



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

March 2023

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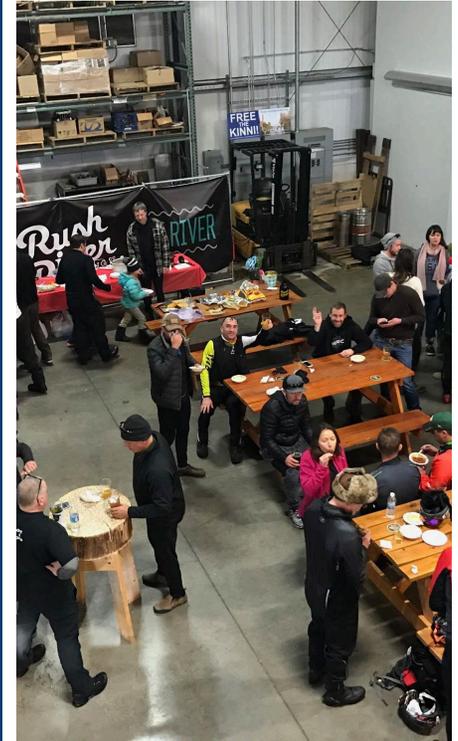
**The Community**



**Community Stakeholders**



**Regional Partners**



PREPARED BY  
**SRF Consulting Group, Inc.**

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## WHAT IS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The Focus River Falls Comprehensive Plan sets out a vision for the next 20 years of growth within the community. The plan was developed through an extensive community outreach process and is intended to serve as a guide for citywide decision making. It identifies short, medium, and long-term actions, which will allow the community to achieve its intended goals. Cities, including River Falls, are ever-changing and evolving over time, therefore it is important for River Falls to pursue a plan that sets up a framework to allow the City to respond and adjust to community trends and changing priorities.

The plan is divided into two sections:

**1 The Comprehensive Plan** serves as the community’s guiding document for investment and growth decision making and contains eleven chapters, including an introduction, plan goals, eight specific elements, and an implementation plan. The plan includes six overarching goals that reach across multiple topic elements that are intended to describe the ideal outcomes for the community. Each topic element includes an overview of background information, discussion of forward-looking priorities, and an introduction to tools to help the city achieve the overarching goals. The eight specific elements include:



Housing



Agricultural,  
Natural, &  
Cultural  
Resources



Economic  
Development



Transportation



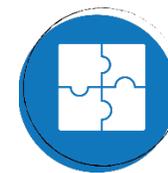
Utilities &  
Community  
Facilities



Land Use



Recreation



Inter-  
governmental  
Cooperation

**2 Technical Memorandums** provide expanded analysis, data, and information related to each chapter in the comprehensive plan. Memos include detailed information such as demographic data, economic analysis, and detailed explanations of tools to assist with plan implementation.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS

As mentioned above, the plan includes a goals chapter, eight topic specific elements, and an implementation plan:



**Chapter 1 – Introduction** provides the reader a guide to the contents of the plan, an overview of the State Smart Growth Legislation, summary of the community engagement process, and key data from the community profile.



**Chapter 2 – Goals and Key Themes** identifies six goals, with associated key themes, that describe the intended outcomes for the City of River Falls. Provided with each goal is information for goal implementation, details on public input related to the goal, and guidance as to how the goal should be incorporated into citywide decision making.



**Chapter 3 – Housing** explores the existing housing stock within the community, gaps in housing types and affordability, and tools for improving and maintaining diverse housing options.



**Chapter 4 – Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources** identifies the various resource types within the community's fabric that shape the identity and sense of place within the community. Recommendations and strategies that support stewardship of these resources are identified, creating opportunities to celebrate the community's history and culture.



**Chapter 5 – Economic Development** explores local River Falls economy and the relationship to the greater economic region. Tools and strategies for supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs and attracting new growth opportunities are identified.



**Chapter 6 – Transportation** reviews mobility options throughout the community across all modes of transportation, and explores strategies for maintaining a connected and accessible community for all. This chapter also builds from the findings of the Bike and Pedestrian Plan.



**Chapter 7 – Utilities and Community Facilities** identifies the infrastructure system that supports existing development and growth opportunities within the community. The City's utility infrastructure, including sewer, water, and electric; emergency services; and other facilities are discussed within the chapter.



**Chapter 8 – Land Use** explores strategies and policies to guide growth and development within the community. Growth strategies include outward growth and redevelopment opportunities that allow for reinvestment of existing infrastructure. Specifically, this chapter will guide the location and density of various development types or land uses.

## Chapter 1: Introduction



**Chapter 9 – Recreation** supports indoor and outdoor recreation considerations for the community and supports the findings of the Outdoor Recreation Plan.



**Chapter 10 – Intergovernmental Cooperation** identifies existing and potential partnerships with local, regional, and state agencies and organizations that will support the community's actions and investments.



**Chapter 11 – Implementation** identifies new policies, programs, regulatory actions, and guidance that were identified in the exploration and analysis of each plan element. Tools are identified to support each action, including lead departments, partner agencies, and the benefit of the action.



# Chapter 1: Introduction

## WISCONSIN SMART GROWTH LEGISLATION

According to Wisconsin State Statute 66.1001, commonly referred to as "Smart Growth" legislation, the City of River Falls is required to complete comprehensive planning efforts every 10 years. Under State Statute, comprehensive plans are defined as "a guide to the physical, social, and economic development of a local governmental unit".

Comprehensive plans in Wisconsin are required to address nine distinct and interrelated topics, including: 1) issues and opportunities; 2) housing; 3) transportation; 4) utilities and community facilities; 5) agricultural, natural, and cultural resources; 6) economic development; 7) intergovernmental coordination; 8) land use; and 9) implementation.

The foundation for this plan is built upon the comprehensive planning structure established by the Wisconsin Smart Growth legislation, however, structural differences are included to ensure that the plan fits the needs of the River Falls community.

## Wisconsin Smart Planning Required Elements



## Chapter 1: Introduction

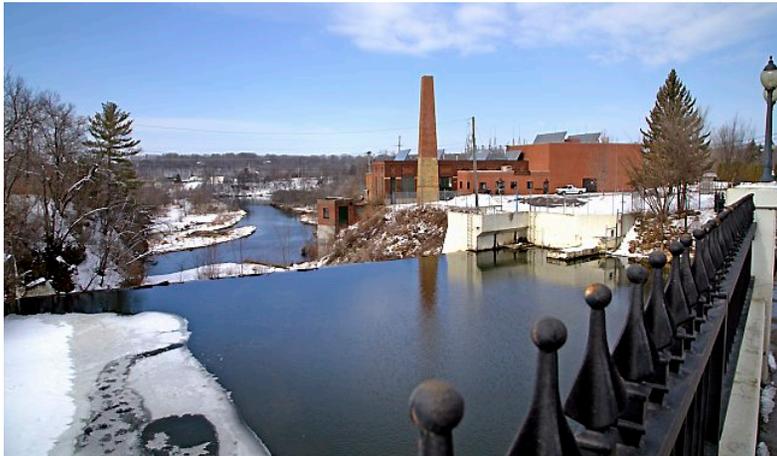
### FOUNDATIONAL PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Through the engagement process, three foundational planning principles were identified. The principles are incorporated throughout the plan and are as follows:

- **Social and Physical Connections** – River Falls residents pride themselves on being an open and welcoming community. This plan seeks to foster those characteristics by enhancing the social and physical connectedness between people.
- **Recreation** – Residents of River Falls have emphasized the importance of the natural resources and recreation opportunities that are available to members of the community. Many aspects of this plan seek to protect, maintain, and enhance these natural areas, while providing members of the community access to these vital resources.
- **Resilience** – Incorporating resilience into planning will help to protect the long-term sustainability of the community. Improving the resilience of infrastructure not only protects quality-of-life for residents, but it will also safeguard the City’s fiscal resources. Resiliency considerations are incorporated throughout the River Falls planning framework.

#### What is “resilience”?

In the context of this plan, resilience is the city’s/community’s ability to endure and recover from unexpected occurrences. For example, a resilient community protects key facilities, services, and infrastructure from the impacts of flooding events and other natural disasters and/or has the ability to adapt and recover from such events.



## Chapter 1: Introduction

### RIVER FALLS PLANNING FRAMEWORK

In addition to the Comprehensive Plan, the overall Focus River Falls planning framework includes two other planning documents: 1) The Outdoor Recreation Plan; and 2) The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Each plan plays a specific role in creating the desired outcomes for the community. However, implementation of the strategies and actions identified in each plan are connected to all three plans.

#### Outdoor Recreation Plan

The purpose of the Outdoor Recreation Plan is to explore the City of River Falls' existing outdoor recreation system and resources, anticipate future needs and demands, and identify actions for the city to implement the community's outdoor recreation vision. The plan provides both a short term (2030) and long term (2045) horizon of outdoor recreation needs for the community. The short term needs analysis was completed to align with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) requirements to maintain eligibility for a variety of Federal and State aids to purchase land and add facilities to existing outdoor recreation lands through the development of an Outdoor Recreation Plan. This plan was conducted in accordance with guidance found in Wisconsin Statute 23.30 Outdoor Recreation Program and the Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The long term analysis was completed to align with the Focus River Falls planning process.



#### Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

The River Falls Bike and Pedestrian Plan outlines the current conditions for bicycling and walking in the City and recommends ways to improve the experience of moving around the City outside of a vehicle. The plan is informed by the Bike and Pedestrian Steering Committee, City staff, and the public. The plan begins with the vision and goals that will guide the improvement of walking and biking in River Falls, followed by a summary of the community context and public input that shaped the plan. The plan includes infrastructure recommendations (physical changes to streets, trails, and bridges) as well as policy and program recommendations. The plan closes with a summary of next steps, including quick wins, more complex but high-benefit improvements, and major high-benefit projects. Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Appendices provide more detail on infrastructure project recommendations, details the analysis of existing transportation infrastructure, demographics, and local destinations, and provides more information on existing plans, programs, and policies.



## Chapter 1: Introduction

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Focus River Falls process included an extensive community input process, that looked to utilize fun and informative engagement opportunities to include as much of the community as possible. The tools and activities that were employed in the engagement process were broken into four different stages:

### Ongoing Engagement

Ongoing engagement efforts were used throughout the planning process. Those activities included:

- **Online Engagement – EngageRF.org** was used for continued engagement efforts and information sharing, through online surveys, mapping activities, and entertaining activities such as the River Falls pet mayor election.
- **Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee** – The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee served as an advisory group, providing input on plan content, direction for the planning process and reviewing draft documents.
- **Community Survey** – The City continues to utilize a community survey as an engagement tool to gather updated feedback every two to three years. This ongoing tool provides community input on a variety of topics. The frequency of survey allows the city to assess changing community needs and desires.
- **Outreach Presentations** – Presentations to interested community groups and surrounding townships took place in the early phases and during the draft plan review to provide updates and gather feedback.



## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Early Engagement

Early engagement activities sought to identify the topics that are important to the community. They set the stage for goal setting and the identification of key themes, which informed the plan development. Those activities included:

- **Outreach Kickoff Event** – A public kick-off event was held to inform the public about the planning process and gather an understanding of current issues and opportunities experienced by community members.
- **Community Surveying** – Paper and online surveys were used to solicit feedback about growth and development, community character, quality of life, aesthetics, economic issues, services, and other aspects of life.
- **Pop-Up Events** – Smaller pop-up events were held around the community which provided an opportunity to meet community members where they are, rather than making them come to a specific event.

### Plan Analysis Engagement

The plan analysis component of the engagement process was used to inform the development of the comprehensive plan. This included creation of the future land use map and implementation plan. Activities included:

- **Stakeholder Conversations** – Seven stakeholder conversations were held with invited members of the community to discuss specific topics related to the comprehensive plan.
- **Goal and Element Recommendations** – [EngageRF.org](https://www.engageRF.org) was used to share information and provide community members the opportunity to provide input about specific plan elements.

### Plan Review Engagement

- **Draft Plan Public Engagement** – The draft Comprehensive Plan was available for public review to gather input and potential updates prior to the adoption process. The draft plan was available online at [EngageRF.org](https://www.engageRF.org) and in paper copies at City Hall and the library from February 6<sup>th</sup> to February 26<sup>th</sup>. An open house was held on February 9, 2023, welcoming the community to learn more about the plan and ask questions of the planning team. A survey was used to gather feedback from community members and was available online and via paper copies. The feedback gathered was used to inform updates to the plan prior to adoption.
- **Public Hearing** – The plan adoption process included meetings with the Plan Commission and City Council to review and act on the plan. The Plan Commission held a meeting on March 7, 2023 to review the plan and make a recommendation to the City Council. The City Council held public hearings on March 14<sup>th</sup> and March 28<sup>th</sup> to discuss the plan and act on an ordinance for adoption.

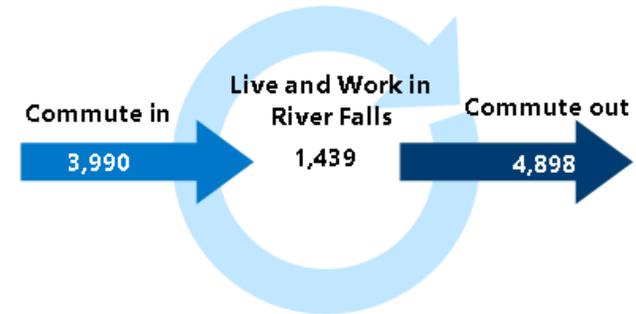
# Chapter 1: Introduction

## COMMUNITY PROFILE

To effectively complete comprehensive planning for the City of River Falls, an extensive community profile was prepared to help understand the existing conditions for the community and inform planning. The profile includes demographic data, a review of the community’s existing facilities, services, utilities, and infrastructure, and population projections. It’s estimated that the city is expected to grow by about 6,300 people between 2020 and 2040. To accommodate that growth, assuming the average household size of 2.4 people, would require an additional 2,600 housing units. A full Community Profile is available in the appendices of the plan, including detailed demographic and economic data and an overview of services, intergovernmental partners, and infrastructure.



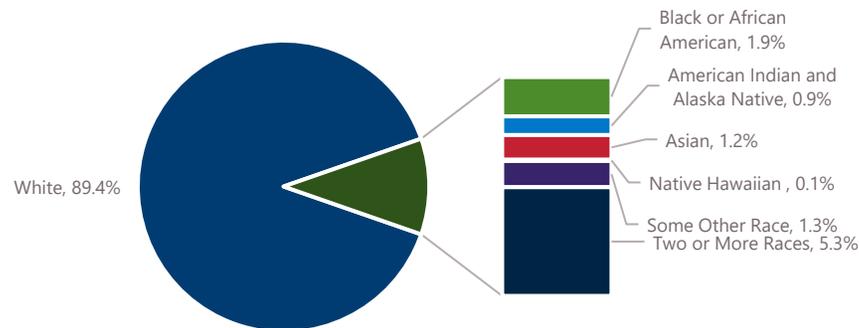
### Commuter Inflow and Outflow



### Housing Tenure, 2022

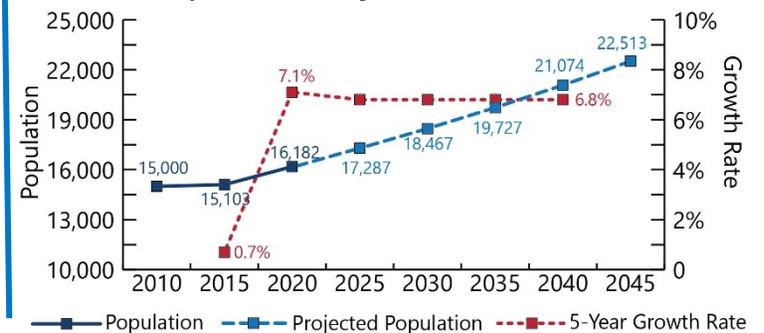


### Race in River Falls, 2020



River Falls is projected to grow by 6,331 people between 2020 and 2045, a 5-year growth rate of 6.8 percent.

### Population Projection, 2020-2045





## Chapter 2: Goals & Key Themes

# GOALS AND KEY THEMES

## GOAL FORMAT

Goals and key themes are intentionally formatted (example on the following page) to describe and display each of the following information:

- **Goal Statement:** Visionary statements that describe the preferred outcomes the community would like to achieve and maintain over an extended period of time. The goal statements were created through early engagement and early review.
- **Connected Plan Elements:** The goal statements connect to the plan elements. These relationships lead directly into shaping a vibrant and connected future. The icons identified in gray identify those that are not connected to the goal statement.
- **Key Themes:** Summary of the common themes or ideas identified through early engagement that were used to inform the goal statement.
- **Supporting Information:**
  - **Community Input:** Highlights aspects of community input that directly informed the development of the goal statement.
  - **Critical Implementation Strategies:** Identifies key aspects of the implementation plan that will help to implement the goal statement.
  - **Element Focus:** Summarizes how the goal statement connects to one or more topic elements.
- **Informed Decision Making:** Describes how the goal statement should be incorporated into city wide decision making.

# Chapter 2: Goals & Key Themes

## Goal Format Example:



### CONNECTED PLAN ELEMENTS



Housing



Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources



Economic Development



Transportation



Utilities & Community Facilities



Land Use



Recreation



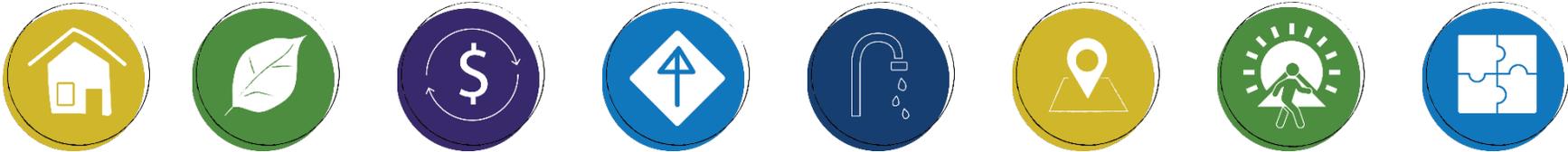
Intergovernmental Cooperation

<b>KEY THEMES</b>	<b>Theme A</b>	Supporting Information	<b>SUPPORTING INFORMATION</b>	<b>Community Input</b> What input specifically informed the goal.
	<b>Theme B</b>	Supporting Information		<b>Critical Implementation Strategies</b> What implementation strategies will be key for successful achievement of this goal.
	<b>Theme C</b>	Supporting Information		<b>Element Focus</b> Which plan elements are directly connected to the goal statement.
<b>INFORMED DECISION MAKING</b>		Guidance to inform how each goal statement and key themes can be used to inform decision making within the community.		

# Connection

River Falls is a welcoming community that incorporates equity and inclusion into decision making, thereby creating opportunities for everyone to connect and thrive.

## CONNECTED PLAN ELEMENTS



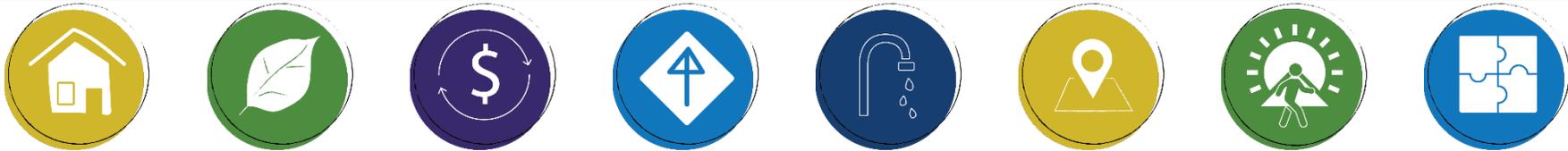
<b>KEY THEMES</b>	<b>Welcoming &amp; Safe</b>	River Falls is a welcoming community that provides a variety of opportunities for people from all backgrounds. Community members identify River Falls as a safe community.	<b>SUPPORTING INFORMATION</b>	<b>Community Input</b>	Most survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the community does a good job of celebrating its history and culture. Cultural celebrations provide opportunities for residents to feel welcome within the community and share their culture.
	<b>Opportunity</b>	There are a variety of opportunities for people to find their place in the community. Decision making that considers the benefits and impacts to all is important for the future of River Falls.		<b>Element Focus</b>	This goal is integrated into all the elements addressed by this plan. Each one plays a different role in creating and maintaining a community where residents have access to opportunities and feel welcome to express themselves.
	<b>Connection</b>	People value that the city provides a community connection between people and spaces.			

**INFORMED DECISION MAKING** River Falls should continue to consider quality-of-life when making decisions on infrastructure investments, regulatory standards, services or programming. For example, applying this goal in practice could lead to investing in more public transportation infrastructure decisions that focus on the efficient, safe, and healthy movement of people throughout the city.

# Livability

River Falls supports livability through intentional growth management policies and development standards, quality and diverse housing stock and local businesses that together support a strong connection to place.

## CONNECTED PLAN ELEMENTS



<b>KEY THEMES</b>	<b>Additional Housing</b>	Need for additional housing options that are diverse, affordable, and accessible.	<b>SUPPORTING INFORMATION</b>	<b>Community Input</b>	In the Community Survey, maintaining and growing local businesses was identified as the highest priority issue/opportunity in the community over the next 20 years.
	<b>Workforce</b>	The available housing stock is directly connected to the available workforce within the community.		<b>Implementation Strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update the zoning ordinance to support density and development that accommodates missing middle housing.</li> <li>Develop a Main Street Corridor Plan with a focus on Downtown.</li> </ul>
	<b>Local Businesses</b>	Support and retainment of existing local businesses is desired by community members.			
	<b>Connection</b>	Growth and new development should create connections between where people live and where they work, shop, and recreate.			
	<b>Growth</b>	Thoughtful growth supports businesses and livability, particularly when filling a gap in goods or services, and supports and enhances the overall identity of River Falls.			

### INFORMED DECISION MAKING

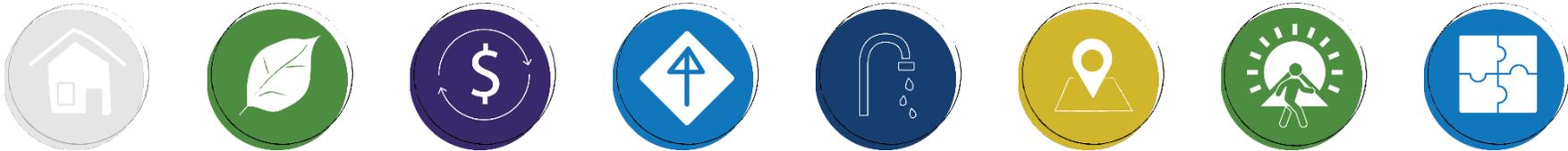
River Falls should consider the connection between housing choices, employment opportunities, and the location of goods and services. For example, land use and development policies and regulations should be analyzed and updated to ensure that they allow and encourage the development of diverse housing that provides a variety of housing options in locations throughout the community.

## Chapter 2: Goals & Key Themes

# Access

River Falls has accessible transportation infrastructure for people to safely, sustainably, and efficiently move throughout the city and in the region using varied modes of transport.

### CONNECTED PLAN ELEMENTS



#### KEY THEMES

#### Modes

Many people drive a personal vehicle as their primary mode of transportation today. Many people identified a desire to use other modes (e.g., walking, biking) to move throughout the community

#### Connections

A connected transportation system is necessary to connect people, places, services, and the city's various systems.

#### Network

The transportation network should prioritize both safe and efficient movement for all modes.

#### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### Implementation Strategies

Participate and support in the exploration of passenger rail connection between Minneapolis/Saint Paul and Milwaukee/Chicago.

#### Element Focus

The Transportation element seeks to create a transportation system that supports human mobility, rather than focusing solely on vehicles. In coordination with the Bike and Pedestrian Plan the City will look to improve connectivity of bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the city.

#### INFORMED DECISION MAKING

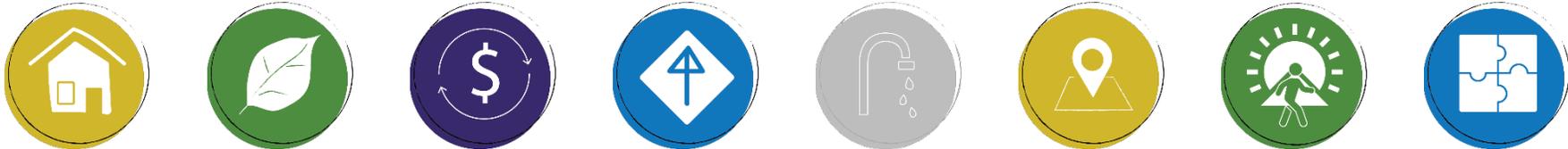
Wherever appropriate, the city should prioritize improving and accommodating the movement of pedestrians, bicycles, and other non-motorized transportation options, when developing transportation plans and improving transportation infrastructure.

## Chapter 2: Goals & Key Themes

# Resources

River Falls prioritizes natural and cultural resources and outdoor recreation to increase opportunities that support healthy lifestyles.

### CONNECTED PLAN ELEMENTS



#### KEY THEMES

<b>Identity</b>	The existing natural resources are a key element of the identity of River Falls.
<b>Connection</b>	Access to natural resources provides opportunities for people to connect socially, recreate, learn, and explore.
<b>History</b>	The community's history is important to its identity and people desire opportunities to preserve and enhance spaces where all are welcome.
<b>Health</b>	Access to outdoor recreation and natural resources support a healthy lifestyle, with opportunities for social, physical, and mental health.
<b>Culture</b>	The community recognizes the individuality of community members and their contribution to the community's culture.

#### INFORMED DECISION MAKING

The management of resources in coordination with the development process creates opportunities to connect the community to those resources, preserve key areas, and support resilience and sustainability efforts. As development decisions are made, evaluating the management, preservation and needs of all local assets should be considered.

#### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

##### Community Input

When asked what issues or opportunities they were most concerned about over the next 20 years, protection of natural resources and enhancement of parks, greenway, and open space were selected by Community Survey participants as two of their top priorities.



##### Implementation Strategies

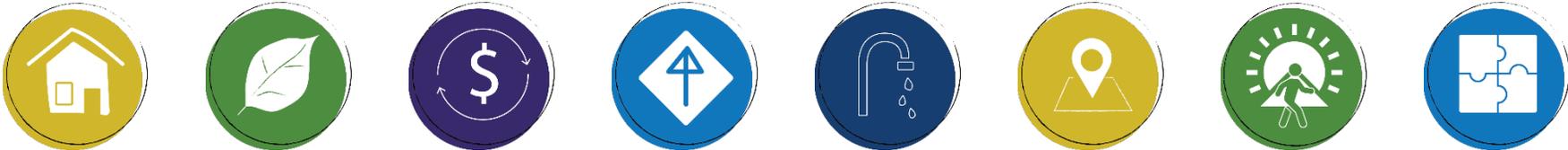
Maintain active collaboration with local organizations that focus on natural and cultural resources to support the community's preservation and enhancement efforts.



# Partnerships

River Falls has mutually beneficial relationships with the community, organizations, educational institutions, and state/regional agencies.

### CONNECTED PLAN ELEMENTS



#### KEY THEMES

<b>Education</b>	Education at all levels is an important component that brings people to River Falls and contributes to the future success of the community.
<b>Neighbors</b>	Continued coordination with neighboring communities is important for growth considerations.
<b>Partnerships</b>	Local and regional partnerships are needed to support future action.

