

# City of Barron

## PLACEMAKING BARRON REPORT SUMMARY

SUMMER 2015



During Summer 2015, residents, business owners, organizations, and other stakeholders from Barron came together to take a fresh look at six key locations within the community. This project was a true local partnership with financial and sponsorship support from the City of Barron, Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce, and Mayo Clinic, coordination support from the Barron County Economic Development Corporation (EDC), facilitation by West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, advertising assistance from the Barron News-Shield, and the input of various additional local stakeholders and other community groups. In all, over 200 hours of total volunteer time was spent during the May and July workshops, in addition to pre-planning meetings and presentations.

During the project, WCWRPC utilized the Project for Public Spaces placemaking approach as a framework for evaluation and discussion. Placemaking looks to enhance the character of places where people gather, while building on existing initiatives in a community, and to connect spaces physically and thematically through partnerships and cooperation. Project participants learned what factors make great public places and incorporated these attributes into their placemaking recommendations..

From the initial workshop, the following placemaking vision for Barron was created:

*Barron is a family-oriented community and a welcoming hometown for everyone. The community will have a vibrant, historic downtown with strong visual and physical linkages to an exceptional outdoor recreational system that attracts visitors and brings all residents together. This vision embraces the community's diversity while offering things to do for all ages.*



Participants view Barron as a family-friendly hometown and identified recommendations that improve “family friendliness” and nurture a sense of “hometown.” Pedestrian and bicycle linkages should be safe, visible, and enticing. Places should be comfortable, with places to sit, landscaping, and things to do that encourage people to gather, mingle, and linger. Improving connectivity and directional wayfinding, while enhancing Barron’s recreational amenities and downtown, were additional common themes throughout the workshops. A community-wide wayfinding plan with a coordinated theme or “brand” was identified as a critical need. And participants also desired that Barron be a hometown for everyone and that the cultural diversity of the community be shared and celebrated. The key recommendations are included on the following pages of this summary, but be certain to also consider the node evaluations and connectivity discussion in the full report.



Participants recognized that everyone must get involved in order to accomplish the vision and actions identified in the report. A strong commitment to participant ideas was very apparent during the July follow-up workshop when a decision was made to form a community placemaking committee to champion the placemaking action plan, foster communication, leverage resources, and promote volunteerism.

PREPARED BY  
WEST CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION



	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>LQC?</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Potential Resources</b>
<b>City-Wide</b>	1. Establish a Barron Placemaking Committee to coordinate action plan implementation.	yes	ASAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kiwanis to take initial coordination role</li> </ul>
	2. Update the City's Outdoor Recreation Plan for grant eligibility and integrate placemaking recommendations, including City-wide trail and route connectivity.		short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City</li> </ul>
	3. Integrate placemaking recommendations into City Comprehensive Plan update, as well as address related housing availability concerns.		short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Plan Commission to take lead</li> </ul>
	4. Develop a City-wide wayfinding strategy or plan with common design elements.		short- to medium-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new Placemaking Committee to take an advocacy role</li> <li>• City</li> </ul>
	5. Study and obtain consensus on the most appropriate site for a farmers' market in the community. Could incorporate a cultural diversity component.	yes	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new Placemaking Committee to advocate</li> </ul>
<b>Node #1: Anderson Park</b>	1. Develop entrance treatments at 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street and Mill Street. Add designated walking areas on streets for linkages to area sidewalks.	yes	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kiwanis</li> <li>• School project</li> <li>• City on tree removal</li> </ul>
	2. Improve internal site connectivity between park amenities, including new lighting, landscaping, bridge improvements, and ADA-accessible pavement. Consider aesthetics to add interest and "bread crumbs."	some - yes	short- to long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kiwanis</li> <li>• WDNR Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grants</li> <li>• School projects</li> </ul>
	3. Dredge and improve flow on the secondary (south) stream as a kayak/canoe course and/or trailhead. Develop a river trail down to the dam. Partner to provide canoe and/or kayak rentals.		medium- to long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lake Association for weed control</li> </ul>
	4. Develop a new bridge connecting Anderson Park to Kiwanis Park.		long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State/Local snowmobile clubs</li> </ul>
	5. Install bathrooms or composting toilets on the island.		medium- to long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WDNR Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grants</li> </ul>
	6. Develop an Anderson/Kiwanis Park Master Plan. Anderson Park should stay more family-oriented; add a gazebo or bandshell. Kiwanis Park would be more of an active athletics complex; move the tennis courts to Kiwanis and provide more landscaping/shade trees. Longer-term, consider leveling and developing west end of Anderson Park.	plan – yes	short- to long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City</li> <li>• Schools</li> </ul>
<b>Node #2: 3<sup>rd</sup> St. and USH 8</b>	1. Make the area more visually appealing. Improve wayfinding signage and add "breadcrumbs" to downtown and parks, including attractive lighting. Add gardens, landscaping, color, flags, lighting, etc. Attach a large mural to Suzie's wall, if owner allows.	some - yes	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master Gardeners</li> <li>• Conservation Club</li> <li>• 4-H</li> <li>• Business owners</li> <li>• City</li> </ul>
	2. Work with Wisconsin DOT to add a roundabout, underground walkway, or other major, plausible pedestrian/biking safety improvements for crossing USH 8.		long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wisconsin DOT</li> </ul>
	3. Develop a river walk/bike walk from Anderson Park and Beckers, then throughout the City.		long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership of public and private landowners</li> </ul>
	4. Develop mid-town local market at the sales barn or depot, then tie to library.		medium-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private owners of sales barn and depot</li> <li>• Music club</li> </ul>
	5. Develop the historic building next to Suzie's. Restore, add interesting business (e.g., cool coffee shop with Wifi). Consider acquisition and redevelopment if a feasible public use can be identified.		medium-to long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property owner</li> <li>• Barron County EDC</li> <li>• Find grant/funds for restoration work</li> </ul>

