtle Creek
- ◆ Be master planned as part of Beloit 2020's Turtle Creek District

Riverbend

The Riverbend District, when developed, will be the source of a reinvigorated Downtown living environment. As a prime riverfront location in Beloit's Downtown, it will be important for the DBA and City to maintain a consistent vision for this property so that the development is ultimately a high-quality housing project that achieves the potential that this site offers and sets the tone for

Downtown housing development to follow. The District should include a mix of residential options all appropriate for the character of an urban neighborhood, including single family homes, townhomes, duplexes, and small-scale multi-story condominiums. The District will primarily attract young professionals and families, empty nesters, retirees, and others. This District will offer a unique, attractive, Downtown living option as it:

- ◆ Maximizes access to and views of the River
- ◆ Offers the benefits of new construction balanced with the character of a traditional neighborhood development
- ◆ Is located within a pedestrian- and bicycle- friendly environment with easy access to Downtown.

PROPOSED DISTRICTS

DOWNTOWN BELOIT



- WEST BANK**
- Daytime services for Ironworks
 - Upper floor housing (live-work)
 - Ethnic business cluster
 - Restaurants & specialty foods
 - Industrial Arts aesthetics



- "RIALTO" BELOIT**
- Cultural core and restaurants
 - Specialty retail
 - Major public art at "squares"
 - Improved bridge architecture



- CIVIC/CORPORATE CORE**
- Civic Center
 - Corporate campus expansion
 - Strong pedestrian connections to Grand Avenue District

- RIVERBEND**
- Traditional neighborhood-mixed housing types
 - Maximized river views
 - Targeted to young professionals and families, empty nesters, retirees and others



PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

- RIVER EAST**
- Specialty housing/offices
 - Recreation
 - Hospitality services



- COLLEGE HILL**
- Campus annex/connector
 - Improved pedestrian connections to downtown
 - Housing targeted to staff and students
 - Student-oriented services and businesses "Third Places"
 - Target zone for new/expanded campus facilities



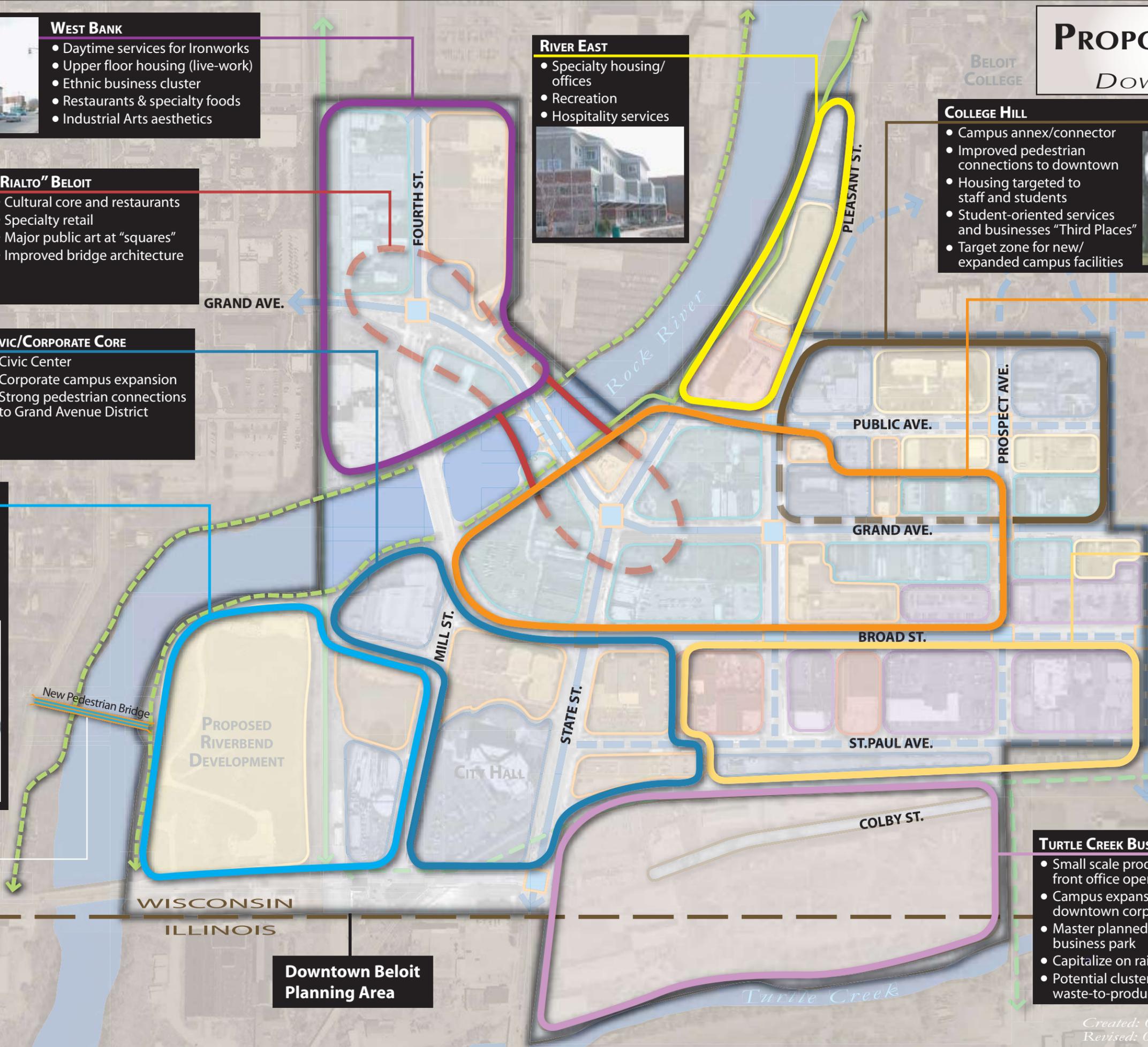
- GRAND AVENUE**
- Entertainment & retail
 - Upper story residential
 - Arts district
 - Restaurant Row
 - Arts Merchandising
 - Specialty retail



- HAYMARKET DISTRICT**
- Experience-based tourism
 - Indoor/outdoor public market
 - Artisan workshops/merchandising
 - Micro-brewery
 - Outdoor flea/antiques market



- TURTLE CREEK BUSINESS PARK**
- Small scale production and front office operations
 - Campus expansion area for downtown corporations
 - Master planned urban business park
 - Capitalize on rail access
 - Potential cluster of waste-to-product businesses



Downtown Beloit Planning Area



Implementation Strategy

An overall implementation framework is needed to guide Beloit's efforts to capitalize on key Downtown redevelopment opportunities. Successful redevelopment in downtowns such as Beloit often relies on active public sector involvement to help kick-start a project. The Downtown Beloit Association, the City, and their strategic partners can help facilitate redevelopment by actively participating in the redevelopment process where necessary through property acquisition, site assembly and preparation, brownfields assessment and remediation, developer recruitment, marketing, and events coordination. This Implementation Strategy includes two sections:

Implementation Partners and Roles

The strategic partners that will be involved in Plan implementation, the roles they each play, and programs, policies, and other tools they can each contribute are identified in the *Implementation Partners and Roles* flowchart following this page.

Implementation of this Plan will be greatly strengthened by the existence of the new Vision Beloit Center in the City Center Building (old Wisconsin Power and Light Building) in Downtown. This Center was established in December 2007 to co-locate the Downtown Beloit Association, Visit Beloit, the Greater Beloit Chamber of Commerce, and the Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation. Additionally, the Center includes displays that tell the story of Beloit's riverfront renaissance and illustrate the plans for Beloit's future. The Center will offer an opportunity to better engage residents, property owners, businesses, and developers in the implementation activities for this Plan and help these four organizations and the City of Beloit to partner to bring this Plan to life.

Implementation Phasing

Key to the DBA's, City's and their partners' success in implementing this Plan will be a clear focus on priority projects within the context of a long-term vision. Implementation priorities are grouped into four project areas illustrated on the map on following the *Implementation Partners and Roles* flowchart and are based on the following:

- ◆ Level of difficulty and availability of resources
- ◆ The expected timing of key opportunities
- ◆ The ability to coordinate multiple projects in a concentrated area
- ◆ Project visibility and market impact

These phases are targets—there will be adjustments to these phases over time to be able to take advantage of particular opportunities when they present themselves. Targeted redevelopment projects and public improvements are described and illustrated for each area in the four implementation phasing maps in this section.

Additionally, after the Area I map is a more detailed discussion and illustration of site reuse strategies for two of the key riverfront sites in this area. Aggressive use of tax increment financing (TIF) is contemplated in all phases.

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS AND ROLES BELOIT DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

DOWNTOWN BELOIT ASSOCIATION

DBA is a National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street program and the primary organization responsible for Plan implementation.