#### INFORMED DECISION MAKING

When feasible, the city should look to enhance relationships with community members, local organizations, and other agencies to assist with plan implementation, collaborate on programming that enhances the quality of life in River Falls, and bring necessary services to the community.

#### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

##### Implementation Strategies

- Inventory existing and review new partnership opportunities with the Counties.
- Collaborate with local employers to understand workforce needs, including access to housing and services.



##### Element Focus

While the Intergovernmental Cooperation element identifies the partners and roles that can aid implementation, the creation and maintenance of strong relationships will be critical to successful implementation of the activities for all elements.

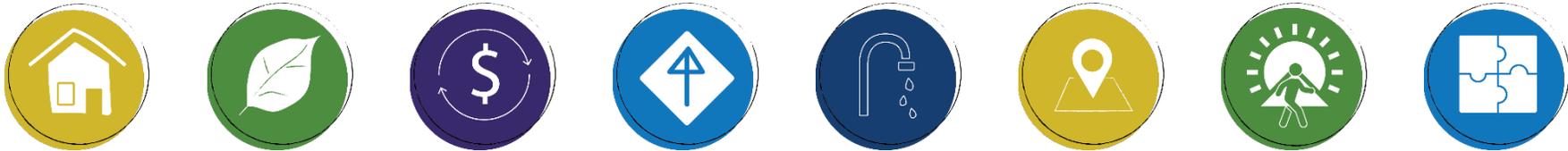


## Chapter 2: Goals & Key Themes

# Resiliency

River Falls has a resilient system of infrastructure, community facilities, and utilities that ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the community and preserve quality of life for future generations.

### CONNECTED PLAN ELEMENTS



#### KEY THEMES

#### Sustainability

Thoughtful planning and actions support sustainability, the efficient use of resources, and lowers environmental impacts.

#### Investments

Efforts to protect infrastructure and facilities for years to come should be supported.

#### Quality of Life

Continue to support City infrastructure, facilities, and services that give access to a high quality of life for all.

#### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### Community Input

Generally, community members felt that the number of parks, trails, and outdoor recreation opportunities were enough to support the community, however several members stated that they wished there was a community center with a gym for kids.



#### Implementation Strategies

Explore sustainable development policies and regulations



#### INFORMED DECISION MAKING

The city should continue to ensure that resilience is a key aspect of infrastructure maintenance and expansion. Protecting facilities from unexpected occurrences such as natural disasters will help ensure the long-term quality of life for the River Falls community and protect city investments.

# CHAPTER 3: HOUSING



## INTRODUCTION

Housing is necessary to satisfy the most fundamental needs for shelter and survival. The type, location, and availability of housing contributes to the local economy and growth of the community. Housing is the prevalent land use in terms of the acres of land in most communities, including River Falls, and should be given extensive consideration in a comprehensive planning process. The planning process examined the city’s existing housing market, explored projected housing growth, and explored opportunities for the city to address key housing topics such as housing affordability and senior housing.



# Chapter 3: Housing

## RELATED GOALS

While the Goals outlined in **Chapter 2** are intended to direct all chapters within the plan, some are more related to specific topic elements than others. The following goals play a significant role in guiding the Housing Chapter:

<b>Connection</b>	River Falls is a welcoming community that incorporates equity and inclusion into decision making, thereby creating opportunities for everyone to connect and thrive.
<b>Livability</b>	River Falls supports livability through intentional growth management policies and development standards, quality and diverse housing stock and local businesses that together support a strong connection to place.
<b>Resources</b>	River Falls prioritizes natural and cultural resources and outdoor recreation to increase opportunities that support healthy lifestyles.
<b>Partnerships</b>	River Falls has mutually beneficial relationships with the community, organizations, educational institutions, and state/regional agencies.
<b>Resiliency</b>	River Falls has a resilient system of infrastructure, community facilities, and utilities that ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the community and preserve quality of life for future generations.

## HOUSING TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

The **Housing Technical Memorandum** included in **Appendix A1** provides additional detail and analysis to support the recommendations and actions identified to support the community’s housing goals. Visit the Technical Memorandum to learn more about:

Overview of the <b>existing housing stock</b> , including the supply, tenure, costs, and overall needs.	<b>Missing Middle Housing</b> overview and detailed analysis to inform implementation.	Overview of <b>Affordable Housing Tools</b> , what is available and how they can be used.	Tools and resources to support <b>diverse housing development</b> to support the needs of the community.
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## Chapter 3: Housing

# HOUSING CONTEXT

## HOUSING PROFILE

Analyzing housing market data is helpful in understanding how a community can achieve its housing goals. Incorporating a consideration of projected community growth will help estimate the amount of housing development that will be necessary to accommodate growth over the life of the planning process. A full housing data profile is available in **Appendix B**. Additionally, a housing needs assessment was completed in 2018 and then updated in the fall of 2022 and informs this chapter collectively. These documents informed the following key findings:

- There are an estimated 5,753 housing units within the City of River Falls.
- Single-family units are the dominant form of housing, making up about 43 percent of total units.
- About half of all units are occupied by renters and half occupied by owners.
- On average, households have 2.4 people, however, owner-occupied households are larger at 2.68 people per household while renter occupied households are smaller at 2.17 people.
- In 2020, the median housing price in River Falls was \$370,300, as identified in the 2022 Housing Study.
- About 30 percent of River Falls households are housing cost burdened, which means they pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing.



# Chapter 3: Housing

## PROJECTED GROWTH

The Comprehensive Plan is a guide for growth and development investment decisions in River Falls. Population and housing projections are a tool to assess resources and infrastructure needs to support growth over the next 20 years. Projections provide a best guess of future growth based on current and historical data. Housing and population projections were explored in two forms - historic growth to 2045, specific to this Focus River Falls process and 10-year growth as calculated in the 2022 Housing Study.

As a part of the Focus River Falls planning process, population projections were created for the City of River Falls to inform growth, amenity, and service needs. These projections estimated a growth of 6,331 people between 2020 and 2045. Overall, this represents an annual population growth of 253 residents. This broad growth projection was developed to inform all elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the year 2045. An estimate of 2,600 additional housing units would be needed to support the projected growth, based on the current average of 2.4 people per household.

The 2022 Housing Study update explored specific housing and population projections for the next 5 and 10 years based on market factors and recent housing construction. These forecasts project a growth of 472 households over the next 10 years or a growth of 0.8 percent each year. This forecast not only responds to population growth but also considers the increase in housing needed to improve accessibility and affordability.

	Population		Households	
	Count/Projection	Percent Change	Count/Projection	Percent Change
2000 Census*	12,560	--	4,269	--
2010 Census*	15,000	7.9%	5,150	11.0%
2020 Census*	16,182	2.5%	5,719	3.2%
2027 Forecast°	16,903	1.9%	6,081	3.0%
2030 Forecast°	17,100	1.2%	6,191	1.8%

Source: \*US Census, 2000, 2010 & 2020; °Maxfield Research

For reference, between 2018 and 2021, the City of River Falls saw an average of 208 housing units constructed per year. Between 2000 and 2017 the city permitted an average of 101 units per year.

## Chapter 3: Housing

### ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

**Community Survey responses indicate that community members are concerned about the supply of affordable housing in River Falls.**

Generally, community members who responded to the Community Survey are **very satisfied (18%), satisfied (23%), or neutral (38%) with the housing available** within River Falls.

46% of Community Survey respondents stated that there is **not enough senior housing** in River Falls.

37% of Community Survey respondents stated that there is **not enough multifamily housing, while 29% stated there was too much.**

**Generally, respondents seem to prioritize locational features, such as neighborhood proximity to services and access to parks and trails when deciding where to live.**

Small lot single-family development was the preferred housing style of need for River Falls.



Townhome/condo was the second highest preference for housing needs in the community.



Senior housing was identified as the third highest need for housing in the city.



## Chapter 3: Housing

# HOUSING STRATEGIES AND TOOLS

## MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

Missing Middle Housing is a term to describe a range of multi-family development styles that help bridge the density and affordability gap. These are housing styles span the gap between traditional single-family homes to multi-story apartment buildings. Typically, Missing Middle Housing includes development with multiple units, ranging from a two-unit duplex to a multi-unit condominium. These developments should be located in areas that are walkable with access to a variety of resources and can include both owner-occupied and renter-occupied units.

### Missing Middle Housing Diagram.



Source: [MissingMiddleHousing.com](http://MissingMiddleHousing.com)

TOOL/ RESOURCE	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Implementation Actions</b></p> 	<p>The city should look to encourage the development of Missing Middle style housing. This will allow the community to increase residential densities while protecting the character of the existing community. Since these housing types are built at a scale and form that is consistent with single-family neighborhoods, it can be incorporated into the existing community without drastically changing the feel of the area.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Additional Resources</b></p> 	<p>Missing Middle Housing is a concept that is used by many communities. Resources are available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Missing Middle Housing</u></a></li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Potential Partners</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Developers</li> <li>• Housing Organizations</li> </ul>



*Neighboring duplexes*  
Source: [missingmiddlehousing.com](http://missingmiddlehousing.com)



*Stacked fourplex.*  
Source: [missingmiddlehousing.com](http://missingmiddlehousing.com)



*Townhomes.*  
Source: [missingmiddlehousing.com](http://missingmiddlehousing.com)

## Chapter 3: Housing

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING TOOLS

There are a variety of strategies available to communities to help them increase the amount of affordable housing within the community. Each of these strategies address a different aspect and individually will not fully address all housing affordability issues. As such, these tools/strategies should be implemented in combination to improve outcomes.

The 2022 Housing Study update explored recent housing sales and development trends to understand the overall supply and demand within the community, which is directly linked to the affordability of housing units. Like any supply/demand scenario, when the supply is low and demand is high, costs can increase to support the seller. Some key data points that recognize a supply and demand issue are highlighted below:

- Residential resale activity has varied over the last seven years in River Falls. In 2017, there were a total of 262 closed resales. This total decreased by 15 percent to 221 resales in 2019. The number of sales then increased by 19 percent to 263 resales in 2021.
- Average marketing times dropped steadily in the community, with detached single-family home resales declining from an average of 106 days on the market in 2017 to 46 days in 2021. Average multifamily resale marketing times decreased from 52 days on the market in 2017 to 29 days in 2022.
- Median resale prices for homes in River Falls have experienced solid growth since 2017, with particularly strong pricing increases in 2020 and 2021.
  - The median resale price for detached single-family homes increased 46 percent since 2017, expanding at an average annual rate of 9.1 percent over the past five years. However, pricing increases accelerated to 15.4 percent in 2020 and 15.9 percent in 2021.
  - Median resale prices for multifamily (i.e., townhomes, condominiums) for-sale housing product types in River Falls experienced faster growth, increasing 69 percent since 2017. Over the past five years, median multifamily resale prices have increased at an average rate of 10 percent per year, including 22.6 percent jump in 2021.

<b>TOOL/ RESOURCE</b>	<b>Housing Preservation</b>	<p>Preserving the existing housing stock is a common strategy that communities adopt to help maintain their supply of affordable housing. In many cases, preserving an existing home is more financially effective than building new housing because new construction costs more, more materials are needed, and time to build. Naturally occurring affordable housing is often offset by the loss of existing housing through deterioration or abandonment. Funding opportunities exist that can allow a local community to support housing preservation efforts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• USDA Housing Preservation Grants</li> </ul>
	<b>Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing</b>	<p>Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing consists of older multifamily rental properties that meet affordability standards but are not subsidized by federal programs.<sup>1</sup> Many of these properties were built between 1940 and 1990 and are at risk of being lost to deterioration or conversion to less affordable housing. River Falls can combine its housing preservation efforts with the identification of these properties to ensure that they are maintained in good condition as affordable housing units.</p>
	<b>Financial Tools</b>	<p>A variety of financial tools are available to local governments and private developers that can assist in funding affordable housing projects. River Falls should continue to work to ensure that financial opportunities are maximized. The following federal grant/funding programs can help communities provide affordable housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)</li> <li>• HOME Grants</li> <li>• Community Development Block Grants</li> <li>• National Housing Trust Fund</li> </ul> <p>The following tools and programs are available to assist community members in finding a home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WERA Rent Assistance</li> <li>• Housing Choice Vouchers/Section 8</li> <li>• Rapid Re-Housing</li> <li>• Tenant-Based Rental Assistance</li> <li>• Permanent Supportive Housing</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> <https://noahimpactfund.com/impact-investing-affordable-housing-minnesota/what-is-noah/>

# Chapter 3: Housing

## SENIOR HOUSING

As adults age, their housing needs may shift. Communities can implement policies and programs that will provide opportunities for older adults to age in place or move into a housing option that appropriately meets their needs. Survey responses indicate that River Falls community members believe that there is a need for additional senior housing options within the community.

<b>TOOL/ RESOURCE</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Implementation Actions</b></p> 	<p>Many opportunities exist for communities to provide housing options for older adults. Outside of the development of senior living facilities, other options exist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Aging in Place</b> – River Falls could implement programming and planning level efforts to help their older population safely and independently age in place. Programming can assist with home maintenance or needed upgrades, such as accessibility improvements, and planning can ensure that housing is in close proximity to goods and services and has access to transportation.</li> <li>• <b>Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)</b> – ADUs are secondary dwelling units located on the same lot as a primary single-family dwelling or within the principle structure. By allowing their construction, homeowners can be empowered to stay in their home longer through supplemental income from the ADU, having space for a caretaker or family to live, or by having a smaller more accessible space to downsize into.</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Additional Resources</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Aging in Place – A Toolkit for Local Governments</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The ABCs of ADUs – A guide to Accessory Dwelling Units and how they expand housing options for people of all ages</a></li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Potential Partners</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• River Falls Housing Authority</li> <li>• Our Neighbors Place</li> <li>• Local housing developers</li> <li>• West Cap</li> <li>• Pierce &amp; St. Croix Counties</li> <li>• State and Federal Organizations</li> </ul>

# CHAPTER 4: AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, & CULTURAL RESOURCES



## INTRODUCTION

The physical and social environment are crucial to a community's sense of identity and placemaking. The City of River Falls' physical identity is largely defined by the Kinnickinnic River and the area's natural topography. These resources are explored in three general categories: agricultural resources, natural resources, and cultural resources.

Agricultural Resources	Natural Resources	Cultural Resources
 <p>Resources that support agricultural activity within the community, including the preservation of agricultural soils and farmlands.</p>	 <p>Existing resources that comprise the natural environment in the community, including wetlands, rivers, soils, steep slopes, and vegetation.</p>	 <p>Historic and current community components like land recognition, historic structures, community celebration, and cultural inclusion that continue to form and shape the identity of River Falls.</p>

## Chapter 4: Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

### RELATED GOALS

While the goals outlined in **Chapter 2** are intended to direct all chapters within the plan, some are more related to specific topic elements than others. The following goals play a significant role in guiding the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Chapter:

<b>Connection</b>	River Falls is a welcoming community that incorporates equity and inclusion into decision making, thereby creating opportunities for everyone to connect and thrive.
<b>Livability</b>	River Falls supports livability through intentional growth management policies and development standards, quality and diverse housing stock and local businesses that together support a strong connection to place.
<b>Access</b>	River Falls has accessible transportation infrastructure for people to safely, sustainably, and efficiently move throughout the city and into the region using varied modes of transport.
<b>Resources</b>	River Falls prioritizes natural and cultural resources and outdoor recreation to increase opportunities that support healthy lifestyles.
<b>Partnerships</b>	River Falls has mutually beneficial relationships with the community, organizations, educational institutions, and state/regional agencies.
<b>Resiliency</b>	River Falls has a resilient system of infrastructure, community facilities, and utilities that ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the community and preserve quality of life for future generations.

## Chapter 4: Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

# AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, & CULTURAL RESOURCES TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

The **Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Technical Memorandum** included in **Appendix A2** provides additional detail and analysis to support the recommendations and actions identified to support the community’s resource goals. Visit the Technical Memorandum to learn more about:

Agricultural resources tools including existing conditions and partnerships and a focus on **local food access.**

A review of natural resources and tools for **preservation and enhancement.**

Detailed introduction of the **Green Corridors** concept and connection to recreation.

Overview of **Cultural Resources Strategies** to support the celebration of the community and its history.



## Chapter 4: Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

# AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES CONTEXT

## AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES OVERVIEW

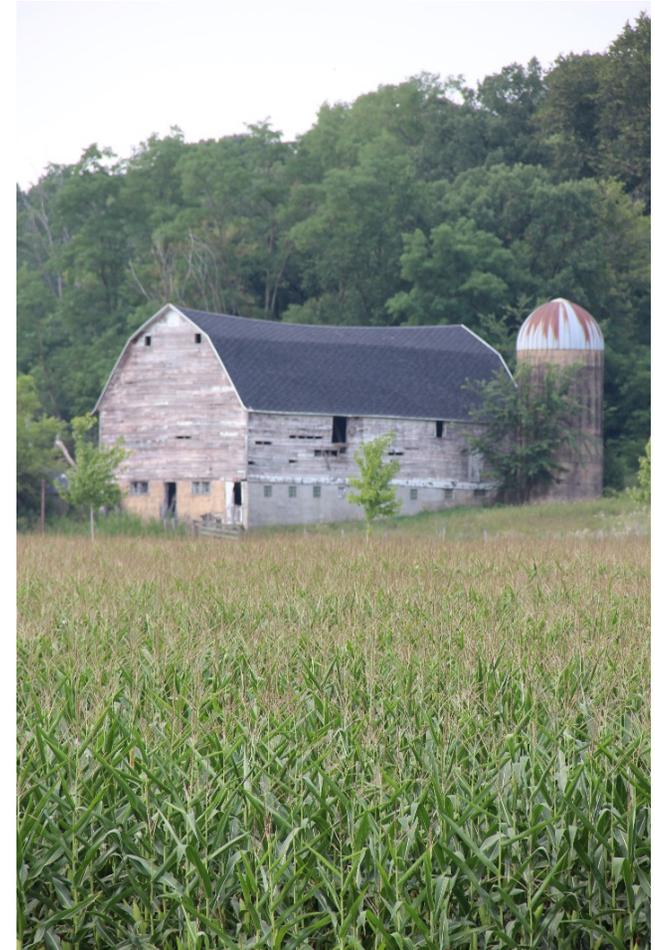
Agriculture is one of the primary industries in the Midwest and the State of Wisconsin. River Falls supports this industry through the agricultural program at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls (UWRF) and extraterritorial ordinances that preserve farmland. While there are limited agricultural uses within city limits, there are many active agricultural uses and that the city supports through extraterritorial ordinances and cooperative agreements

### University of Wisconsin-River Falls Laboratory Farms

Agricultural programs at the UWRF campus teach students animal sciences, horticulture, crop and soil science, environmental science, and agricultural engineering technology. The University operates two laboratory farms in the community - the Campus Farm and the Mann Valley Farm- that are integrated into the program and support the production of crops and animal husbandry, including horse, beef and dairy cattle, swine, and sheep. The farms provide students the education and employment for potential careers in farm management, nutrition, breeding education, and more. There are also educational and volunteer opportunities that are open to the public. The City will continue to maintain the partnership with the University for collective planning and efforts for future agricultural programming.

### St. Croix County and Pierce County Farmland Preservation Programs

Farmland preservation plans and programs are tools utilized by counties and municipalities to solidify policies for agricultural preservation and support land use regulations. County Farmland Preservation Plans must be certified by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). St. Croix County and Pierce County adopted individual Farmland Preservation Plans in 2012 and 2013, respectively, with continuous efforts to support and preserve farmland.



## Chapter 4: Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

While the Counties’ farmland preservation policies do not apply to areas within city limits, farmland preservation areas are identified in the four adjacent towns. These preservation areas should be monitored as the city grows outside of city limits. In addition to the farmland preservation designation of its Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Troy has established an Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA). An AEA is a community led effort to designate areas important to Wisconsin’s agricultural future, according to DATCP.

### Local Food Access

An understanding of where our food comes from and how it is grown or produced isn’t necessarily common knowledge, particularly for some in our younger generations. Opportunities to connect the community to education of local foods and access to the locally produced goods is important for supporting stewardship of our agricultural resources and support a resilient system of food production. There are six organizations or efforts within the community that support efforts to increase access to local foods for the River Falls community.

#### WE Market Co-Op

The WE Market Co-Op located within downtown River Falls provides access to locally grown foods and products and fosters a sense of community and connection.

#### Grow to Share

The Grow to Share organization supports education to all ages of the origin of our produce and how it can be grown. The community garden with seven plots in Hoffman Park are maintained and managed by the organization and educational events are also hosted by Grow to Share.

#### River Falls Farmers Market

The River Falls Farmers Market supports local food growers within 35 miles of the community. Venders are welcomed every Saturday and Tuesday to sell locally produced vegetables, plants, fruits, local cheese, canned and baked goods, eggs, flowers, and more.

#### University of Wisconsin – River Falls and School District of River Falls Food Services

The UWRF and School District of River Falls booth support locally grown foods through their purchase and use as part of their food service offerings. UWRF also supports resiliency efforts in food offerings through the use of reusable containers.

#### Local Growers

Many local farmers and growers utilize pop-up shops for the sales of goods within the community. Whether through a roadside stand or from the bed of a truck, these opportunities allow growers to sell goods and increase exposure in the community.

## Chapter 4: Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

### NATURAL RESOURCES OVERVIEW

Natural resources are a main component of the community's identity and continued investment and stewardship of these resources is important for preserving that identity. There are three main resource areas within the community: Kinnickinnic River, wetlands/floodplains, steep slopes and conservancy areas.

- **Kinnickinnic River, Wetlands and Floodplains** are important because they are key identifiers of landscape and are important resources for access to fresh water. Additionally, impacts to these resources has the potential to impact existing built investments through climate change, rising water levels, and pollution. These resources include rivers, lakes, and streams within the community. Floodplains are also an important aspect of this resource as they include upland areas that are identified to be at risk of impacts from flood events or rising water levels.
- **Steep Slopes** are resources in the community that set the landscape that we see and affect how we can move between and connect spaces. Steep slopes are identified within the community as slopes greater than 20 percent and cannot be modified with new development.
- **Conservancy Areas** are identified throughout the community to protect and preserve valuable natural resources, open space, and visual character. These areas include a variety of resource types including steep slopes, prairie, hillsides, forestland, wetlands, stormwater facilities, and floodplains. Additionally, dedicated open spaces such as the Community Forest and School District Forest are specific conservancy areas that should be considered in the city's network of natural resources.
- **Aquifers** are sources of groundwater that serve a community through the provision of groundwater. There are three aquifers that the community accesses – the Jordan, the St. Lawrence, and the Prairie du Chien. Many communities have access to a single aquifer; therefore, the City has access to plenty of clean water to support the community.

### City Designations

The City of River Falls has embraced its focus and support of these natural resources through participation in natural city designation programs that connect to the community's resource preservation values. The City of River Falls is currently a Tree City USA, Bird City Wisconsin, Monarch City and Bee City USA.

## Chapter 4: Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

### CULTURAL RESOURCES OVERVIEW

Cultural resources are the historic and current components of the community that celebrate the past, present and future and contribute to the community’s identity. It is important to recognize these resources to understand where we have come from, who we are today, and the community we want to be known for in the future. There are two resource types used to categorize cultural resources within this plan, Historic Resources and Cultural Resources.

**Historic Resources** are the sites, structures, and spaces that are highlighted as memorably significant or created before our current era. These resources can include locations of celebration of indigenous or built structures within the community. Sites within the community are recognized at the federal, state and local level.

**Cultural Resources** include the celebrations, physical improvements and spaces that help define the community today. These resources tend to center around evidence of past human activity that contribute to the heritage or identity of a place.



# AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCE STRATEGIES AND TOOLS

## GREEN CORRIDORS

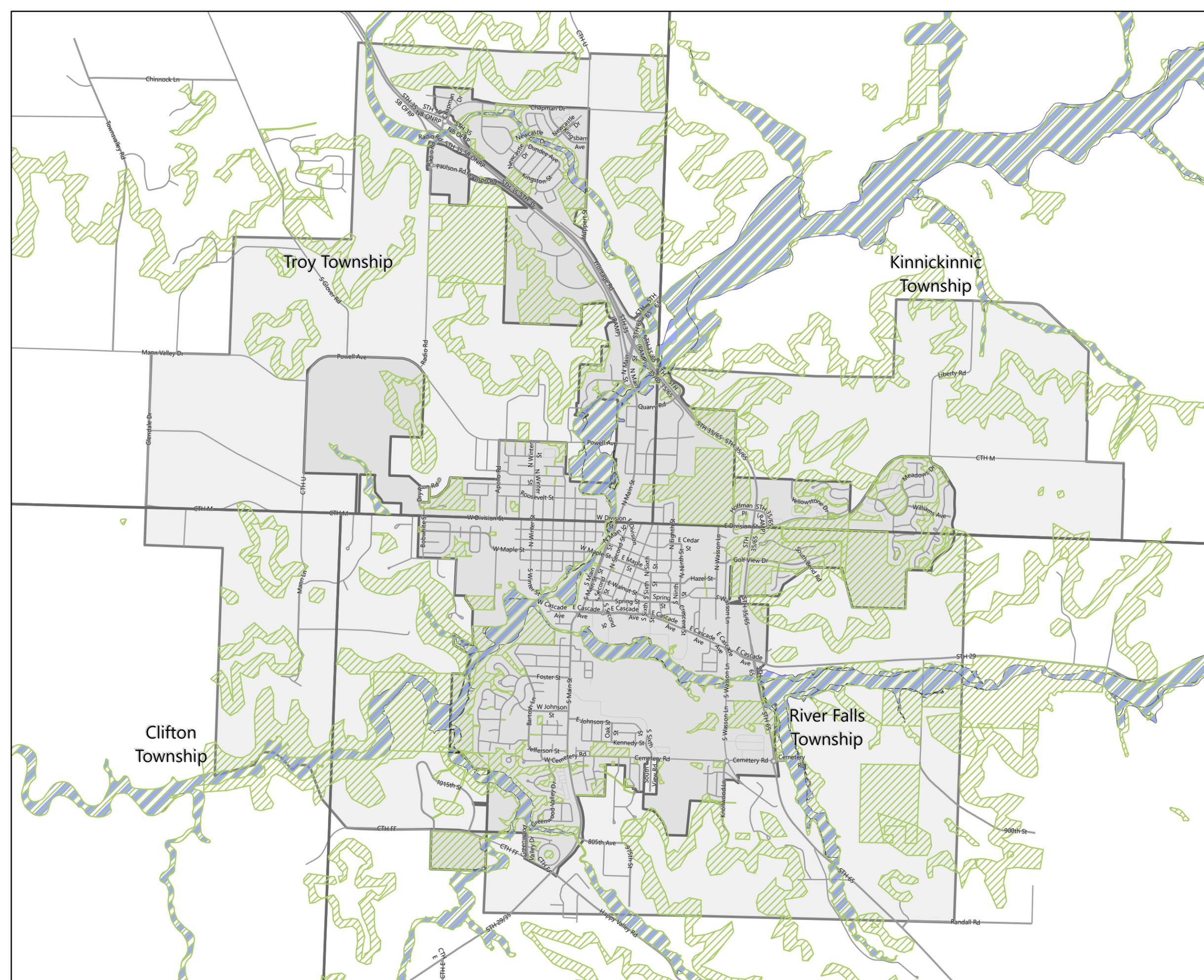
The Green Corridors concept highlights a network of existing natural resources within the community, including wetlands, steep slopes, floodplain areas, and general open space. This network of resources and recreational areas within the community are supported through local stewardship, increased access and connection to the resources, and increased available recreational amenities and offerings to the community.