	6. Paint different walkways to make it more clear to drivers or pedestrians.	yes	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with WDOT</li> </ul>
	7. Explore the creation of a small park near Library in the greenspace on the Subway side of street.		medium-to long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library</li> <li>• Property owner</li> <li>• City</li> </ul>
<b>Nodes #3 &amp; #4:</b> Downtown	NODE #3 – 1. Create a new public space at the courthouse for benches, music venue, and splash pad/fountain. Level some of the lawn to at or near street level OR create a more inviting stairway from main street for access to the existing area.		medium-to long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barron County government</li> <li>• H.S. Art Club</li> <li>• Master Gardeners</li> <li>• Kiwanis</li> </ul>
	2. Utilize the Chamber to advocate for downtown revitalization efforts.		short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chamber</li> <li>• Business Owners</li> </ul>
	3. Create a more attractive, inviting, and “sticky” pedestrian envelope through sidewalk repairs, installing planters, and repainting garbage cans with bright colors. Install new Barron banners on street lamps.	yes	short-term; some may be phased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School groups</li> <li>• City on sidewalk repairs</li> <li>• H.S. Art Club</li> <li>• Community members and artists</li> </ul>
	4. Improve visibility of the downtown and connections to other community destinations through improved and/or repaired signage. Add more signage on Highway 8 to get visitors to main street.		short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community artists</li> </ul>
	5. Attract new retail (e.g., café, art store, sporting goods) and fill vacant stores. Look at what other places are doing and <u>create a strategy</u> . Some ideas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Until new tenants are identified, use art, historical displays, etc., to avoid empty windows; keep it interesting and maintain downtown continuity for pedestrians.</li> <li>• Develop &amp; maintain a list of available properties, along with structural needs and space profiles.</li> <li>• Identify any supply/demand gaps in current retail market and</li> <li>• Obtain owner permission to market the list.</li> <li>• Develop a quality, targeted recruitment package for potential new businesses and regional stores, including the space profiles, market information, financial incentives, and planned revitalization efforts.</li> <li>• Continue to market the entire downtown.</li> <li>• Redevelop a building as a small business incubator or encourage other services/organizations to locate downtown.</li> </ul>		short- to long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barron County EDC</li> <li>• Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• News Shield (advertising)</li> <li>• Property owners</li> <li>• WCWRPC façade loans</li> </ul>
	6. NODE #4: Develop a community directional board at corner of 5 <sup>th</sup> and Main Streets to assist with wayfinding.		short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property owner</li> </ul>
	7. NODE #4: Allow street dining in front of the Bakery and pizza place. Remove a parking spot or two.		short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business owners</li> <li>• City Council</li> </ul>
	8. Install more interesting, improved, pedestrian-scale street lighting.		long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City</li> <li>• Chamber</li> </ul>
	9. Hold weekly events downtown (e.g., car show, farmers market, boat/rv show, music in the park, movie night). Allow the closing of main street for such events.	yes	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Local business owners</li> <li>• News Shield (advertising)</li> <li>• Kiwanis</li> </ul>

