

City of Rice Lake

PLACEMAKING RICE LAKE

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PREPARED BY
WEST CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION



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Project for Public Spaces, Inc. (PPS) is a nonprofit planning, design, and educational organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build stronger communities.

West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC), a multi-county planning agency statutorily charged with planning for the physical, social, and economic development of the region, has formed a partnership with PPS to advocate for and facilitate placemaking activities in west central Wisconsin.

The placemaking concepts discussed within this document, including the four attributes to a great place (place diagram), the ‘Power of 10’, and managing your public space, are provided by or adapted from PPS materials and cannot be used without formal, written permission from PPS. More information on PPS and placemaking can be found at www.pps.org.





I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Rice Lake has grown from its logging roots to become a regional retail, service, and employment center, with excellent connections to US Highway 53, post-secondary institutions, and natural amenities. To continue to improve upon the attractiveness of the City for residents, visitors, and investors, City representatives requested the assistance of West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC) to facilitate a community placemaking initiative. This report summarizes the results of the 2014 **Placemaking Rice Lake** project, which brought residents, business owners, and special

interests together to take a fresh look at key locations within the community.

This project was a true local partnership overseen by the Rice Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, with financial support from the City of Rice Lake, coordination support from the Barron County Economic Development Corporation (EDC), advertising assistance from The Chronotype, and the input of various additional local stakeholders. The following summarizes the primary steps in Rice Lake's placemaking exercise:

- On May 14, 2014, WCWRPC met with a core group of City stakeholders to discuss the project goals and scope. Key community locations were identified and prioritized as the focus for the project. This pre-event meeting also yielded the following general project goals:
 - engage community members in a discussion on “what makes Rice Lake unique?”
 - capitalize on linkages to lakes and rivers, as well as improve trail connections
 - help identify a “feel” or identity for the downtown that is vibrant, active, and visible
 - enhance the aesthetics and function of the downtown bridge at the dam
 - improve the role of the UW-Barron County/WITC campus area as a community destination with connections to the Red Cedar River and trail system
 - pull highway travelers and potential shoppers downtown
 - enhance the primary community entrances from USH 53
 - build community enthusiasm and engage younger adults
 - help foster partnerships; implementation cannot be solely on the City's shoulders
- With assistance from WCWRPC, the Chamber and EDC advertised the July 14, 2014, placemaking workshop through flyers, The Chronotype, and by word-of-mouth. Attendance exceeded expectations, with 84 participants during the 3.5 hour workshop facilitated by WCWRPC (*over 300 hours of total volunteer time!*). The workshop began with instruction in placemaking techniques, followed by site visits, group brainstorming, and full group discussions.
- WCWRPC presented the workshop results at a follow-up community meeting on September 16, 2014. During this follow-up meeting, participants further prioritized and fine-tuned the placemaking recommendations, as well as discussed resources and next steps. The final report and corresponding one-page report summary were then completed by WCWRPC.



II. PLACE MAKING PRINCIPLES

a. What is Placemaking?

Placemaking is the planning, design, and management of public spaces. It transcends “place” to bring the “making” to the forefront. Placemaking involves listening to, and asking questions of the people who live, work, and play in a particular space, to determine their needs and aspirations. This information is then used to create common goals. The goals can evolve quickly into an action plan, beginning with small-scale, do-able improvements that can immediately bring benefits to public spaces and the people who use them. Simply put, placemaking allows people to make extraordinary improvements, both big and small, in their communities.

b. Benefits of a Great Place

We shape our public spaces, and afterwards they shape us. Great places have many far-reaching benefits.

- Places nurture and define community identity.
- Places benefit communities economically.
- Places promote a greater sense of comfort.
- Places draw a diverse population.
- Places create improved accessibility.
- Places foster frequent and meaningful contact.

c. What Makes a Great Place?

Great public spaces are where celebrations are held, social and economic exchanges take place, friends run into each other, and cultures mix. They are the “front porches” of our communities – libraries, parks, event centers, cafés, neighborhood schools – where we interact with each other and government. When the spaces work well, they serve as a stage for our public lives.

What makes some spaces succeed while others fail? In part, it is having a variety or critical mass of things to do in one spot. When the space becomes more than the sum of its parts, it becomes a place. For example, an area in a park that has a fountain, a playground, somewhere for parents to sit in the shade, and a place to get something to drink or eat will attract people to stay there for more than a few minutes, and to return. If the park had a library across the street, with an outdoor area that had storytelling hours for kids, and exhibits on local history, people would come to both the library and park, again and again. Easy access to a bus stop or bike trail and proximity to residential areas are additional components that cumulatively add up to create a very successful place.

d. Function Before Form

Inherent to the second placemaking principle in the box above is that how a place is used is more important than the design of that place. Function should come before form. This is the primary difference between a placemaking effort and a beautification project. Placemaking goes beyond beautification and aesthetics by challenging communities to create, program, and maintain things to do. Great places are not only attractive, but need to have a purpose and should be linked to other great places.

Principles of Placemaking

1. The community is the expert
2. You are creating a place, not a design
3. You can't do it alone
4. They'll always say, "It can't be done"
5. You can see a lot just by observing
6. Develop a vision
7. Use is more important than design
8. Cluster elements to foster activities
9. Start with simple, short-term solutions
10. Money is not the issue
11. You are never finished

e. Four Key Attributes of a Successful Place

The Project of Public Spaces has identified four key attributes that successful places have in common:

- 1. Access and Linkages**
They are accessible and have linkages to other places;
- 2. Uses and Activities**
People use the space and are engaged in activities there;
- 3. Comfort and Image**
The space is comfortable and has a good image; and
- 4. Sociability**
It is a sociable place – one where people meet each other and take people when they come to visit.

PPS developed the following Place Diagram as a tool to help people in judging any place, good or bad, by using the four key attributes of a successful place:



Imagine the center circle on the diagram is a specific place that you know: a street corner, playground, public plaza, or area outside a building. You can evaluate that place according to the four key attributes in the orange ring. In the green ring are a number of intuitive or qualitative aspects by which to judge a place. And the blue area offers example quantitative aspects of that place that can be measured by statistics or research.

III. PLACEMAKING OPPORTUNITIES

a. Identifying Key Places in Rice Lake

Seven places, or nodes, were prioritized as targets for the placemaking exercise by Rice Lake stakeholders during the pre-event meeting in May 2014. The following criteria were used in selecting the nodes:

- Importance and value to the community
- Small-scale; will allow each group to focus their efforts during the limited workshop time
- Easily identifiable and comprehensible
- Clear issues and/or opportunities available
- Transition zones (gateways, park entrances, focal point, intersection, or offers linkages to other places)
- At least one site within the node should create interest and excitement

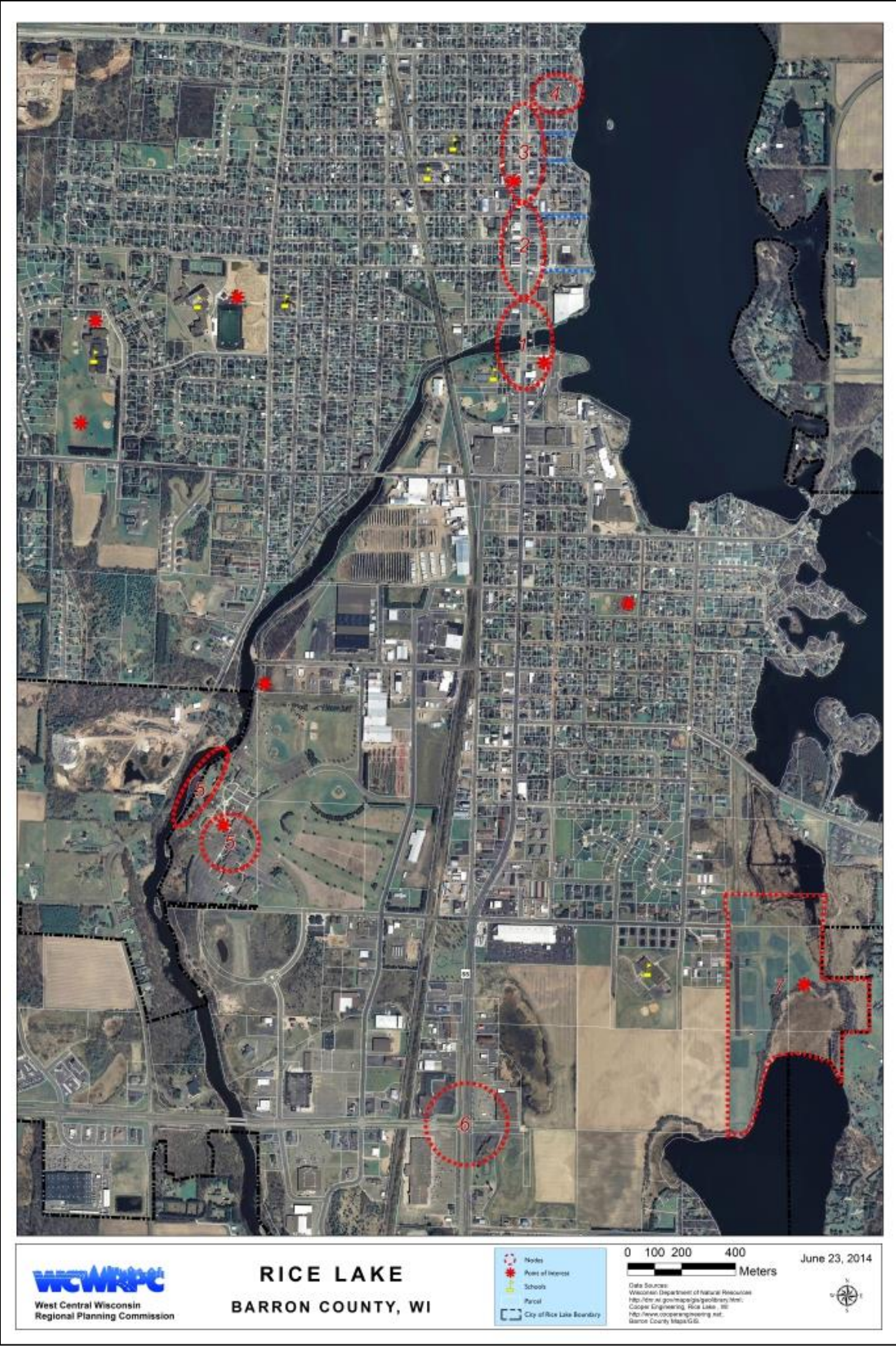
The seven selected nodes, as shown on Figure 1 on the following page are:

1. Downtown Bridge and Chamber of Commerce area
2. Main Street (south-part Downtown) – roughly from Eau Claire Street to Highland Street, plus linkages to lake
3. Main Street (north-part Downtown) – roughly from Eau Claire Street to Douglas Street, plus linkages to lake
4. Veterans Memorial Park (formerly City Park)
5. UW-Barron County/WITC Campus area, especially public features near river and trail connections, and, as time allows, the connections between the campuses.
6. Highway “SS” & “O” intersection area by the mall
7. Moon Lake Park

During the July 14th workshop, a work group of 6-10 individuals was assigned to each of the above seven nodes, with two groups for Nodes 1 and 2, and a larger group for Node 7 given its size. Attendees during the workshop were instructed that the exact boundaries of each node were flexible and that it was okay if some overlap between the nodes downtown occurred.