There are a number of individual resources that are critical to the ecosystem, identity, and sense of place within River Falls. While each resource has its own tools and resources for management and preservation, this planning process explored the creation of a system of resources to aid the community in preservation and enhancement. This Green Corridor concept explores the connected system of wetlands, parks and open spaces, floodplains, and steep slopes (greater than 20 percent) within the community for the creation of a policy tool that enhances preservation efforts. The resulting green corridor network highlights key resource areas throughout the community that can be preserved or enhanced through the development process.

TOOL/ RESOURCE	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Implementation Actions and Resources</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solidify the Green Corridors as a resource preservation and enhancement tool. Specific regulations can include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Location of Transportation and Utility Infrastructure</li> <li>○ Single Family Residential Development</li> <li>○ Limitations for Commercial and Industrial Development</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Utilize the Green Corridors as a development tool to identify future recreational trail connections and support increased access and stewardship through the development process.</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Potential Partners</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing resource agencies may be a great partner in implementing the Green Corridor concept, including WDNR, St. Croix County, Pierce County, Historical Societies, Natural Resources Group (e.g., Prairie Enthusiast), etc.</li> </ul>

# Legend

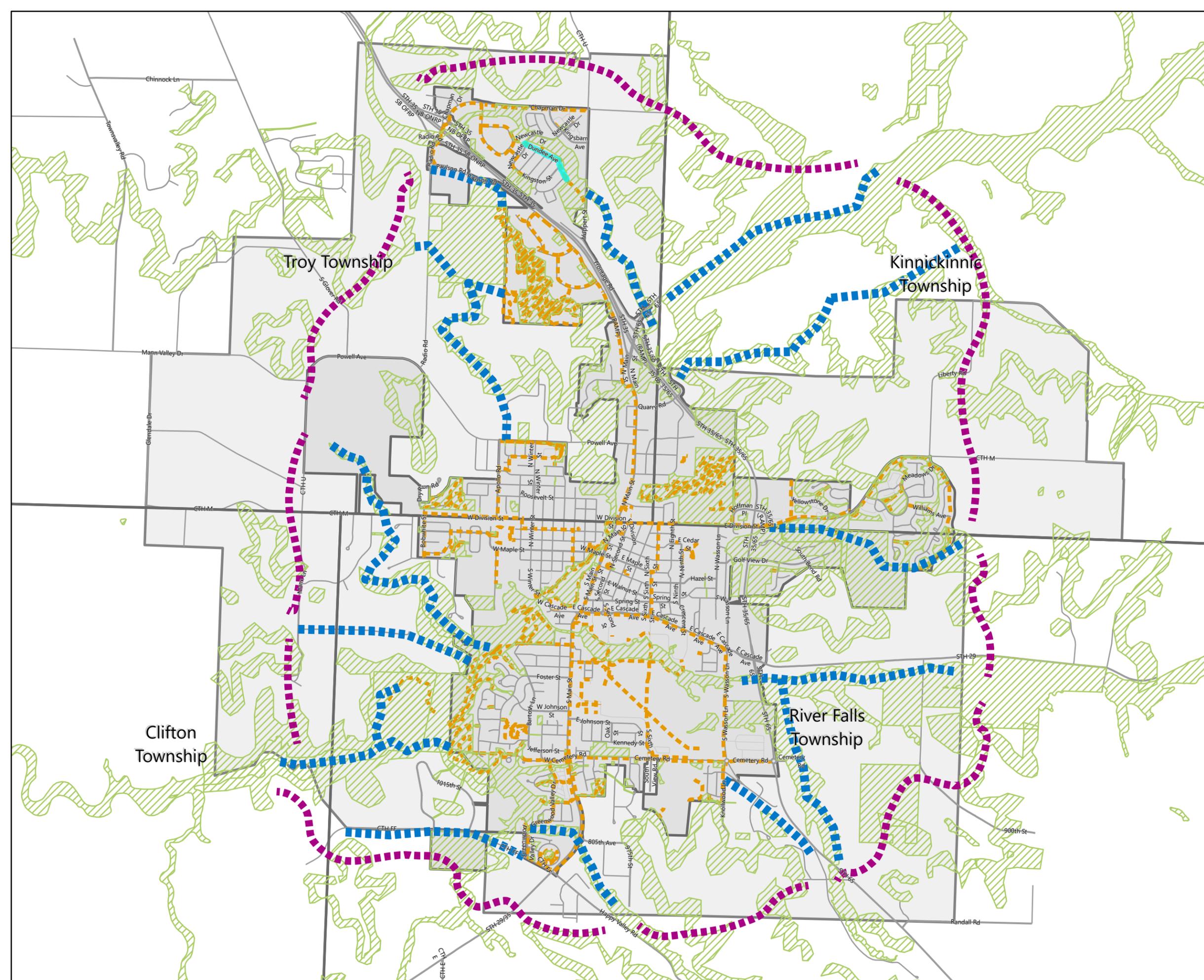
-  Green Corridors
-  100 Year Flood Plain
-  River Falls City Limits
-  Urban Area Boundary
-  Township Boundaries



# Green Corridors

# Legend

- Recreation Opportunities
  - Blue dashed line: Pedestrian/Bicycle Connection Opportunities
  - Magenta dashed line: Green Corridor Recreation Loop Opportunity
  - Orange dashed line: Existing Trails and Sidewalk Connections
  - Green hatched area: Green Corridors
- River Falls City Limits (Grey outline)
- Urban Area Boundary (Light grey fill)
- Township Boundaries (Black outline)



# Green Corridor Recreation Opportunities

# Chapter 4: Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

## RESILIENCY

Climate change will have strong impacts on the entire community, not just our natural, cultural, and historic resources. To respond to these changing conditions, resiliency and sustainability initiatives should be incorporated into the city’s decision-making structure. Resiliency can protect resources and populations through adaptation and mitigation. Adaptation means to modify existing activities or policies to become more responsive to the environment or situation. Mitigation actions are in direct response to activities or disasters and typically occur after a major event. Including resilience measures in city planning ensures that River Falls is actively managing and protecting its resources and investments and is capable of responding to change.

<b>TOOL/ RESOURCE</b>	<p><b>Implementation Actions and Resources</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tree preservation to maintain an urban tree canopy, reducing the heat island effect</li> <li>• Promotion and use of residential solar systems</li> <li>• Hazard mitigation planning efforts and the Current HazMat Plan and updates that include resilience</li> <li>• Conservation Easements</li> <li>• Green Infrastructure</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing resource agencies may be a great partner in implementing resilient actions and policies , including State, regional and local groups. For example, the city has partnered with Prairie Enthusiast to support maintenance of natural and native planting throughout the community. Efforts to remove and reduce invasive species have also been completed.</li> </ul>

## Chapter 4: Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

### HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES TOOLS

Properties and structures on the National Register are eligible for a variety of tax credits to assist in their maintenance and preservation. These programs are available on a wide range of project scales and sizes. These include grant programs through the Historic Preservation Fund, local and state governments, and occasionally private organizations. There are also tax incentives for historic easements and rehabilitation of historic properties. Local tools can be used to preserve and enhance locally important historic properties thought development standards and ordinances. The recently updated Historic Preservation Plan (HPP) identifies specific actions and policies that will support the community's preservation goals.

<b>TOOL/ RESOURCE</b>	<p><b>Implementation Actions and Resources</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education on the value of historic resources</li> <li>• Enhance partnerships with non-city historic preservation entities</li> <li>• Public Art</li> <li>• Cultural and Historic Tourism</li> <li>• Explore incentives for preservation and maintenance efforts</li> <li>• Indigenous Peoples Collaboration</li> <li>• Continue to maintain the Historic Preservation Commission</li> <li>• Implement and update as necessary the HPP</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St. Croix County Historic Society</li> <li>• Pierce County Historical Association</li> <li>• WI State Historic Society</li> <li>• Local organizations and community members</li> <li>• Municipal organizations</li> </ul>

# Chapter 4: Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

## KINNI CORRIDOR PLAN – NATURAL RESOURCES + RIVER ECOLOGY

The Kinni Corridor Plan represents a multi-year planning process to guide the Kinni River Corridor that meets the needs and desires of residents, reflects community values, and protects the river for future generations. This effort focused on efforts to determine the future of the two hydroelectric dams on the Kinnickinnic River. This planning process explored land use, ecology, and economic development considerations related to the Kinni. Specific to this plan element, the plan identified natural resources and river ecology implementation strategies to support the health and stability of the river and its tributaries.

<b>TOOL/ RESOURCE</b>	<p><b>Implementation Actions and Resources</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dam removal and river restoration</li> <li>• Conservation easements and natural buffers</li> <li>• Green infrastructure and stormwater best practices</li> <li>• Nature center and environmental education</li> <li>• Community gardens</li> <li>• River Corridor Management</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Groups</li> <li>• Resource Agencies</li> <li>• Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources</li> <li>• Kinni Corridor Collaborative</li> <li>• U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</li> <li>• Kinnickinnic River Land Trust</li> <li>• University of Wisconsin-River Falls</li> </ul>

# CHAPTER 5: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## INTRODUCTION

The River Falls local economy is a complex mix of the University of River Falls as the major employer, a strong local business base and a growing industrial foundation of international and innovative companies. Local businesses provide shopping, eateries, and other key services to the residents of the city. Being located just outside the Twin Cities and being home to the University of Wisconsin, River Falls, the city has unique economic development opportunities. A vibrant local economy should include a balance of a capable workforce, local services, and a growing demand.



In this Comprehensive Plan, the Economic Development element explores the role of economic development in the city’s long-range planning. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight key economic data and identify resources that should be used to support a thriving economy.



## Chapter 5: Economic Development

### RELATED GOALS

While the Goals outlined in **Chapter 2** are intended to direct all chapters within the plan, some are more related to specific topic elements than others. The following goals play a significant role in guiding the Economic Development Chapter:

<b>Livability</b>	<b>River Falls supports livability through intentional growth management policies and development standards, quality and diverse housing stock and local businesses that together support a strong connection to place.</b>
<b>Partnerships</b>	<b>River Falls has mutually beneficial relationships with the community, organizations, educational institutions, and state/regional agencies.</b>
<b>Resiliency</b>	<b>River Falls has a resilient system of infrastructure, community facilities, and utilities that ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the community and preserve quality of life for future generations.</b>

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

The **Economic Development Technical Memorandum** included in **Appendix A3** provides additional detail and analysis to support the recommendations and actions identified to support the community’s goals. Visit the Technical Memorandum to learn more about:

Overview of the <b>existing economic conditions</b> , including community patterns, employment densities, and income.	<b>Partnerships</b> that can support economic development growth and success.	<b>Workforce Development and Retention</b> tools and strategies.	A focus on <b>local business</b> growth and support, including tools and resources.
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## Chapter 5: Economic Development

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

Compiling a profile of existing conditions for a community is a helpful aspect of developing an economic development element. Within this chapter, economic data, including unemployment, commuting, and employment by sector, was analyzed and used to help inform the development of goals and implementation actions related to economic development. The following is a summary of the economic development profile, which can be found in full in **Appendix B**.

- Likely a result of the number of students living in the community, in 2019, median household income was lower in River Falls (\$59,440) than Pierce County (\$72,323), St. Croix County (\$84,756), Wisconsin (\$61,747), and the nation (\$62,843), according to the American Community Survey.
- Approximately 12 percent of the River Falls community was experiencing poverty in 2019, which is approximately 2,108 residents.
- While a variety of organizations track and report unemployment data, according to the U.S. Census, the 2019 unemployment rate in River Falls was under two percent.
- As is expected in a community with a university, the unemployment rate within River Falls is the highest among community members between 20 and 24 years of age (9.2 percent).
- Based on 2019 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a total of 4,898 River Falls residents were employed outside the city, 1,439 both live and work in the city, and 3,990 live outside the city but were employed in River Falls (see Figure 1).

### Community Highlight: Innovation Centers

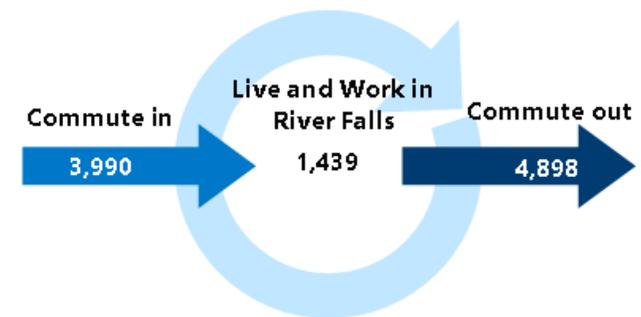
#### UWRF SciTech University and Business Collaboration Center (UBC)

A center, dedicated to SCITECH, where businesses, industry leaders, and entrepreneurs can collaborate with students to combine industry and university resources to support economic growth and innovation in River Falls.

#### St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center

Located in River Falls, the Business Innovation Center provides incubation space, training, and other support to foster entrepreneurship and innovation in the River Falls community.

**Figure 1. 2019 Commuting Patterns in River Falls.**



## Chapter 5: Economic Development

### ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

**Community Survey responses show that River Falls residents are passionate about the small businesses within the community and want to see the City’s economic development efforts continue to focus on supporting those businesses.**

<p>90% percent of Community Survey Respondents reported <b>that they purchase their groceries in River Falls.</b></p>	<p><b>Few community members reported purchasing retail goods in River Falls</b>, with 22% purchasing online, 37% purchasing 10 to 30 miles away, and 27% purchasing within 10 miles.</p>	<p>Of the employed survey respondents, <b>59% reported that they work within River Falls.</b></p>
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**While community members love small businesses, when asked what one issue or concern for River Falls, some survey respondents expressed that they would like to have additional retail shopping and business options within the city.**

<p>Survey Respondents have a <b>clear preference towards supporting small businesses</b> through economic development efforts.</p>	<p>When asked what River Falls’ economic development goals should be, <b>88% of respondents answered, “support and enhance local businesses” and 80% responded, “attract more local businesses.”</b></p>	<p>Despite respondents stating concerns over lack of retail shopping options, <b>only 29% of responses</b> support an economic development goal of <b>attracting big box retail.</b></p>
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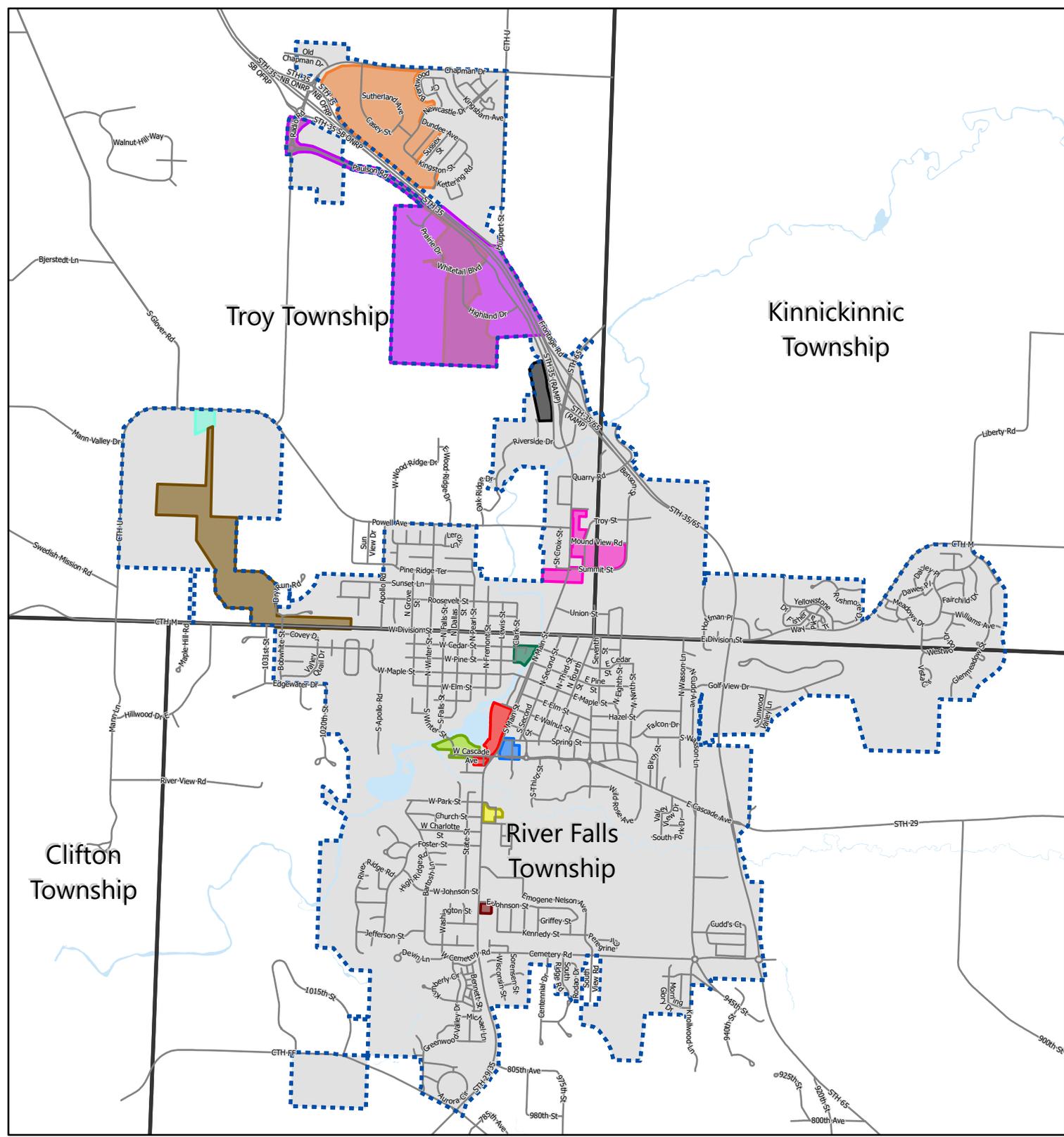
## Chapter 5: Economic Development

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND TOOLS

## FUNDING RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS

A key aspect of successful local economic development efforts is employing strong partnerships and identifying funding opportunities. Several local, regional, and statewide organizations serve River Falls, which can help the city implement successful economic development initiatives.

<b>RESOURCE OR PARTNERSHIP</b>	<b>River Falls Economic Development Corporation (RFEDC)</b>	<p>The River Falls Economic Development Corporation (RFEDC) helps the city promote local area growth by collaborating with the City of River Falls and regional economic development organizations to increase employment opportunities throughout the community through industrial development. Led by a board of directors consisting of up to 11 members, the RFEDC adopted its first Strategic Plan in January 2019, which identified six economic development goals.</p>
	<b>Tax Increment Financing</b>	<p>The City of River Falls updated their Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Policy in May 2018. The TIF policy allows the City to create Tax Increment Financing Districts (TIDs) to help stimulate redevelopment. The City's TIF policy provides detailed guidance on the implementation of the TIF program in River Falls.</p>
		<p>The Wisconsin Economic Development Council (WEDC) is a statewide economic development organization that works with local partners to assist with workforce and economic development. WEDC provides programs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Development Investment Grant (CDI)</li> <li>• Connect Communities</li> <li>• Certified Sites Program</li> </ul>
	<b>Other Resources/Partnerships</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pierce County Economic Development Corporation</li> <li>• St. Croix County Economic Development Corporation</li> <li>• Momentum West</li> <li>• Wisconsin Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)</li> <li>• West Central WI Regional Planning and Regional Business Fund</li> <li>• Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation</li> <li>• River Falls Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau</li> <li>• Public Finance Authority (PFA)</li> <li>• Wisconsin Department of Revenue</li> <li>• University of Wisconsin, River Falls (UWRF)</li> <li>• St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center</li> </ul>



## Legend

- River Falls City Limits
- Township Boundaries
- Roads
- Lakes and Rivers

## TID Tax Increment Districts

- TID 5 - Whitetail Ridge
- TID 6 - Downtown Hotel
- TID 8 - West Cascade
- TID 9 - Family Fresh Market
- TID 10 - Sterling Ponds
- TID 11 - RF Industrial Park
- TID 12 - WinField United
- TID 13 - Whitetail Ridge II
- TID 14 - The Depot
- TID 15 - The 1300
- TID 16 - Milltown-Mann Valley
- TID 17 - Former Shopko
- TID 18 - 700 S Main St



**Figure 2. Tax Increment Districts**

## Chapter 5: Economic Development

### SMALL AND LOCAL BUSINESS SUPPORT AND NEEDS

Small and local businesses are often the backbone of local economies. Ensuring that those businesses have the appropriate level of support and access to resources is key to ensure their continued success. Small businesses are important to the River Falls community and should be supported as a key aspect of economic development activities.

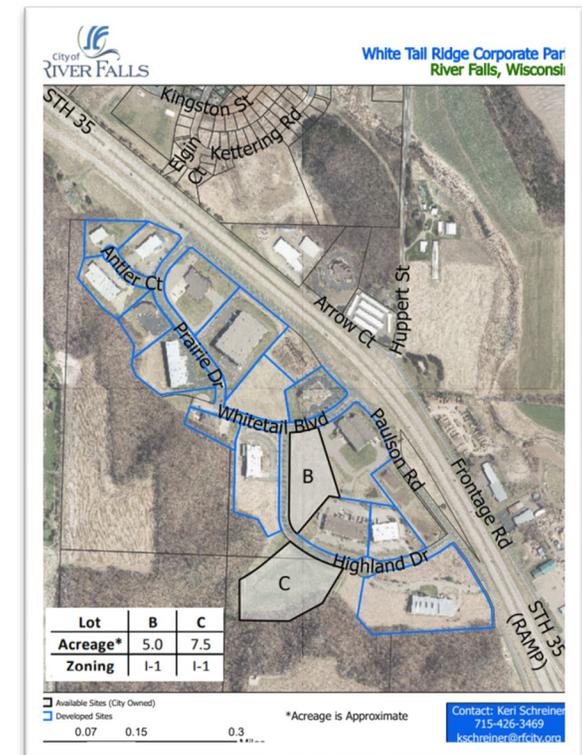
TOOL/ RESOURCE	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Implementation Actions</b></p> 	<p>The City of River Falls can establish or support a variety of programs that provide support for local businesses. Those programs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Makerspaces and Community Workshops</b> – provide community members access to tools and technology to support business ideas and innovation.</li> <li>• <b>Home Occupation/Business Regulations</b> – Improve regulations to continue to allow residents to operate businesses from their homes. Opportunities may exist to amend regulatory standards to accommodate modern businesses while still maintaining appropriate protections on health, safety, and welfare.</li> <li>• <b>Broadband Internet Connectivity</b> – Ensuring affordable, highspeed communications technologies to all residents of the community will allow opportunities for continued small business and workforce development.</li> <li>• <b>Other Regulatory Changes</b> – The city could pursue updates to other sections of City Code to allow for additional small business opportunities, such as food truck permitting.</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Additional Resources</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University of Wisconsin, River Falls Small Business Development Center</li> <li>• <a href="#">Six Ways Planners Can Help Local Businesses</a> – American Planning Association</li> <li>• <a href="#">Zoning for Small Businesses</a> – American Planning Association</li> <li>• <a href="#">Planning to Support Small Businesses</a> – American Planning Association</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Potential Partners</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)</li> <li>• Public Finance Authority (PFA)</li> <li>• River Falls Economic Development Corporation (FREDC)</li> <li>• River Falls Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau</li> </ul>

# Chapter 5: Economic Development

## BUSINESS RETENTION AND ATTRACTION

Another key aspect of economic development efforts is the attraction and retention of non-local businesses that can provide higher numbers of jobs. River Falls has several existing programs that can be continued or expanded.

TOOL/ RESOURCE	<p><b>Implementation Actions</b></p> 	<p>Many opportunities exist for the city to retain and attract new businesses to River Falls. Those programs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Retention and Expansion Program (BRE)</li> <li>• Built-to-Suit, Lease-to-Own – A past program where the River Falls Economic Development Corporation (RFEDC) provides financing for new construction, allowing the lease holder an option to purchase in the future.</li> <li>• Corporate Parks – City developed shovel ready business parks. Currently, the city has four locations, River Falls Industrial Park, Sterling Ponds Corporate Park, Whitetail Ridge Corporate Park, and Mann Valley Corporate Park.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Metrics to Watch</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Park available site buildout rates</li> <li>• Number of new businesses and jobs locating in the River Falls</li> <li>• Number of new living wage jobs</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)</li> <li>• Public Finance Authority (PFA)</li> <li>• River Falls Economic Development Corporation (RFEDC)</li> <li>• River Falls Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau</li> <li>• St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center</li> </ul>



## Chapter 5: Economic Development

### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ATTRACTION

Workforce development programs can help to ensure the local workforce has a diverse set of skills and knowledge. Without a diverse workforce, communities cannot support a diverse economy. Through partnerships, River Falls can continue to provide opportunities for community members to gain specialized skills.

<b>TOOL/ RESOURCE</b>	<b>Implementation Actions</b> 	<p>Due to the presence of the University of Wisconsin, River Falls (UWRF) and Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC), River Falls is in a unique place relative to workforce education opportunities. Educational needs vary across different sectors and between positions within an individual sector. Having a diverse economy requires a workforce with diverse knowledge and skills. The city can continue to support a diverse economy and workforce through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships with UWRF, CVTC, and the School District of River Falls to provide training and educational experiences that meet the needs of a diverse set of employers.</li> <li>• Develop programs in collaboration with local businesses to provide internships and apprenticeships to help residents gain experience.</li> <li>• Continue to make River Falls a great place to live, to attract new residents and retain more UWRF and CVTC graduates.</li> <li>• Implementing the community’s housing goals, to ensure that there is a diverse range of high quality, affordable, and safe housing choices for residents of all income levels.</li> <li>• Ensuring adequate access to human and social services and public facilities, including childcare, public health, and educational opportunities.</li> <li>• Partnering with local leaders that represent various population groups and supporting the employment opportunities at all levels and opportunities.</li> </ul>	
	<b>Metrics to Watch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemployment Rates</li> <li>• Changes in top employers</li> </ul>	
	<b>Potential Partners</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University of Wisconsin, River Falls</li> <li>• Chippewa Valley Technical College</li> <li>• School District of River Falls</li> <li>• Local Businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• River Falls Economic Development Corporation (RFEDC)</li> <li>• River Falls Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau</li> <li>• Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee</li> </ul>

# CHAPTER 6: TRANSPORTATION

## INTRODUCTION

A community's transportation infrastructure is the network of paths that safely connects the community to one another, such as through sidewalks, trails, and roadways. Creating accessible community destinations promotes economic development, and recreation opportunities. A safe and efficient transportation system is critical for supporting the health of residents and businesses within the community. An ideal transportation network includes multiple modes, each providing options for the movement of goods and/or people throughout River Falls shown in the graphic below:



**Walking & Rolling**



**Bicycle**



**Personal Vehicle – Alone**



**Personal Vehicle – Carpool**



**Public Transportation**



**Freight**

## Chapter 6: Transportation

### RELATED GOALS

While the goals outlined in **Chapter 2** are intended to direct all chapters within the plan, some are more related to specific topic elements than others. The following goals play a significant role in guiding the Transportation Chapter:

<b>Connection</b>	River Falls is a welcoming community that incorporates equity and inclusion into decision making, thereby creating opportunities for everyone to connect and thrive.
<b>Access</b>	River Falls has accessible transportation infrastructure for people to safely, sustainably, and efficiently move throughout the city and into the region using varied modes of transport.
<b>Resources</b>	River Falls prioritizes natural and cultural resources and outdoor recreation to increase opportunities that support healthy lifestyles.
<b>Partnerships</b>	River Falls has mutually beneficial relationships with the community, organizations, educational institutions, and state/regional agencies.
<b>Resiliency</b>	River Falls has a resilient system of infrastructure, community facilities, and utilities that ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the community and preserve quality of life for future generations.