Roles in Plan Implementation:

ORGANIZATION

- Lead implementation of redevelopment projects through the Co-Development Team
- Maintain communication with Downtown business owners and property owners
- Mobilize community organizations, stakeholders, and individuals

PROMOTION

- Enrich peoples' experiences of Downtown through special events
- Brand Downtown Districts
- Encourage continued Downtown investment and activity

DESIGN

- Encourage and educate property owners on historic rehabilitation and façade improvements
- Implement public improvements with the City
- Promote historically sensitive and successful signage and storefront design

ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING

- Help businesses to sharpen their competitiveness
- Recruit businesses
- Facilitate redevelopment

KEY IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

CITY OF BELOIT

The City is the DBA's most direct financial and organizational partner. Its roles should include:

- Adopt Plan and amend/update in the future
- Review and approve redevelopment projects (e.g. site plans and plats, acquisition, master leases, and redevelopment agreements)
- Address current projects through the Economic Development Rapid Response Team
- Create/amend (as needed) special districts including Business Improvement District (BID) (which currently finances DBA activities); Tax Increment Finance District (TIF) (spending life of TIF #5 will end in 2012 and district will expire in 2017); and Downtown Historic District (which has previously been proposed but not implemented)
- Promote blight elimination and housing improvements through the Community Development Authority
- Implement public improvements through capital improvements plan (CIP) and capital budget
- Amend zoning designations, as needed, to implement Plan
- Implement projects with additional funding sources including utility funds, HUD CDBG, General Fund, bonds, City Center Community Development, and assistance to businesses with SBA financing applications
- Coordinate with State agencies to ensure that projects such as transportation improvements (e.g. Grand Avenue bridge improvements) are consistent with this plan

BELOIT 2020

Beloit 2020 brings together the private and public sectors to advance redevelopment and public improvement projects along Beloit's riverfront. Its roles should include:

- Coordinate Downtown and City Center efforts through the Beloit 2020 City Center Planning Committee, including implementation of remaining sections of the Riverwalk
- Implement the Vision Beloit Center that will display this Plan and improve coordination among several groups by co-locating the DBA, Chamber of Commerce, GBEDC, and Visit Beloit
- Assist with further developing the Turtle Creek Business Park concept

GREATER BELOIT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The GBEDC is a private-sector driven organization that advances economic development opportunities. Its roles should include:

- Maintain Downtown redevelopment as a consistent focus of GBEDC efforts
- Provide financing for appropriate projects through the Beloit Revolving Loan Fund and Multi-Bank Loan Pool
- Assist with marketing Downtown redevelopment projects
- Assist with further developing the Turtle Creek Business Park concept

VISIT BELOIT

Visit Beloit is the local Visitor's Center and can help with Plan implementation in these roles:

- Attract tourism to Downtown
- Market the Downtown Districts described in this Plan
- Strengthen Beloit's Arts scene including the cluster of arts activities in Downtown

BELOIT COLLEGE

Beloit College has been and will continue to be an important partner with the DBA. Its roles should include:

- Help with Designing, redeveloping, and marketing the "College Hill" District
- Identify opportunities for increased interaction among the Campus and Beloit communities, including as part of the library reuse

FRIENDS OF THE RIVERFRONT

Friends of the Riverfront is a volunteer group "committed to animating and sustaining our spaces along the Rock River." Its roles should include:

- Organize riverfront events
- Implement riverfront landscaping projects

CORPORATE COMMUNITY

In addition to a more formal role for the corporate community through the GBEDC and Beloit 2020, the DBA can encourage Beloit corporations to take on the following roles:

- Seek corporate contributions for DBA-sponsored initiatives
- Encourage Downtown employers to provide incentives to employees who purchase homes within walking distance and also encourage renters to locate downtown.
- Invest in Downtown redevelopment projects and businesses

GREATER BELOIT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

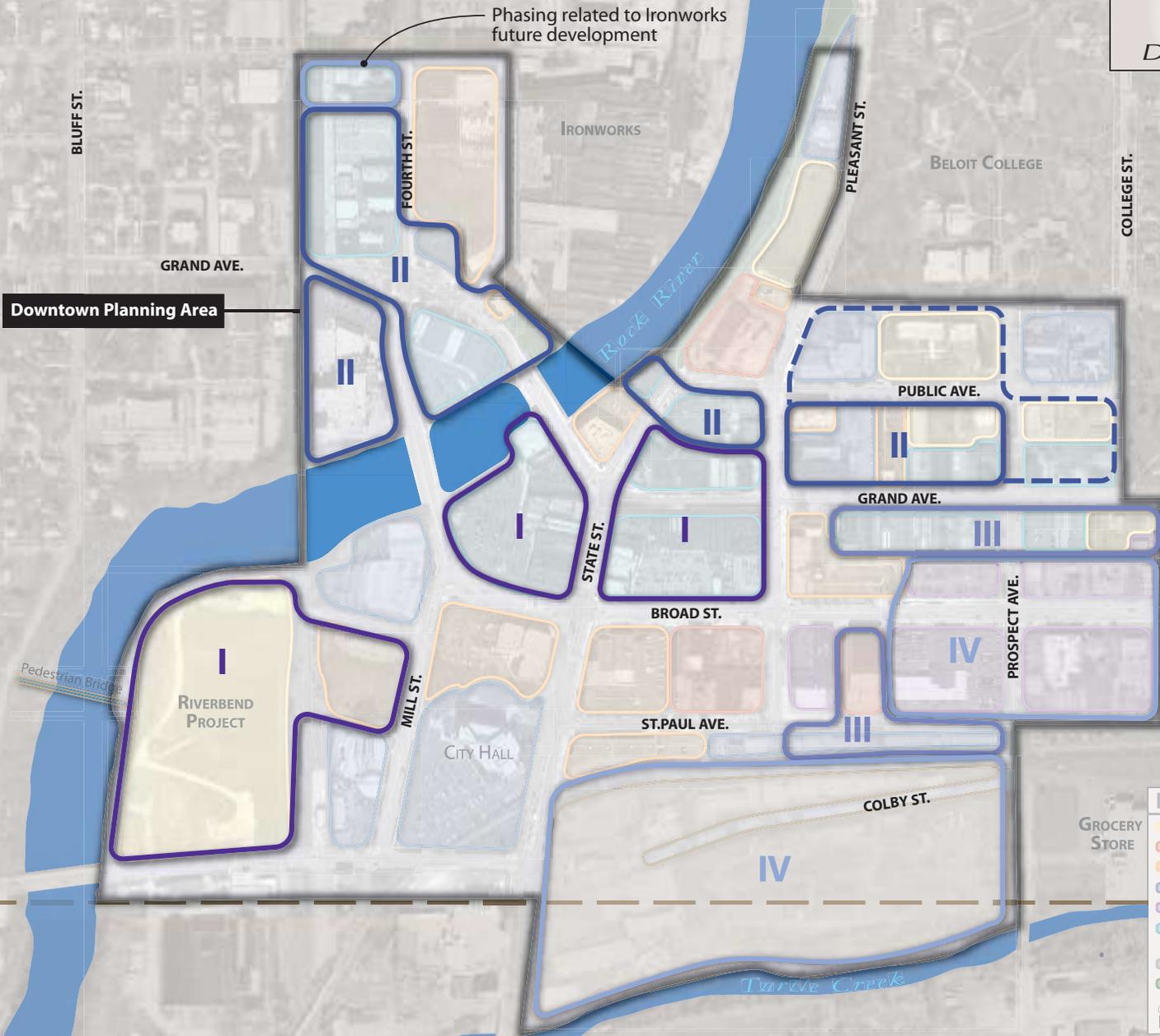
The Chamber of Commerce is a strategic partner that can help with Plan implementation in these roles:

- Provide business development services, including networking, advertising, c, and business recognition
- Establish a Young Professional's Network to combat "brain drain" provide a forum for young professionals to identify and implement opportunities to improve Downtown's appeal to young adults
- Advance the regional food cluster by:
 - Partnering with the DBA to promote food-based activity and venues in Downtown
 - Working with State agencies and the GBEDC to promote and expand the regional food cluster
 - Continuing to help coordinate the annual Food Expo, hosting it periodically in Beloit
 - Staging events to promote the food cluster

Created: 10.22.07
Revised: 01.07.08

IMPLEMENTATION PHASING

DOWNTOWN BELOIT



Phasing related to Ironworks future development

Downtown Planning Area

CHAPIN ST.
BUSHNELL ST.
HORACE WHITE PARK
PARK AVE.

LAND USE	
	Urban Residential
	Retail
	Commercial/Office
	Institutional
	Mixed Use: Office above retail
	Mixed Use: Office/Residential above retail
	Production
	Park/Open space