Also, during the pre-event planning meeting, the stakeholders identified the two community entrances off of U.S. Highway 53 as priority locations due to their prominence and community importance. But, due to their unique location and roles, it was determined that these entrances could better be addressed as a full group discussion regarding their purpose and aesthetics, rather than using the standard placemaking approach.

Figure 1: Targeted Placemaking Nodes in Rice Lake



b. Key Nodes

The following assessments were provided by the groups at the workshop. The reported issues and opportunities are a potential starting point and should be further discussed prior to implementation.

NODE #1: DOWNTOWN BRIDGE & CHAMBER AREA

The two groups assessing Node #1 generated many ideas due to the location and the variety of public spaces within the node that they had to work with. As such, this node is given more attention within this report.

Place Rating (on a scale of 1 to 4 with 4 being highest)

Comfort & Image	1.9	Overall, not very attractive, with no places to sit. Described as “bland,” but has potential.
Access & Linkages	2.4	Improved visibility and wayfinding needed.
Uses & Activities	2.3	Limited things to do. Other than fishing and passing cars, not very busy. Theatre an asset, but not very visible.
Sociability	1.7	Few groups present. No evidence of volunteerism. Does not demonstrate City pride, but could.



Issues

- **Underutilized Space**

The area includes three parks or park-like areas—Knapp-Stout Park, Holsum Riverside Park, and east of Main Street south of the dam—that are underutilized.

- **Aesthetics & Comfort**

Landscaping and colors are bland and non-descript. Chain link fence and dam buildings are visually unappealing. Area lacks sufficient seating and lighting. Some maintenance needed. Traffic is fast and loud. Bridge and width of Main Street is not pedestrian friendly.

- **Access & Wayfinding**

Pedestrian and bicycle amenities across Main Street and over the bridge/river are limited and safety concerns were expressed. No linkages to the larger trail network in the City. Wayfinding, signage, and visibility to nearby amenities need improvement. This area does not welcome visitors to downtown. It is difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross Main Street.

Opportunities

- **Highlight the River**

The natural beauty of the location is its #1 asset. The three park areas along the river are underutilized and do not take full advantage of their location along the river and at the entrance to downtown. Provide better seating, signage, and related amenities, including river access for persons of all abilities for viewing, fishing, picnics, and grilling. The City has already begun development of a riverwalk system, but the connectivity is broken in this area.

- **Placemake the Bridge**

Planned improvements to the bridge offer an opportunity to improve both function and aesthetics. It is also the gateway to the historic downtown. Suggestions include:

- consider an aesthetic design similar to Narrows Park bridge; needs nice railings and color
- provide better fishing access, through “bump-outs” or pier, railing height, separate walkway, etc.
- add seating, nice lights, and potential pavement treatments
- make it more pedestrian and bicycle friendly
- explore options for quieter pavement or unique surface (e.g., wood) on driving deck
- add gateway feature (not full arch) at south end that is simple, clean, beautiful, lighted; perhaps industrial or wrought iron/steel; should be low maintenance

- improve the pedestrian crossing at south end with signalized crosswalk
 - add a trail or walking platform under the bridge on its south side with steps down to the trail
 - address nearby aesthetics (i.e., bury power lines, relocate/refurbish dam buildings, plantings)
 - consider additional traffic-calming strategies for the area
- **Improve Linkages to Nearby Amenities and the Greater Community**
Improved signage and wayfinding are needed to improve connections to nearby amenities, such as the Great Lakes Forestry Museum. Some selected tree trimming could improve visibility at the Theatre. Pavement treatments or art can be used to improve wayfinding and aesthetics.
 - **Reimagine and Differentiate, but Link the Three Park Areas**

During the workshop and a special follow-up discussion, a vision emerged on how the three park areas could be reimaged.

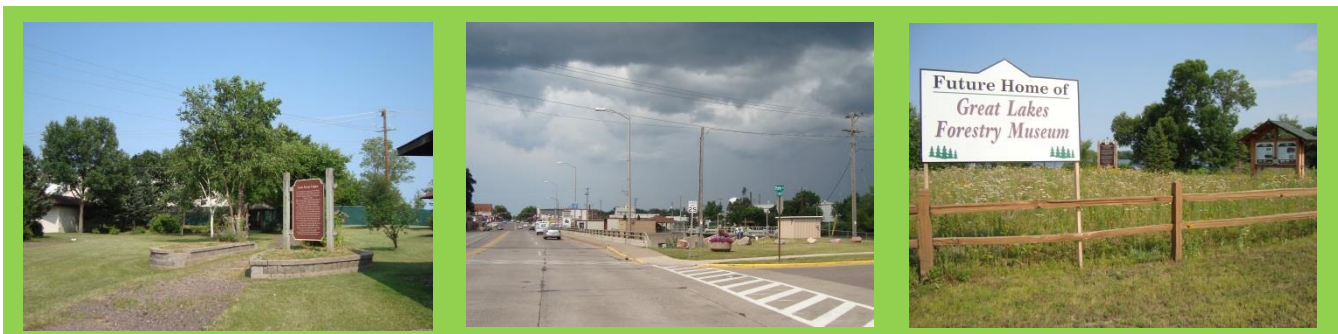
(a) Knapp-Stout Park – Use this park for more passive activities most of the year, though it could be more active during the winter months if the skating rink remained at this location. Good location for farmer’s market, arts/crafts sales, and similar events. Could the warming house be expanded or replaced for additional indoor events (e.g., classes, community kitchen, winter farmer’s market)? Add a Little Free Library. Look to the arts, local history, natural environment, or culture to create a park that is a unique destination and provides a relaxing setting.

(b) “East Dam Park Area” – This area, with restrooms and boat landing, sees significant use for fishing, though it is not an official City Park. Due to its visibility at the entrance to downtown, this area could become an active, community gathering place. Ideas included removal of the existing parking lot and adding a food park (area for food trucks). The gazebo at Knapp-Stout Park could be “refreshened” and moved to this site for more seating, along with additional benches and picnic tables. Swings and a small splash pad were also mentioned as attractions for all age groups. This is an alternative location for a downtown farmer’s market.

(c) Holsum Riverside Park – Maintain a natural riverside area with improved access and amenities to and along the riverside trail (e.g., seating, garbage cans, grills). If additional parking is needed for fishing and trail users, create a parking area and trailhead.



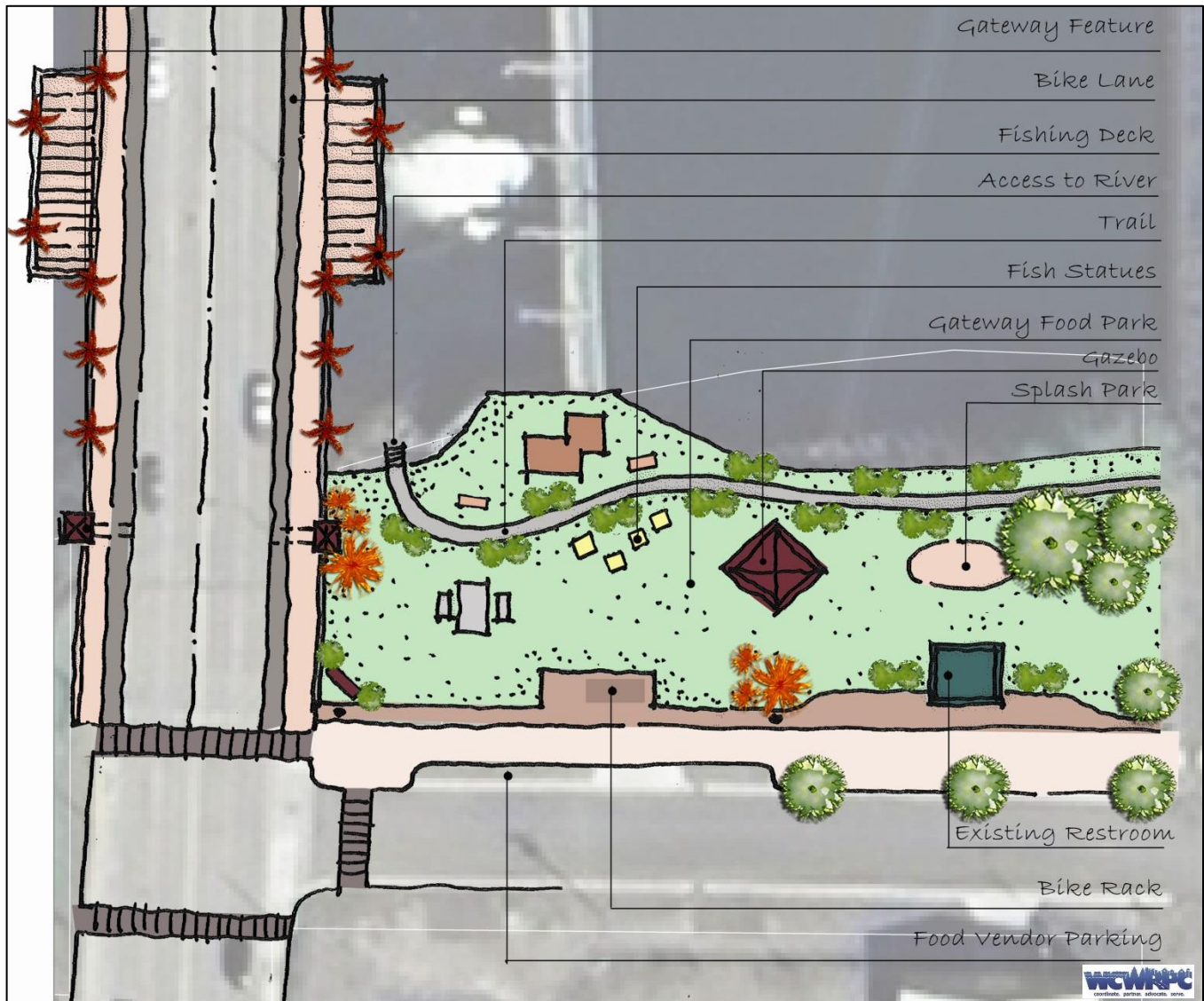
Knapp-Stout Park may be well suited as the City’s “4-Season Park”, with a skating rink, community hearth, Christkindlmarkt, special lighting, and using local history, culture, and/or art to create a strong sense of place.