## TRANSPORTATION TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

The **Transportation Technical Memorandum** included in **Appendix A4** provides additional detail and analysis to support the recommendations and actions identified to support the community's goals. Visit the Technical Memorandum to learn more about:

Overview of the <b>transportation conditions</b> , including the multimodal network and partnerships.	Exploration of <b>emerging technology</b> resources and tools.	Analysis of <b>community transit</b> options and actions.	Explore <b>Regional Connectivity and Community Loop</b> options and tools.
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## Chapter 6: Transportation

# TRANSPORTATION CONTEXT

## TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

Transportation facilities are a key element of our community’s fabric as they provide the means to connect people to local destinations and the greater region. This network of infrastructure supports economic development activities – bringing visitors into the community and supports recreation opportunities for the community, among other roles. Transportation facilities within the community are managed and maintained by multiple agencies, which includes ownership of specific roadways and management of various program offerings (i.e., transit).

### Interstate, US Highways, State Highways

River Falls is connected to the larger region via several State Highways such as Highway 65 (WIS 65), Highway 29 (WIS 29), and State Highway 35 (WIS 35). Both WIS 35 and WIS 65 connect to I-94 to the north, which connects the city to greater Minnesota and Wisconsin communities. Although several minor arterials and collectors exist within River Falls, most roadways are local and serve to connect the city at a local level.

### Roadway Jurisdiction

The roadway network within the community includes roadways owned and maintained by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, St. Croix County, Pierce County, and the City of River Falls. Most roadways (71 percent) are managed and maintained by the City of River Falls. Additionally, towns have jurisdiction over the local roads outside of city limits. The agency with jurisdiction over the roadway is typically responsible for the overall maintenance and operations of the roadway, completing any upgrades or maintenance work need to support mobility along the corridor.

Jurisdiction	Example Roadways	Total Mileage	Percentage
State of Wisconsin (WisDOT)	WIS 35, WIS 65, WIS 29	22.7	20.4%
St. Croix/Pierce Counties	County Highway M, County Highway U	9.9	8.9%
City of River Falls	Main Street, Maple Street	79.0	70.8%

## Chapter 6: Transportation

### Freight

The City of River Falls is not a primary freight destination, and therefore does not include abundant freight facilities. No current railroads, intermodal facilities, or airports (excluding the hospital helipad) are located within the city. However, the state highways that traverse the city do play an important role in access to freight transportation and will be considered throughout this plan.

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure



Sidewalks and trails within the community provide dedicated bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. There are over 90 miles of sidewalks, paths, and trails within the community, mostly consisting of paved sidewalks. Efforts to continue to expand and enhance this infrastructure are identified within the **Bike**

**and Pedestrian Plan**, completed as part of the Focus River Falls planning process.

### Local and Regional Transit

Local and regional transit options are limited within the River Falls community, which is not uncommon for a city of this size. Regional transit options are limited as well but are important for many groups within the community. There is one service currently provided within the community.



The City of River Falls receives State and Federal grant dollars to help fund a shared-ride taxi program. The taxi service is open to anyone and covers the area within the City of River Falls as well as five miles outside the city limits. Currently, Running, Inc. is contracted as the shared-ride taxi provider. This on demand transit service is provided seven days a week at a fee. Through the financial support from the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ARDC) of St. Croix County, service is also available seven days a week to persons over 18 with a disability and individuals over the age of 60.



## Chapter 6: Transportation

### REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIPS

The City’s relationship with regional partners is an important component of the overall function of the transportation system and will continue to be over the next twenty years. These partnerships include collaboration with agencies that have jurisdiction over roadways within the community, as well as regional planning authorities.

Agency	Jurisdiction/Role	Collaboration Opportunity
<b>Wisconsin Department of Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jurisdiction over WIS 35, WIS 65, WIS 29</li> <li>• Maintains statewide plans and policies for all modes</li> </ul>	Collaborate on improvements and investments on state highways in the community and participate in applicable regional and statewide efforts
<b>St. Croix and Pierce Counties</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jurisdiction over county highways</li> <li>• Maintains county-wide plans and policies for all modes</li> </ul>	Collaborate on improvements and investments on county highways in the community and participate in applicable regional efforts
<b>Adjacent Towns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jurisdiction over local/town roads within their boundary</li> </ul>	Collaboration as growth planning and annexation occurs and jurisdiction is changed from town to city
<b>West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support of local partners regarding long range planning initiatives and implementation</li> </ul>	Coordination regarding complex activities and support of specific implementation actions (e.g., grant writing)
<b>Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support of local partners regarding long range planning initiatives and implementation</li> </ul>	Coordination regarding complex activities and support of specific implementation actions (e.g., grant writing)

## Chapter 6: Transportation

# TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES AND TOOLS

## BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN

### Plan Overview

The River Falls Bike and Pedestrian Plan outlines the current conditions for bicycling and walking in the City and recommends ways to improve the experience of moving around the City outside of a vehicle. The plan is informed by the Bike and Pedestrian Steering Committee, City staff, and the public, and was developed through the Focus River Falls process.

The plan begins with the vision and goals that will guide the improvement of walking and biking in River Falls, followed by a summary of the community context and public input that shaped the plan. The plan includes infrastructure recommendations (physical changes to streets, trails, and bridges) as well as policy and program recommendations. The plan closes with a summary of next steps, including quick wins, more complex but high-benefit improvements, and major high-benefit projects.

### Bike and Pedestrian Plan Vision



Walking and biking are comfortable modes of transportation that connect people of all ages and abilities to one another and to everyday destinations via safe, accessible infrastructure.

### Implementation and Connections to the Full Transportation Network

The Bike and Pedestrian Plan identifies both construction and policy recommendations that will aid the community in creating a connected and accessible community. These recommendations were used to support the strategies of the Comprehensive Plan through multiple elements:

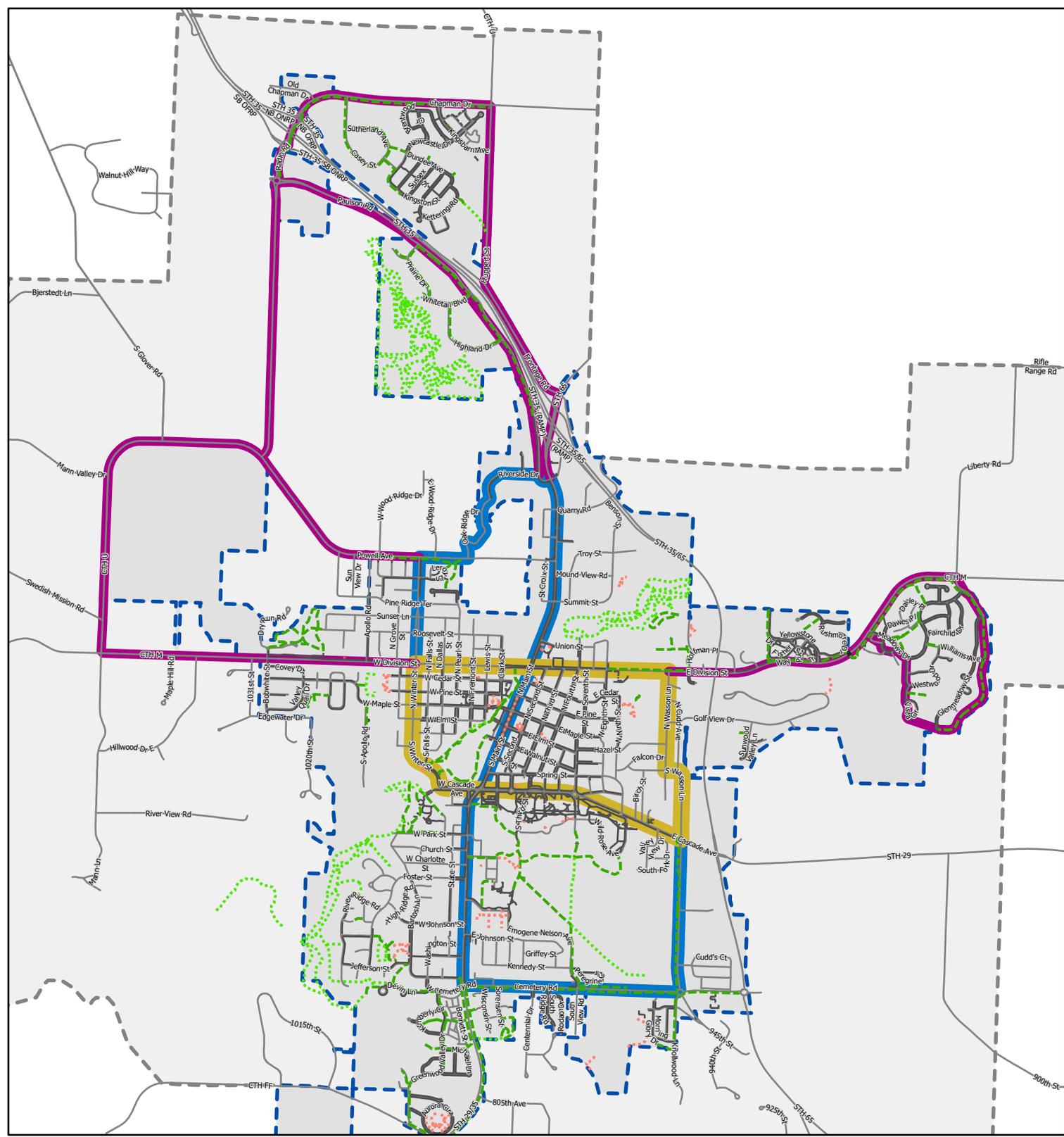
- **Land Use:** The infrastructure recommendations were included within the small area plans analyzed in the Land Use Chapter.
- **Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources and Recreation:** The proposed improvements were utilized to support and enhance recreational offerings.
- **Transportation:** The infrastructure recommendations are key elements to the community loop concept described in the following pages.

# Chapter 6: Transportation

## COMMUNITY LOOP

Desires for a connected, healthy, and vibrant community were commonly heard throughout the planning process. The opportunities to identify community loops that connect neighborhoods and community destinations creates an opportunity to support recreation, health, and transportation. Potential loop alignments were explored throughout the planning process, from new trail alignments circling the existing urban area to internal loops that promote movement within the community’s core. As a result, a community loop concept was created that utilizes the existing transportation network, identified bike and pedestrian improvements, and existing/planned land uses. The intent of the loop is to inform bike and pedestrian infrastructure and connections that emphasize the core of the community, support healthy choices, and support economic development.

<b>TOOL/ RESOURCE</b>	<p><b>Implementation Actions and Resources</b></p> 	<p>Solidify the community loop and determine the implementation actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wayfinding to establish the community loop and direct users to the loop and destinations along the way.</li> <li>• Land Use policies that support the development of designations along the community loop</li> <li>• Identify connection opportunities from all areas of the community to the community loop and explore sub loops that could be established (e.g., downtown loop).</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Businesses</li> <li>• River Falls Area Chamber of Commerce &amp; Tourism Bureau</li> <li>• Neighborhoods</li> <li>• University of Wisconsin – River Falls</li> <li>• School District of River Falls</li> </ul>



## Legend

### City Loop

- City Loop
- Secondary Loop
- Loop Connector

### Sidewalks and Trails

- Bridge
- Tunnel
- Underpass
- Sidewalk
- Paved Path
- Dirt Trail
- Other
- River Falls City Limits
- Urban Area Boundary



## City Loop

# Chapter 6: Transportation

## COMMUNITY TRANSIT CONSIDERATIONS

Community transit options add another mobility option for community members and visitors to travel throughout the community. The City of River Falls has recognized the importance of varied mobility options for years, including the establishment of taxi service in 1985. Transit offerings within a community can be directly tied to the overall community size and regional connections, and the current offerings within the community are not uncommon for similarly sized communities. The City of River Falls currently provides a shared ride taxi service that provides community transit options for residents and visitors and on-going investments to improve the bicycle and pedestrian network will continue to improve the variety of mobility options.

The existing shared ride tax service is provided by the City of River Falls and operated by Running, Inc. This demand transit service available to the community has a fee structure that includes base, senior, and student rates. The desire for broader transit options was heard throughout the engagement process. As the City continues to explore transportation improvements, multiple transit services and options could be explored. These transit networks should consider both intercity opportunities and regional connections outside of the community. Within the planning horizon of this plan, four transit options are highlighted below. Other transit options may be viable for the community as growth continues to occur and regional transit options are expanded.

<b>TOOL/ RESOURCE</b>	<b>Implementation Actions and Resources</b>  	Explore the transit service options that support the short and long term needs of the community, understanding that each option has varied levels of impact and complexity.
	<b>Transit Options for Consideration</b>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued use of Shared Ride/Transit Taxi – Medium Impact and Medium Complexity</li> <li>• Specialized Transit - Low Impact and Medium Complexity</li> <li>• Autonomous Transit – Medium Impact and High Complexity</li> <li>• Commuter Rail – High Impact and High Complexity</li> </ul>
	<b>Potential Partners</b>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WisDOT</li> <li>• St. Croix and Pierce County</li> <li>• Existing program and service providers</li> <li>• Running, Inc.</li> </ul>

# Chapter 6: Transportation

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

A transportation network that provides safe and efficient connections for all users was a common theme heard throughout the Focus River Falls process. While there are over 200 miles of roadway, trails, and sidewalks in the community, there are many opportunities to bridge gaps that will increase safe and efficient movement by all. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan analyzed the gaps in the sidewalk and trail network throughout the community and developed a list of recommended investments to improve connections throughout the community. The city’s official map provides an opportunity to monitor and address future roadway connections within the community and new growth areas. Specific to the roadway network, expansion of the system as growth occurs should consider the broader connections to the community. This can be achieved through multiple access points into a new development area, providing connectivity within and from the area.

## OTHER POTENTIAL TOOLS

<b>TOOL/ RESOURCE</b>	<b>Access Management Guidelines</b>	Development of guidelines to inform the spacing and type of access points along roadways within the community.
	<b>Emerging Technologies</b>	Support the integration of emerging technologies within the transportation system, including electrical vehicle charging and next steps.
	<b>Pavement Preservation</b>	Actively maintain good quality pavement throughout the community through a number of maintenance processes and policies.
	<b>Wayfinding Signage</b>	Continue to support the community wayfinding efforts and implementation.
	<b>Universal Design/Complete Streets</b>	Create a universal design or complete streets policy that builds transportation infrastructure and supports the safe and efficient movement of all.
	<b>Regional Connectivity</b>	Actively explore opportunities to improve regional connectivity for everyone to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area and greater Wisconsin.
	<b>Parking Requirements</b>	Continue to utilize and update the existing Parking Control Map and regulations for on-street parking needs throughout the community. Complete a Parking Study to understand and analyze existing parking needs, policies, and tools. Explore emerging regulatory tools for on-site parking, such as parking minimums.

# CHAPTER 7: UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES



## INTRODUCTION

The provision of utilities and community facilities is a key quality of life aspect for the residents of River Falls. This planning process examined the City’s existing facilities and services, explored how city growth will affect future service areas, and surveyed the community to understand community needs.

### WHAT ARE UTILITIES, COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES?

In the context of this plan, community facilities and services include the infrastructure that sustains the city’s quality of life and supports future population and economic growth. These facilities consist of traditional utilities, such as water, wastewater treatment, electricity, stormwater management and solid waste collection and disposal, and other facilities that support people, including educational facilities, city hall, libraries, and public spaces.



# Chapter 7: Utilities & Community Facilities

## RELATED GOALS

While the Goals outlined in **Chapter 2** are intended to direct all chapters within the plan, some are more related to specific topic elements than others. The following goals play a significant role in guiding the Utilities and Community Facilities Chapter:

- Resiliency** River Falls has a resilient system of infrastructure, community facilities, and utilities that ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the community and preserve quality of life for future generations.
- Livability** River Falls supports livability through intentional growth management policies and development standards, quality and diverse housing stock and local businesses that together support a strong connection to place.

## UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

The **Utilities and Community Facilities Technical Memorandum** included in **Appendix A5** provides additional detail and analysis to support the recommendations and actions identified to support the community’s goals. Visit the Technical Memorandum to learn more about:

- Overview of the **existing utilities and services.**
- Existing **Metrics and Programs** to emphasize the role and importance of each facility and service.
- Emphasis on **educational institutions** within the community.
- Focus on **sustainable and resilient infrastructure growth.**

## Chapter 7: Utilities & Community Facilities

# UTILITIES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES CONTEXT

## CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Many of River Falls traditional utilities are provided, operated, and maintained by River Falls Municipal Utilities (RFMU), a department of the city. Additional details, including system maps, can be viewed in the **Utilities and Community Facilities Technical Memo** in **Appendix A5**.



Utility Type	Description
 <b>Water System</b>	<p>The City's water system draws drinking water from five production wells. The wells tap into the Jordan Aquifer and the Prairie du Chien Aquifer. Each year, the utility publishes a Water Quality Report, that documents any contaminants that were found in the water supply. RFMU has 6,129 water service customers.</p>
 <b>Wastewater System</b>	<p>The City's wastewater treatment facility is located on the west side of River Falls, along the Kinnickinnic River. The facility has the capacity to treat up to 1.8 million gallons of wastewater per day and is made up of three main systems: 1) Primary Treatment; 2) Secondary Treatment; and 3) Bio-Solids Building (in development). RFMU has 5,363 sewer customers.</p>
 <b>Electricity Utility</b>	<p>Electricity in the city is provided by RFMU, which is one of over two thousand publicly owned power utilities in the country. The City's power is sourced from WPPI Energy, which is an electricity cooperative that works with 50 other electricity providers in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Iowa. According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, in 2021, RFMU was ranked in the top ten utility providers for Green Power Sales Rate and Participation Rate. RFMU has 7,301 electricity customers. Hydropower has been a part of the electric utility since 1900 and includes the generation of renewable energy from the Junction Falls dam on the Kinni.</p>
 <b>Stormwater System</b>	<p>The city stormwater management system uses a series of drainage pipes and ponds to retain, treat, and transport stormwater. As required by state and federal law, the city has a Separate Stormwater Sewer System Permit (MS4) from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The permit requires municipalities to have standards and programs in place to control and treat stormwater runoff.</p> <p><b>METRICS:</b> The City owns and maintains 120 stormwater treatment structures including 39 wet detention basins, 28 dry detention basins, and 28 infiltration basins.</p>



Wastewater Treatment



River Falls' Community Solar Array



Pervious Pavers Demonstration project

# Chapter 7: Utilities & Community Facilities

## COMMUNITY SERVICES

A variety of community services support River Falls. Those services include educational institutions, community safety, and recreational opportunities.

Service Type	Description
 <p><b>Primary &amp; Secondary Education</b></p>	<p>Primary and secondary education in River Falls is provided by the City of River Falls School District. Serving over 3,400 students in 2020-2021, the district provides schooling from 4K to high school, including elementary schools, middle school, high school, a Montessori, a virtual/e-school, and a charter academy. Education is also offered via the St. Bridget Parish School for Pre-K to 8th grade students.</p> <p><b>METRICS:</b> 3,400 students were enrolled in 2020-2021</p>
 <p><b>Postsecondary Education</b></p>	<p>River Falls is home to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and the Chippewa Valley Technical College Campus. Each school provides higher educational facilities and offers unique partnership options for employment and city programming.</p> <p><b>Metrics:</b> Recent enrollment at UWRF has been over 5,000 students and the CVTC system supports over 7,000 students across its campuses.</p>
 <p><b>Community Safety</b></p>	<p>Law enforcement in River Falls is provided by the River Falls Police Department, fire suppression is provided by the River Falls Fire Department, and ambulatory and emergency medical services (EMS) are provided by Allina Emergency Medical Services.</p> <p><b>Metrics:</b> In 2022, the 26 sworn police department staff generated over 12,000 calls for service. Additionally, the 58 active fire department members responded to over 148 square miles of service area.</p>



## Chapter 7: Utilities & Community Facilities

Service Type	Description
 <p><b>Library</b></p>	<p>River Falls Public Library is a key community asset that supports access for community education, social connection, and growth. At its core, the library provides community access to physical and online books, catalogs, and hundreds of other types of media rentals, and provides a variety of other services. Programming for all ages creates opportunities for the community to come together and learn, and conference rooms, study spaces, and computers are available for public use.</p> <p><b>Metrics:</b> 205,261 physical items were checked out from the library in 2022. The library also supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8,000 uses of public computers</li> <li>• 6,000 reference questions</li> <li>• 111,000 visitors</li> <li>• 275 summer programs</li> <li>• 3,000 hours of room use</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Recreation Programs</b></p>	<p>Various recreational opportunities, such as youth sports, are available in the city. The Recreation Chapter and Outdoor and Recreation Plan provide additional details about recreation in River Falls.</p> <p><b>Metrics:</b> In 2022, the Parks and Recreation programming supported 2,419 participants. Additionally, the swimming pool saw thousands of daily users and association or adult activities supported 3,573 users.</p>



## Chapter 7: Utilities & Community Facilities

### ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

**Community Survey responses indicate that generally respondents are satisfied with the utilities and community facilities available. Responses show that no particular system is significantly lacking and the respondents would like to see continued maintenance investments across the board.**

<p><b>23% of survey respondents</b> noted that they would like to see improvements to the community's water infrastructure.</p>	<p><b>Electric infrastructure and solid waste management</b> each received 21% of responses when asked where utility/infrastructure improvements could be made.</p>	<p>Other facilities that received responses included <b>stormwater management/flood protection and sewer infrastructure.</b></p>
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**Community Survey responses indicated that community members want to see increased investments in walking, bicycling, and other recreational trails.**

<p>60 percent of respondents stated that they want to see increased investment to <b>improve or enhance the quality of parks, trails, and waterfront.</b></p>	<p>Other responses support investment in the city's trail and sidewalk system, indicating that want to see the <b>City invest in improving the community's sidewalks and trails.</b></p>
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## TOOLS & RESOURCES

### INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH

River Falls is projected to grow by about 6,300 people between 2020 and 2045. Accommodating that population growth will require more housing units, expanded capacity for community facilities and services, and additional capacity from utility systems. The consideration and planning for accommodating future growth will be key in maintaining the community's quality of life.

<b>TOOL/ RESOURCE</b>	<p><b>Implementation Actions</b></p> 	<p>As is addressed in detail in the Land Use and Housing chapters, the city should prioritize compact mixed-use development in areas that are already served by utilities and infrastructure. This will maximize the use of existing facilities, and reduce the need for costly utility expansion. When outward expansion and greenfield development is necessary, the city should be intentional to ensure that infrastructure can accommodate new development to make efficient use of utility systems. The completion of an Infrastructure Growth Plan will support the direction and support needed.</p>
	<p><b>Metrics to Watch</b></p> 	<p>A variety of metrics can be used to measure the impact of growth on city utilities and community facilities. Those metrics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ratio of new/redevelopment that is located within the planned utility service area vs. development that is located outside the planned utility service area.</li> <li>• Annexed area developed density</li> <li>• School Enrollment/School Class Size</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• River Falls Municipal Utilities</li> <li>• Builders/Developers</li> <li>• Non-profit Organizations</li> <li>• River Falls Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism</li> <li>• University of Wisconsin-River Falls and Chippewa Valley Technical College</li> <li>• Federal, State, and county organizations</li> </ul>

# Chapter 7: Utilities & Community Facilities

## STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Well-functioning stormwater management systems are important in protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the environment and ecosystem. Stormwater management helps to maintain and improve surface and ground water quality and reduce the flooding impacts of storm events. In fact, stormwater runoff is regulated at the state and federal level, requiring local jurisdictions to improve the management and treatment of stormwater within their community.

<b>TOOL/ RESOURCE</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Implementation Actions</b></p> 	<p>River Falls should continue and further improve its stormwater management efforts, through continued programming, education, and regulation. Actions should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Wisconsin DNR Permitting</b> – continue working to increase the use of stormwater management best practices as required by the Separate Stormwater Sewer System Permit (MS4).</li> <li>• <b>Demonstration Projects</b> – explore additional opportunities to develop demonstration projects to display the benefits from stormwater best practices.</li> <li>• <b>Local Regulation</b> – Localities require stormwater management practices as a part of land development. Best practices should be continuously reviewed and updated.</li> <li>• <b>Outreach</b> – Many localities have robust public outreach programs regarding stormwater management. Some efforts include data sharing, interactive mapping, and easily accessible tips for improving water quality.</li> <li>• <b>Appendix A</b> includes additional strategies local jurisdictions use to help improve water quality.</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Additional Resources</b></p> 	<p>Various resources are available that can help communities achieve stormwater management goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Healthy Watersheds, High Quality Waters Action Plan</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Stormwater Technical Standards, Models, and BMPs</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Wisconsin Stormwater Manual</a></li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Potential Partners</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources</li> <li>• Builders/Developers</li> <li>• No-profit Organizations</li> </ul>

# Chapter 7: Utilities & Community Facilities

## SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Resilience has been identified as a key theme throughout this plan. Incorporating resilience and sustainability into infrastructure, utility, and community facilities planning protects community investments, ensures that these facilities are operational when they are needed most, and protect environmental resources.

<b>TOOL/ RESOURCE</b>	<p><b>Implementation Actions</b></p> 	<p>River Falls can protect its high-quality of life and fiscal investments by ensuring that sustainability and resilience are incorporated into infrastructure and utility investment decisions. For example, vital utilities and community services should be located outside of the floodplain, in locations where the risk of closure due to flooding is very low.</p> <p>The community should continue and further its efforts to transition to more renewable sources. Local programs, such as the City’s community solar system, and national programs, such as a group purchasing program similar to <u>Solarize from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)</u> are great efforts to help communities continue the movement toward sustainability.</p>
	<p><b>Metrics to Watch</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utility reliability</li> <li>• New opportunities to expand utilities through renewable resources, such as solar system installations</li> <li>• Infrastructure report card</li> <li>• Infrastructure innovations</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• River Falls Municipal Utilities</li> <li>• National Renewable Energy Laboratory, U.S. Department of Energy</li> <li>• Federal, State, and county organizations</li> </ul>

# CHAPTER 8: LAND USE

## INTRODUCTION

Community identity and character are impacted significantly by land use and development patterns. In particular, the built environment impacts how people live, how they move around, and where they access everyday necessities. The River Falls community values the traditional downtown, the Kinnickinnic River and other environmental amenities, and prefers growth within River Falls over outward expansion. Each of these factors are considered within the Land Use Chapter and are supported by the Future Land Use Plan.