Created: 04.16.07
Revised: 01.04.08



IMPLEMENTATION AREA I Downtown Beloit

LEGEND

AREA I

PROPOSED PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

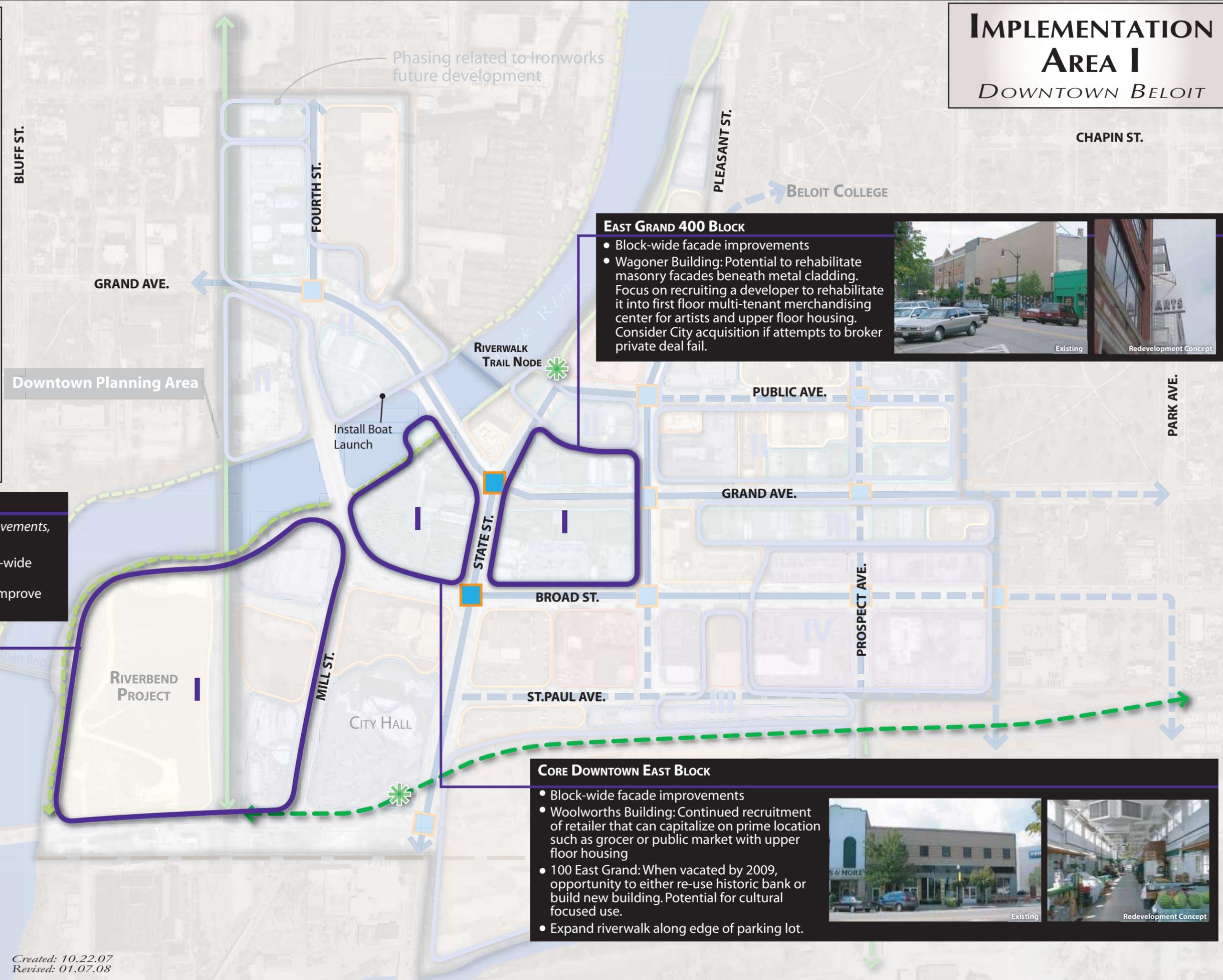
- Proposed Crosswalk Improvements
- Proposed Riverwalk Improvements
- Downtown Gateway Feature
- Proposed Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Improvements
- Proposed Streetscape Improvements

EXISTING PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

- Existing Streetscape Improvements
- Existing Bicycle/Pedestrian Path
- Existing Riverwalk Improvements

LAND USE

- Mixed Residential
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Office
- Urban Business Park
- Institutional and Community Services
- Planned Mixed Use: Office above retail
- Planned Mixed Use: Office/Residential above retail
- Production
- Park and Open Space



EAST GRAND 400 BLOCK

- Block-wide facade improvements
- Wagoner Building: Potential to rehabilitate masonry facades beneath metal cladding. Focus on recruiting a developer to rehabilitate it into first floor multi-tenant merchandising center for artists and upper floor housing. Consider City acquisition if attempts to broker private deal fail.



PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

In addition to the illustrated streetscape improvements, implementation in Area I should include:

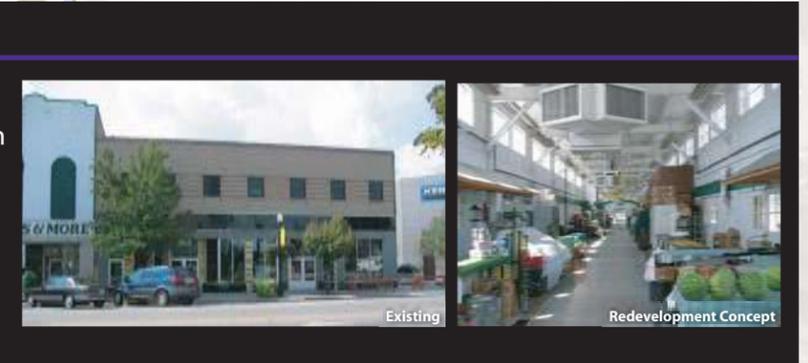
- Work with Rock County and City on county-wide Wi-Fi network
- Improving signage from the interstate to improve wayfinding downtown

RIVERBEND

- Opportunity to stimulate Downtown housing and commercial market
- Public riverwalk easement needs to be high quality market-changing project
- Should accommodate any future expansion needs of Regal Beloit

CORE DOWNTOWN EAST BLOCK

- Block-wide facade improvements
- Woolworths Building: Continued recruitment of retailer that can capitalize on prime location such as grocer or public market with upper floor housing
- 100 East Grand: When vacated by 2009, opportunity to either re-use historic bank or build new building. Potential for cultural focused use.
- Expand riverwalk along edge of parking lot.



100 East Grand Avenue Reuse Concepts

During the development of this Plan, one of Beloit's major employers—Kerry Americas—secured a new site on the East side of Beloit to relocate and expand its operations. This \$45 million project includes Kerry's technologies and applications center and research and development division and will result in significant job growth for Beloit.

While this expansion project is a great boon to Beloit, the Downtown will be impacted by the resulting loss of jobs Downtown. At the same time, the availability of two riverfront sites in the heart of Downtown offers a unique opportunity for Beloit to proactively plan for the reuse of these sites. The 100 East Grand site is identified as an Area I redevelopment priority and the West Grand / Fourth Street site is identified as an Area II redevelopment priority.

The overall reuse concept for 100 East Grand centers on capitalizing on its prime location. Currently, activity in Downtown is most concentrated in this block and the adjacent 400 Block of East Grand, so this site offers a perfect opportunity to extend this activity directly to the river.

A major consideration for the reuse of this site is the need to remove the portion of the existing building that is currently built over and into the river, based on an agreement in place with the Department of Natural Resources. Additionally, this agreement limits the type of improvements can be made to the building until it is removed. An interim use may include another office user that can use the space as it is currently configured.

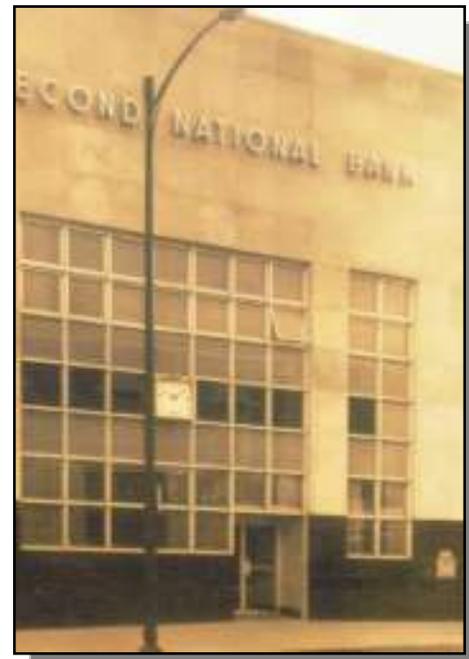
Reuse of this site should ultimately include a mix of uses with both daytime and nighttime activities to strengthen Downtown as a 24-hour activity center. Additionally, a mix of daytime and nighttime uses reduces the number of adjacent parking stalls required to serve the building. As the DBA and the City move forward to advance this concept, they should involve Downtown stakeholders, including business owners that rely on parking in the Mill Street parking lot, to ensure that redevelopment of this area helps to strengthen the Downtown business district and incorporates adequate parking to serve these businesses.

Two reuse concepts are illustrated for this site on the following pages.

Reuse Concept Option 1: This reuse concept entails rehabilitating the original bank structure built in the 1950s from the shell that was added to it in subsequent years. The architectural viability of this option would need to be investigated. Additionally, this reuse concept illustrates a new entryway addition, tying the old with the new.

Reuse of this existing building may include a single office user. However, the ground-floor of the building should be reserved for uses that generate pedestrian traffic such as a riverfront restaurant and retailers with upper-floor office space.

Reuse Concept Option 2: This reuse concept envisions the site as multi-use/multi-tenant building with a significant cultural component as an anchor. The ground floor would incorporate retail and a riverfront restaurant while upper floors could include office and/or



Historic 1950s façade beneath existing building façade

residential units. The lower floors would include a cultural center that could house a variety of uses such as spaces for exhibition, performance, or creation. A variety of cultural activities may be well suited for this space, such as a children's museum, theatre, arts center, or a combination. The precise use(s) should be better defined through a study of space needs of cultural organizations currently in the area as well as organizations that could thrive here if such a space was available. To be successful, this project would require a collaboration among several groups including the DBA, the City, Beloit College, local cultural organizations, the Beloit-Turner School District, and others.