- (d) Linkages – Improved pedestrian linkages between these three parks are also desired, including:
- a safer crosswalk at Main Street, especially if Holsum Park is converted to parking/trailhead
 - continuity of the riverside trail network, perhaps including a path under the bridge along the river
 - working with the old rail bridge owner to improve the bridge as a linkage and for fishing, including a safe trail connection off the rail bridge into Knapp-Stout Park and shading on the bridge

NODE #1: BRIDGE & “EAST DAM” PARK AREA CONCEPT PLAN

The conceptual site plan below and the corresponding photoism or visualization on the following page pull together many of the ideas expressed by the participants during the workshop and the special on-site follow-up discussion. Residents envisioned that a new food park and community gathering place would be created, with nearby fishing deck, trail connections, traffic-calming measures, and other amenities.



These concepts are intended to provide further inspiration and stimulate community discussion. In some cases, additional study or analysis of alternatives may be required prior to implementation. Partnerships will be vital to implementing many of these ideas. Many of the key locations, including Knapp-Stout Park, the boat ramp, and the old railroad trestle, are not owned by the City and cooperation with Barron County, the school district, and private parties will be required. And once built, assistance may be needed with maintenance, upkeep, and programming.



NODE #2: MAIN STREET (south part of downtown)

This key place extends along Main Street, roughly from Highland Street north to Eau Claire Street, plus linkages to lake.

Place Rating (on a scale of 1 to 4 with 4 being highest)

Comfort & Image	1.6	Overall, not very attractive. Weedy. Lacks places to sit and landscaping. Some buildings need maintenance.
Access & Linkages	1.8	Clarity of signage and information is poor. Ease of walking and connections is 2.25.
Uses & Activities	1.9	Fairly busy. Relatively low frequency of events. Vacant buildings of high concern.
Sociability	1.5	Some volunteerism recognized, but not many people on streets to mingle with.



Issues

- **Commercial Vacancies**

Vacancies can make a downtown appear less vibrant and disrupt continuity. Long-term vacancies may lead to maintenance and upkeep concerns. There are seldom easy solutions to attracting new tenants.

- **Aesthetics of Nearby Uses and Visual Cues**

Birchwood Manufacturing's fencing and the large parking area immediately to the west detract from appearance and continuity of the downtown; ideas to better celebrate this important business as a vestige of the community's rich lumber heritage were discussed. The downtown lacks visual cues and wayfinding that encourage exploration and offer a breadcrumb trail between destinations. A variety of ideas were discussed during the workshop, such as wood directional signs, a digital billboard, and a welcome arch or gateway feature (perhaps located at the bridge).

- **Mix of Uses and Activities are Not Inviting to All Ages and During All Seasons**

Workshop attendees expressed a desire for a downtown that is attractive, vibrant, and comfortable for all residents year-round, especially for younger adults. One team suggested that the downtown needed an indoor children's recreational area.

Opportunities

- **Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper (LQC) Opportunities**

Weeding, replacing certain fencing, lowering plantings, more potted plants, and selected tree pruning/cutting. These are a few of the LQC or "low hanging fruit" ideas that participants identified that can be implemented right away at a reasonably low cost.

- **The Library**

Placemaking of the Library's green space or "pocket park" is already underway with plans for more activities, seating, and pet-friendly amenities. This is a very visual "breadcrumb" along Main Street.

- **Linkages to the Lake**

Improved signage and wayfinding are needed to improve connections to the lake, as further discussed in Node #3. Enhancing the beach area and beach house would offer a new destination.

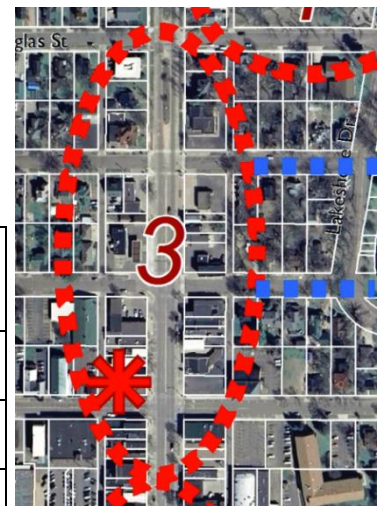


NODE #3: MAIN STREET (north part of downtown)

This key place extends along Main Street, roughly from Eau Claire Street north to Douglas Street, plus linkages to lake. Not surprisingly, many of participant comments, issues, and opportunities had overlap with Node #2.

Place Rating (on a scale of 1 to 4 with 4 being highest)

Comfort & Image	1.5	Weeds and fast-moving traffic decrease from comfort and safety. Some buildings need maintenance. No places to sit.
Access & Linkages	2.0	Trees block sight lines to lake. Crossing Main Street can be difficult. Not bike friendly.
Uses & Activities	1.6	Less busy than Node 2. Lack of events. Above average mix of stores and services.
Sociability	1.3	No groups, children, or seniors. Need to promote more pride. Some volunteerism.



Issues

- **Better Maintain What We Have**
The City's downtown is largely intact and rich in history, but many of the buildings are in need of painting or other repair. Weeds further detract from the downtown's image.
- **Not a "Sticky" Place**
The downtown lacks the amenities and "breadcrumbs" that encourage people to linger, mingle, and explore. Once outside, the downtown lacks places to sit, public art, and other things to do. However, its wide sidewalks provide great opportunity.
- **Described as the "Widest Main Street in Wisconsin"**
With four lanes and traffic often exceeding posted limits, the noise and feel of downtown is busy, but very auto centric. Crossing Main Street can be difficult for pedestrians. Facilities for bikes are limited.

Opportunities

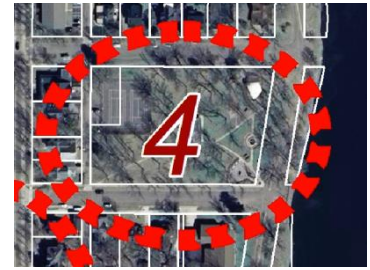
- **Infuse Downtown with Fun & Energy**
Explore innovative opportunities to infuse energy and color into the downtown, such as roofline lighting on buildings, adding public art/murals, color pavement, and comedy entertainment.
- **Improve Linkages to Rice Lake**
Increase visibility and connections to the lake through signage, lighting, and blue sidewalks. Keeping with the fun theme, trees could be carved into caricatures as a "breadcrumb" to the lake, while improving visibility. The old beach house is a great opportunity to restore.
- **Partnering to Build Community Downtown**
With the Main Street Association, Chamber, City Hall, and Library all located downtown, great opportunity exists to return the downtown to its original role as a primary community gathering place. But it will take the commitment, resources, and energy of partners to achieve this vision, such as local college art programs or area business sponsors.



NODE #4: VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK

Place Rating (on a scale of 1 to 4 with 4 being highest)

Comfort & Image	2.8	Overall attractiveness is high (3.3). Good maintenance, except poor sidewalks. Lack of nighttime lighting and places to sit facing lake.
Access & Linkages	1.9	Some signage on site, but no clear connections to larger area and bike/ped routes.
Uses & Activities	2.6	Good frequency of events, though limited overall uses. Tremendous possibilities.
Sociability	2.5	Shows community pride and a strong sense of history. Well used. Children and groups present. Music in the Park.



Veterans Memorial Park was formerly known as City Park

Issues

- **Where Is It? Are We There Yet?**

A very nice park, but it is not visible from downtown and lacks a “breadcrumb trail” from Main Street. The park also lacks a welcoming feature or prominent entrance.

- **Activities Are Not Very Multi-Generational**

The children’s play areas are used by younger families, especially from the nearby neighborhood, but the “Music in the Park” and veteran’s tribute tends to draw more of an older crowd.

- **Implement the City’s Outdoor Recreation Plan**

Comments from the placemaking participants mirrored many of the park improvements and enhancements noted in the City’s outdoor recreation plan, such as replacing sidewalks, adding seating and bike racks, refurbishing the bandshell, and replacing play equipment.

Opportunities

- **The Lake**

Linkages and visibility to the lake can be improved. More places to sit, swings, etc., especially facing the lake, are needed. Develop a paved walking and biking trail along the lake with linkages to the downtown. Add things to do at the lake as well, such as a dock for kayaks, fishing, etc.

- **More Things To Do**

The beauty of the Veterans Memorial Park could be enhanced with lighting to allow extended use. Explore additional programming or more diversity to current programs to attract all ages. Encourage downtown businesses to stay open later on evenings of events at the Park.