In addition, the Land Use Chapter, and the Future Land Use Plan in particular, impact all other elements within the Comprehensive Plan. Land Use decisions: 1) impact the type and location of new housing and development; 2) direct future infrastructure and utility needs; 3) support environmental preservation and improvement; 4) address the availability of commercial and industrial growth opportunities; and 5) guide improvements to the built environment, which impacts community feel and sense of place.

River Falls uses various tools to influence land use and development. Zoning regulates limit how land can be used, including providing standards for building size and location; development regulations control land development, and the Future Land Use Plan serves as a guide for land use and development decisions.

Specifically, the Future Land Use Plan

- Designates an Urban Area Boundary, denoting the city's urban growth area;
- Identifies the preferred land use for each property, both within the City and in its growth areas;
- Includes Small Area Plans; and
- Includes guidance for future changes to zoning standards and development regulations.



### Key Land Use Considerations

**Community Input:** Generally, the River Falls Community wants to see growth within the city over outward expansion and wants the city to protect environmental amenities and the small town feel.

**Future Land Use Map:** Designates an Urban Area Boundary (UAB), showing the City's growth area, and the ideal land use on each parcel within the city and in the UAB.

**Land Use Strategies and Tools:** Identify key resources and considerations that the city can use to implement land use goals. Recommendations include updating development and zoning regulations, encouraging mixed use development, and protecting and enhancing community connectivity to support human movement.

## Chapter 8: Land Use

In whole, this chapter serves as a guide for community decision making on land use, development, and zoning decisions. It includes a Future Land Use Plan, Future Land Use Map, and exploration of land use tools and resources. Additional details, data, and mapping are available for review in the **Land Use Element Technical Memo** in **Appendix A6**.

### RELATED GOALS

While the Goals outlined in **Chapter 2** are intended to direct all chapters within the plan, some are more related to specific topic elements than others. The following goals play a significant role in guiding the Land Use Chapter:

<b>Connection</b>	River Falls is a welcoming community that incorporates equity and inclusion into decision making, thereby creating opportunities for everyone to connect and thrive.
<b>Livability</b>	River Falls supports livability through intentional growth management policies and development standards, quality and diverse housing stock and local businesses that together support a strong connection to place.
<b>Resources</b>	River Falls prioritizes natural and cultural resources and outdoor recreation so that all residents may have those connections and opportunities to support healthy lifestyles.

## LAND USE TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

The **Land Use Technical Memorandum** included in **Appendix A6** provides additional detail and analysis to support the recommendations and actions identified to support the community’s goals. Visit the Technical Memorandum to learn more about:

Overview of <b>existing zoning and extraterritorial controls</b> of the city.	<b>Future Land Use Plan</b> detailing the development types and locations for future guidance.	<b>Development Regulation</b> tools and strategies to guide the form and function of future development.	Overview and supporting information on <b>Mixed Use Development</b> considerations.
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## Chapter 8: Land Use

# LAND USE CONTEXT

## LAND USE PROFILE

Cities have a variety of regulatory and planning tools that can be used to control growth and development. The primary tools are zoning, development regulations, and the future land use map. Each plays a different role in ensuring that growth is consistent with the community’s desired vision. Refer to Key Land Use Terms for more context.

River Falls Code of Ordinances and official zoning map include 15 distinct zoning districts. As is typically the case, the districts fall across five traditional use categories 1) residential; 2) commercial; 3) industrial; 4) institutional; and 5) open space and agricultural, with varying levels of intensity or density. Single family residential zoning and development is the leading form of land use and zoning within the City of River Falls. The **Land Use Technical Memorandum** includes detailed information on zoning within the city.

Additionally, as allowed by state law, the city has extraterritorial zoning (ETZ) standards that extend outside city limits. While State Statute allows the city to extend these controls up to three miles, the City’s current ETZ area extends approximately a mile and half outside the city limits. By applying ETZ standards to areas outside the city, River Falls can protect its growth planning by ensuring that development does not contradict growth plans.

Further, the city has an agreement with Kinnickinnic Township for zoning outside city limits within the Township. The area is called the Urban Reserve Area, and is primarily zoned for agricultural purposes, with a small portion zoned Heavy Industrial.

## Key Land Use Terms

Four main terms are used throughout this chapter to describe land use:

**Existing Land Use:** Describes how the property is currently being used, typically based on a few general categories, including residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and park/open space.

**Zoning:** The regulatory tool that is used by the City to regulate land use, control the development of land, and protect health, safety, welfare, and property values throughout the city. The City’s adopted zoning ordinance includes regulations that limit the uses that are allowed within each zoning district, provides standards for structure size, property line setback, and requirements for land development.

**Future Land Use:** Identifies the desired use on each parcel throughout the city. Similar to existing land use, future land use categories are broken into general uses with subcategories that are based on density or intensity.

**Development Regulations:** Provide standards that limit and control land development. Development regulations impact the look and feel of a community by including standards that address parking, street and subdivision design, building design, and more.

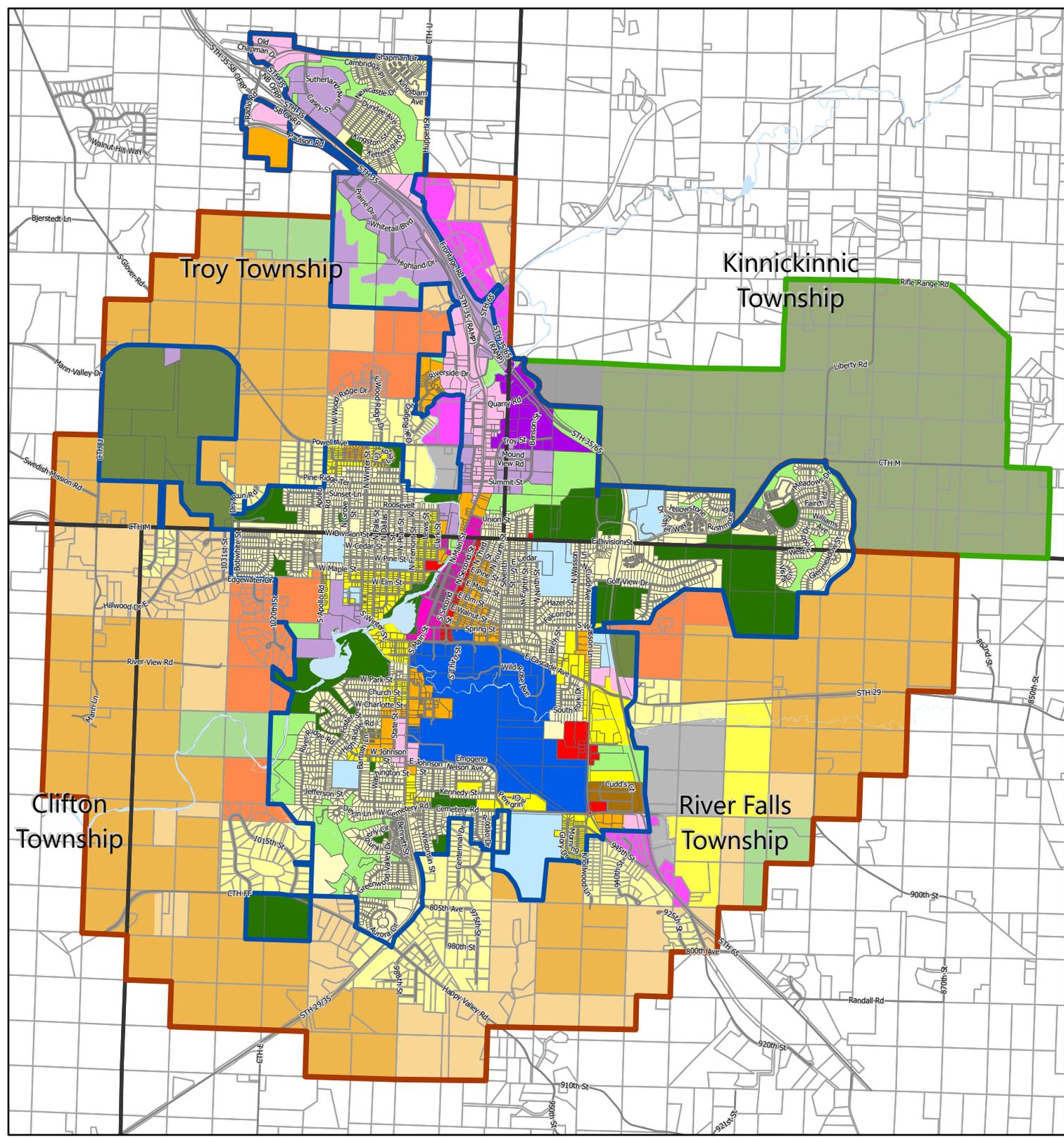
## Chapter 8: Land Use

The figure on the following page shows River Falls existing zoning and extraterritorial zoning. See **Appendix B** for more information about City zoning.

### PROJECTED GROWTH

Future land use planning should consider how a community is expected to grow over the planning horizon. It should ensure that available development and growth can alleviate existing housing shortages and support projected population growth. For instance, River Falls is projected to grow by 6,331 people between 2020 and 2045. By combining available development land and added housing units from redevelopment and infill development, there should be sufficient development capacity to accommodate projected growth. Assuming a stable average household size of 2.4 people, this growth would require an additional 2,638 households over 25 years or 105 housing units each year. However, existing housing shortages necessitate housing growth that exceeds the amount needed to accommodate population growth.





### Legend

- River Falls City Limits
- Extraterritorial Zoning Boundary (ETZ)
- Urban Reserve Area Zoning - Kinnickinnic Township
- Township Boundaries
- Roads
- Lakes and Rivers

### City Zoning

- A - Agriculture
- B1 - General Commercial
- B2 - Limited Business
- B3 - Highway Commercial
- C - Conservancy
- HZ - Hospital Zone
- I1 - Industrial
- I2 - Heavy Industrial
- MHP - Mobile Home Park
- P - Park
- R1 - Single Family Low Density
- R2 - Multiple Family Medium Density
- R3 - Multiple Family High Density
- SZ - School Zone
- TND - Traditional Neighborhood Development
- U - University

### Urban Reserve Area Zoning - Kinnickinnic Township

- A - Agriculture
- I2 - Heavy Industrial

### Extraterritorial Zoning

- Agriculture
- Exclusive Agriculture
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Single Family
- Multiple Family
- Residential Suburban
- Conservancy



# Zoning and Extraterritorial Zoning

## Chapter 8: Land Use

### ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

**Community Survey respondents seem to support and understand the need for new growth in River Falls, however, they would like growth to occur through infill and increased density in the city**

68% of Community Survey respondents support the **development of vacant properties.**

58% of Community Survey respondents support the **infill of vacant or undeveloped properties.**

73% of Community Survey respondents support the **redevelopment of existing properties.**

**When asked what they are proud of, community members cited the community’s small-town feel, environmental amenities, and downtown and community aesthetics, stating:**

“Small town feel, safe.”

“Nature.”

“Main Street.”

“We’re growing but living here still feels like a small town. I feel safe here”

“The Kinnickinnic River”

“How the people and government respect and want to keep the aesthetic of the town beautiful.”

“As of now has a rural, laid-back feel.”

“Great natural spaces.”

“Our small town-ness”

“The Kinni is an amazing resource. It attracts so many people to RF, but is not easily accessible.”

“Downtown.”

“Small town, community feel.”

“A vibrant small town downtown”

**Community Survey respondents support the protection of agricultural, natural, and cultural resources within the community including the adoption of land use policies that will work to protect these areas from development.**

## Chapter 8: Land Use

### FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Future Land Use Plan is intended to be used by elected officials, staff, and the public as a guide for future development and City growth by identifying preferred land use and development style throughout the city. In implementing the Comprehensive Plan Goals, the Future Land Use Plan seeks to:

- Allow for additional housing development to accommodate projected growth;
- Prioritize infill and redevelopment over outward growth, by allowing for increased housing densities in throughout the city;
- Protect environmental and cultural resources from the impacts of development;
- Identify areas for mixed-use development, where housing is located near goods, services, and employment;
- Include opportunities to diversify housing choices by encouraging housing development with a range of densities and housing types, such as Missing Middle style housing;
- Provides opportunities for commercial, industrial, and corporate park development to support the community’s business environment and economic development.

### FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The key component of the Future Land Use Plan is the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). The FLUM serves as a guide for land use and zoning decisions, by identifying a preferred land use on each parcel based as the desired use in the future. All parcels within the River Falls corporate limits and those within the Urban Area Boundary are assigned Future Land Uses.

Natural constraints, such as floodplain and steep slopes, often limit the development potential of land. Figure 2 below overlays 100 year floodplain and steep slopes on the FLUM to serve as a guide to development potential within the City and Urban Area Boundary. This land use and development constraints map must be used in conjunction with the Future Land Use Map in determining the future land use. Shown on the map are key land use and growth designations such as:

**Urban Area Boundary (UAB)** – Initially established by the 2005 River Falls Comprehensive Plan, the Urban Area Boundary identifies a future growth area for the City, where urban development standards should be applied. Upon annexation, properties within the UAB should be zoned based on their identified Future Land Use Category on the FLUM.

**Future Land Use Categories** – Future Land Use Categories identify the preferred land use in the future. Each parcel is assigned a use category based on the desired use and the preferred intensity or density. The description provided for each category applies to the land uses designated within City Limits and the UAB. See the **Land Use Technical Memorandum** in **Appendix A6** for additional details.

## Chapter 8: Land Use

### Future Land Use Categories

Category	Description	Category	Description
Low Density Residential (LDR)	Areas for residential development primarily consisting of single-family dwellings.	Commercial (C)	Areas intended for the location of a variety of commercial uses, including retail sales, office, service, eating and drinking establishments, and other similar uses.
Medium Density Residential (MDR)	Areas reserved for residential development with a mix of housing types including single-family dwellings, duplexes, townhomes, and small and mid-sized multi-family apartment buildings.	Corporate Park (CP)	Areas intended for office, production, and administration uses. Acts as a transition between commercial and industrial uses by allowing higher intensity uses with limited customers on site.
High Density Residential (HDR)	Areas reserved for residential development that is primarily multi-family, including apartments, higher density townhomes, and manufactured housing parks.	Industrial (I)	Areas intended for manufacturing, distribution, agricultural production, and other similar uses.
Mixed-Use (MU)	Areas reserved for a horizontal and vertical mix of residential and commercial uses. Areas within the Downtown District should have vertical mixed-use development and areas outside the Downtown District may have a horizontal mix of commercial and residential uses.	Park (P)	Designated for park specific uses, including both public and private parks, recreational uses, golf courses, and other active and passive areas.
Public/Institutional (PI)	Areas for schools, government buildings, churches, libraries, fire and police, and other institutional uses.	Open Space (OS)	Areas reserved for programmed and non-programmed open space uses including natural resource, conservancy, and corridor protection areas.
University (U)	Areas intended for the University of Wisconsin, River Falls campus and other necessary land uses to support it.		

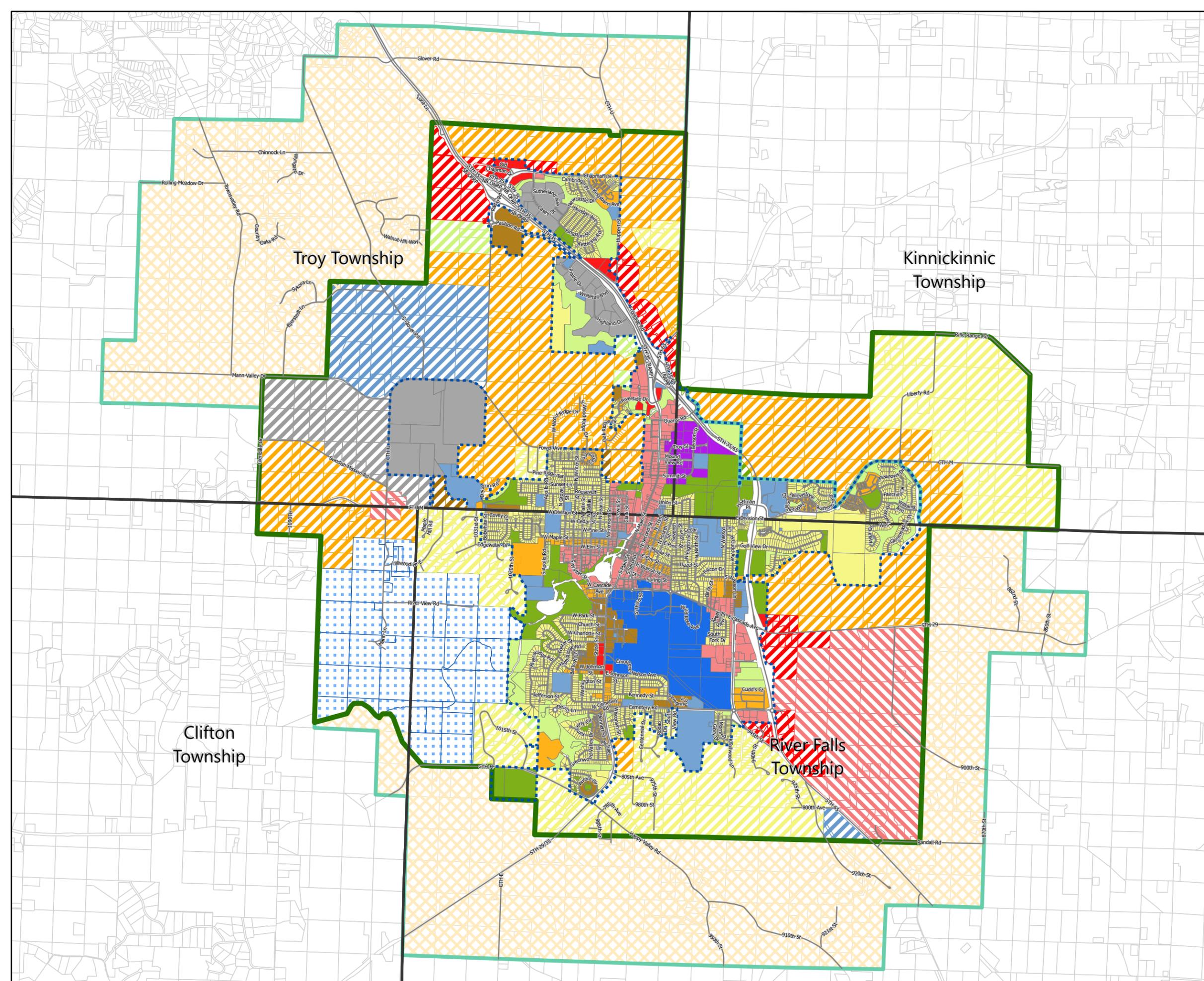
# Chapter 8: Land Use

Two additional land use categories are included within the Urban Area Boundary to guide future decision making. These two areas were created to provide guidance for future growth areas that did not warrant the identification of a specific land use category at this time. Should a proposal be presented to the city, a subarea study to analyze the proposal, surrounding land uses, and recent development to define land use guidance.

## Specific UAB Future Land Use Categories

Category	Description	Category	Description
UAB – Urban Growth Preservation Area	Areas within the UAB that could support future growth and development; however, existing natural resources or access concerns create current barriers for development. While this area is identified for preservation of current uses, development may be explored and identified as deemed appropriate by city staff and the Plan Commission.	UAB – City Edge Growth Preservation Area	Areas within the city’s edge that provide a transition between the city and growth areas and the surrounding townships. The existing uses, open spaces, and large tracts of land should be preserved. However, development may be considered and analyzed as deemed appropriate by city staff and the Plan Commission.





- ### Legend
- River Falls City Limits
  - Township Boundaries
  - Urban Area Boundary
  - Existing Subdivision Control Boundary

- ### Future Land Use
- LDR - Low Density Residential
  - MDR - Medium Density Residential
  - HDR - High Density Residential
  - MU - Mixed Use
  - C - Commercial
  - CP - Corporate Park
  - I - Industrial
  - PI - Public/Insttutional
  - U - University
  - OS - Open Space
  - P - Park

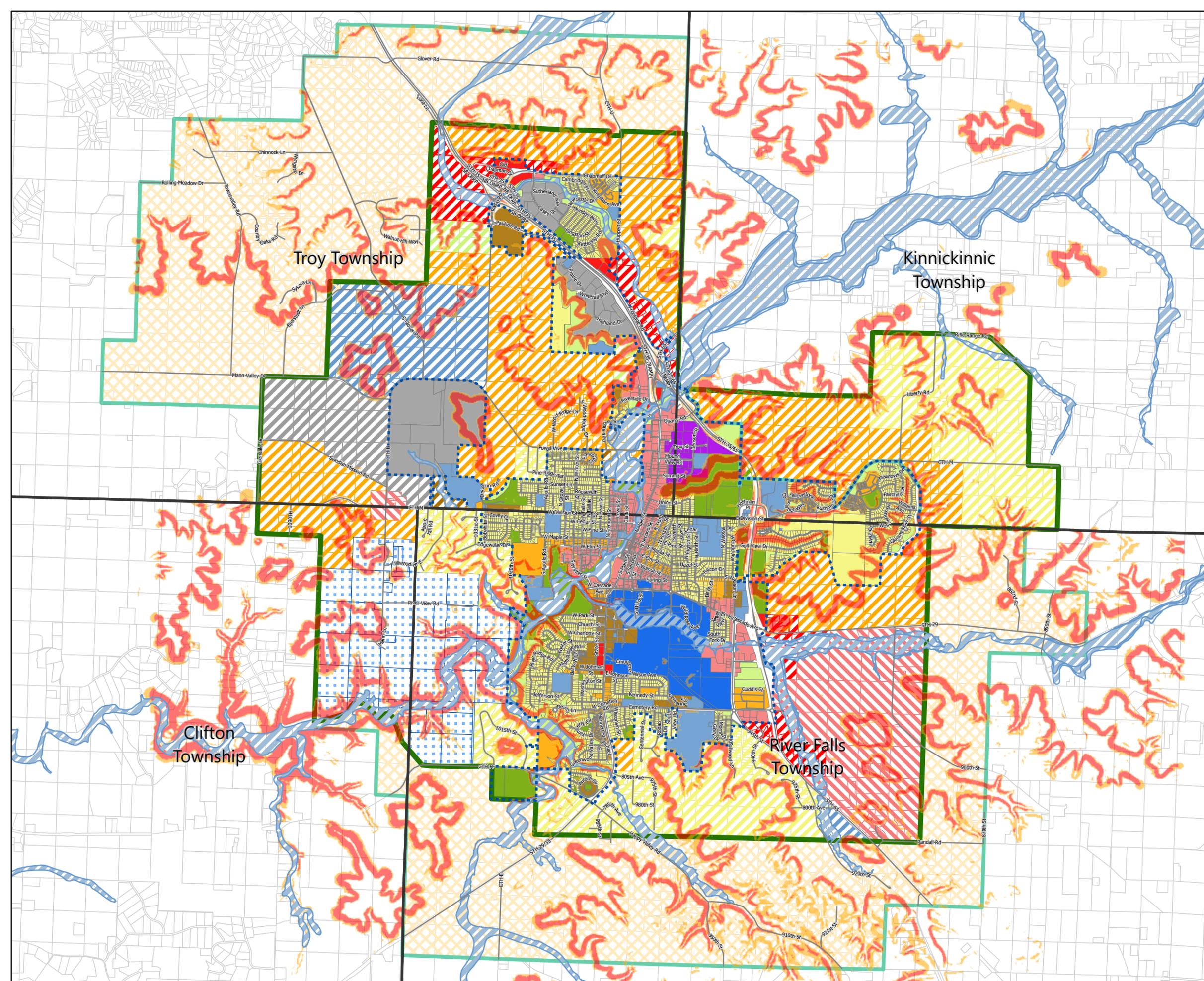
- ### Urban Area Boundary (UAB) Future Land Use
- UAB-Low Density Residential
  - UAB-Medium Density Residential
  - UAB-High Density Residential
  - UAB-Mixed-Use
  - UAB-Commercial
  - UAB-Corporate Park
  - UAB-Public/Insttutional
  - UAB-Open Space
  - UAB-Park
  - UAB-Urban Growth Preservation Area
  - UAB-City Edge Growth Preservation Area



Note: The Future Land Use Map should be used in tandem with the Development Constraint Map.



# Figure 2. Future Land Use Map



### Legend

- River Falls City Limits
- Township Boundaries
- Urban Area Boundary
- Existing Subdivision Control Boundary

### Future Land Use

- LDR - Low Density Residential
- MDR - Medium Density Residential
- HDR - High Density Residential
- MU - Mixed Use
- C - Commercial
- CP - Corporate Park
- I - Industrial
- PI - Public/Institutional
- U - University
- OS - Open Space
- P - Park

### Urban Area Boundary (UAB) Future Land Use

- UAB-Low Density Residential
- UAB-Medium Density Residential
- UAB-High Density Residential
- UAB-Mixed-Use
- UAB-Commercial
- UAB-Corporate Park
- UAB-Public/Institutional
- UAB-Open Space
- UAB-Park
- UAB-Urban Growth Preservation Area
- UAB-City Edge Growth Preservation Area

### Percent Slope Generalized

- 0 - 12%
- 12 - 20%
- > 20%
- 100 Year Floodplain

Note: The Development Constraint Map should be used in tandem with the Future Land Use Map.