100 EAST GRAND AVENUE

CONCEPT PLAN OPTION 1

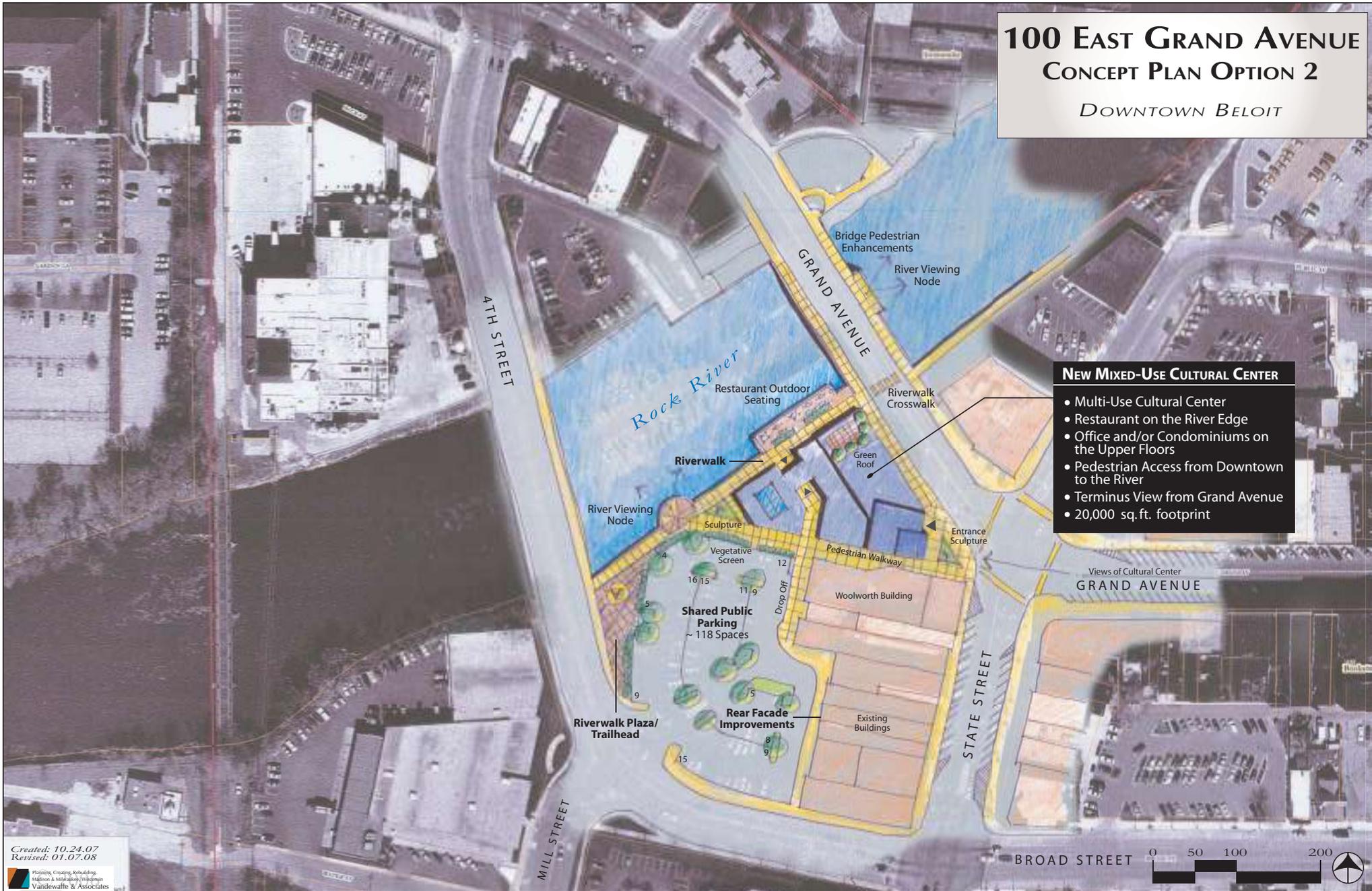
DOWNTOWN BELOIT



- BUILDING REUSE**
- Office Space
 - Restored Historic Facade
 - New Addition and Entrance on the Southern End
 - Oriented Toward Downtown and the Riverwalk
 - Pedestrian Access from Downtown to the River
 - Terminus View from Grand Avenue

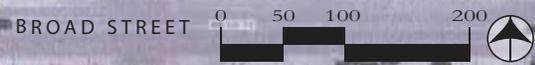


100 EAST GRAND AVENUE CONCEPT PLAN OPTION 2 DOWNTOWN BELOIT



- NEW MIXED-USE CULTURAL CENTER**
- Multi-Use Cultural Center
 - Restaurant on the River Edge
 - Office and/or Condominiums on the Upper Floors
 - Pedestrian Access from Downtown to the River
 - Terminus View from Grand Avenue
 - 20,000 sq. ft. footprint

Created: 10.24.07
Revised: 01.07.08
Planning, Creating, Rebuilding
Nelson & Johnson Architects
Vandewalle & Associates

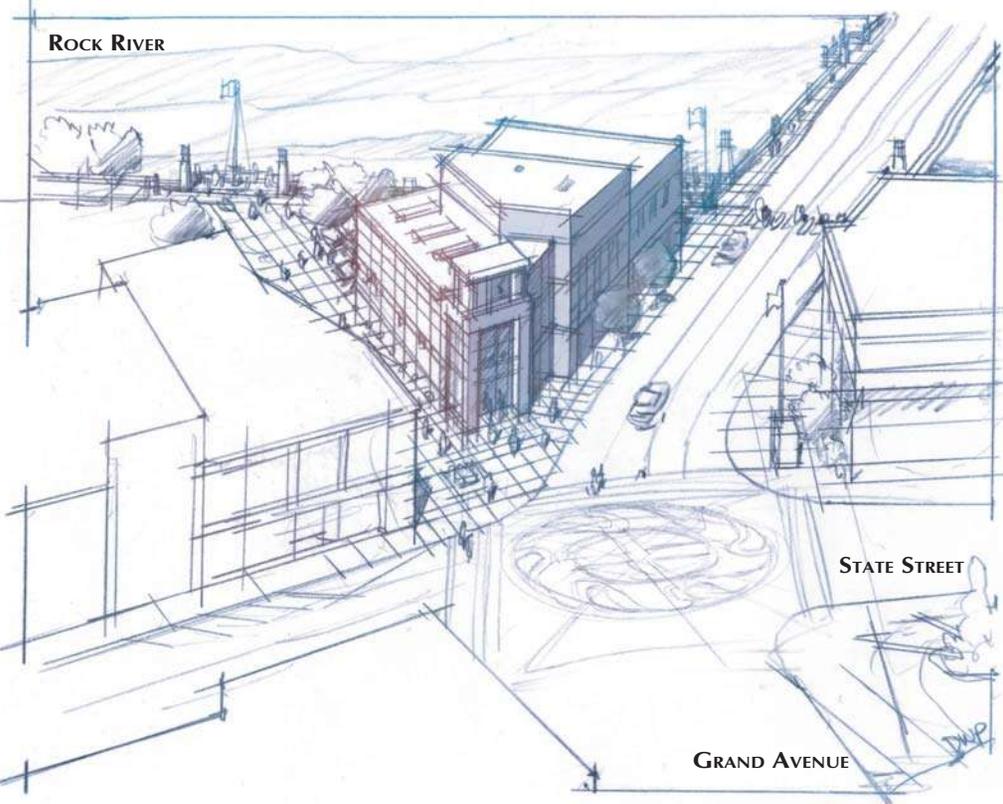


100 EAST GRAND AVENUE OPTION 1 AND OPTION 2

DOWNTOWN BELOIT

OPTION 1

ROCK RIVER

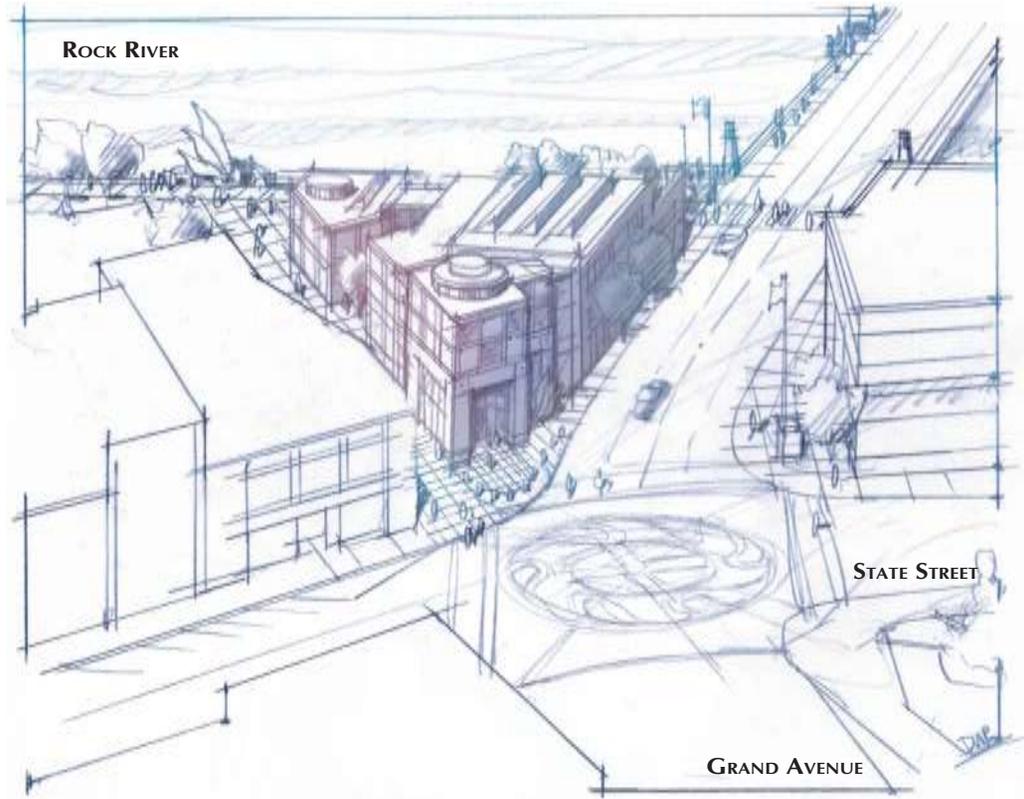


STATE STREET

GRAND AVENUE

OPTION 2

ROCK RIVER



STATE STREET

GRAND AVENUE

Created: 10.26.07
Revised: 01.04.08

Planning, Creating, Rebuilding.
Madison & Milwaukee Wisconsin
Vandewalle & Associates