<b>Node #5:</b> "Campus" area	1. Improve and modernize signage and wayfinding to and within this node. Develop entrance and directional signage at corner. Can be a unique and beautiful gateway feature (e.g., statute, bear on skis designed by students, mama and baby bear). Improve visibility and lighting to parking areas, Rockman Woods, and destinations. Extend these connections to Highway 8.	yes	very high priority; very short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High School</li> <li>• BACC</li> <li>• Users of sports fields, Rockman's Woods</li> </ul>
	2. Develop a universal design for safe street and sidewalk linkages that is ADA accessible, more kid and senior friendly, and incorporates "breadcrumb" elements for both walking and biking.	yes, for design	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City</li> <li>• Mayo Clinic</li> <li>• Public input</li> </ul>
	3. Enhance the visibility of the creek as a gateway feature. Provide creek access on the northeast side and potentially develop a creek-side walking path.	yes/no	medium-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City</li> <li>• Churches</li> <li>• E-Day</li> <li>• WI DNR grants</li> <li>• Scouts</li> <li>• Soil Conservation</li> <li>• Property owners</li> </ul>
	4. Develop the BACC "front yard" as a community gathering place and a park for visitors, hospital guests, etc. Encourage activities that are often indoors to move outdoors into this space.	varies	medium-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BACC</li> <li>• may be dependent on parking needs, but new parking should be landscaped</li> </ul>
	5. Add outdoor seating areas throughout the area. When feasible, triangulate seating with other amenities (e.g., garbage cans, plantings, statues) to create "mini-rooms."	yes	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayo Clinic</li> <li>• Churches</li> <li>• Schools</li> </ul>
<b>Node #6:</b> USH 8 & LaSalle Ave Area, including Lions Park	1. Develop some type of gateway feature (e.g., archway, big sign, big bear), with wayfinding to downtown and other key nodes.		short- to medium-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spark Weber welders</li> </ul>
	2. Improve lighting. Continue the lighting at City Hall and extend it east into Lions Park and across the LaSalle bridge. Light the bear and add more lighting to the City Hall area.		medium-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City</li> <li>• undetermined</li> </ul>
	3. Involve the Somali community in the planning and landscaping for this area, especially on the west side of the LaSalle bridge.	yes	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Somali representatives</li> </ul>
	4. Improve the shoreline and remove brush at Lions Park and along the north side of LaSalle.	yes	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation Club</li> </ul>
	5. Enlarge Lions Park for more parking, a playground, more seating/picnic area, drinking fountain, public restrooms, dog park, etc. Move the fence. Conduct more activities at the park.		long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WDNR grants</li> <li>• Lions Club</li> </ul>
	6. Enhance and extend the mini-park at City Hall. Extend/repeat the plantings and trees (e.g., flowering crab apples) at City Hall throughout the area and across the bridges. Light these trees in the winter. Add painted crosswalks.	yes	short- to medium-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master Gardeners</li> <li>• City</li> <li>• Community organizations</li> </ul>
	7. Add a mural on the old power plant.		short- to medium-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• volunteers</li> <li>• student art class</li> <li>• Zentangle-Mosaics</li> </ul>
	8. Improve and widen the bridges to make them more inviting and walkable, including lights, seating, plantings, fishing decks, etc. Add a crosswalk with colored or painted pavement at Poor Farm Road and La Salle.		long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City</li> <li>• Wisconsin DOT</li> </ul>
	9. At or near City Hall, develop some type of visitor and new resident information gazebo or kiosk. Integrate with a webpage and public WiFi hotspot, potentially incorporating QR codes on signs and materials.		medium-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• undetermined</li> </ul>