## Figure 2. Land Use & Development Constraint Map

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_, 2023

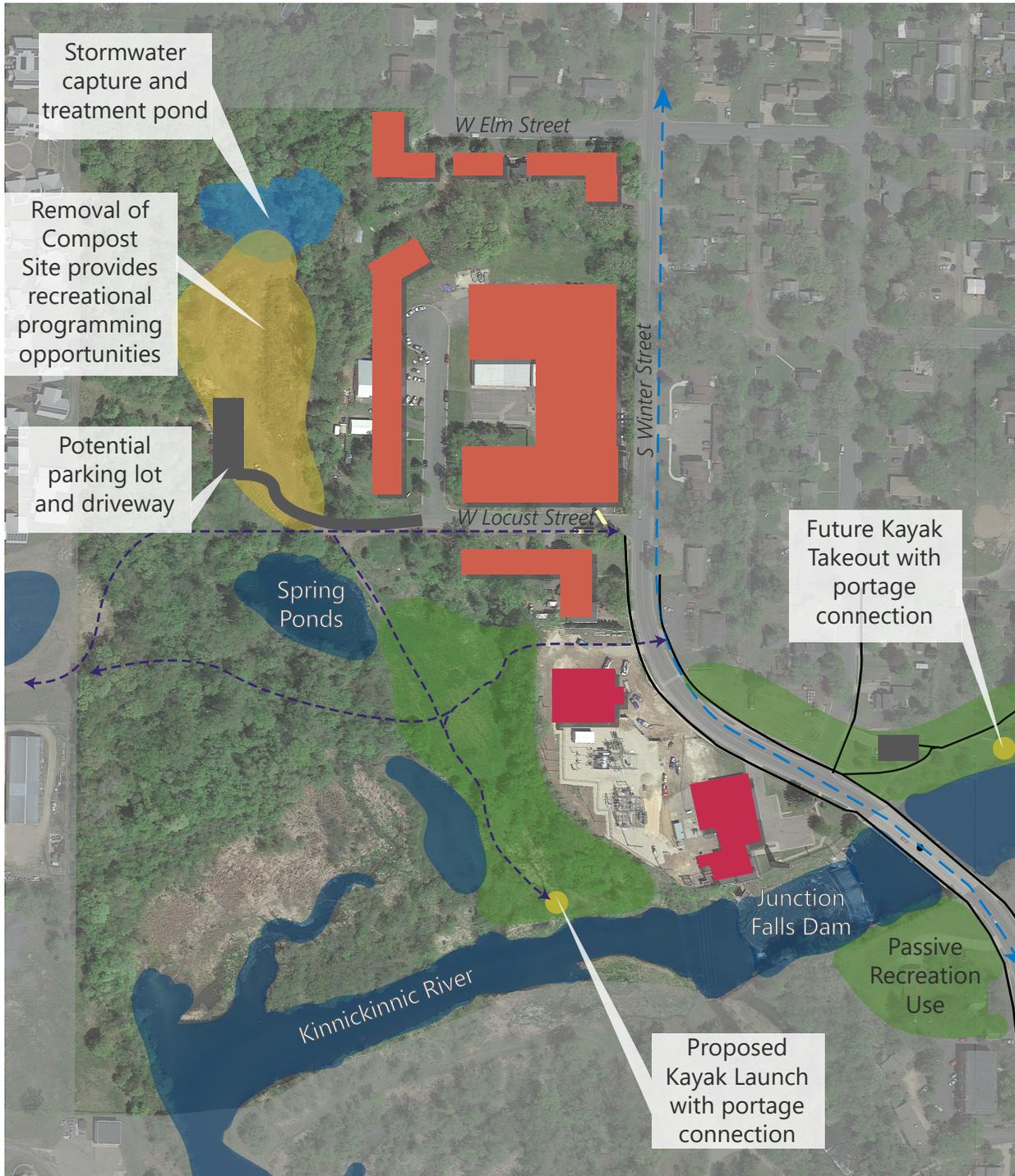
## Chapter 8: Land Use

### SMALL AREA PLANS

Small Area Plans are a planning tool that provides a detailed analysis of development opportunities for a specific area. Three small areas were identified for analysis as part of the Comprehensive Plan. The following pages present the small area plans developed through this analysis. See the **Land Use Technical Memorandum** in **Appendix A6** for further detail about these plans.

Small Area Plan	Description	Opportunities
Locust and Winter	This area includes a number of potential changes, each creating an opportunity for future growth and investment from both the built environment and recreational opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reuse of the existing Power Plant</li> <li>• Future removal of the dam</li> <li>• Removal and reuse of the recycling center</li> </ul>
Cascade and Main	This area is uniquely positioned at the southern edge of Downtown, to the west of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls Campus, and along the Kinni which creates opportunities for multiple investments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased residential density</li> <li>• Expansion of recreational offerings</li> <li>• Mixed-use development opportunities</li> </ul>
Cascade and Wasson	This location has connections to both the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and Chippewa Valley Technical College campuses. It is also a primary entrance into the community, solidifying the identity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased residential density</li> <li>• Multimodal connection between campuses</li> <li>• Roadway network updates</li> </ul>





## Legend

### Development Opportunities

- Mixed Use Development
- Multi-Family Residential Development
- Recreational Development
- Commercial Development

### Transportation Networks

- Existing Trail/Sidewalk
- Bike/Ped Proposed Improvement
- Potential Trail Connection
- Potential Roadway Connection
- Existing/Proposed Parking Lots

### Programming Opportunities

- Recreation/Open Space
- Change of Use
- Stormwater Management



# Locust and Winter Small Area Plan



## Legend

### Development Opportunities

- Mixed Use Development
- Multi-Family Residential Development
- Recreational Development
- Commercial Development

### Transportation Networks

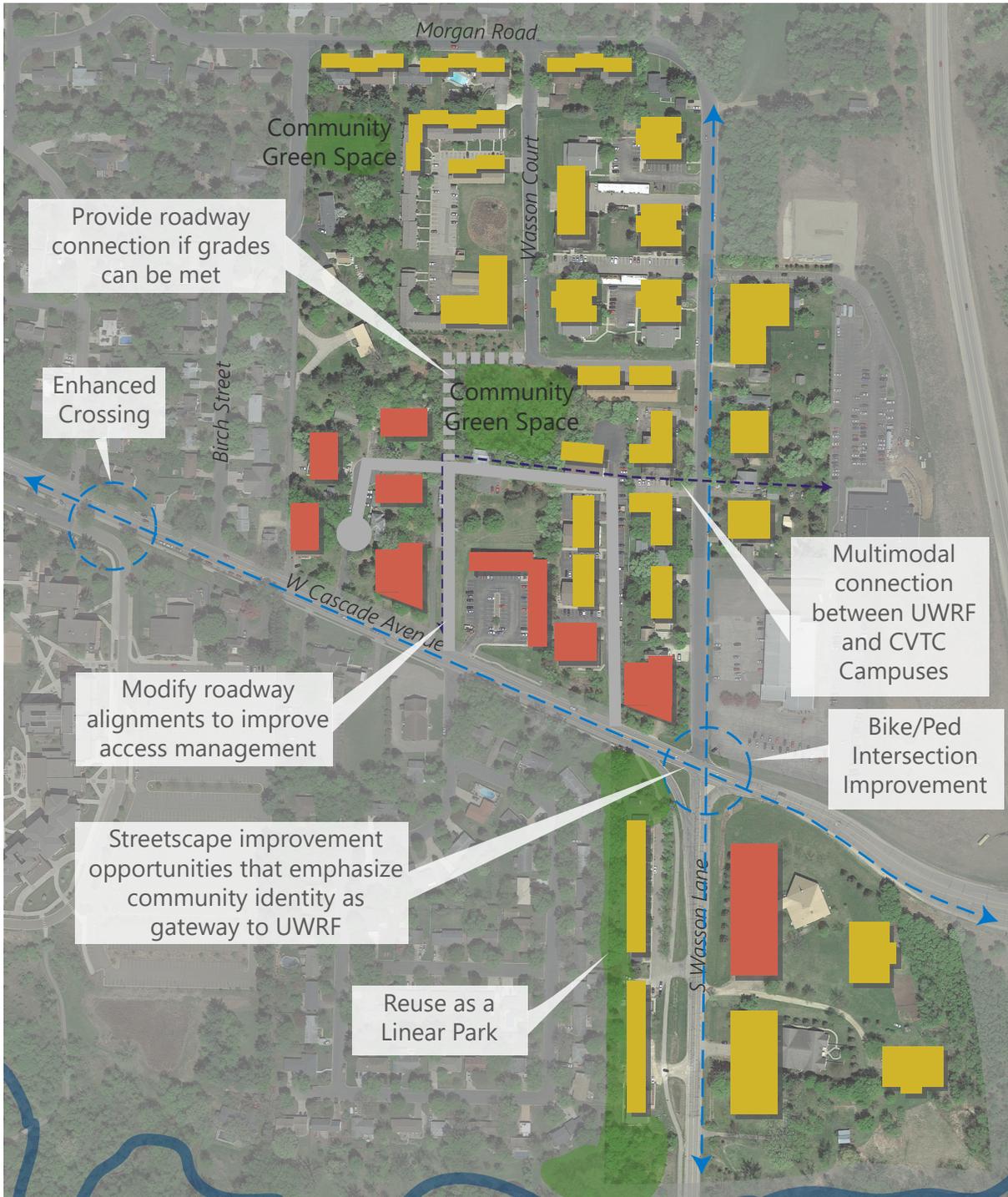
- Existing Trail/Sidewalk
- Bike/Ped Proposed Improvement
- Potential Trail Connection
- Potential Roadway Connection

### Programming Opportunities

- Recreation/Open Space
- Change of Use



# Cascade and Main Small Area Plan



## Legend

### Development Opportunities

- Mixed Use Development
- Multi-Family Residential Development
- Recreational Development
- Commercial Development

### Transportation Networks

- Existing Trail/Sidewalk
- Bike/Ped Proposed Improvement
- Potential Trail Connection
- Potential Roadway Connection

### Programming Opportunities

- Recreation/Open Space
- Change of Use



# Cascade and Wasson Small Area Plan

# LAND USE STRATEGIES AND TOOLS

## DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Zoning and development regulations provide a key tool for communities to implement their land use goals. They impact the built environment, can help to protect sense of place and community character, influence transportation patterns, implement environmental and cultural preservation goals, and work to protect community health, safety, and welfare. To ensure regulations further land use and development priorities, River Falls should review zoning and development standards.

TOOL/ RESOURCE	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Implementation Actions</b></p> 	<p>Various sections of River Falls development and zoning standards should be reviewed and updated as appropriate for consistency with the comprehensive plan. Those sections include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available zoning districts and residential densities – ensure that standards support implementation of the various Future Land Use Categories shown on the Future Land Use Map.</li> <li>• Commercial and Industrial Districts – ensure districts support commercial, industrial, and corporate park development as identified in the Future Land Use Plan.</li> <li>• Subdivision and street design standards – review and update standards to ensure they support development the promotes multimodal transportation options.</li> <li>• Other Standards – consider the incorporation of modern features, such as form-based zoning, into the zoning code.</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Design Guidelines</b></p> 	<p>The city should also consider development of design guidelines, which are often used to protect, enhance, and maintain a community or neighborhood’s sense of place, by providing a uniform set of standards to ensure development is consistent with community goals and historic design elements. Standards often cover topics such as: 1) parking amount, lot design, and location; 2) commercial ground floor transparency; 3) signage; 4) building materials, height; and 5) other topics including lighting and building entrance features.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Form-Based Zoning</b></p> 	<p>While traditional zoning focuses on separating uses by type, form-based zoning regulates the built form of buildings. Form-based codes focus on community feel, allow a mix of uses, and encourage development that enhances livability. Many cities implement form-based standards throughout the community, for specific locations, or simply incorporate aspects of form-based standards into codes.</p>

# Chapter 8: Land Use

## MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

Implementing the Future Land Use plan will require encouraging mixed use development. Mixed use development is intended to help the city achieve housing, transportation, and land use goals by allowing increased residential densities in close proximity to everyday necessities and employment opportunities. Two types of mixed-use development exist and are allowed under the Future Land Use Plan: 1) vertical mixed-use development allows both commercial and residential uses within the same building; and 2) horizontal mixed-use development allows commercial and residential uses on neighboring parcels.

<b>TOOL/ RESOURCE</b>	<b>Implementation Actions</b> 	Encouraging mixed-use development supports multimodal transportation, provides communities designed with humans in mind, and will support River Falls’ traditional downtown area. Implementation of the Mixed-Use Land Use Category will require updates to the City’s zoning and development standards to more readily allow and/or require development that matches the preferred style in mixed-use areas.
	<b>Future Land Use Map</b> 	The Future Land Use Map identifies significant portions of the city under the Mixed-Use Land Use Category. Located along Main Street and extending east and west, the Mixed-Use Category allows a vertical mix of residential and commercial land uses within the Downtown District and a horizontal mix of residential and commercial uses outside the Downtown District.
	<b>Housing Density</b> 	Depending on the location, differing levels of residential density are allowed in the Mixed-Use Land Use Category, however in all locations, residential development should have densities that exceed those seen in traditional single-family development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within the Downtown District: greater than 12 units per acre</li> <li>• Outside the Downtown District: 6 to 12 units per acre</li> </ul>

## Chapter 8: Land Use

### COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

River Falls is proud of its downtown core, which supports the community’s many small businesses, restaurants, and shopping opportunities. As the City grows, it is important that development does not result in a shift away from its traditional downtown activity center. To maintain the City’s focus on downtown, it is vital that community connectivity is considered when making regulatory, land use, and development decisions.

TOOL/ RESOURCE	<p><b>Implementation Actions</b></p> 	<p>River Falls can pursue a variety of strategies to help ensure community connectivity and connections downtown:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The creation of a Main Street Corridor Master Plan which includes an update to the Downtown Plan Design</li> <li>2. Prioritize redevelopment and infill development</li> <li>3. Consider establishing smart development guidelines; and</li> <li>4. Implement multimodal transportation goals, including the recommendations in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan</li> </ol>
	<p><b>Additional Resources</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Creating Connected Communities: A Guidebook for Improving Transportation Connections in Low- and Moderate-Income Households in Small and Mid-Sized Communities</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>American Planning Association: Infill Development Supports Community Connectivity</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>American Planning Association Guide on Smart Growth</u></a></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• River Falls Economic Development Corporation</li> <li>• Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Local Businesses</li> <li>• Local Developers</li> </ul>



# CHAPTER 9: RECREATION



## INTRODUCTION

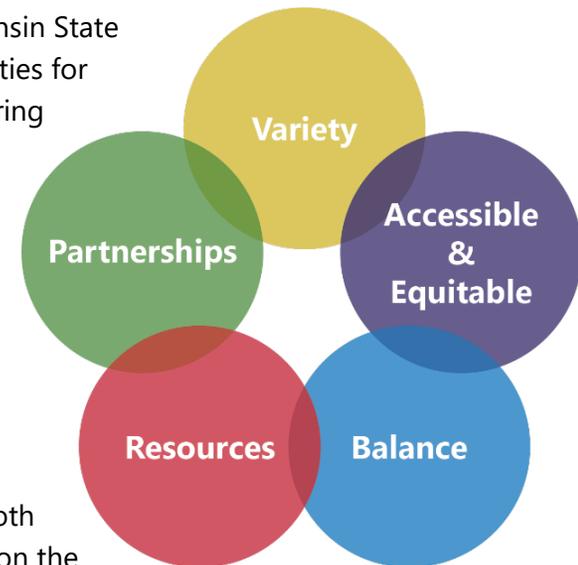
Recreation is an integral part of the River Falls community. Whether indoor or outdoor, community members in River Falls enjoy recreating and will utilize facilities year-round. Throughout the planning process, existing recreation amenities were documented and analyzed to help inform the needs assessment for the community.

Recreation is the one plan element of this Comprehensive Plan that is not specifically required by Wisconsin State Statutes. The first phase of community engagement for the Focus River Falls process included opportunities for the community to share issues and opportunities identified through their experience. Data collected during this phase provided valuable information that was used to identify the goals and focus areas of the plan. There were three common themes that emerged during this phase that related to the community as a whole: **Recreational Amenities and Activities, Connected Community, and Sustainability**. In response to the broad concentration of recreation during the early phases of engagement, a decision was made to add a recreation element to the Comprehensive Plan.

### Outdoor Recreation Plan

This element will coincide with the **Outdoor Recreation Plan** as key themes and goals were identified through community engagement and the analysis of the Comprehensive Plan. The goals are used to prioritize action areas, guide recreational facility development, and ensure that the implementation of both plans align with the priorities identified by the community during the engagement process. Goals focus on the following areas:

1. Ensure variety in the amenities and activities that are offered
2. Sustain and strengthen current local partnerships
3. Preserve and enhance natural resources
4. Maintain and enhance operations and maintenance resources
5. Provide a balance of amenities and activities at parks
6. Ensure accessibility and equity throughout the recreation system.



# Chapter 9: Recreation

## RELATED GOALS

While the Goals outlined in **Chapter 2** are intended to direct all chapters within the plan, some are more related to specific topic elements than others. The following goals play a significant role in guiding the Recreation Chapter:

<b>Connection</b>	<b>River Falls is a welcoming community that incorporates equity and inclusion into decision making, thereby creating opportunities for everyone to connect and thrive.</b>
<b>Livability</b>	<b>River Falls supports livability through intentional growth management policies and development standards, quality and diverse housing stock and local businesses that together support a strong connection to place.</b>
<b>Resources</b>	<b>River Falls prioritizes natural and cultural resources and outdoor recreation to increase opportunities that support healthy lifestyles.</b>
<b>Partnerships</b>	<b>River Falls has mutually beneficial relationships with the community, organizations, educational institutions, and state/regional agencies.</b>
<b>Resiliency</b>	<b>River Falls has a resilient system of infrastructure, community facilities, and utilities that ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the community and preserve quality of life for future generations.</b>

## RECREATION TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

The **Recreation Technical Memorandum** included in **Appendix A7** provides additional detail and analysis to support the recommendations and actions identified to support the community’s goals. Visit the Technical Memorandum to learn more about:

- Overview of the **existing park system.**
- Review of existing **Indoor Recreation** facilities and opportunities.
- Overview of **existing plans and strategies.**
- Strategies to support **Physical and Mental Health** for all community members.

## RECREATION CONTEXT

### EXISTING PARK & TRAIL SYSTEM

River Falls is home to 28 parks and recreation spaces as well as a trail system. The community is unique in its interconnectedness between urban and natural environments, and because of this, there is a clear emphasis for protecting the natural resources amongst the community. In addition to the 28 city managed parks within the community, there are a number of other recreational areas, including city parks, public open spaces, and conservation areas. For example, the Community Forest and School District Forest provide recreational uses within the community.



Park Type	Description	Park Names
<b>Regional Park</b>	Regional Parks are designed to serve several neighborhoods or an entire community, meeting the needs of all age groups. Most regional parks have an average size of between 20 and 35 acres but may be larger and often provide facilities such as swimming pools, formal playing fields, sports complexes, and other facilities serving a large population base.	DeSanctis, Glen, Hoffman, Golf View
<b>Neighborhood Park</b>	Neighborhood parks are designed to meet the immediate active and passive recreation needs of those people living within a short distance of the park. Neighborhood parks commonly range from 5-10 acres in size	Brandan’s, Collins, Hamilton, Highview, Knollwood, Larson, Rolling Hills, Spring Creek, Sterling Ponds, Wells, Westdale
<b>Pocket Park</b>	A Pocket Park is a small site used to address limited, isolated, or unique recreational needs. These parks may be found in any type of setting. These address a specific recreational need rather than a particular population density.	Inlow, Corner, Power Plant, City Hall Plaza, Ostness, North Winter Parkway, Veterans

Park Type	Description	Park Names
<b>Special Use Park</b>	A special use park is often created to satisfy demand for a particular sport, recreational activity, or special event. The actual size of a special use park is determined by land availability and facility/market demand for special uses or recreation programs.	White Tail Ridge
<b>Linear Park</b>	Linear Parks and Greenways serve similar functions within a community. Most of the land area within greenway corridors is used to preserve natural features, while linear parks support a variety of recreational functions, primarily including trails as associated uses.	Mound, River Hills, River Falls Dog Park, Kinnickinnic Pathway, Heritage Park

### Future Park Growth and Expansion

The city's 28 existing parks provide a variety of recreational offerings and amenities within the community. In addition to the amenity offerings, the city should also assess the need for additional park spaces geographically, ensuring that new growth areas have access to park facilities within a common walking distance of ¼ to ½ mile. A service area assessment was completed and highlighted within the Outdoor Recreation Plan. Considerations of this analysis identified the following considerations for future expansion and investment:

- A new regional park within the northwest or southeast growth areas would support the communities growing recreational needs. A regional park is intended to serve a broader audience and should be sited in a location with good multimodal vehicular access.
- New neighborhood parks should be established as residential development occurs.
- Opportunities to explore a new upper Kinnickinnic State Park could be explored to provide a broader resource and amenity.
- Establish park standards for each park type, create a consistent design and amenity offering across parks of the same type.

## Chapter 9: Recreation

### ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Engagement efforts conducted throughout the Focus River Falls process identified the community’s connection and desire for continued investment in recreation. Access to a variety of amenities and spaces is a key component of the community’s identity and sense of place. Engagement summaries included in Appendix C provide greater detail. Additionally, a specific recreation survey was completed during this process. This online survey was live from September 1<sup>st</sup> – October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022, with 390 community responses.



<b>What Engagement Occurred?</b>	<p><b>POP UP EVENTS</b>          Art on the Kinni (Sept 10)          Youth Football (Sept 17)          Food Pantry (Sept 28)</p>	<p><b>STAKEHOLDER CONVERSATIONS</b>          July 21, 2022</p>	<p><b>ONLINE SURVEY</b>          (open Sept 1 – Oct 7)          390 Total Responses</p>	
<b>How Did Engagement Occur?</b>	<p>The goal of the engagement and survey was to understand gaps in outdoor recreation amenities and service offerings. Topics covered included: <b>Park Amenities, Accessibility in Parks, Mobility and Recreation, and Questions for Youth</b> In addition to three in-person pop up events and stakeholder conversations, there was an online survey option that was open from September 1<sup>st</sup> – October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The survey was actively promoted on social media and an EngageRF community newsletter. Flyers were posted at local businesses and general comments about the EngageRF process via the city's mass utility mailing.</p>			
<b>People Want to See More...</b>	 <p><b>Ice Skating Rink</b></p>	 <p><b>All Season Recreation</b></p>	 <p><b>Splash Pad</b></p>	 <p><b>Indoor Recreation / Community Center</b></p>

## Chapter 9: Recreation

### Key Takeaways from Engagement

#### Recreation is an integral part of the River Falls experience.

##### The community interacts with the park system.

Participants all identified that they visit a City park at least one per season with 42 percent noting they visit a park multiple times per week.

##### Year-round Recreation.

Generally, participants recreate outdoors during all seasons. We heard similar feedback with our in-person engagement.

##### Accessibility is key.

Accessibility in the parks system is key to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to experience the recreation that River Falls has to offer. Accessible playground equipment and improved transportation options are two improvements that address accessibility.

#### Overall, the community values the variety of recreational offerings and supports continued investments that support a range of recreation amenities in River Falls.

**85 respondents** desire an indoor community center that provides indoor recreation and community gathering space



*Shoreview, MN Community Center*

**186 respondents** desire improved kayak launches



*ADA Accessible Kayak Launch<sup>1</sup>*

**204 respondents** desire all-abilities playground opportunities, similar to the Tri-Angles playground



*All-abilities Playground<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> <https://boardsafedocks.com/accessible-kayak-launch/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://allabilityplayground.org/>

## Chapter 9: Recreation

# TOOLS AND RESOURCES

The planning process includes a review of existing conditions and identification of actions and strategies that can be used to help the city achieve their recreational goals and needs. The following tools and resources were identified through this planning process and should be used by the community as investments and decisions are made.



### Public Health

Recreation is shown to be beneficial to human mental and physical health; through recreational facilities and programming, the City can continue to support that. Statewide data on health statistics can help inform the overall status of health for residents of Wisconsin, including the Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). The data available through these sources and identified below can be used to inform and provide factual evidence for implementation.

	Statistic	Why Does This Matter?	Recreation Can Help!
1	Only five out of ten (50%) Wisconsin adults meet the physical activity recommendation of at least 150 minutes of aerobic activity per week (WISH data).	The Wisconsin DNR reports that access to outdoor recreation can reduce the risk of heart disease, premature death, and high blood pressure among others. Benefits to mental health include a positive effect on sleep habits, self-esteem, and potentially the immune system. <sup>3</sup> Healthy people = happy and healthy community	The current rate of physical activity amongst River Falls residents and visitors could increase as a result of expanding and strengthening our recreation systems. This would also increase the benefits that recreation has on mental health, which could potentially decrease the rate of mental illness in the state.
2	As of 2021, 859,000 adults in Wisconsin (3x the population of the City of Madison) have a mental health condition <sup>4</sup> .		

<sup>3</sup> "Head Outdoors for Inspiration." Head Outdoors for Inspiration | Time Spent Outside Proves Invaluable to Body and Mind | Wisconsin DNR, <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/wnrmag/2020/Summer/OutdoorInspiration>.

<sup>4</sup> "Mental Health in Wisconsin" Wisconsin State Fact Sheet | National Alliance on Mental Illness <https://www.nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-Media/StateFactSheets/WisconsinStateFactSheet.pdf>

# Chapter 9: Recreation

Parks and recreation systems can help to promote and encourage these health benefits and growing the resources available to the community could help spread the message of the importance of recreation. Wisconsin Department of Health Services has developed an **“Active Communities Toolkit”** through the Division of Public Health Chronic Disease Prevention Program. Communities can utilize this toolkit and its guidelines to help inform decisions, programs, and policies to contribute to the greater health and wellbeing of their residents.



## Social Environment & Community

Recreation contributes to the welcoming, sense of (place or community) in River Falls by providing public spaces to gather, recreate, and socialize. Adequate access to parks and recreation facilities is vital in upholding this community structure. Outdoor recreation is also linked to social benefits and interpersonal development, particularly for youth. Overall, recreation is proven to benefit general wellbeing, encourage social relationships and active citizenship, and promote a healthy, active lifestyle. There are

endless benefits in supporting and enriching recreation and sports in River Falls for these reasons. Dedicated programming and amenities provide direct opportunities for community connection, including the Grow to Share community gardens. As a social-recreational experience. Additionally, the parks and their amenities create opportunities for chance encounters and gatherings.

Studies show that psychological outcomes (i.e. self-esteem, mental well-being) improved significantly for participants in sports programs.<sup>5</sup>



## Recreational Tourism



The City’s recreational infrastructure supports multiple functions within the community, including support of economic development. Existing parks and amenities draw visitors to the community from a broader region to play a new disc golf course, explore mountain bike offerings, or visit historic and cultural resources. When these visitors come into the community for recreation, they may also visit restaurants, shops, or other amenities in the community, supporting other uses. The community’s parks and recreation opportunities should be leveraged to assist and enhance tourism and economic development efforts. Strategies to leverage recreation resources, include providing connections and wayfinding between recreational areas and community destinations, community events that connect visitors to amenities, and the location of new recreational areas within new growth and investment areas.

## Chapter 9: Recreation

### Community Partnerships

Community partnerships are instrumental in maintaining the connectedness that recreation and organized activities have with the River Falls community. These partnerships also help to further encourage the social benefits that recreation is proven to have on a community.

- Youth and adult organized sports: basketball, baseball, gymnastics, hockey, soccer, softball, swim, track and field, volleyball, wrestling, etc.
- The River Falls School District plays an integral part of the parks and recreation system in the City by providing publicly available amenities for recreation and sports. The school district's contributions to park facilities allow wider access to recreation for the public. Additionally, the School District Forest provide another recreational resource.
- The University of Wisconsin – River Falls has a variety of recreational resources that support recreational offerings to the community.
- Kinni Collaborative serves as a partner for the preservation and enhancement of the Kinni and surrounding areas – each of which supports the recreation system.
- Local recreation groups and businesses are also key recreational partners that support the amenities and programs available within the parks, and also provide a connection between the community and park spaces.

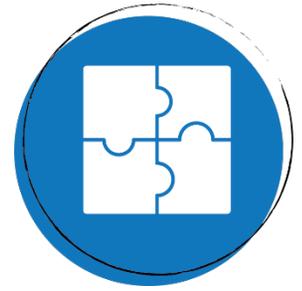


The City is home to a plethora of community / interest organizations. It is vital for the City to maintain mutually beneficial relationships through collaboration to support the recreation desires of the community.