LEGEND

- AREA II**
- PROPOSED PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS**
- Proposed Bridge Improvements
 - Proposed Crosswalk Improvements
 - Proposed Streetscape Improvements
 - Proposed Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Improvements
 - Proposed Riverwalk Improvements
- EXISTING PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS**
- Existing Streetscape Improvements
 - Existing Bicycle/Pedestrian Path
 - Existing Riverwalk Improvements
- LAND USE**
- Mixed Residential
 - Neighborhood Commercial
 - Office
 - Urban Business Park
 - Institutional and Community Services
 - Planned Mixed Use: Office above retail
 - Planned Mixed Use: Office/Residential above retail
 - Production
 - Park and Open Space

IMPLEMENTATION
AREA II
Downtown Beloit

WEST BANK

- Block-wide facade improvements.
- Re-brand the Grand Avenue retail district as Chester Square.
- Infill retail development along the edge of the Third Street Parking Lot and along the back face of Fourth Street block along recreation path.
- Work with the local Latino Business Association and others to facilitate new restaurants and retail uses that can promote the ethnic character of the area.



BRIDGE ENHANCEMENTS

- Work with WDOT on high quality Grand Avenue Bridge enhancements with bold architectural detail to make the bridge a central Downtown focal point connecting the east and west sides of Downtown.



FORTH/ WEST GRAND INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

- When vacated by 2009, opportunity for reuse by clean industry (one or more tenants) that can use equipment.
- Improve exterior aesthetic through facade improvement, screening/removing mechanicals, public riverfront and landscaping
- Reuse should maintain base of downtown employment
- Long-term potential for redevelopment of site with housing and commercial



PUBLIC AVENUE RIVERFRONT

- Target parking lot for infill development; ideally a parking structure faced with first floor retail to enhance the viability of upper floor housing.
- Work with bank to identify opportunities for relocation of bank drive-through into a use that capitalizes on riverfront, such as a restaurant or brew pub. Additional opportunity for upper floor housing. Alternatively, use for public open space and public art that maximizes river views



COLLEGE HILL

- Library: Coordinate with College on reuse and opportunities for programmed public events/exhibits.
- Vision Center: Coordinate with Beloit 2020 and other partners to maximize visibility, use.
- Grand Avenue: Redevelop with greater density to extend pedestrian-character.
- Target campus-supportive uses
- Public Avenue: Redevelop primarily with new housing aimed at the campus community.
- Expanded Redevelopment Area: expand district to north and east as core develops



West Grand Avenue / Fourth Street Reuse Concepts

This site poses a unique redevelopment challenge as well as an opportunity as it includes a large processing facility along the riverfront in the heart of Downtown.

Two reuse concepts are illustrated for this site on the following pages:

Reuse Concept Option 1: This reuse concept involves maintaining the existing industrial processing facility on the riverfront but improving the building's exterior to enhance the downtown/riverfront setting. Targeted users for this site should include companies that can take advantage of the unique processing infrastructure within the building. Preserving this facility will help to maintain Beloit's Downtown employment base and will avoid major costs associated with demolishing the building.

Additionally, this concept illustrates a new mixed-use building at the intersection of West Grand Avenue and Fourth Street to increase the activity flow at this key intersection.

Reuse Concept Option 2: This reuse concept is a longer-term vision for the site where the existing industrial facility is demolished and replaced with new residential construction. Additionally, the mixed-use commercial/residential building along Grand/Fourth is also proposed in this option. This reuse scenario reflects a future increased market for Downtown Riverfront housing, particularly once the Riverbend site is developed. Buildings are placed perpendicular to the river to maximize visual access to the river.

WEST GRAND AVE. / FOURTH ST.

REUSE CONCEPT PLAN

OPTION 1

DOWNTOWN BELOIT



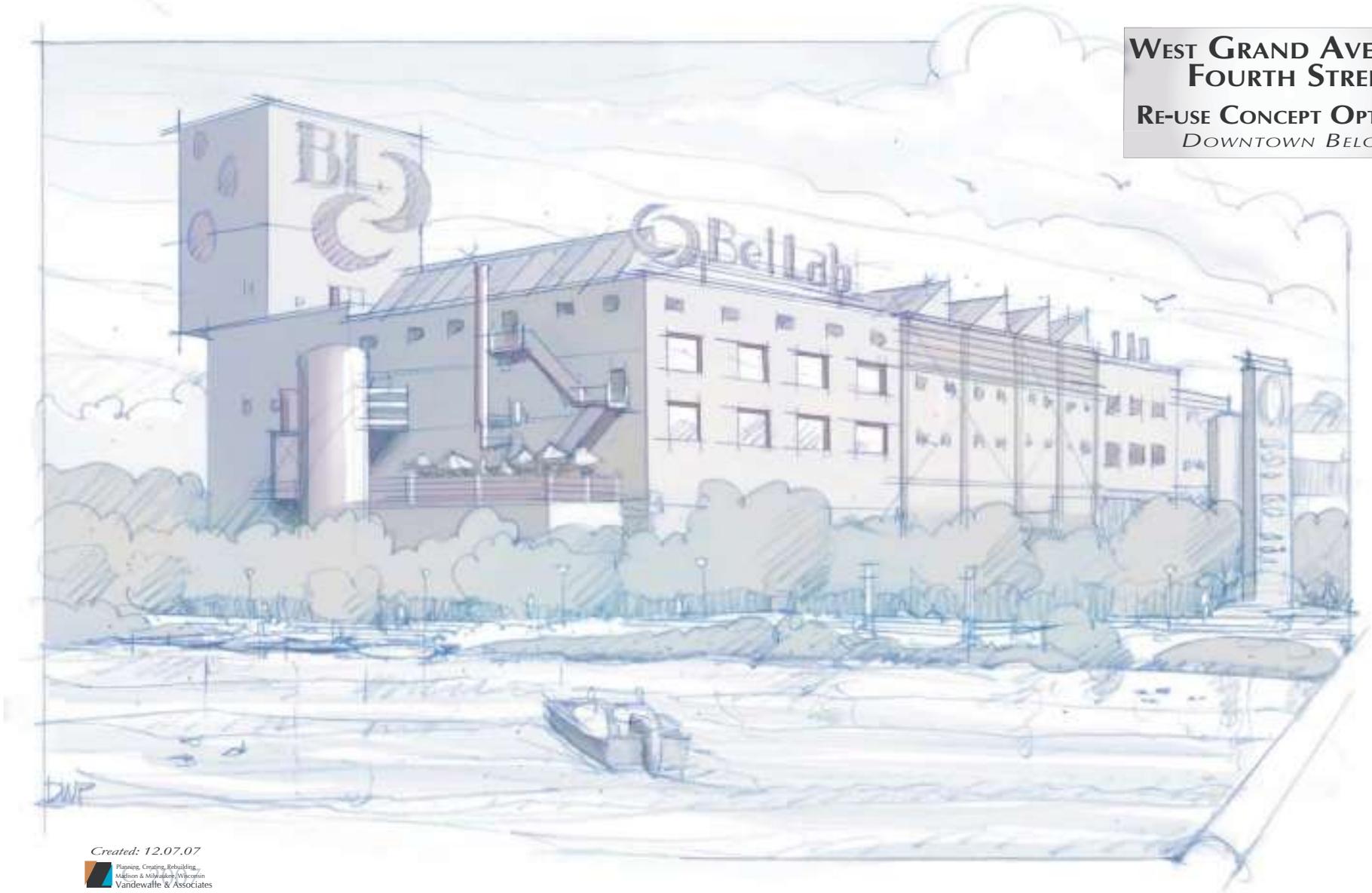
MIXED USE

- 10,000 SF retail on ground floor
- 18 residential units
- 3 stories plus underground parking

RE-USE OF EXISTING BUILDING

- Multi - tenant use
- Production

**WEST GRAND AVENUE /
FOURTH STREET**
RE-USE CONCEPT OPTION 1
DOWNTOWN BELOIT



Created: 12.07.07

Planning, Creating, Rebuilding,
Madison & Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Vandewalle & Associates

WEST GRAND AVE. / FOURTH ST.