Vintage-style lighting along walking paths and the illumination of the fountain and bandshell could create a very inviting ambiance during evenings.

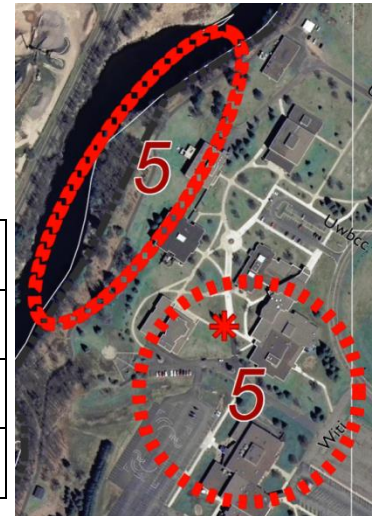


NODE #5: UWBC/WITC CAMPUS AREA

This assessment focused primarily on the public areas near the Red Cedar River and adjacent trail connections. Some limited discussion focused on the connections between the campuses as time allowed.

Place Rating (on a scale of 1 to 4 with 4 being highest)

Comfort & Image	2.3	Tranquil with natural beauty. Maintained. Feels like not in the City. Lacks places to sit.
Access & Linkages	2.0	Trail is an asset, but no signage to campus and views to River. No “bread crumbs.” Hidden.
Uses & Activities	1.8	Many trail users. Was difficult to rate since the place offered few other uses and activities.
Sociability	2.2	A place to be proud of. Well used trail, but lacks presence of children and seniors.

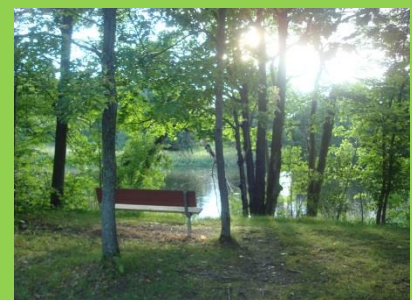


Issues

- **Hidden and Not Fully Connected**
The current trail lacks directional signage and clearly defined (and maintained) entrances. Linkages between the two campuses can be improved through wayfinding, signage, and more uniform design of such features. Overall, the current trail system is not fully connected to the larger community.
- **Limited Things to Do**
Other than the trail which is used for fitness, walking, birdwatching, etc., the place lacks other amenities and things to do. It currently is not a “sticky” place that encourages people to linger.
- **Lack of Linkages to the River**
While the River is the predominant natural feature, good views of the Red Cedar River and access to the River are very limited. No river-related amenities (e.g., canoe launch, kayak rentals) exist.

Opportunities

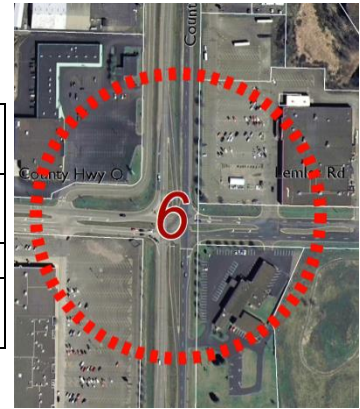
- **Faculty and Students**
Places are about people, and the faculty and students attending the two campuses will be a primary user group for this place and can provide energy, ideas, and resources. Encourage campus activities (e.g., events, educational outreach, study) to “spill out” into the green space.
- **“You don’t feel like you’re in Rice Lake!”**
Activities should be compatible with and enhance the natural beauty and overall tranquility of the place. Appropriate landscaping, brush clearing, benches, educational signage, and campus-led activities, are a few of the lighter, quicker, and cheaper (LQC) ideas.
- **Cedar Side Park and Trail**
Treat the space more like a park, than just a trail, with appropriate things to do, amenities, and places to gather.
- **South Street Development**
As new development occurs, trail and pavilion use will increase, if the connections are made.



NODE #6: HIGHWAYS “SS” & “O” INTERSECTION

Place Rating (on a scale of 1 to 4 with 4 being highest)

Comfort & Image	1.7	Unattractive, though well maintained and clean. Not inviting and no places to sit.
Access & Linkages	2.0	No wayfinding or informational signage. Not ped. friendly and poor bike/ped connections.
Uses & Activities	2.8	Very busy with nice mix of commercial in area.
Sociability	1.2	Cleanliness shows a sense of ownership, but doesn't support a sense of community.



Issues

- **Not a Social-Friendly Place**

Of the seven nodes evaluated, Node 6 was rated as the busiest, but, ironically, was also rated as the least social and the least attractive. This place was designed for cars, not people. Large areas of hardscape (parking lots, streets, buildings) make it a challenge to placemake. Traffic speeds can make it a challenge to cross the highways, while some of the crosswalks do not connect to sidewalks.

- **“Anywhere U.S.A.”**

Though the place is well-maintained and clean, it lacks identity. Nothing conveys to the visitor that Rice Lake is unique or a special place.

Opportunities

- **Exposure**

This is the busiest intersection in Barron County, with about 16,000 vehicles passing through in an average day. What happens here will be very visible and contributes to the identity of the entire community. This exposure and location within a commercial area may also be beneficial to identifying potential sponsors for planned improvements.

- **Provide Direction and Wayfinding**

For a first-time visitor, Rice Lake can be challenging to navigate. To get visitors to truly explore Rice Lake, they will likely pass through this intersection. This intersection is key in directing visitors to the downtown and other community destinations. The planned residential development and new street connections to the east of this intersection provides an opportunity to increase visibility and linkages to Moon Lake Park, the campuses, and the existing trail network.

- **Transform Parking Areas**

Treat the different quadrants of the intersection as individual spaces or “rooms” for placemaking. Some of the large, open areas of parking lots, especially at the Mall, can be enhanced through landscaping, green space, sidewalks, natural swales/rain gardens, and more people- or bike-friendly amenities. A named pocket park with a very visible feature could create an identity for the intersection. Continue and expand current event and commercial activities (e.g., truck sales, car shows).



NODE #7: MOON LAKE PARK

Place Rating (on a scale of 1 to 4 with 4 being highest)

Comfort & Image	2.5	Very open, safe, tranquil, and well maintained. Lack of seating, garbage cans, etc. Potential!
Access & Linkages	1.7	Single entrance inhibits linkages. Lack of signs stating what you can do. Can't see the lake.
Uses & Activities	1.5	Limited mix of uses and events. Overall, not very busy unless an event is going on.
Sociability	2.5	Very strong volunteerism and community pride, but few groups or people present.



Issues

- **Lacks a Prominent Entrance**
Only one entrance currently exists, which limits connectivity. The existing entrance does not convey a strong sense of arrival and does not inform visitors on what to do and where things are.
- **There's a Lake Here?**
Moon Lake is perhaps the site's largest issue and opportunity. Visitors can't see the lake from the park and there is no lake access. However, surface water conditions (eutrophication) may limit uses during certain times of year.
- **Inconsistent Use**
Moon Lake Park gets heavy use during events, but is less used during other times. With the exception of the trail and the Rotary Pavilion, this is primarily a large, open space for sporting activities. Trees are primarily limited to areas along the trail and lake. Given the Park's size, there are few other amenities (e.g., places to sit or eat, Wi-Fi, lighting, garbage cans) that encourage visitors to linger, mingle, or hold events, such as family reunions, weddings, and fundraisers.

Opportunities

- **The Size**
The Park's size offers opportunities for many types of active and passive uses, such as the shelter, ADA-compliant playground, and the east-side walking trails envisioned in the Rice Lake Outdoor Recreation Plan. During the placemaking event, residents envisioned that these activities be year-round, including grooming the trails for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. If needed, some field sport areas can be temporary in order to allow flexibility of more diverse uses. Longer-term, the general area may be appropriate for a youth sports complex.
- **Connections**
Planned residential development to the west provides a great opportunity to increase the Park's visibility and connections, including a possible new entrance. Public art, possibly developed with campus assistance, could be used as "breadcrumbs" to enhance these connections. Additional public art, wayfinding, and directional signage can extend into and through Moon Lake Park, instead of terminating such breadcrumbs at the park entrance.



c. Community Entrances

U.S. Highway 53 accommodates between 8,000 and 10,000 vehicle trips in an average day. The project steering committee asked that the placemaking event include a discussion on how to enhance the community's two entrances off of USH 53:

- **“North Entrance”** (W. Knapp Street/STH 48) - This stretch of highway hosts 9,900 vehicles in an average day. Due to topography and landownership, current welcome signage in this area is not located near the USH 53 intersection, but farther east without the best visibility. This entrance was described during the workshop as being more local.
- **“South Entrance”** (18 ½ Avenue/CTH “0”) - 13,100 vehicles travel through the area just east of the USH 53 intersection in an average day. The welcome sign here is visible from the east roundabout, but becomes somewhat lost in the visual clutter. Arguably, this entrance may be more important given its convenience to visitors from the higher population centers to the south and the “anywhere USA” impression of the general area.



During the workshop, much of the discussion focused on welcome signage, since both areas were primarily auto-centric. The current welcome signs do have a nice design; and the south entrance sign is very visible, though it can become lost among other nearby signs. However, both are aging, with limited landscaping; some upkeep concerns were noted. And, currently, no feature or sign gives a lasting impression or message as one leaves the community.

Most attendees envisioned that the two entrances should be similar or alike, though it may be appropriate to vary size or landscaping depending on context. Community members identified the following primary functions or purposes of the entrances:

- welcoming
- “shake the hand” of visitors
- give a first & last impression
- provide direction or wayfinding
- reinforce a community brand
- provide an unforgettable identity
- demonstrate uniqueness; not anywhere USA
- attract business investment and new residents

An intriguing suggestion was to establish the primary community entrances visible from USH 53, so all travelers would see what Rice Lake is about and encourage them to stop. Attendees also discussed balancing the expenses for such an entrance feature with the need to make a big statement that differentiates the City and attracts new investment. One suggestion was to seek corporate sponsor(s) to help fund such features.