# CHAPTER 10: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

## INTRODUCTION

Intergovernmental cooperation is the collaboration of representative government staff or officials between two or more jurisdictions to communicate visions and coordinate plans, policies, and programs to address and resolve issues of mutual interest. From the simplest form of sharing information to creating formal agreements to establish shared services and resources, there are many forms of cooperation between the City of River Falls and its agency partners. This chapter outlines the existing activities where the city is engaged with local, regional and statewide partners and explores opportunities and tools to strengthen relationships and outcomes.



The issues, resources, or opportunities for a community are not limited to their jurisdictional boundaries. For example, rivers cut through the landscape regardless of boundaries so that one jurisdiction's activity that impacts a river will impact other jurisdictions, both upstream and downstream. Therefore, active cooperation and collaboration with partners can establish an understanding and may open doors for shared work towards a mutual benefit, including:

**Cost Savings:** Cooperation can save money by increasing efficiency and avoiding unnecessary duplication. Cooperation can also extend services and resources to areas that would otherwise be too costly.

**Service to Residents:** Community members are the biggest beneficiaries of intergovernmental cooperation efforts. While the details of these agreements may not be understood by all, the cost savings, access to additional services, and efficiencies in operations are a benefit to all.

**Natural Resource Preservation and Enhancement:** Cooperation and collaboration activities can reduce the impact to existing natural resources and support preservation and enhancement activities for years to come.

**Reduced Litigation:** Communities that cooperate are able to resolve issues before they become mired in litigation. Reducing the possibility of costly litigation can save a community money, as well as the disappointment and frustration of unwanted outcomes.

## Chapter 10: Intergovernmental Cooperation

### RELATED GOALS

While the Goals outlined in **Chapter 2** are intended to direct all chapters within the plan, including Intergovernmental Cooperation. Partnerships and collaboration are critical for achieving each of the plans six goals.

<b>Connection</b>	River Falls is a welcoming community that incorporates equity and inclusion into decision making, thereby creating opportunities for everyone to connect and thrive.
<b>Livability</b>	River Falls supports livability through intentional growth management policies and development standards, quality and diverse housing stock and local businesses that together support a strong connection to place.
<b>Access</b>	River Falls has accessible transportation infrastructure for people to safely, sustainably, and efficiently move throughout the city and into the region using varied modes of transport.
<b>Resources</b>	River Falls prioritizes natural and cultural resources and outdoor recreation to increase opportunities that support healthy lifestyles.
<b>Partnerships</b>	River Falls has mutually beneficial relationships with the community, organizations, educational institutions, and state/regional agencies.
<b>Resiliency</b>	River Falls has a resilient system of infrastructure, community facilities, and utilities that ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the community and preserve quality of life for future generations.

## Chapter 10: Intergovernmental Cooperation

# INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

The **Intergovernmental Cooperation Technical Memorandum** included in **Appendix A8** provides additional detail and analysis to support the recommendations and actions identified to support the community’s goals. Visit the Technical Memorandum to learn more about:

Overview of the <b>existing partnerships</b> at all levels.	<b>Statutory Planning Authority</b> available to the City of River Falls.	<b>Community Engagement</b> strategies to continue to collaborate with the community.	Overview of <b>Cooperative Agreements</b> as a tools and resource.
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## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION CONTEXT

### EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS

The City of River Falls collaborates widely with local, regional, state and federal partners as it works to achieve the community’s goals and support a high quality of life for residents. These partnerships are vital to achieving the goals and action established within the Focus River Falls process and other city efforts. The following pages identified the most familiar partners at the state and federal, regional, and local levels. However, there are many more that the City should continue to explore and continue to connect with; more detail about these partnerships and active collaboration efforts can be found in **Intergovernmental Cooperation Technical Memorandum**.

	Partner Organizations	Collaboration Topics
Federal and State Partnerships	Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)	
	Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)	
	Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	

# Chapter 10: Intergovernmental Cooperation

	Partner Organizations	Collaboration Topics
Regional Partnerships	Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI)	
	Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA)	
	Wisconsin Wetland Association	
	National Park Service	
	Wisconsin Historical Society	
	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR)	
	St. Croix County	
	Pierce County	
	Regional Indigenous Communities	
	West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC)	
Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC)		

# Chapter 10: Intergovernmental Cooperation

	Partner Organizations	Collaboration Topics
Regional Partnerships	Metropolitan Council	
	Town of Kinnickinnic	
	Town of Troy	
	Town of Clifton	
	Town of River Falls	
	City of Hudson	
	Cities of Ellsworth, New Richmond, Baldwin and Prescott	
	St Croix County Historical Society	
	Pierce County Historical Association	
	River Falls Housing Authority (RFHA)	

	Partner Organizations	Collaboration Topics
Local Partnerships	<b>University of Wisconsin – River Falls (UWRF)</b>	
	<b>Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC)</b>	
	<b>Kinni Collaborative</b>	
	<b>Local Recreational Organizations</b>	
	<b>School District of River Falls</b>	
	<b>River Falls Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau</b>	

## STATUTORY PLANNING AUTHORITY

The City of River Falls, along with all cities in the State of Wisconsin are given authority through State Statutes to execute long range planning efforts. There are two main components of this authority, the development of zoning and subdivision regulations to manage growth activities and the adopt of a Comprehensive Plan to guide the ordinances. The Focus River Falls process to create this Comprehensive Plan was done in accordance with the requirements of State Statute §66.1001. The following ordinances should be consistent with a city’s Comprehensive Plan.

- Official Mapping Ordinances (§62.23(6))
- Local Subdivision Ordinances (§236.45)
- City Zoning Ordinances (§62.23(7))
- Shorelands or Wetlands in Shoreland Ordinances (§59.692, §61.351, §61.353, §62.231, or §62.233)

Cities with a population greater than 10,000 are afforded the opportunity to exercise extraterritorial zoning and subdivision authority for up to three miles outside of city limits. The City of River Falls has exercised their extraterritorial authority with the establishment of Extraterritorial

## Chapter 10: Intergovernmental Cooperation

Subdivision Control and Extraterritorial Zoning Control boundaries. Both boundaries extend into four townships: Town of Troy and Kinnickinnic in St. Croix County and the Towns of Clifton and River Falls in Pierce County. Currently the City has one Cooperative Plan with the Town of Kinnickinnic which defines the two jurisdictions agreement on boundary and urban development regulations. The Extraterritorial regulations are discussed further in the Land Use Chapter and Land Use Technical Memorandum.

### COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

Cooperative agreements are used to solidify roles and outcomes between two parties regarding a variety of topics. For example, cooperative agreements can be used to determine the jurisdiction with planning authority over a certain area, outline the use of facilities and amenities owned by another organization, or solidify how funding can be used to support investments.



# Chapter 10: Intergovernmental Cooperation

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The partnership between the City of River Falls and its residents is one of the most important and impactful partnerships of all. The 2018 Strategic Plan establishes six values for the community that include putting people first, pursue excellence, act with integrity, embrace change, serve our community, and consideration future generation. The following are engagement tools and methods that the city will continue to utilize to foster a welcome and engaged partnerships.

<b>OPEN HOUSES</b>	<b>SURVEYS</b>	<b>COUNCIL AND COMMISSION MEETINGS</b>
<b>OFFICAL CITY WEBSITE AND OTHER ONLINE SITES</b>	<b>SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATES</b>	<b>NEWSLETTERS AND EBLASTS</b>
<b>DIRECT MAILINGS</b>	<b>INFORMATIONAL EVENTS</b>	<b>PUBLIC HEARINGS</b>



## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION STRATEGIES AND TOOLS

### PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION TOOLS

There are a variety of strategies available to strengthen existing and establish new partnerships with other agencies. Strategies include both engagement tools and methods for solidified roles and opportunities.

<b>TOOL/ RESOURCE</b>	<b>Maintain and Expand partnership opportunities with Counties</b>	The City of River Falls should continue to maintain individual relationships with each of its partner counties to ensure activities respond to mutual needs. Maintaining an inventory of the active partnerships and programs within each county will organize the efforts and opportunities, but also helps to identify gaps for improvements.
	<b>Utilize cooperative agreements to solidify role and responsibilities</b>	Cooperative agreements are used to solidify the City’s roles and responsibilities for a variety of efforts. Whether agreements with Towns regarding extraterritorial authority or with the School District for use of recreation amenities, these agreements are critical tools for preserving the city’s investments.
	<b>Monitor Metro Region activities, tools and initiatives</b>	Planning activities within the Twin Cities Metro continue to evolve new tools, resources, and initiatives that can be explored in River Falls. While not a member community, active review of Metro Area activities can aid the City’s implementation efforts.
	<b>Coordinate with the Housing Authority</b>	Providing access to housing options for all residents is a key focus area for the community and will require the maintenance of the existing housing stock and growth of new opportunities to achieve. Coordination with the Housing Authority will identify investment opportunities and policies to assist the City’s efforts.
	<b>Enhance engagement opportunities with Towns</b>	Collaboration with the Towns and their residents is a key consideration for executing the City’s growth management policies. Beyond the required engagement through the extraterritorial committee, there are opportunities to enhance existing outreach and education with the towns and their residents.

# IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter emphasizes the future action and investment of the Focus River Falls process. The actions identified within this chapter provide the guidance for the city to achieve the goals and themes identified in this process. This guidance includes actions, policies, and initiatives for each plan element to guide the development of work plans and efforts for years to come. Over the next twenty years, staff, elected and appointed officials, and the community should reference this section when making policy updates, investments and long-term choices.

The actions identified in this chapter were built from community input, staff recommendation, steering committee feedback, and plan analysis. Since the beginning of the Focus River Falls process, a running list of potential actions has been maintained and revised in response to plan activity.

## STRUCTURE

Implementation actions are presented in the *following* pages by plan element (i.e., housing transportation, etc.) and include regulatory, programming, planning and guidance actions and strategies. To support implementation of each action, supporting information is provided in six categories, each identified below.

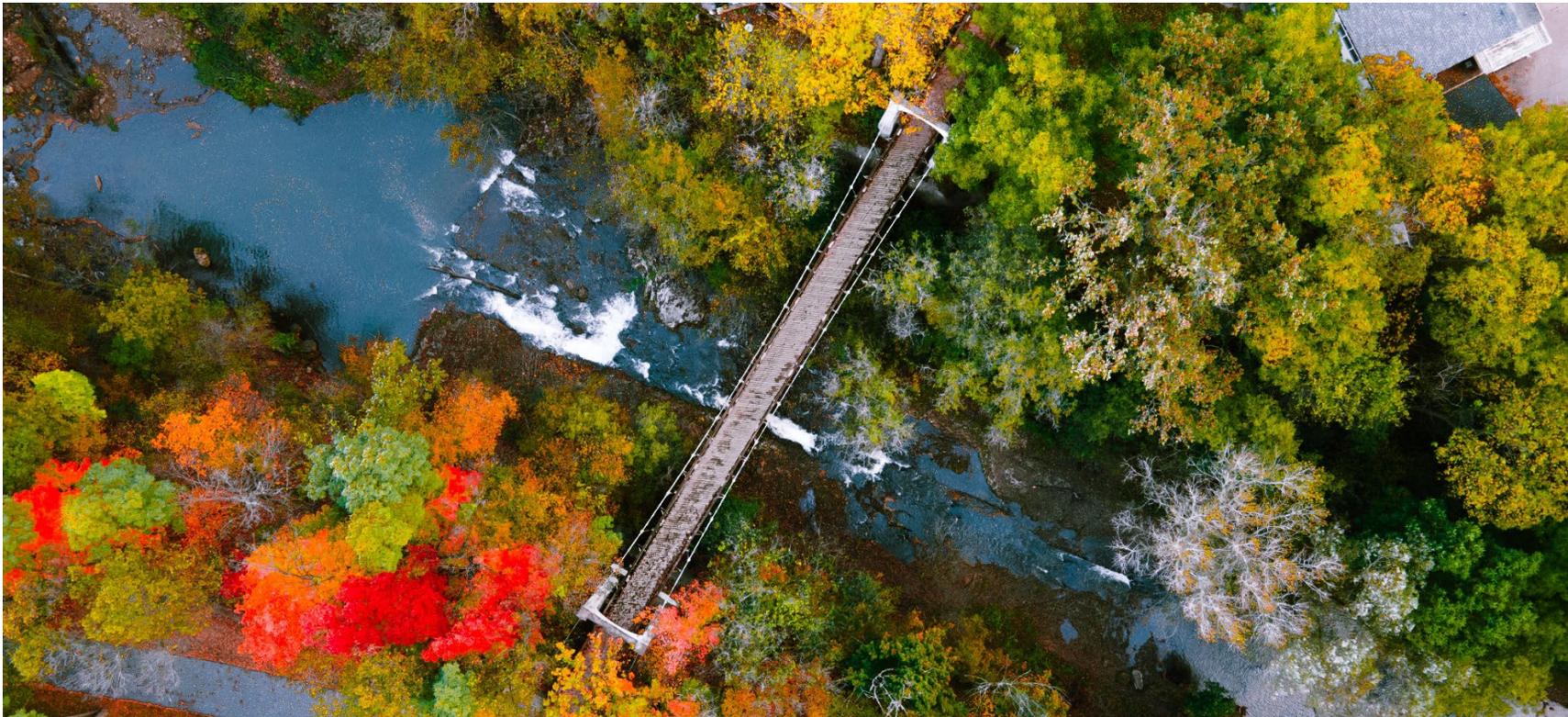
Category	Description	How is this displayed?
<b>Action Type</b>	Identifies the general action type from the following categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Regulatory:</b> development of policy or ordinance</li> <li>• <b>Program:</b> creation or maintenance of program</li> <li>• <b>Planning:</b> action that require additional planning or exploration for implementation</li> <li>• <b>Guidance:</b> general guidance to be considered during the decision making process</li> <li>• <b>Development:</b> Construction or creation of a built structures or infrastructure</li> </ul>	Notation of the type of action: Regulatory, Program, Planning, or Guidance

Category	Description	How is this displayed?
<b>Supporting Goal(s)</b>	<p><b>Which of the six established goals will this action help the community achieve?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A) Connection</li> <li>B) Livability</li> <li>C) Access</li> <li>D) Resources</li> <li>E) Partnerships</li> <li>F) Resilience</li> </ul>	<p>Each supported goal is highlighted in color and unsupported goals are grey.</p> 
<b>Complexity</b>	<p><b>How complex is the implementation of the action?</b></p> <p>This category identifies the overall complexity for achieving success for each action. Factors that inform a low, medium, or high rating of complexity include cost, coordination with partners, and the completion of additional studies.</p>	<p>The level of complexity is provided on a scale of low, medium, and high, identified by the colored circles.</p> 
<b>Benefit</b>	<p><b>What is the overall benefit of the implementation of the action?</b></p> <p>This category identifies the overall level of benefit of the action for the community. Factors that inform a low, medium, or high benefit rating include those that directly support progress of the Focus River Falls Goals and increase the city's capacity for success.</p>	<p>The range of benefit complexity is provided on a scale of low, medium, and high, identified by the colored circles</p> 
<b>Community Partners</b>	<p><b>What community partners can assist in carrying out the action?</b></p> <p>This category identifies community partners that may could support the implementation of this action. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list.</p>	<p>Potential partners have been identified by name.</p>
<p><b>Lead Department/Division &amp; Lead Committee</b></p>	<p><b>Who will lead the implementation?</b></p> <p>This category identifies a city department, division and/or committee that may be tasked with implementing the action.</p>	<p>Lead Department/Division and Lead Committee are identified</p>

# Chapter 11: Implementation

## EXAMPLE IMPLEMENTATION ACTION

Action	Action Type	Supporting Goal(s)	Complexity	Benefit	Community Partners	Lead Department/ Division & Lead Committee						
Update the Comprehensive Plan every 10 years	Planning	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>B</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C</td> <td>D</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>F</td> </tr> </table>	A	B	C	D	E	F			All	Community Development <hr/> City Council
A	B											
C	D											
E	F											



## KEY ACTIVITIES

The following pages identify nearly 100 actions specifically identified to support the city in progressing towards the six identified goals. The complexity and benefit identified for each action provide guidance of priority. However, the following actions were identified as key priorities for each plan element. The following actions were identified as their implementation may kick start progress.

	Plan Element	Key Action	Complexity	Benefit
	HOUSING	Update the zoning ordinance to support density and development that accommodates missing middle housing (e.g., townhomes, duplexes, fourplexes).	● ● ○	● ● ●
		Develop a housing action plan that identifies specific housing goals for the community, identifies roles and partnerships, and a plan for action.	● ● ●	● ● ●
	AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, & CULTURAL RESOURCES	Maintain active collaboration with the Wisconsin DNR and Army Corps of Engineers to support investment and enhancement of the Kinni and other water resources.	● ● ○	● ● ●
		Continue to prioritize and celebrate preservation of historic resources. Efforts include the preservation and enhancement of locally and regionally designated historic sites, identification of new locally recognized sites, and programming the celebrates the historic assets.	● ○ ○	● ● ●

	Plan Element	Key Action	Complexity	Benefit
	<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>	Support infill commercial development through local financing tools and policy guidance as appropriate.	● ● ○	● ● ●
		Support enhance broadband internet in the community to increase business and residential capacity and access.	● ● ○	● ● ●
	<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	Develop policies and procedures to support construction of trail connections with development that connect future growth areas and respond to the goals of the Bike and Pedestrian Plan.	● ● ○	● ● ●
		Explore programming, funding, and incentives for local public transit options within the community. Opportunities may include community-wide transit service, shuttle service for user groups, or other opportunities.	● ● ○	● ● ●
	<b>UTILITIES &amp; COMMUNITY FACILITIES</b>	Update water facility master plan, including new wells and storage infrastructure.	● ● ○	● ● ●
		Update wastewater facility master plan.	● ● ●	● ● ●
	<b>LAND USE</b>	Update the zoning code to support the residential land use categories and densities of the Land Use Chapter, including updates to minimum lot size requirements and other dimensional standards (e.g., setbacks).	● ● ○	● ● ●
		Complete a comprehensive review of the zoning ordinance to identify and pursue amendments that support the community's goals and vision for development.	● ● ○	● ● ●

# Chapter 11: Implementation

	Plan Element	Key Action	Complexity	Benefit
	<b>RECREATION</b>	Explore opportunities to bring a community center to River Falls, include testing the feasibility and researching funding opportunities.		
		Monitor existing and future park needs and plan for the construction of facilities to accommodate anticipated growth.		
	<b>INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION</b>	Complete, review, or modify cooperative agreements with Towns for development and infrastructure planning.		
		Update the ETZ subdivision ordinances for clarity and alignment with current policies and goals.		

HOUSING	Action	Action Type	Supporting Goal(s)	Complexity	Benefit	Community Partners	Lead Department/ Division & Lead Committee
	Update the zoning ordinance to support density and development that accommodates missing middle housing (e.g., townhomes, duplexes, fourplexes).	Regulatory	A B C D E F	●●○	●●●		Community Development Plan Commission
	Explore and consider adoption of regulations to allow the development of alternative housing options, including accessory dwelling units (ADUs), tiny homes, etc.	Regulator	A B C D E F	●○○	●●○		Community Development Plan Commission
	Review design requirements/performance standards for multifamily housing and update as needed to support community identity.	Regulatory	A B C D E F	●●○	●●○	Development Community	Community Development Plan Commission
	Evaluate tools and programs that support maintenance of rental housing in good repair (e.g., rental housing code).	Program	A B C D E F	●●●	●●○	HUD, Counties	Community Development Plan Commission
	Evaluate neighborhoods plans and preservation tools and needs.	Planning	A B C D E F	●●○	●●○	River Falls Neighborhoods	Community Development Plan Commission
	Explore and invest in tools, programing, and funding sources to encourage and support preservation of the existing housing stock.	Program	A B C D E F	●●○	●●●	Development Community	Community Development Plan Commission
	Explore opportunities to create city funded homeowner loans to assist low and moderate income households purchase and maintain their homes.	Program	A B C D E F	●●○	●●○	HUD, Counties	Community Development/ Finance Plan Commission
	Develop regulatory tools and resources to promote and encourage the development mixed income housing options.	Planning	A B C D E F	●●○	●●●	Development Community	Community Development Plan Commission
	Explore feasibility of a Community Development Authority within the city.	Planning	A B C D E F	●●○	●●○		Community Development

Action	Action Type	Supporting Goal(s)	Complexity	Benefit	Community Partners	Lead Department/ Division & Lead Committee						
Develop a housing action plan that identifies specific housing goals for the community, identifies roles and partnerships, and a plan for action.	Planning	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>B</td> <td>C</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D</td> <td>E</td> <td>F</td> </tr> </table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●●	●●●		Community Development
A	B	C										
D	E	F										
Coordinate with housing authority and HUD redevelopment to support housing development and access.	Planning	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>B</td> <td>C</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D</td> <td>E</td> <td>F</td> </tr> </table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●○	Housing Authority, HUD	Community Development
A	B	C										
D	E	F										



AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES	Action	Action Type	Supporting Goal(s)	Complexity	Benefit	Community Partners	Lead Department/ Division & Lead Committee						
	Maintain and utilize a list of available programs and policies for preservation of natural and cultural resources.	Planning	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	● ○ ○	● ● ○	WDNR, Local Resource Organizations	Community Development
	A	B	C										
	D	E	F										
	Establish the Green Corridors as a regulatory tool and create preservation and development policies that support the city's goals and existing resource preservation tools (i.e., steep slopes, floodplain).	Planning	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	● ● ○	● ● ○		Community Development Plan Commission
	A	B	C										
	D	E	F										
	Invest in habitat restoration and preservation within open spaces and parking areas through regulatory updates and program development.	Regulatory & Program	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	● ● ○	● ○ ○		Community Development Plan Commission
	A	B	C										
	D	E	F										
Maintain active collaboration with the Wisconsin DNR and Army Corps of Engineers to support investment and enhancement of the Kinni and other water resources.	Guidance	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	● ● ○	● ● ●	WDNR, USACE	Community Development City Council	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											
Identify strategies with University of Wisconsin – River Falls to preserve and enhance UWRF Lab Farm #1 and #2.	Planning	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	● ● ○	● ● ○	UWRF	Administration	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											
Identify strategies to preserve and enhance the South Fork of the Kinni.	Planning	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	● ● ○	● ● ○	Community Organizations	Administration	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											
Maintain active collaboration with local organizations that focus on natural and cultural resources to support the community's preservation and enhancement efforts.	Guidance	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	● ● ○	● ● ○	Community Organizations, Historic Societies	Community Development	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											
Support the community's designation as a Tree City USA, Bee City, Bird City, and other designations. Explore policies that support these designations, including tree preservation.	Program	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	● ○ ○	● ● ○	Community Organizations	Sustainability/Parks & Recreation	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											
Support efforts that recognize and reference pre-European history and collaborate with local organizations.	Planning	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	● ● ○	● ● ○	Historical Societies, Community organizations	Administration/ Community Development Historic Preservation Commission	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											

AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL	Action	Action Type	Supporting Goal(s)	Complexity	Benefit	Community Partners	Lead Department/ Division & Lead Committee						
	Continue to support the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts and policies through all city decision making.	Planning	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●●		Administration City Council
	A	B	C										
	D	E	F										
	Emphasize opportunities to improve access to the river and create education and interaction opportunities through development review and policy creation.	Planning	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●●	WDNR, USACE, Local Organizations	Community Development Park Board
	A	B	C										
	D	E	F										
	Develop policies and programs that preserve indigenous features and elements (e.g., artifacts, cairns, and ceremonial locations) within the community and support funding opportunities for investments.	Program	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●○	Historical Societies, Community organizations	Community Development Historic Preservation Commission
A	B	C											
D	E	F											
Support efforts that preserve native animal species and support funding opportunities for investments.	Program	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●○	WDNR, Community Organizations	Sustainability	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											
Advance public artist opportunities that support community identity and history through city funded projects and programs.	Program	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●○	Community Organizations, Local Artists	Administration River Falls Creates Committee	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											
Support efforts support the community's sense of place and identity.	Guidance	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●○○	●●●	Community Organizations	Community Development	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											
Continue to prioritize and celebrate preservation of historic resources. Efforts include the preservation and enhancement of locally and regionally designated historic sites, identification of new locally recognized sites, and programming the celebrates the historic assets.	Program	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●○○	●●●	Community Organizations	Community Development Historic Preservation Commission	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Action	Action Type	Supporting Goal(s)	Complexity	Benefit	Community Partners	Lead Department/ Division & Lead Committee
	Maintain a list of available restoration and preservation funding tools and assess the use as projects arise.	Planning				Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, Chamber	Economic Development Business Improvement District Board
	With the development of a downtown plan, understand market context specific to downtown and update as needed to provide coordinated information.	Guidance				Chamber, Development Community	Economic Development Business Improvement District Board
	Support local businesses and entrepreneurs by creating opportunities for maker spaces and community workshops.	Planning				UWRF, CVTC, RFSD, Chamber	Economic Development Economic Development Corporation
	Modernize home occupation regulations within the zoning ordinance to support all business types.	Regulatory					Economic Development/ Planning Plan Commission
	Create ordinance to manage food truck operations and permitting.	Regulatory					Economic Development/City Clerk City Council
	Maintain a list of available tools and strategies to support economic growth and regularly assess new opportunities and available tools. Regularly assess the benefit of existing tools and explore new opportunities to respond to the community's needs.	Planning				Chamber, WEDC, Counties	Economic Development
	Support infill commercial development through local financing tools and policy guidance as appropriate.	Program				WEDC, Development Community	Economic Development

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Action	Action Type	Supporting Goal(s)	Complexity	Benefit	Community Partners	Lead Department/ Division & Lead Committee						
	Continue to utilize the shovel ready program to support economic growth within the community, including the completion of existing efforts and identification of the next sites primed for development.	Program	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●○	WEDC, Chamber	Economic Development Economic Development Commission (EDC)
	A	B	C										
	D	E	F										
	Support development of the Mann Valley Corporate Park through the exploration and planning for city infrastructure, development of certified sites, and marketing of the corporate park.	Planning	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●●		Economic Development City Council/EDC
	A	B	C										
	D	E	F										
	Enhance Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program to support local business growth and development.	Program	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●○○	●●●		Economic Development EDC
A	B	C											
D	E	F											
Renew and refresh partnership with River Falls Economic Development Commission to support local investment and opportunities.	Program	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●○○	●●○		Economic Development EDC	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											
Renew and refresh partnership with RF Chamber & Visitors Bureau to support local investment and opportunities.	Program	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●○○	●●○	Chamber	Economic Development EDC	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											
Support enhance broadband internet in the community to increase business and residential capacity and access.	Program	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●●	WEDC, Broadband Providers	Economic Development	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											
Support infill development of housing within Downtown River Falls.	Development	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●○	Development Community	Community Development Plan Commission	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											