REUSE CONCEPT PLAN

OPTION 2

DOWNTOWN BELOIT



MIXED USE

- 10,000 SF retail on ground floor
- 18 residential units
- 3 stories plus underground parking

RESIDENTIAL

- 72 residential units (36/building)
- 3 stories plus underground parking
- River views

Parking
~ 44 spaces

Courtyard Garden

Courtyard Garden

River Plaza & Overlook

Bike Path

GRAND AVENUE

CROSS ST

FOURTH STREET

Rock River

Created: 10.26.07



IMPLEMENTATION AREA III DOWNTOWN BELOIT

LEGEND

AREA III

PROPOSED PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

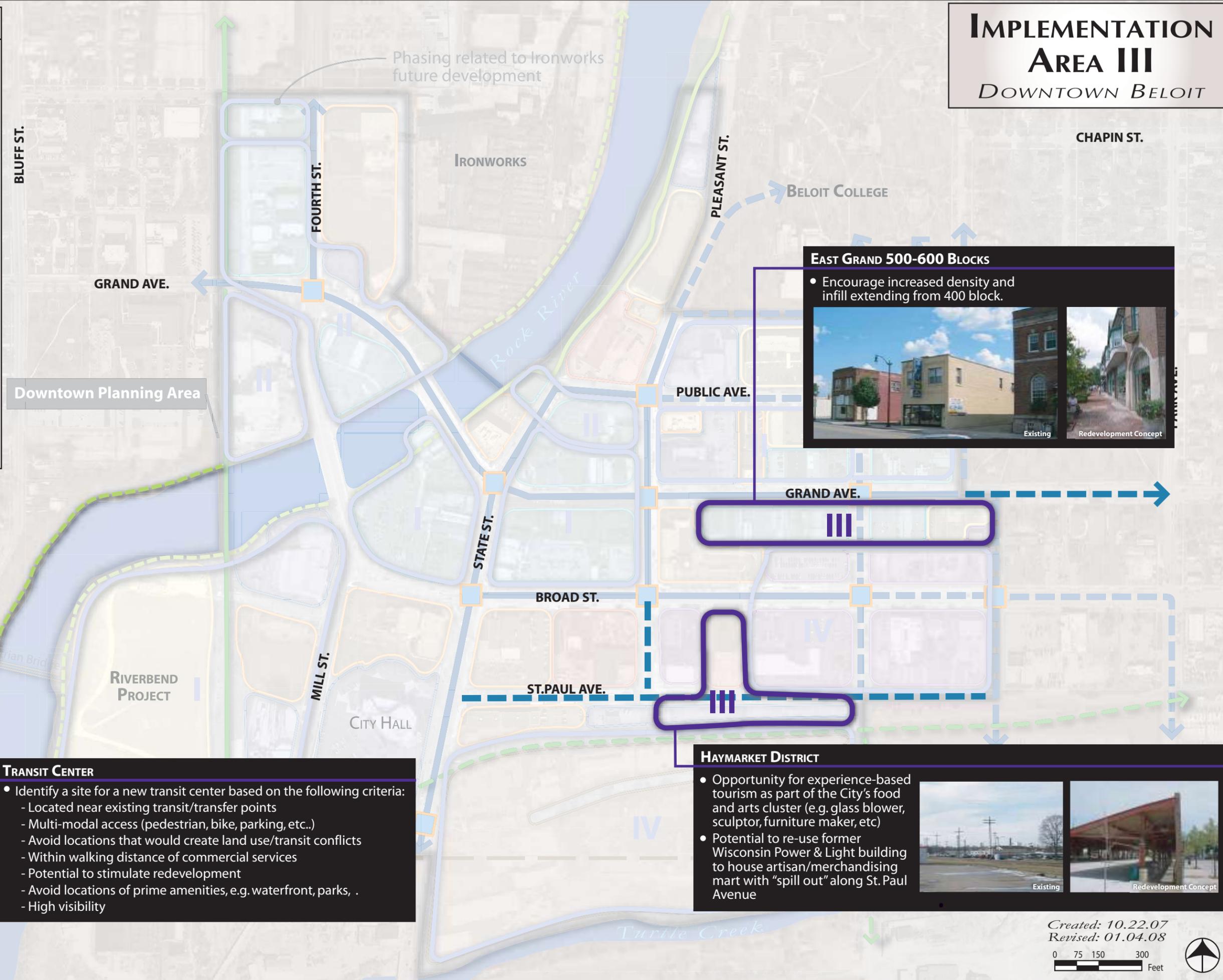
- Proposed Riverwalk Improvements
- Proposed Streetscape Improvements
- Proposed Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Improvements
- Proposed Crosswalk Improvements

EXISTING PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

- Existing Streetscape Improvements
- Existing Bicycle/Pedestrian Path
- Existing Riverwalk Improvements

LAND USE

- Mixed Residential
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Office
- Urban Business Park
- Institutional and Community Services
- Planned Mixed Use: Office above retail
- Planned Mixed Use: Office/Residential above retail
- Production
- Park and Open Space



Downtown Planning Area

Phasing related to Ironworks future development

EAST GRAND 500-600 BLOCKS

- Encourage increased density and infill extending from 400 block.




TRANSIT CENTER

- Identify a site for a new transit center based on the following criteria:
 - Located near existing transit/transfer points
 - Multi-modal access (pedestrian, bike, parking, etc..)
 - Avoid locations that would create land use/transit conflicts
 - Within walking distance of commercial services
 - Potential to stimulate redevelopment
 - Avoid locations of prime amenities, e.g. waterfront, parks, .
 - High visibility

HAYMARKET DISTRICT

- Opportunity for experience-based tourism as part of the City's food and arts cluster (e.g. glass blower, sculptor, furniture maker, etc)
- Potential to re-use former Wisconsin Power & Light building to house artisan/merchandising mart with "spill out" along St. Paul Avenue




IMPLEMENTATION AREA IV DOWNTOWN BELOIT

LEGEND

AREA IV

PROPOSED PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

- Proposed Streetscape Improvements
- Proposed Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Improvements
- Proposed Crosswalk Improvements
- Proposed Riverwalk Improvements

EXISTING PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

- Existing Streetscape Improvements
- Existing Bicycle/Pedestrian Path
- Existing Riverwalk Improvements

LAND USE

- Mixed Residential
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Office
- Urban Business Park
- Institutional and Community Services
- Planned Mixed Use: Office above retail
- Planned Mixed Use: Office/Residential above retail
- Production
- Park and Open Space

BLUFF ST.

GRAND AVE.

Downtown Planning Area

RIVERBEND PROJECT

Phasing related to Ironworks future development

PLEASANT ST.

CHAPIN ST.

BROAD STREET REDEVELOPMENT

- Connect Haymarket District to the Grand Avenue District through improved pedestrian connections.
- Mixed-use multi-story, first floor retail with upper floor office. Site buildings along the front lot line with parking oriented to the interior of the block.
- Work closely with existing property owners to identify areas for relocation.
- Replace open-air car lots with showrooms.






BUSHNELL ST.

HORACE WHITE PARK

PARK AVE.

PUBLIC AVE.

GRAND AVE.

STATE ST.

BROAD ST.

ST. PAUL AVE.

COLBY ST.

GROCERY STORE

TURTLE CREEK BUSINESS PARK

- Master planned urban business park with small scale production and front office operations
- Interim open space use
- Retain public easement along Turtle Creek
- Campus expansion area for downtown corporations
- Capitalize on rail access
- Potential cluster of waste-to-product businesses
- Partner with Wisconsin Department of Commerce to promote job creation and Department of Natural Resources to address brownfield issues
- Beloit 2020 to help advance concept through its planning for the Turtle Creek District; also partner with GBEDC
- Potential to realign Colby Street as part of Master Plan
- Bicycle/pedestrian path along rail corridor and across Turtle Creek






Turtle Creek

Created: 10.22.07
Revised: 01.07.08



Appendix A: Visioning Workshop Results Summary

On March 31, 2007, a Downtown Visioning Workshop was held at the Beloit Inn. Twenty-five people participated in the Workshop, representing Beloit residents, community leaders, and Downtown property and business owners. The goal of the Workshop was to gather information and to provide an opportunity for the community to “weigh in” on the future growth, development, services, and activities in Downtown. The information and opinions shared in this Workshop greatly contributed to the final plan recommendations.

VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES first provided a brief overview of the Downtown planning process and the Downtown Opportunities Analysis. VANDEWALLE & ASSOCIATES then facilitated three exercises aimed at gathering community input in both verbal and graphic formats. The following is a summary of the results of these three exercises.

Downtown Visioning Exercise

The first exercise was designed to elicit participants’ input in four areas:

- ◆ Threats/Challenges facing Downtown
- ◆ Positive Trends/Opportunities for Downtown
- ◆ Current Image of Downtown
- ◆ Role of Downtown

Each participant first responded to each of these four questions individually. Participants then discussed their responses in six small groups and recorded the most common responses from their group. Lastly, each small group reported to the larger group the key responses to each question. The small group and large group discussions provided an opportunity for participants to engage in a dialogue about each of these topics, adding greater value to the exercise.

The following is a summary of individual responses to each of the questions.