During the follow-up meeting in September, each attendee was asked to select the three characteristics that they would most like to see for the two entrances. The following characteristics received votes:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| • landscaped and illuminated at night (17 votes) | • add directional/attractive wood signage (3) |
| • make a big statement; “wow” visitors; high impact; substantial (15) | • convey what we’re about (3) |
| • provide biking/walking trail connections (11) | • keep it simple and uncluttered (3) |
| • establish/move the primary entrances so they are visible from USH 53 (8) | • low maintenance and well maintained (2) |
| • digital billboard for events, welcome messages, etc. (8) | • wood-carved statues (1) |
| • fix, clean-up, and maintain existing signs and landscaping (4) | • taller, standalone feature (1) |
| | • keep new version of logo; use a common logo (1) |

d. Linkages

Linkages help communities capitalize on existing destinations by encouraging people to walk and/or bike between places like their homes, downtown Rice Lake, Moon Lake Park, and the WITC/UW-BC campus. This visual and activity-based “bread-crumb trail” must provide safe and convenient access for people of all ages and abilities, especially for those who do not drive.

Linkages can be formed and strengthened through visual cues, such as unified streetscape treatments, signage, wayfinding, pavement treatments, designated bike routes with signage, and accentuating the sight-lines between key destinations. But activities and amenities between key destinations are also important to strengthening linkages, such as store window treatments, outdoor shopping/dining areas, public art, street furniture, informational signage, drinking fountains, etc. Clustering such amenities along routes will promote your breadcrumb trail.

Connecting Rice Lake

Improving linkages and connections was a constant theme throughout Rice Lake’s placemaking workshop, as reflected in the previous sub-sections. Recommendations to improve linkages included the following:

General or City Wide

- more consistent signage and wayfinding systems, “themes” and naming
- establish web-based maps or an app that shows different routes (e.g., history, bike, running, birding) modeled after the MapMyRun.com
- improve ATV route connections within the City

Nodes 1 (Downtown Bridge)

- extend east-west trail under/over the Main St. bridge
- make the bridge ped/bike friendly; add color
- add trail signage (historic-themed), seating, new steps
- walking access to Knapp-Stout Park via railroad bridge
- trim trees for better visibility of Theatre

Node 2-3 (Downtown)

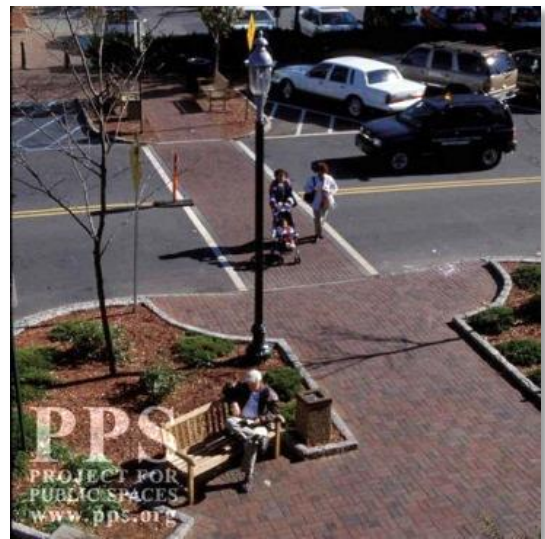
- improve visibility to lake (signage, cut trees)
- “breadcrumb trail” to lake (e.g. blue-colored sidewalks, local artist to carve caricatures from trees)
- connect Cedar Side Trail to Main Street
- repave sidewalks and make more inviting (e.g., potted plants, seating, wooden directional signage)
- traffic calming on Main Street
- address vacant storefronts

Node 4 (Veterans Memorial Park)

- add bike/walking pathways along lake and
- improve lake access (dock, etc.)
- better/more striking signage for the park
- “breadcrumb trail” from Main Street
- one resident envisioned a one-way “lakeshore drive” between the Moose and Old Hospital with walking/biking lanes, summer activities, restaurant, etc.

Node 5 (Campus Area Trail/Park)

- establish clear entrances to the trail and park area



Curb extensions or curb bulbs, pavement treatments, and diagonal parking are among a number of traffic calming tools that can make downtowns safer, quieter, and more attractive, while offering landscaping opportunities. And the slower traffic means that storefronts get more exposure time.

- ASAP install signage, lighting, and art to and along the trail/park area, as well as between the campuses
- improved visibility of the River through selective brush clearing
- connections to the new South Street development will be needed, as well as to rest of the City

Node 6 (“SS” & “O” Intersection)

- the node, the entire trail system, and the different trail segments need names and identities
- wayfinding and directional signage for drivers and trail users
- matching landscaping on both sides of Main Street
- Lemler extension presents good opportunity to better connect to residences and Moon Lake Park

Node 7 (Moon Lake Park)

- create a more prominent entrance (e.g., large sign)
- use art as a breadcrumb to connect to other destinations, including a strong connection to the Highways “SS” & “O” intersection.

Rice Lake Bike and Pedestrian Plan

Adopted in 2011, this Plan further supports many of the findings and recommendations from the placemaking workshop, including:

General Recommendations

- more bike storage; visible and sheltered if possible
- signals that detect bikes
- trail lighting & signage

Nodes 1-3 (Downtown)

- Main Street is a barrier for walking and biking
- construct curb extensions and crosswalk treatments
- walking signal priority
- converging trails at bridge (Node 1)
- warning signs/overhead flashers at bridge (Node 1)
- add Messenger Street bike lane (Node 2)

Node 4 (Veterans Memorial Park)

- construct/extend lakeside trail east of the Park

Node 5 (Campus Area)

- existing trail along river
- planned sidewalk
- connections proposed

Node 6 (“SS” & “O” Intersection)

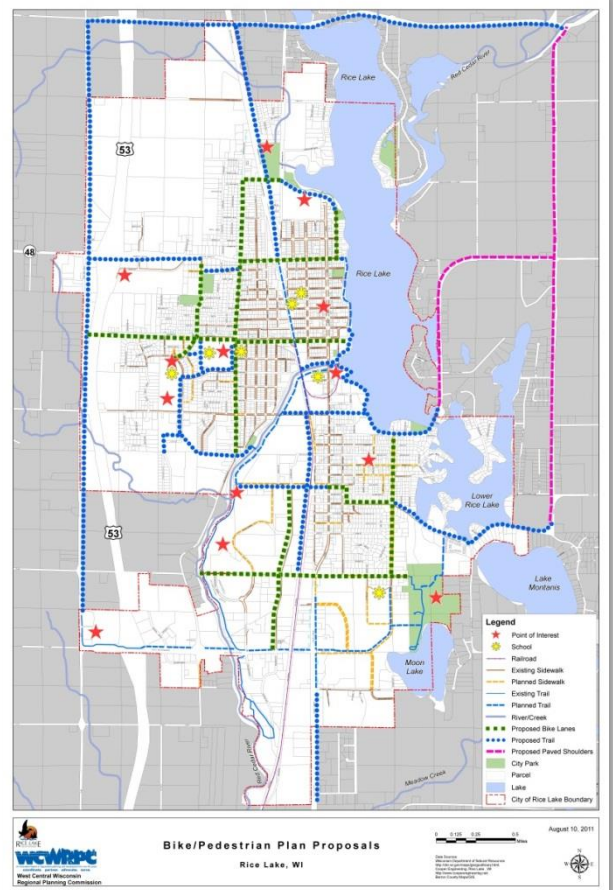
- develop planned trail intersection

Node 7 (Moon Lake Park)

- planned trails
- bike route connection and overall bike & pedestrian connectivity to larger community

Community Entrances

- extend and improve visibility of walking and biking connections
- provide better welcoming and wayfinding signage



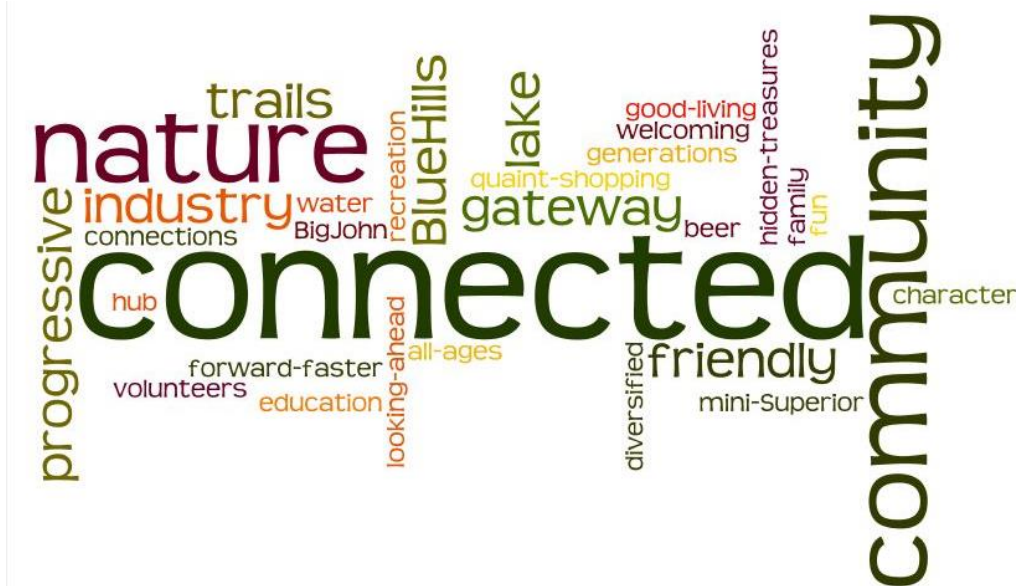
IV. Creating a Unique Rice Lake

Great places build upon local assets and identity; they do not attempt to be something they are not. Identifying unique attributes and creating a vision can provide valuable guidance when evaluating placemaking strategies. In addition to placemaking individual nodes, the Rice Lake workshop participants also undertook visioning exercises to identify what is unique about Rice Lake and the desired character of the downtown.

a. A Connected Community

What is Rice Lake's reputation? What makes Rice Lake different than other communities in the Region? What do they say about Rice Lake when you are not around? Identifying what makes a community truly unique can become the basis for a theme or brand that can be reflected in public spaces, can be incorporated into the community's culture, and can provide a competitive advantage. However, identifying what is truly unique is not easy, as the workshop participants noted. For instance, Rice Lake has a very nice lake, but many other area communities can say the same (e.g., Chetek, Cumberland, Minoqua, Balsam Lake).