1. What are some of the THREATS/CHALLENGES facing Downtown Beloit both today and in the future?

Most Cited Responses for Threats/ Challenges (number of responses listed after each)

- ◆ Storefront vacancies; business attraction/retention (12)
- ◆ Parking availability and times (e.g. parking designed for retail businesses used by downtown employees). In large group discussion, several participants also noted that an overabundance of parking is not desired either (11)
- ◆ Ability to attract people to downtown / need for more business and entertainment attractions (9)
- ◆ Competition with big box retail near Interstate and with catalogue shopping (6)
- ◆ Downtown aesthetics (unappealing facades) and need for infill development (3)

Other Responses for Threats/ Challenges (1 – 2 people provided each response)

- ◆ Business hours

- ◆ Need for greater collaboration/communication amongst businesses (e.g. work together on joint sales promotions)
- ◆ Perception of violence and safety problems
- ◆ Automobile vendor lots on southern edge of Downtown
- ◆ Downtown is located off the beaten path; not seen as destination within the region
- ◆ Lack of interest in residential upper floor housing; need for adjacent covered parking poses a challenge
- ◆ Business/property owners need funding assistance to preserve buildings
- ◆ Some properties overvalued
- ◆ Need for incentives by major Downtown employers/City to encourage Downtown living
- ◆ Difficult to maintain vibrant activity in Downtown during winter
- ◆ Lack of lower-cost lodging for visitors
- ◆ Development of Riverbend
- ◆ Need for more greenspace and pedestrian/bicycle pathways (and improved path from campus to grocery store and to new campus use at the library)
- ◆ Need improved guidelines for buildings, facades, and signage
- ◆ Library leaving Downtown
- ◆ Ability to attract developers
- ◆ Redevelopment of the Wagner building
- ◆ Lack of infrastructure for urban housing
- ◆ Proposed casino near the interstate

2. What are potential POSITIVE TRENDS/OPPORTUNITIES for Downtown Beloit both today and in the future?

Most Cited Responses for Positive Trends/Opportunities (number of responses listed after each)

- ◆ Growth of events/activities/attractions in Downtown (events cited include Art Walk, Street Dance, Beloit International Film Festival, Farmer's Market, and Fridays in the Park) (7)
- ◆ Residential development (upper floor housing)/ greater Downtown density(6)
- ◆ Business growth and small business ownership opportunities (4)
- ◆ Restaurants and coffee houses and outdoor street cafes (4)
- ◆ Job growth (4)
- ◆ Riverfront improvements/redevelopment (4)
- ◆ Attracting visitors to Downtown (4)
- ◆ Downtown arts district (4)

Other Responses for Positive Trends/Opportunities (1 – 2 people provided each response)

- ◆ Landscaping, streetscaping, and beautification
- ◆ Recreational opportunities
- ◆ Opportunity to attract college students and their families to Downtown by connecting Downtown with the College through improved pathways and Downtown campus uses
- ◆ Opportunity to attract young people

- ◆ Historic preservation
- ◆ Niche/destination businesses
- ◆ Work of the Downtown Beloit Association
- ◆ Building on success achieved to date
- ◆ Downtown Beloit's unique atmosphere and feeling of community
- ◆ Opportunities for collaboration through the new Vision Center and among government, citizens, and institutions including Beloit College
- ◆ Extend evening events (e.g. on Fridays)
- ◆ Opportunity for larger/anchor retailers
- ◆ Increased transportation costs may help promote Downtown living/working/shopping
- ◆ Catalytic projects (Heritage View, Woolworths, potential for redevelopment of Wagners)
- ◆ Positive market trends

3. What is the CURRENT IMAGE of Downtown Beloit?

Most Cited Responses for Current Image of Downtown (number of responses listed after each)

- ◆ Downtown is event driven; events are successful (4)
- ◆ Some perception that there is not much to do Downtown, but that is changing (3)
- ◆ Downtown underutilized; too many vacancies (3)
- ◆ Those that use Downtown love it, others don't know what it has to offer (3)

Other Responses for Current Image of Downtown (1 – 2 people provided each response)

- ◆ Positive image—charming/welcoming
- ◆ Some nice businesses, improved shopping
- ◆ Need a vision for future of Downtown
- ◆ Parking problems
- ◆ Need a Downtown “brand” to create an image of Downtown
- ◆ Need for building maintenance/restoration
- ◆ Good accessibility to Downtown
- ◆ Perceived safety issues
- ◆ Downtown experiencing revitalization
- ◆ Close to Rockford (ability to attract people from that market)
- ◆ Expensive
- ◆ Difficulty with marketing as Beloit is in a media middle market
- ◆ Community pride in Downtown
- ◆ Questionable appeal
- ◆ Need to serve more everyday needs (pharmacy, grocery, etc.)
- ◆ “Old” image but undergoing change
- ◆ Need to take better advantage of river in Downtown
- ◆ Need to make bookstore more of an anchor

4. What should the role of Downtown be for the COMMUNITY—what should some of the activities, land uses, and functions be?

Most Cited Responses for Role of Downtown (number of responses listed after each)

- ◆ Central shopping district / niche/destination businesses (7)
- ◆ City center; central district for businesses and services (6)
- ◆ Destination for dining, entertainment, and nightlife (6)
- ◆ Gathering/meeting place (5)
- ◆ Residential (including focus on upper floor housing) (5)
- ◆ Arts district (4)

Other Responses for Role of Downtown

- ◆ Pedestrian-oriented district
- ◆ Location for community events
- ◆ Center of community history / historic preservation
- ◆ Exudes Beloit's local identity, has local products
- ◆ Cultural center
- ◆ Offices / employment
- ◆ A "cool" district--place to have fun
- ◆ Should attract people between 35-40
- ◆ Local/regional transit hub
- ◆ Family destination

Downtown Mapping Exercise

The Downtown Mapping exercise gave participants an opportunity to identify areas that should be focused on in the plan. Participants worked in six small groups to identify areas where they believed special characteristics, problems, or conditions exist corresponding to the color code below. Each participant was asked to use six colored dots to identify the six issues/areas they felt were highest priorities (using any combination of colored dots). Markers were also provided to groups to identify larger geographic areas.

The colored dots/markers represent the following:

- ◆ **Blue: Preservation Sites**—sites of high cultural or historic value that should be preserved or restored.
- ◆ **Yellow: Revitalization or Redevelopment Sites**—problem sites and/or buildings that have value and should be maintained (both the structures and the underlying land use) but that currently present problems related to crime or poor property maintenance or sites and/or buildings that are functionally obsolete, vacant, or blighted or that pose major conflicts with adjoining properties. Areas outlined in red marker also signify redevelopment sites (as yellow marker was not legible on the map).
- ◆ **Red: Traffic “Hot Spots”**—places where the transportation network system is overloaded, failing, or simply dangerous; typically, sites with a high incidence of collisions, vehicle-pedestrian conflicts, poor pedestrian connections/crossings to adjoining neighborhoods, speed zones, or poor sightlines.
- ◆ **Green: Public Amenities**—areas where public facilities are currently lacking and should be introduced. Public facilities include such things as parks, pedestrian connections, outdoor markets, landscaping, and recreation facilities.

The map on the following page is a compilation of all six group’s maps combined. The following were the primary issues/opportunities identified through this exercise:

Preservation Sites (blue dots)

- ◆ Public Library
- ◆ Chester Square building
- ◆ 400 Block of Grand
- ◆ 300 Block of State
- ◆ Church at northeast corner of Prospect and Public
- ◆ Professional Building

Revitalization or Redevelopment Sites (yellow dots and red marker)

- ◆ Wagner Building
- ◆ Woolworths Building and others in the 300 block of State
- ◆ Professional Building
- ◆ Riverbend Site
- ◆ Site that has since been redeveloped into a hardware store
- ◆ Church on the northeast corner of Pleasant and Public
- ◆ Parking lot on the southeast corner of Public and State

Traffic “Hot Spots” (red dots)

- ◆ 100 Block of West Grand Avenue
- ◆ Intersection of Shirland Avenue and State Street
- ◆ 400 Block of Broad Street (current transit center)
- ◆ 400 Block of East Grand Avenue

Needed Public Amenities (green dots)

- ◆ Improvements to the green/pedestrian space that connects the Broad Street parking lot with State Street
- ◆ Public amenities as part of the Riverbend redevelopment, including extension of the Riverwalk
- ◆ Extension of the bike path from 5th Street south, crossing the river



Downtown Modeling Exercise

Four of the six groups completed an optional modeling exercise. Each group identified an area of Downtown they believed needed redevelopment/rehabilitation. They were then asked to model the ideal redevelopment scenario to illustrate the ideal building height, density, use, and setback from the street. Uses were represented by the following colors:

- ◆ Yellow: Residential
- ◆ Red: Commercial
- ◆ Blue: Civic
- ◆ Green: Open Space

The following are the results of this exercise:



Group One

This group focused on the 400 block of East Grand Avenue and the 300 block of State Street, illustrating maintenance of first-floor retail and encouraging upper-story housing. This group also identified a civic use for the Library and promoted upper floor housing in a building on the 500 block of East Grand.



Group Two

This group focused on the block of East Grand between State and Pleasant Streets. The model shows maintenance of first-floor retail on Grand and promotes upper-floor housing in the existing buildings on this block. The model also illustrates new two-story mixed-use commercial/residential buildings along Public Avenue with green space in the middle of the block. Additionally, this group shows extension of the Riverwalk along the Mill Race parking lot.