Workshop participants were asked to envision that it is now 2020 and your placemaking is complete. You look around and enjoy what you helped create. Later that day, a friend asks you "what makes Rice Lake unique and a great place to visit and live?" There was no group discussion on the above question. Instead, each participant was asked to write-down a single word or short phrase that best describes what is unique about Rice Lake. The results were used to create the following word cloud of what makes (or could make) Rice Lake unique based on the frequency of similar or identical words.



Participants believed that Rice Lake's connections are what make it most unique, such as:

- Rice Lake is connected to nature, including Rice Lake, the Red Cedar River, and the Blue Hills;
- Rice Lake is connected to the economy, as a regional shopping, cultural, and industrial hub;
- Rice Lake is connected for travelers, as the gateway to the northwoods along USH 53;
- Rice Lake is connected to its people, as a friendly place to live, work, learn, and play; and,
- Rice Lake is connected to its history, while progressively looking ahead to its future.

A resident unable to attend the workshop provided written comments that, perhaps, best fit here. The Rice Lake area has a rich American Indian history (pipestone quarries, Song of Hiawatha, mounds, wild rice) that is unique. However, this history is not well promoted for tourism; and the City currently lacks a location where these stories and videos can be presented.

It was not the intent of the workshop exercise to create a clear consensus on a community brand. Such an effort requires a market analysis, focus groups, and additional community discussion. However, the results do suggest that highlighting and enhancing these many connections are very important to Rice Lake's future.

b. A Vibrant, Friendly, Connected Downtown

During the workshop, the five downtown teams for Nodes 1, 2, and 3 brainstormed and prioritized their ideas to the following questions:

What image or character should the downtown convey?

What should be the “feel” or identity of downtown Rice Lake?

The downtown team ideas were then compiled by WCWRPC staff. At the end of the workshop, each workshop participant was asked to individually select three characteristics they would most like to see for downtown Rice Lake or what image/feel should downtown Rice Lake convey.

Desired Downtown Characteristics	Workshop Votes
Lights/Vibrant/Colorful/Bright	25
Friendly to Younger Age Groups (20s – 30s)	20
“Breadcrumb Trail” from Lake to Downtown	14
Welcome/Friendly/Warm	13
Connections to Both Sides of the Dam and River	12
Logging Theme	12
Beer/Brewery/Brew Pub	9
Artwork	7
Outdoor Café	6
Outdoor Activities	6
Wi-Fi	5
Seating	4
Flowers/Greenery/Natural Landscaping	4
Consistent Signage	4
Not Stop, But Stay	4
Parking	3
Old Creamery	2
Interesting	1
Culture	1
Lessen the Distraction from Business	1
Humor	1
Birchwood	1
Identified by the Downtown Teams as desired, but not receiving votes: Accessibility, Modern, Energy, Tiles/Mosaic	

The above characteristics suggest potential priorities for downtown-related strategies and improvements. Two of the top five suggested that strengthening linkages to the Lake and River as critical to the downtown's image. Many of the above also would assist in creating a more inviting place for younger adults, such as lights, colorful, artwork, brewery/brew pub, outdoor activities, trail connections, and Wi-Fi. A clear consensus on specific style was not the purpose of the exercise, though the “logging theme” did garner twelve votes, while “humor” received one vote and “modern” received no votes. Could downtown Rice Lake be the first to use area artists to create a fresh, unique logging “theme” that brings together color, lights, and wood in a playful, highly stylized, functional, interactive, and more modern way? Regardless, the character, style, or “theme” for the downtown, wayfinding, and community entrances must be authentic. Again, as discussed during the workshop, “do not attempt to be something you are not.”

V. Action Plan

The previous sections summarized the workshop results, as well as how the results were attained. These results provided the participant consensus upon which the recommendations found within this section were developed.

a. Rice Lake General Placemaking Goals

The diversity of the seven nodes in terms of uses, characteristics, and location made it challenging to identify over-arching themes and goals for locations. However, the following themes were most prevalent:

1. IMPROVE AND CREATE CONNECTIONS, WAYFINDING, AND GATEWAYS

Improving and creating connections, directional signage, gateways, and other “breadcrumbs” for residents and visitors alike was the predominant theme during the workshop.

2. BUILD STRONGER LINKAGES TO THE LAKES AND RIVER

Selectively clear trees and shrubs for better views. Add swinging benches facing the lake. Install a small dock, kayak launch, or other access points. Add blue-colored sidewalks between Main Street and the Lake. Include fishing decks at the Main Street bridge. From such ideas, it is clear that residents want to visually and physically “touch” the City’s river and lakes.

3. ALL PLACES SHOULD BE PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY AND “STICKY”

Seating, lighting, landscaping, and traffic calming were among the numerous recommendations that would create places that are inviting, “sticky,” and put people first.

4. MORE THINGS TO DO FOR ALL AGES

Adding more things to do and programming, especially for younger adults, was another common theme for many of the nodes. In part due to the diversity of nodes, “more things to do” was identified as a need and goal, but specific activities were not decided upon. In many cases, additional community dialogue will be needed to evaluate and determine these activities.

5. EVERYONE MUST GET INVOLVED

The action plan is based on the many great ideas that were identified during the workshop. Many lighter, quicker, cheaper (LQC) strategies can be accomplished quickly with limited resources. However, the overall vision for each node will not be realized without partnerships and volunteerism. The City cannot do it all. Individuals, organizations, businesses, and other partners will need to work cooperatively to make it happen. And community champions will need to step-up and take a leadership role to help maintain energy and focus. Rice Lake has many potential partners who can help realize this vision.



b. Next Steps

The following are specific action items based on the top recommendations for each node as identified by the workshop participants. Many additional great ideas and potential guidance can be found in the previous sections. In some cases, the community may need to perform additional study and research to determine feasibility or how best to implement a recommendation. Priorities are relative and may change based on available resources.

	Recommendations	Priority	Potential Resources
General	Implement City Outdoor Recreation Plan.	ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • see plan
	Implement City Bike & Pedestrian Plan.	ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • see plan & Section III.d.
	Further investigate the interest and value in creating a “Friends of Rice Lake Parks & Trails” group to coordinate volunteer efforts for fundraising, volunteerism, planning, installation of new amenities, and maintenance.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Parks Board • City Community Svcs Dept • Chamber • everyone
	Integrate placemaking recommendations into City Comprehensive Plan update.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Plan Commission to take lead
	Evaluate and determine the most appropriate mix of pedestrian safety and traffic calming at Nodes #1, #2, #3, and #6, such as reduced speed limits, curb extensions, signalization, crosswalks, etc.	short- to long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City • Barron Co. Highway Dept • Create a task force to examine and recommend
	Improve linkages and wayfinding along trails, downtown, and throughout the community, as discussed previously in the Linkages sub-section.	varies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local artists • businesses • City Community Svcs Dept
Node #1: Downtown Bridge Area	Reconstruct the new Main Street bridge with ped/bike improvements (signalized crosswalk, pavement treatment, designated lanes), color/aesthetics, seating, light posts, fishing deck w/ appropriate height railings, quieter surface, and welcome archway.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barron County • local artists • artist contest for the archway
	Convert S.E. parking area to a gathering space with the relocated gazebo, food park, places to sit, swings (musical?), and amenities.	short-term (Phase I) short- to long-term (Phase II)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County has ok'd Phase I • Main Street Association • Rotary final approval of gazebo relocation needed • artists for murals being sought
	Phase I: Group agreed to pursue grant application to move gazebo, add murals to metal building by dam, clean up of chain-link fence, and native plantings. Will be implement ASAP with plantings in in Spring 2015. Phase II: Additional places to sit, food park, signage, and additional amenities and landscaping. Initial priorities are installation of garbage cans (themed), benches, tables, and grills along river trail.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food vendors • City Community Svcs Dept • community groups • approach County with Phase II • donors/sponsors
	Create a more passive garden or historical park (and potentially a winter park) at Knapp-Stout Park. Relocate steam engine as needed. Add a Little Free Library. Address aesthetics of nearby buildings. Add more places to sit.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master Gardeners • Chamber of Commerce • 4-H & SVC Clubs
	Trim trees to improve the Theatre's visibility. Identify costs and funding sources, if needed.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theatre • City Public Works
	Connect River/Lake trail under or over the Main Street bridge then east to Forestry Museum and across old railroad bridge to Knapp-Stout Park.	short- to long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County • City Community Svcs Dept • railroad bridge owner

	Improve fishing amenities at the bridge, near dam, and on the old railroad bridge.	short- to long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walleye League • WDNR • railroad bridge owner
	Convert Holsum Park to parking and a trailhead.	long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Community Svcs Dept • adjacent landowner
	Improve the River trail with amenities, such as light posts, benches, decorative permanent garbage containers, historical/wayfinding signage, BBQ pits/grills, and more colorful features.	long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Community Svcs Dept • County • National Honor Society
Nodes #2 & #3: Downtown	Continue with the placemaking amenities and activities of the library green area development.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • library
	Address the appearance of Birchwood Manufacturing parking lots and Aquafest Grounds through tile mosaic, landscaping, and façade and screening improvements.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birchwood Manufacturing • Chamber of Commerce • Aquafest venue as fundraising
	Create more attractive sidewalks and pedestrian envelope by weeding, installing flower pots, and replacing/trimming/adding trees. Add public art, seating, and pavement treatments with color and logo. More places to sit, perhaps with a 4-season awning or roof, is an additional need.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Street Association • City • business owners • service clubs
	Improve visibility of downtown businesses through tree-trimming and signage. Allow well-designed perpendicular signs, like in the historic photos. If needed, revisit and update City sign standards.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City • business owners • local sign companies
	<p>Fill vacant stores. Look at what other places are doing and <u>create a strategy</u>. Some ideas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Until new tenants are identified, use art, historical displays, etc., to avoid empty windows; keep it interesting and maintain downtown continuity for pedestrians. • Develop & maintain a list of available properties, along with structural needs and space profiles. • Identify any supply/demand gaps in current retail market and match to vacant buildings. • Compile list of resources that can assist new business owners (e.g., financing, façade loans, tax credits, mentors). • Obtain owner permission to market the list. • 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. • Continue to market the entire downtown. • Redevelop a building as a small business incubator or encourage other services/organizations to locate downtown. • Identify a vacant building that may be appropriate for redevelopment as a brewery with tap room or brew pub, then market as an opportunity. • Support and attract more entertainment businesses, programming, and events downtown. • Explore a program that will allow the temporary display and retail of local arts and crafts in unleased stores. 	short- to long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City (e.g., TIF) • County EDC & WCWRPC • Main Street Association • business advisors/mentors • local artists, historians, etc. • WITC/UWBC/Schools • entrepreneurs