Group Three

This group focused on the 400 block of East Grand and Woolworth Building on the 300 Block of State, modeling mixed-use two-story buildings with housing above commercial. The group also modeled redevelopment at the Riverbend site, showing a mix of residential and mixed-use commercial/residential buildings. Additionally, the group illustrated extension of the Riverwalk south of 4th Street and Broad Street.



Group Four

This group modeled a commercial structure connecting the Beloit Inn with a building across Public Avenue (presumably a parking structure). Additionally, the group modeled several mixed-use buildings on Grand Avenue as well as at specific sites including the Wagner Building, the Woolworth Building, and Heritage View, and the Library. The group also identified the need to

restore/enhance the Rock River.

Visual Preference Survey

The final exercise in the Downtown Visioning Workshop was a Visual Preference Survey. This exercise gave participants an opportunity to score images of several different development types as a tool for identifying preferences for development and public spaces. Participants scored each image on a scale from +5.0 to -5.0, and these scores were then averaged for each image.

Images were grouped into the following five categories:

1. Commercial Retail
2. Commercial Office
3. Multi-family Residential
4. Mixed-Use
5. Public Spaces

Participants could make written comments for each image to explain their score. Additionally, participants had the option of scoring each site as a “+” or “-” for the following six attributes:

Buildings (first four categories)

- ◆ Building design
- ◆ Building placement
- ◆ Garage/parking areas
- ◆ Pedestrian amenities
- ◆ Landscaping
- ◆ Signage

Public Spaces

- ◆ Hardscape design/materials
- ◆ Landscape design/materials
- ◆ Functionality
- ◆ Sense of being safe/welcome
- ◆ Lighting
- ◆ Public art

The **highest** and **lowest** rated images for each category are depicted beginning on the following page. Scores are out of a possible range of -5.0 to +5.0

COMMERCIAL RETAIL

Some of the most highly rated images in the entire Survey were identified in this category. Preferred images included buildings at a scale appropriate for Beloit’s Downtown, articulated facades, appropriate materials, and attractive signage. Images that received lower scores generally were of a more modern architectural style and a less pedestrian-friendly frontage.



Highest Score: +3.8

Positive attributes: building design, building placement, pedestrian amenities, and signage



2nd Highest Score: +3.7

Positive attributes: building design, signage, pedestrian amenities



Lowest Score: -2.0

Negative attributes: building design



2nd Lowest Score: -1.3

Negative attributes: mis-matched uses

COMMERCIAL OFFICE

On the whole, images in this category did not receive very high scores as most participants found the building design and/or scale to be inappropriate for Downtown. These images were included with the proposed Turtle Creek Business Park in mind, which is on the “edge” of downtown and therefore may be more appropriate for these types of commercial office development.



Highest Score: +1.8
Positive attributes: building design
Negative attributes: architecture too modern for Downtown



2nd Highest Score: +1.0
Positive attributes: building design/height
Negative attributes: architecture does not fit Downtown



Lowest Score: -2.1
Negative attributes: architecture not appropriate for Downtown



2nd Lowest Score: -1.6
Negative attributes: building design, landscaping, institutional character

MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

Some of the most highly rated images in the entire Survey were identified in this category. Preferred images included buildings at a scale appropriate for Beloit’s Downtown (generally 2-story), articulated facades, small building setback, and a considerable degree of landscaping. Images that received lower scores were cited by participants as being too monotonous in design.



Highest Score: +3.5
 Positive attributes: building design, placement, scale, and materials; pedestrian amenities



2nd Highest Score: +3.2
 Positive attributes: building design, building placement, landscaping, good design for Riverbend



Lowest Score: -1.1
 Negative attributes: building design and placement (repetition is monotonous, units too close together)



2nd Lowest Score: -0.3
 Negative attributes: building design and placement (not enough variation in units, bland color), landscaping

MIXED USE

None of the images in this category received a significantly high score. However, had the preferred images in the commercial retail category also included upper-story housing, they may have scored high in the mixed use category. Preferred images included buildings of 2-3 stories and had brick, articulated facades.



Highest Score: +2.3
 Positive attributes: building design—good fit for downtown, parking access



2nd Highest Score: +1.9
 Positive attributes: Building design and placement, parking lot design/ placement



2nd Lowest Score: -0.5
 Negative attributes: lack of pedestrian amenities and landscaping, height



Lowest Score: -0.1
 Negative attributes: building – needs better attention to detail, no curb appeal



2nd Lowest Score: -0.5
 Respondents provided a mix of positive and negative reviews of the building design

PUBLIC SPACES

Images that received the highest score in this category had an appropriate balance of landscape and hardscape and had amenities appealing to pedestrians. The most highly rated images were both of streetscapes, but images of public plazas and other spaces also received positive scores.



Highest Score: +2.6
 Positive attributes: hardscape, landscape, sense of safety. Suggestion made to incorporate seating



Highest Score: +2.4
 Positive attributes: hardscape, landscape, sense of safety



Lowest Score: +0.5
 Negative attributes: needs more landscaping/shade
 Positive attributes: invites activity/gathering



2nd Lowest Score: +1.4
 Generally favorable of hardscape, landscape, and functionality, but some negative scores as well

Appendix B: Open House Summary

On December 13, 2007, a Downtown Visioning Workshop was held at the Vision Beloit Center. Seventeen people participated in the Open House. The Open House offered an opportunity for residents to comment on the draft plan and included a presentation of the plan as well as displays of the plan graphics.

The following comments were provided by attendees of this Open House.

Large Group Discussion

The following is a summary of comments made in a discussion amongst Open House participants that took place after the presentation of the draft Plan.

Support for Specific Elements of the Plan

- ◆ Concept of a cultural center at 100 E Grand
- ◆ Expanding the Riverwalk to connect with the west side of river
- ◆ Riverbend redevelopment as a catalyst for Downtown
- ◆ Urban business park concept to maintain Downtown employment—working across the state line to implement will be a challenge.
- ◆ Redevelopment of the site where Public Avenue meets the river—will expand views and eliminate car/pedestrian/bike conflicts; explore opportunity to relocate existing use across the street and incorporate it as part of a parking structure.
- ◆ Enhancing river vistas

Questions / Concerns for Specific Elements of the Plan

- ◆ Concern expressed that concept plan for the 100 E Grand site would remove existing parking spaces. Others countered that there is sufficient parking Downtown and that people overcome parking challenges to visit lively downtowns such as Ann Arbor, MI or Lake Geneva, WI.
- ◆ A question was posed on how the plan would be funded and project consultants indicated that private investment will be critical to the success of public investments made to implement the plan.

Additional Ideas Expressed

- ◆ Reuse at West Grand/4th Street site should respect industrial heritage of Beloit
- ◆ Increased gas prices will help support Downtown living
- ◆ Importance of feeling of safety in Downtown
- ◆ Need place for festival grounds when Downtown currently blocked off for events

Written Comments

The following is a summary of written comments made by Open House participants on provided comment sheets.

Which recommendations in the Plan do you support the most? (number of responses listed after each)

- ◆ The Riverbend redevelopment acting as a catalyst to bring new activity and redevelopment to Downtown. (3)
- ◆ Reuse options for 100 E Grand and W. Grand/Fourth St. (7 total – listed below)
 - Reuse concepts in general (2)
 - Maintain employment Downtown at 100 E Grand and W. Grand/Fourth St. sites (2)
 - Cultural center reuse option at 100 E. Grand (2)
 - W. Grand / Fourth St. reuse concept Option 2 (1)
- ◆ Support for plan as a whole (2)
- ◆ Importance of State and Grand square as center of Downtown activity (1)
- ◆ Public Avenue corridor redevelopment concept (1)
- ◆ West Side Riverwalk to complete the loop Downtown (1)
- ◆ Urban business park for small enterprises (1)
- ◆ Public places with access, views, and connections (1)
- ◆ Encouraging more Downtown retailers (1)
- ◆ Pedestrian and bicycle amenities (1)

Which recommendations in the Plan do you have questions about or do you not support? Why? (number of responses listed after each)

- ◆ Concern with potential to displace long-time Downtown businesses—reuses for these sites needs to be well thought out (2)
- ◆ Potential to relocate library to 100 E. Grand site (1)
- ◆ West side redevelopment concepts too vague (1)
- ◆ Haymarket concept; fleamarkets should not be planned (1)
- ◆ College doesn't need City incentives to improve town-gown relationship (1)
- ◆ Scrutinize Public Avenue transformation carefully; the River to East Side connection has already been compromised by deleting Emerson Street from the equation (1)
- ◆ Keeping industrial building at West Grand/Fourth Street when Kerry relocates; should be used instead for public outdoor events such as Friday's in the Park, etc. (1)
- ◆ Cost of implementing plan (1)
- ◆ Should make north block of 400 E. Grand / Public Ave. an Implementation Area I priority; Need to clean up alley on 400 block of Pleasant – worst part of Downtown (1)

Other Comments and Ideas (number of responses listed after each)

- ◆ Downtown lighting is important; provides feeling of security; connects with distance people are willing to walk in Downtown (1)
- ◆ Need to improve aesthetics on main entry corridor to Downtown on Broad St. from Illinois (1)
- ◆ Should mention “river” more instead of “recreation” – e.g. “river recreation” (1)
- ◆ Encourage opportunities for vehicles on major highways to be able to stop easily in Downtown (1)
- ◆ Post Office building should be redeveloped (1)