	<p><u>Develop a downtown building maintenance work group</u> to pursue a mix of strategies to encourage building maintenance. Strategies could potentially include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise the existing façade loan program and historic tax credits. • Establish a local maintenance revolving loan fund or tax credit program. • Schedule a Downtown “Clean-Up” Weekend • Conduct seminars on building maintenance encourage residential occupancy on upper floors. • Enforce building codes. 	short- to long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • property owners • tax credits and façade loans • banks/CRA credits • City • volunteers
	Enhance or restore the beach/beach house area. This could be in coordinated with the improved water access and docks envisioned in Node #4 below.	long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDNR grants • City Community Svcs Dept • services clubs
	Create an indoor children’s recreational area.	long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • foundations/grants
	Add modern lighting or illumination. Add roof-line lighting on buildings.	long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • property owners • contractors & utilities • City
Node #4: Veterans Memorial Park	Add more comfortable seating, especially facing the Lake.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boy Scouts • local schools • local business sponsors
	Build upon “Music in the Park” by offering and promoting music and other acts and amenities that are of interest to younger adults and by encouraging downtown businesses to stay open later on event nights.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music in the Park organizers • Main Street Association
	Make various Park improvements, such as replacing sidewalks, adding bike racks, refurbishing the bandshell, and replacing the play equipment. Implement the City’s Outdoor Recreation Plan.	ongoing; see ORP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Community Svcs Dept
	Install water access/docks. Offer bike and kayak rentals. This could be part of the enhancement or restoration of the former beach and beach house (see Node #3) or a new replacement structure.	long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • colleges • Grinders • Lake Protection District
	Improve signage to the park and create a prominent park entrance over Douglas where it meets Main Street.	long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City
	Create a bike/walking trail along the Lake.	long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Community Svcs Dept • civic groups, Kiwanis
	Improved lighting and illumination along sidewalks and especially within the Park.	long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • utilities and City
Node #5: Campus area, especially along the River	Identify and develop the green spaces along the trail, which should be renamed as Cedar Side Park and Trail. Treat it more like a nature-based park, with the trail as a fitness amenity. Promote this as a destination.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City • WITC & UWBC • UWBC Foundation
	Landscaping and selective tree/ brush cutting along the Trail. It is very important that cutting is selective in order to allow better views of the Red Cedar River, yet maintain the overall natural beauty and character of this asset. Contact groups responsible for trail maintenance in Fall 2014.	short-term; should be done Fall 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master Gardeners • WDNR • City & County Foresters • local nurseries

	Encourage campus activities (e.g., learning, artistic, study, recreational) to “spill out” onto the green space and Trail. Support and help promote UWBC Foundation’s U-Fest . Renovate and utilize the UWBC amphitheatre. Create public art pads for sculpture.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UWBC & WITC • UWBC Foundation • County
	Identify and create welcoming entrances with wayfinding for the Cedar Side Park and Trail. Unified signage along the Trail and to indicate that the Trail and River are adjacent to the campuses is essential.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public utilities • Barron County • WITC/UWBC staff and students
	<p>Improve wayfinding and create visual linkages in the green space in the heart of UWBC and WITC to help unify the campuses to the Cedar Side Park and Trail and to connect all of Node 5 to the rest of the City. This strategy includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install trail and park directional, educational, and interpretative signage. • Strategically locate additional visual breadcrumbs that add interest and comfort, such as public art and benches. • Signage should unified and consistent between the campuses and along the Cedar Side Park and Trail, and fit into an overall City wayfinding system. 	short- and long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WITC & UWBC • Rice Lake High School • Charter School • City • grantwriting • faculty and students at both campuses to design & create signage, benches, public art, etc.
	Install lighting along the Trail.	long-term, but ASAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • utilities • solar lighting grant • civic groups
	Continue with plans to better connect the Cedar Side Park and Trail to the South Street development.	long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UWBC & WITC • Craig/Dean • County
Node #6: Highways “SS” & “O” Intersection	Identify a Rice Lake organization or champion that will adopt this node and follow-up on these placemaking ideas.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a placemaking coordination committee that can provide such oversight
	“Sell” adjacent landowners and tenants on the value and business case of placemaking enhancements. Identify the best strategy for approaching key properties.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barron County EDC • WCWRPC
	Lower speed limits through the area. Consider a roundabout. Increase police presence.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City • County • Wisconsin DOT
	Add directional signage and other wayfinding for the directions to other destinations (e.g., downtown, dog park), as well as signage for the trail.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WI Tourism • City • grants • “Adopt-a-Trail” sections • Tourism & Retail Development Commission
	Hold a contest to establish an identity and name for this area. Then, create/install signage or features that reflect this identity. Create a very prominent, unique feature that will contribute to the identity and offer a visual “guide post” to travelers.	short-term, then longer-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mall • BW • Goldridge • Gordy’s

	Establish pocket parks, green spaces, and/or other points of interest on all four corners that enhance the intersection's identity and recreates the intersection as a major "entry" and welcoming point to the City. Consider establishing a satellite informational center or kiosk.	long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • business/land owners • tax credits • stormwater credits for green, onsite infiltration • Chamber
	Retrofit nearby parking lots to extend pedestrian and bike connections, while adding landscaping and other features that reflect the intersection's identity and enhances other parking lot uses (e.g., markets, car shows).	long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mall, businesses, & landowners • Farmer's Market • other event coordinators
Node #7: Moon Lake Park	Cut trees and shrubs to increase visibility of the lake.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City • volunteers
	Add more seating, picnic tables, and another shelter, including near the lake.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City • donations • Kiwanis Club
	Install path lighting and maintain the trail during winter for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.	short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fundraising at the Park • Kiwanis Club
	Establish lake access for non-motorized watercraft and fishing.	long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDNR grant •
	Develop a more prominent entrance to the Park with large signage or archway. Use art to create a breadcrumb trail from the CTH "OO" & "S" intersection.	long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WITC/UWBC • Masons • woodworking students • artists/art students
	Provide Wi-Fi service.	long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undetermined
	Add more landscaping, plantings, art features, and general beautification to break-up the large open spaces into "rooms" and offer more things of interest. Provide wayfinding and directional signage between these points of interest.	long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Community Svcs Dept • Kiwanis Club
	Develop a Youth Sports Complex at the Park or nearby.	long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaborative effort
	Implement the improvements envisioned in the City's Outdoor Recreation Plan, including a new playground and east-side walking trails.	varies; see ORP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Community Svcs Dept

c. Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper (LQC) & Initial Priorities

Taking action and showing accomplishment can build momentum and lead to bigger things. The placemaking exercises and this report are a great first step. All respondents (100%) to the evaluation distributed at the 8/15/14 follow-up meeting agreed or strongly agreed that:

- As a result of this project, my awareness of the factors which make great public places has significantly increased.
- The Placemaking Action Plan includes a variety of strategies that would greatly improve key public places in Rice Lake.
- I am now more likely to volunteer to help implement placemaking activities, compared to six months ago.

One way to get a quick start to implementing your placemaking action plan is to focus on lighter, quicker, cheaper (LQC) projects and activities that can be accomplished fast and won't "break the bank." Putting a mechanism in place to coordinate implementation is one LQC action that can yield large dividends.

For example, during the follow-up meeting, participants identified the need for an oversight committee or work group to finalize and coordinate implementation of the various placemaking action items. This approach will provide a single entity to champion the placemaking plan, foster communication, leverage resources, and promote volunteerism. The Chamber will take the initial lead in bringing the committee together, with representation from various community organizations, the City, and other stakeholders.

Related to project coordination, another idea was to establish a web page or web-based coordinating portal for the City's placemaking efforts, projects, and volunteer opportunities. Another related suggestion is to conduct a node sign-up meeting during which individuals and groups can volunteer to work on specific projects or nodes, thereby narrowing focus, while increasing commitment and sense of ownership (and maybe even some positive competition).

Additional LQC and initial priority suggestions identified by participants during the follow-up meeting included:

- establish a consistent, city-wide "theme" for wayfinding/signage, naming places, etc.
- install quality, visually-appealing garbage cans by the bridge
- implement the bridge area projects (grant to move gazebo, plantings, & murals; new bridge)
- clean-up and maintenance of downtown buildings
- tree trimming
- coordinate with Gordy's on Node #6 action items
- need to do one signature project to see end result; this is incentive to move to another
- use the press and public relations; continue to engage the public on the placemaking plan and projects
- name the entire trail system and use it in wayfinding, maps, smartphone apps, etc.



The City of Rice Lake is already benefiting from some of the ideas generated and discussed during the placemaking exercises. Action is being taken to coordinate with Barron County and to pursue grant dollars to make improvements in the Main Street bridge area (e.g., moving the gazebo, murals, plantings). Concurrently, the design of the new Main Street bridge is moving forward. The Rotary Club is installing playground equipment at Moon Lake Park. JCI-Rice Lake plans to use the placemaking ideas from this initiative to direct their future plans and projects, such as the installation of fitness stations at Moon

Lake Park. And the UW-Barron County Foundation will be hosting U-Fest next year, which will include festival activities in the green space between the river and campus buildings, as envisioned in this plan. These are just a few examples. While some of these activities have been planned independently of this placemaking initiative, they very much compliment the assessments, goals, and recommendations within this report.

VI. MANAGING YOUR PUBLIC SPACES

Public spaces that have the four key placemaking attributes do not occur by accident. While the appropriate design and physical features of the space are important, proper management is even more critical to their ongoing success. The principal public space management tasks are:

MAINTENANCE: The more used and loved a public space is, the more maintenance it requires. This is especially true for interactive amenities. But regular cleaning and repair of the facility more than repays the cost. Prompt attention to items that could be easily deferred, such as the removal of weeds or graffiti, says that someone is in charge, that the facility is respected, and that the public is protected. Landscaping may require special attention if gardens are extensive, or if rare plants are present.

TREE AND BRUSH TRIMMING: Another part of maintenance is the care of trees and brush. Downtown Rice Lake is blessed with a tree-lined Main Street that offers shade to visitors, provides visual appeal, and softens the hardscape. However, some tree-trimming is needed to improve visibility of signage (e.g., Theatre) and to destinations (the Lake). Selective brush and tree removal (and upkeep) was also noted as a need along the Red Cedar River (Node #5) and at Half Moon Lake (Node #7) in order to improve access and views.

SECURITY AND HOSPITALITY: If a space is well-designed and active, security can be comforting without being intrusive. Active public spaces are to a large extent self-policing. The more people feel secure in a space, the more users the space attracts, and the more secure the space will be. Security guards and maintenance workers who are friendly, informed, and helpful can make people feel “hosted” and “welcomed,” without feeling the need to be “protected.”

PROGRAMMING: “Programming” refers to the wide variety of planned activities and to all the facilities and equipment related to them: furnishing the space appropriately, for example, with chairs or tables that can easily be rearranged; operating a program to allow vending carts; producing a small performing arts event or annual beer/wine garden; conducting a historical re-enactment or tours; revolving public art displays; or operating a specialty market. Programming a public space successfully is an entrepreneurial art, but does not necessarily imply intensive staffing. It can be something as simple as providing benches or installing an exhibit. It can also be retail operations that are contracted to vendors, whether with carts, space for an outdoor cafe, or through retail operations in the buildings that open out to the public space. Programming can be undertaken by community organizations (like youth clubs) that may be given the responsibility for operating a portion of or a specific facility within a park.



MARKETING AND PROMOTION: Promoting the events and activities that take place in the public space is an important adjunct to programming, particularly for a space being built or programmed for the first time. The most successful public spaces can reach a point where the space is so well-known and sought-after that no marketing is necessary. But for most spaces, and especially early in a new public-space management program, a commitment to marketing and promotion is needed. Like programming, this is an activity that can be contracted out or provided by a downtown improvement organization as part of the publicity for a larger district.

VII. RESOURCES

The following is a brief overview of potential technical, funding, and partnership resources that the City of Rice Lake can use during the implementation of its placemaking strategy. **This list is a supplement to those partnership resources identified in the action plan.** This list is also meant to be a starting point, and is not inclusive of all potential resources. For questions regarding this resource list and other funding opportunities, please contact West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

- **West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's Plan Implementation Guide for West Central Wisconsin:** wcrpc.org/Regional_Comp_Plan/Plan_Implementation_Guide.pdf; Information about enhancing and managing public spaces in both a local and regional context.
- **Project for Public Spaces, Inc.:** www.pps.org; Seminal information from the experts of placemaking.
- **Partners for Livable Communities:** www.livable.com; Information from a non-profit organization promoting quality of life, economic development, and social equity.
- **Wisconsin Main Street Program:** <http://wedc.org/mainstreet>; A comprehensive revitalization program designed to promote the historic and economic redevelopment of traditional business districts in Wisconsin. Annually communities join the program and receive technical support and training needed to restore their Main Streets to centers of community activity and commerce.
- **Barron County Economic Development Corporation:** <http://barroncounty.com>; Provides local communities and businesses economic assistance and coordination.
- **Congress for the New Urbanism:** www.cnu.org; A leading organization promoting walkable, mixed-use neighborhood development, sustainable communities and healthier living conditions.
- **Federal Highway Administration:** http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/speedmgt/traffic_calm.cfm; The FHA maintains a traffic calming website that includes a searchable library of reports and a link to the Institute of Transportation Engineers traffic calming seminar's toolbox of traffic calming measures.
- **Artists in Storefronts:** <http://www.artistsinstorefronts.com>; This website provides ideas on how to use art to help revitalize or add energy to vacant storefronts.
- **University of Wisconsin-Extension:** <http://fyi.uwex.edu/downtown-market-analysis/>; UWEX maintains a web-based Downtown and Business District Market Analysis toolkit with economic development data, studies, and guidance.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- **Wisconsin Department of Transportation:** Transportation programming efforts in Wisconsin are largely coordinated or funded through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), including the distribution of federal transportation assistance dollars. Key programs that could be utilized for the development of nearby road or bridge improvements are listed below.
 - General Transportation Aids return about 30% of all state-collected transportation revenues to local governments for road construction, maintenance, and other related costs.
 - Local Roads and Local Bridge Improvement Programs assist local governments in improving seriously deteriorating roads and bridges.
 - The Surface Transportation Program uses allocated federal funds for the improvement of federal-aid-eligible rural and urban roads and streets.

- The Traffic Signing and Marking Enhancement Grants Program provides funds to local governments for signage improvements to improve visibility for elderly drivers and pedestrians.
- The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) allocates federal funds to transportation improvement projects that “expand travel choice, strengthen the local economy, improve the quality of life, and protect the environment.” Eligible projects include trail facilities, overlooks, safe-routes-to-school, and viewing areas.
- **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)** provides technical assistance, assessment support, and funding to local governments for shoreland management and outdoor recreation activities, including trails, paths, routes, and other infrastructure for related alternative modes of transportation, such as biking, walking/hiking, canoeing/kayaking, and boating. Some programs that the City may want to consider include:
 - Local Assistance Stewardship Grant Program includes five grant programs for nature-based recreational activities: Aids for the Acquisition and Development of Local Parks (ADLP); Urban Green Space (UGS) grants; Urban Rivers (UR) grants; Acquisition of Development Rights (ADR); Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF); and Recreational Trails Act (RTA).
 - Clean Water Fund Program funds are available to protect water quality by correcting existing wastewater treatment and urban storm water problems and preventing future problems. Eligible projects include construction of treatment works, sewer systems, interceptors, and urban stormwater runoff treatment systems. Low-interest loans are available for planning, design, and construction of wastewater treatment projects and urban storm water runoff projects approved by the Department.
 - River Management and Planning Grants River management and planning grants are available from the WDNR for various river protection and conservation efforts.
- **Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)** nurtures business growth and job creation in Wisconsin by providing resources, technical support, and financial assistance to companies, partners and the communities they serve. Programs that could potential provide financial assistance for downtown revitalization and placemaking efforts include the Community Development Investment Grant Program, Connect Communities Program, and Main Street Program.
- **Wisconsin Department of Administration:** <http://doa.wi.gov/section.asp?linkid=242&locid=173>; Manages Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs for economic development, community development planning and infrastructure improvements.
- **Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Association (WHEDA):** www.wheda.com; Resources to help families and small businesses.
- **Tax Incremental Financing (TIF)** can help a municipality undertake a public project to stimulate beneficial development or redevelopment that would not otherwise occur. It is a mechanism for financing local economic development projects in underdeveloped and blighted areas. Taxes generated by the increased property values pay for land acquisition or needed public works.
- **West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission & Regional Business Fund, Inc.** provides information on pertinent funding sources and grant writing support including the downtown façade loan program.
- **USDA-Rural Development** has financial programs supporting essential public facilities and services like community centers, water and sewer systems, housing, health clinics, emergency service facilities and electric and telephone service.
- **National Endowment for the Arts** has grants available to fund the creation of art and creative placemaking projects, specifically with the Art Works and Our Town grants.

OTHER FUNDRAISING AND/OR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The City of Rice Lake is blessed with many interest groups and civic-minded residents and businesses. Involving a diversity of stakeholders early during any design and development process will not only result in a better design, but can be crucial to fundraising efforts and future programming support. The following are a few of the many potential partners and the roles which they may play:

- In cooperation with the City, the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Association, Tourism Commission, and Barron County Economic Development Corporation are four local champions who can bring together community partners to identify specific resources for each action plan recommendations.
- Local businesses and interest groups could all be called upon to assist with fundraising and programming efforts.
- Property owners and nearby residents are often vital to successful implementation, programming and upkeep of public places. Many of the recommendation involve City-owned park land, which requires coordination with the City Community Services Department. Barron County has a role given their ownership of highway rights-of-way and property adjacent to the dam. Other strategies involve land owned by private businesses, UW-BC and CVTC, to name a few.
- UW-Barron County, CVTC, and the Rice Lake School District were frequently mentioned as potential sources of expertise in artistic design, arts programming, and fabrication.
- Sponsorships and other fundraising methods could be considered (e.g., adopt-a-bench, corporate-named fishing deck or dock).
- There are a variety of programming and events with which existing organizations, school groups, clubs, and church groups can assist. For example, JCI Rice Lake (Jaycees) intends to utilize the placemaking ideas within this report to guide their own future community plans and activities.
- The Chronotype, community television, school/campus newsletters, and other local media can assist in advertising events and volunteer opportunities.

The above list is intended as a sampling of the many potential partners and is not inclusive of all of the organizations that could (or should) be involved in the further planning, development, and programming of public places in Rice Lake.





WEST CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
800 WISCONSIN STREET, SUITE D2-401 MAIL BOX 9
RICE LAKE, WI 54703-3606
PHONE: (715) 836-2918



PROJECT FOR PUBLIC SPACES
419 LAFAYETTE STREET, FL 7
NEW YORK, NY 10003
PHONE: (212) 620-5660