TRANSPORTATION	Action	Action Type	Supporting Goal(s)	Complexity	Benefit	Community Partners	Lead Department/ Division & Lead Committee
	Complete a Parking Study that will analyze and recommend parking policies and regulations throughout the community to respond to the needs and growth plans for various land uses and destinations and build community understanding. Then implement; efforts may include modifications to parking minimums.	Planning	A B C D E F	●●○	●●○		Community Development Plan Commission
	Implement the recommendations of the Bike & Pedestrian Plan.	Planning/ Development	A B C D E F	●●●	●●●		Community Development City Council
	Continue to explore pavement preservation tools and planning guidance to maintain existing roadways and investments.	Planning	A B C D E F	●○○	●●○		Engineering City Council
	Develop policies and procedures to support construction of trail connections with development that connect future growth areas and respond to the goals of the Bike and Pedestrian Plan.	Regulatory	A B C D E F	●○○	●●●		Community Development City Council
	Collaborate with WisDOT, St Croix and Pierce Counties, and regional municipalities regarding regional connectivity and improvements.	Guidance	A B C D E F	●○○	●●○		Engineering City Council
	Explore programming, funding, and incentives for local public transit options within the community. Opportunities may include community-wide transit service, shuttle service for user groups, or other opportunities.	Planning	A B C D E F	●●●	●●●	Counties, UWRF	Administration/ Community Development City Council
	Participate and support in the exploration of passenger rail connection between Minneapolis/Saint Paul and Milwaukee.	Planning	A B C D E F	●●●	●●○	WisDOT, MnDOT, Regional Transportation Agencies	Administration/ Community Development City Council
	Develop policies and guidance that support universal design and a transportation system designed for all ages, supporting both the goals of the Bike and Pedestrian Plan and vehicular transportation modes.	Planning	A B C D E F	●●○	●●○		Engineering City Council

	Action	Action Type	Supporting Goal(s)	Complexity	Benefit	Community Partners	Lead Department/ Division & Lead Committee
TRANSPORTATION	Support community connectivity through the implementation of the community loop concept as identified within the Bike and Pedestrian Plan and also support the multimodal goals of the community.	Planning	A B C D E F	● ● ○	● ● ○		Community Development Plan Commission
	Explore connections from River Falls to the Minneapolis/Saint Paul transportation network and key destinations such as MSP Airport.	Planning	A B C D E F	● ● ●	● ● ○		Administration City Council
	Completion of Cascade Phase II,	Development	A B C D E F	● ● ●	● ● ○		Engineering City Council
	Complete 6 <sup>th</sup> Street connection from Cascade to Cemetery opening up at University of Wisconsin-River Falls.	Planning/ Development	A B C D E F	● ● ●	● ● ○	UWRF	Engineering City Council

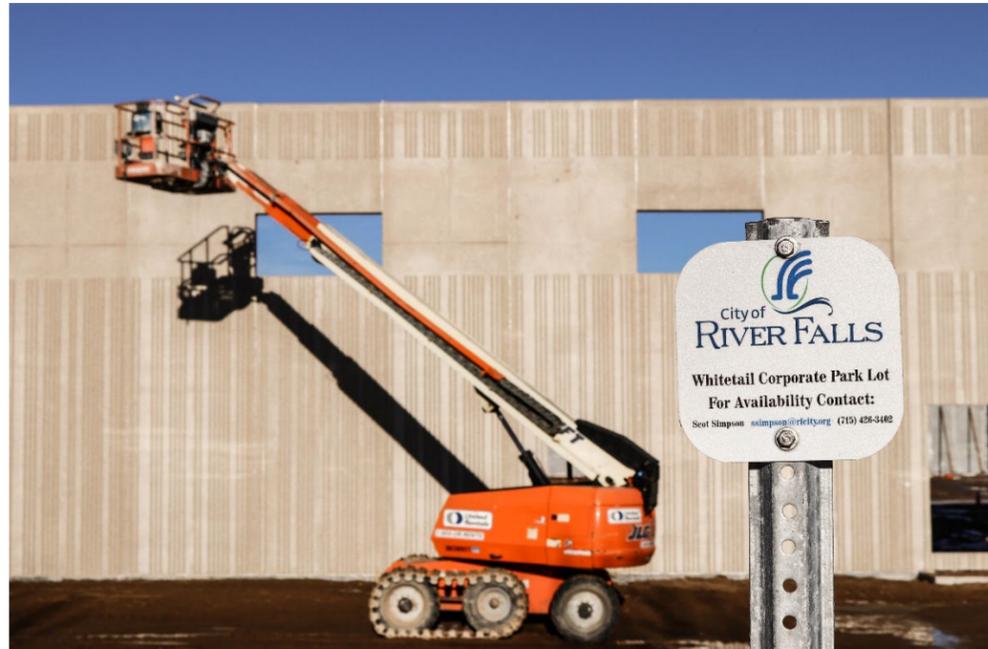


UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Action	Action Type	Supporting Goal(s)	Complexity	Benefit	Community Partners	Lead Department/ Division & Lead Committee						
Develop a clean water policy for the community to support maintained access to clean water for all.	Regulatory	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●●	WDNR	Sustainability Utility Advisory Board (UAB)
A	B	C										
D	E	F										
Update water facility master plan, including new wells and storage infrastructure.	Regulatory	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●●		Utilities/ Engineering UAB
A	B	C										
D	E	F										
Improve water quality by monitoring and updating development standards to incorporate stormwater management best practices.	Regulatory	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●●		Engineering UAB
A	B	C										
D	E	F										
Maintain and expand stormwater management efforts through continued programming and education (e.g., demonstration projects).	Program	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●○	Community Organizations	Engineering UAB
A	B	C										
D	E	F										
Incorporate sustainability and resilience tools and resources in infrastructure planning to ensure continued facility operation and planning to protect community quality of life and fiscal investments.	Planning	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●●	Community Organizations	Sustainability UAB
A	B	C										
D	E	F										
Update wastewater facility master plan.	Planning	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●●	●●○		Utilities/ Engineering UAB
A	B	C										
D	E	F										
Maintain the asset management inventory and policy to identify facility needs and support investments in infrastructure and utility systems.	Program	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●○		Utilities UAB
A	B	C										
D	E	F										
Evaluate infrastructure needs and a plan for sustainable growth and development through the development of a new Infrastructure Growth Plan.	Planning	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●●	●●●		Engineering/ Utilities UAB
A	B	C										
D	E	F										
Explore sustainable development policies and regulations.	Regulatory	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●○	Development Community	Planning/ Sustainability Plan Commission/UAB
A	B	C										
D	E	F										

UTILITIES & FACILITIES

Action	Action Type	Supporting Goal(s)	Complexity	Benefit	Community Partners	Lead Department/ Division & Lead Committee
Continue to support and participate in programs that transition the community electricity system to more renewable sources (e.g., community solar, group purchasing).	Program	A B C D E F	●●●	●●○		Sustainability UAB
Monitor facility and service needs throughout the community to ensure that all community members, with an emphasis on those that are historically underserved, have healthy, safe, and adequate access to community facilities and utilities.	Program	A B C D E F	●●○	●●○		Administration City Council
Evaluate additional local renewable energy generators.	Planning	A B C D E F	●●○	●●○		Administration City Council
Evaluate undergrounding electric infrastructure for resiliency purposes.	Development	A B C D E F	●●●	●●○		Administration City Council
Implement public works and fire facility plans.	Program	A B C D E F	●●○	●●●		Engineering/ Utilities UAB



LAND USE	Action	Action Type	Supporting Goal(s)	Complexity	Benefit	Community Partners	Lead Department/ Division & Lead Committee
	Update the zoning code to support the residential land use categories and densities of the Land Use Chapter, including updates to minimum lot size requirements and other dimensional standards (e.g., setbacks).	Regulatory				Development Community, Relators	Community Development Plan Commission
	Explore and pursue amendments to the zoning code to support the commercial land use categories and goals of the Land Use Chapter, including dimensional standards and allowed uses.	Regulatory				Development Community	Community Development Plan Commission
	Explore and pursue amendments to the zoning code to support the industrial and business park land use categories and goals of the Land Use Chapter, including dimensional standards and allowed uses.	Regulatory				Development Community	Community Development Plan Commission
	Review subdivision code to support updates to zoning regulations and update as warranted.	Regulatory					Community Development Plan Commission
	Re-evaluate street design requirements to ensure they support land use and transportation guidance within the Comprehensive Plan.	Regulatory				WisDOT	Community Development Plan Commission
	Complete a comprehensive review of the zoning ordinance to identify and pursue amendments that support the community's goals and vision for development. Potential amendments include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance standards to regulate building form and design that support community identity</li> <li>• Modern elements such as a use table, illustrations and modern language</li> <li>• Incorporation of form-based zoning concepts within the existing format</li> </ul>	Regulatory					Community Development Plan Commission
	Update zoning ordinance to allow mixed use development to align with the future land use plan.	Regulatory				Development Community	Community Development Plan Commission

LAND USE	Action	Action Type	Supporting Goal(s)	Complexity	Benefit	Community Partners	Lead Department/ Division & Lead Committee						
	Develop zoning category and process fact sheets that educate the public and property owners on regulations and processes.	Planning	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●○○	●●○	Development Community, Towns	Community Development ----- Plan Commission
	A	B	C										
	D	E	F										
	Review growth policies and statutory growth boundaries (e.g., subdivision and zoning) every three years to protect the community's future growth interests.	Guidance & Regulatory	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●○	Towns	Community Development ----- Plan Commission
	A	B	C										
	D	E	F										
Establish the Green Corridors as a regulatory tool and create preservation and development policies that support the city's goals and existing resource preservation tools (i.e., steep slopes, floodplain).	Guidance	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●○	Natura Resource Agencies, Wisconsin DNR	Community Development ----- Plan Commission	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											
Develop a Main Street Corridor Plan with a focus on Downtown.	Planning	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●●	Chamber	Community Development ----- Plan Commission & City Council	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											
With all policy and regulatory updates, evaluate the flexibility and broad use to ensure changes support the changing community.	Guidance	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●○○	●○○		Community Development ----- Plan Commission	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											
Implement the recommendations of the Kinni Corridor Plan and other planning documents.	Planning	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●●	●●●	USACE, Wisconsin DNR	Community Development ----- City Council	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											

RECREATION	Action	Action Type	Supporting Goal(s)	Complexity	Benefit	Community Partners	Lead Department/ Division & Lead Committee
	Implement the Outdoor Recreation Plan and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.	Planning/ Development				Community Organizations, UWRF, School District of River Falls	Parks & Recreation/ Engineering Park & Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB)
	Explore opportunities to bring a community center to River Falls, include testing the feasibility and researching funding opportunities.	Planning				Community Organizations	Administration Council
	Implement green and multimodal connections throughout city with bike and pedestrian trails and connections.	Planning					Community Development PRAB/ Plan Commission
	Monitor existing and future park needs and plan for the construction of facilities to accommodate anticipated growth.	Planning				Community Organizations, UWRF, School District of River Falls	Parks & Recreation/Public Works PRAB
	Inventory existing and new partnership opportunities with UWRF and RFSD to support existing and future programming and recreation offerings.	Planning				UWRF, School District of River Falls	Park & Recreation PRAB
	Consider recreation summit to strengthen coordination and collaboration among various recreation partners (UWRF, RFSD, Youth Associations, etc.)	Planning				Community Organizations, UWRF, School District of River Falls	Administration PRAB
	Implement the findings of park master plans and the Kinni Corridor Plan.	Planning				Community Organizations, USACE, WDNR	Community Development Plan Commission
Create minimum standards for parks.	Regulatory				Community Organizations	Park & Recreation/ Public Works PRAB	

Action	Action Type	Supporting Goal(s)	Complexity	Benefit	Community Partners	Lead Department/ Division & Lead Committee
Complete feasibility and site analysis for new park facilities and locations.	Planning	A B C D E F	● ○ ○	● ● ○	Community Organizations	Park & Recreation/ PRAB
Identify a site for the development of a fourth Regional Park.	Planning	A B C D E F	● ○ ○	● ● ○	Community Organizations	Park & Recreation/ PRAB
Complete a river access plan and construct recommendations in support of implementation of the Kinni Corridor Plan.	Planning	A B C D E F	● ○ ○	● ● ●	Community Organizations	Park & Recreation/ PRAB



INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION	Action	Action Type	Supporting Goal(s)	Complexity	Benefit	Community Partners	Lead Department/ Division & Lead Committee						
	Complete, review, or modify cooperative agreements with Towns for development and infrastructure planning.	Regulatory	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●●	Towns	Community Development ----- Plan Commission & City Council
	A	B	C										
	D	E	F										
	Update the ETZ subdivision ordinances for clarity and alignment with current policies and goals.	Regulatory	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●●	Towns	Planning ----- Plan Commission
	A	B	C										
	D	E	F										
	Inventory existing opportunities and consider new ones for collaboration, education and engagement with Towns to discuss community growth, change, and investment and support future growth and annexation.	Guidance	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●●○	●●●	Towns	Administration -----
A	B	C											
D	E	F											
Inventory existing and review new partnership opportunities with the Counties.		<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●○○	●●●	St. Croix and Pierce Counties	Community Development -----	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											
Collaborate with local employers to understand workforce needs, including access to housing and services.	Guidance	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●○○	●●○	Local Employers	Community Development -----	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											
Monitor and participate in metro region programs, tools and planning initiatives.	Planning	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●○○	●●○		Community Development -----	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											
Monitor state and regional planning efforts that connect to local resources.	Planning	<table border="1"><tr><td>A</td><td>B</td><td>C</td></tr><tr><td>D</td><td>E</td><td>F</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	●○○	●●○	Regional and State Agencies	Planning -----	
A	B	C											
D	E	F											



## APPENDIX A: Technical Memorandums

- A1:** Housing Technical Memorandum
- A2:** Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Technical Memorandum
- A3:** Economic Development Technical Memorandum
- A4:** Transportation Technical Memorandum
- A5:** Utilities and Community Facilities Technical Memorandum
- A6:** Land Use Technical Memorandum
- A7:** Recreation Technical Memorandum
- A8:** Intergovernmental Cooperation Technical Memorandum



# HOUSING ELEMENT ANALYSIS

## INTRODUCTION

This technical memorandum provides data, detailed analysis, and additional information that is intended to supplement the Housing Element within the Focus River Falls Comprehensive Plan. Included in this analysis is an overview of community input related to housing, data outlining the community’s housing market, and an overview of strategies related to River Falls housing priorities. Additionally, the memo includes detailed information about the tools and resources that are available to assist the city in reaching its goals.



## ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Information obtained through the engagement process was used to inform the development of the Housing Element. Early engagement activities looked to build an understanding of the community’s experiences and the following information provides a snapshot of the information gathered. Additionally, the 2021 National Community Survey completed for the community provided insight into the community’s view of housing. Key results of that survey include:

- **The variety of housing options is decreasing:** When asked to rate the variety of housing options, less than 50 percent of respondents identified excellent or very good for the 2019 and 2021 surveys. This is a significant drop from the 62 percent of respondents in 2015 and 2017,
- **The availability of quality affordable housing options is decreasing:** In 2021, 39 percent of respondents identified the availability of affordable housing options as excellent or good, representing a 16 percent decrease from 2015. Specifically, 28 percent of respondents identified the availability as poor.

## Technical Memorandum – Housing

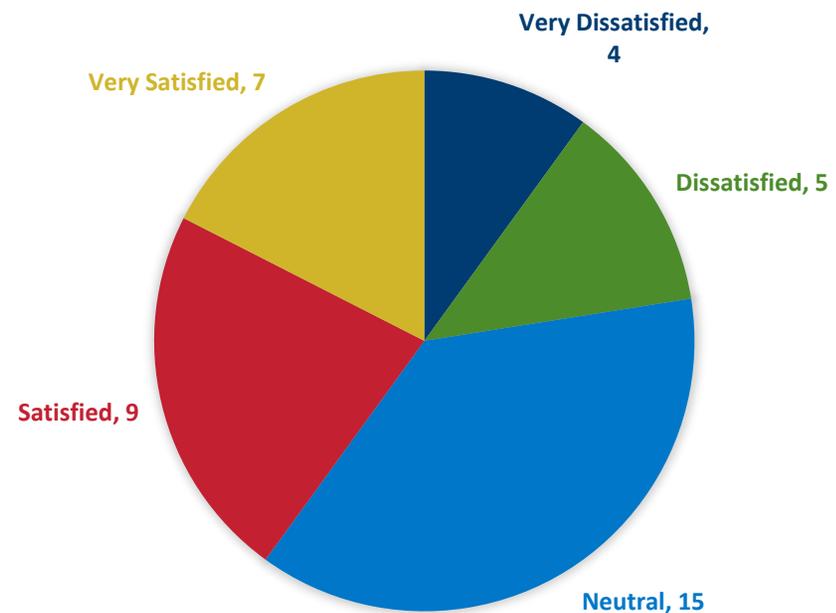
Through the Community Survey, respondents were asked to comment what they believed “one concern or issue for the future of River Falls is”. While responses ranged across all plan topic areas, some cited concerns about the supply of affordable housing responding:

- “Lack of new affordable housing”,
- “No affordable housing”,
- “Affordable/smaller HOMES, not apartments”,
- “Lack of affordable housing for working people and overabundance of overpriced ‘luxury’ apartments”, and
- Multiple responses simply stating, “affordable housing.”

Beyond affordable housing, other responses expressed concern over the availability of affordable single family developments, the amount of multi-family homes being constructed, and the impact of the University on the city’s overall housing market and supply. To understand the perceived needs and status of the existing housing stock, respondents were also asked questions specific to the housing element:

**Question:** How satisfied are you with the housing available within River Falls?

**Key Takeaway:** Only nine of the 40 respondents stated that they are “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with the housing within River Falls, which indicates that people feel generally positive about the available housing in the city.



## Technical Memorandum – Housing

**Question:** Rank the need of the following housing styles in the City of River Falls (1 – most needed to 9 – least needed).

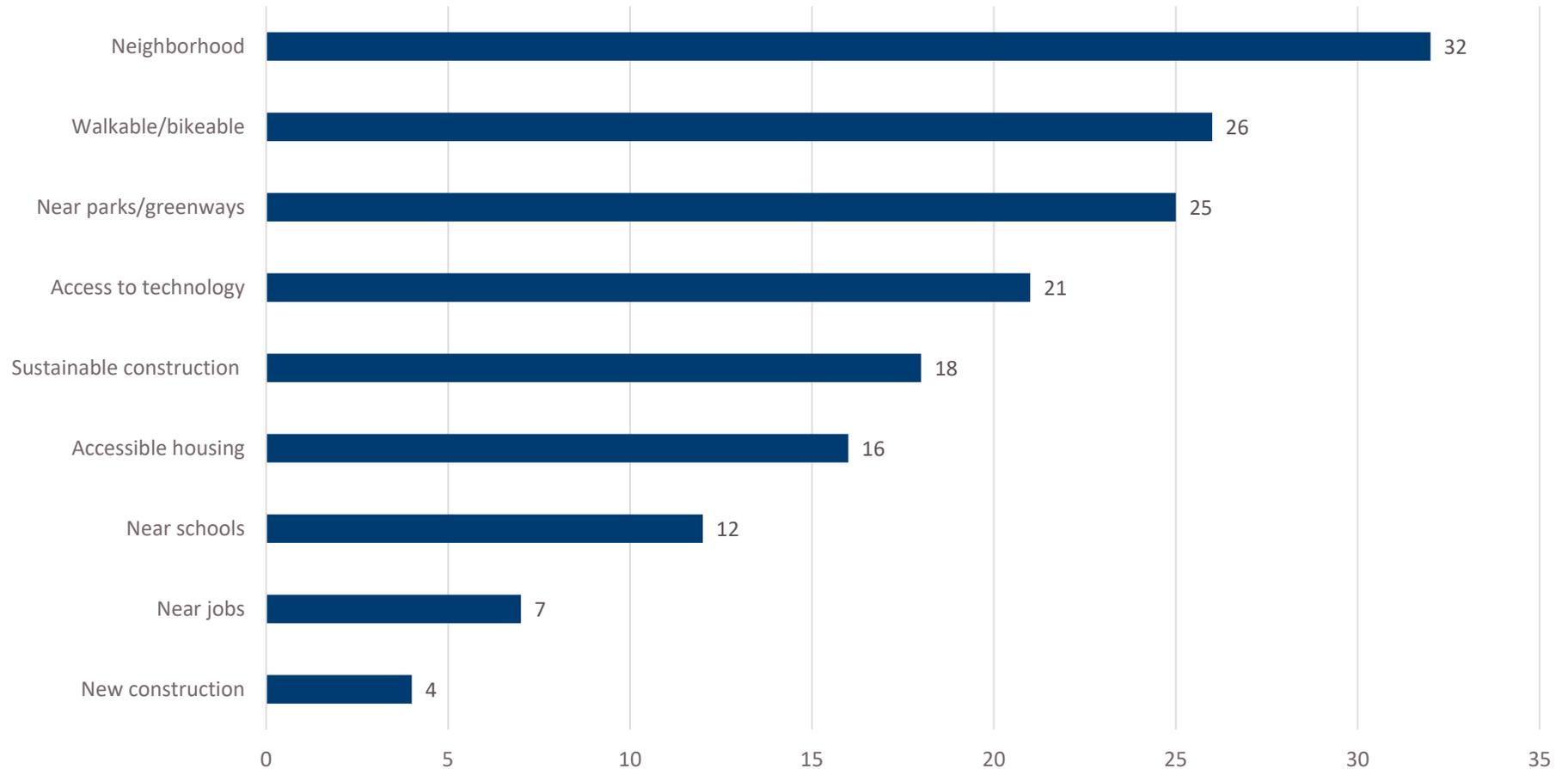
**Key Takeaway:** Respondents are in favor of small and medium lot single family developments but are generally opposed to large lot single family. Beyond that, there is a preference for townhome/condo development over apartment housing. Based on the input collected, those that participated ranked the following desires for housing types, in order of need. This data represents a relatively small sample size.

1. Small Lot single family (1/4 acre or less lots) – uses the least amount of land, resources, and infrastructure (costs less to build and maintain)
2. Townhome/Condo
3. Medium Lot Single Family (1/4-1 acre) – uses less land, resources, and infrastructure (costs less to build and maintain)
4. Senior Housing (active living with accessible design, assisted living, memory care)
5. Apartment
6. Student Housing
7. Large Lot single family (1 acre or more) – uses greater land, resources and infrastructure (costs most to build and maintain)
8. Mother in law flats
9. Other

## Technical Memorandum – Housing

**Question:** What amenities do you look for when finding housing? (select all that apply)

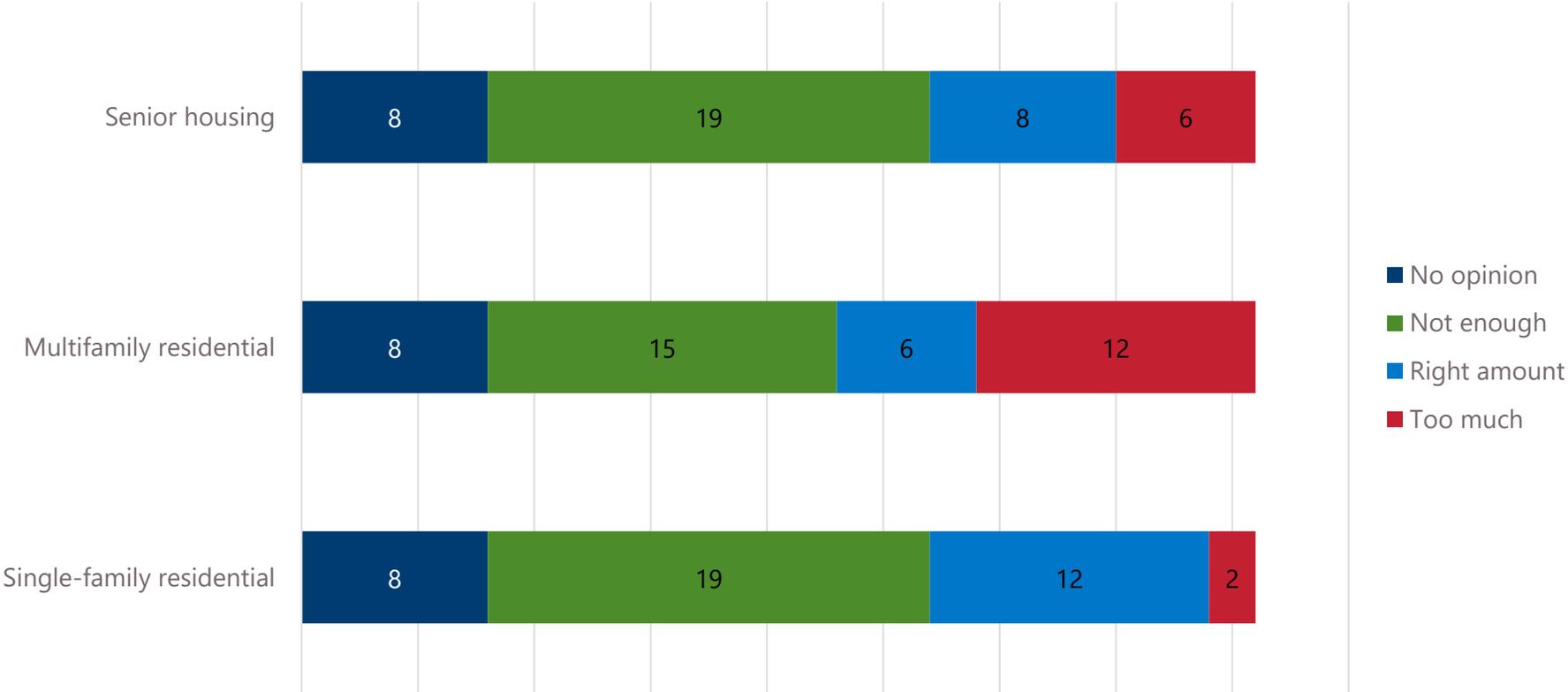
**Key Takeaway:** In selecting the amenities “neighborhood”, “walkable/bikeable”, and “near parks/greenways”, at the highest rates, survey respondents indicated that the location and feel of the location of their housing is the most important feature.



# Technical Memorandum – Housing

**Question:** How would you describe the supply of the following spaces or uses in River Falls? (other use types were included in this question, the following chart reports only the housing types)

**Key Takeaway:** For each of the options, senior housing, multifamily residential, and single-family residential, the largest group of respondents stated that there is not enough supply. This indicates, that generally, community members believe that there is not as sufficient supply of housing options in the city.



# HOUSING CONTEXT

## HOUSING STOCK OVERVIEW

The following section reviews the existing housing available with the community, including specific characteristics of the housing types to provide an understanding of the availability and access. The data presented within this section includes a combination of available Census data with a comparison to the 2022 Housing Study Report completed by Maxfield Research in 2022.

### Housing Supply

The 2022 Housing Study estimated a total of 5,904 households within the City of River Falls in 2022, representing an increase of nearly 200 households over the last two years. This represents an increase in the number of households of 3.2 percent. The study also estimated an increase in the city’s population of 2.0 percent, showing a higher growth rate of households to residents.

A total of 5,904 housing units located within city limits, only 0.7 percent were identified as vacant. The majority of homes in River Falls are detached single-family homes, followed by attached single-family units and large apartment complexes (20 or more units).

**Table 1. Number of Housing Units in River Falls**

Units in Structure	1 unit-detached	1 unit-attached	2	3-4	5-9	10-19	20 or more	Mobile home
Total Number	2,459	955	179	107	320	548	1,049	136
Percent	43%	17%	3%	2%	6%	10%	18%	2%

Source: 2019 ACS

### Housing Tenure

About 50 percent of residences in River Falls are owner occupied and 50 percent rental occupied. There is a slightly higher proportion of rental units in Pierce County (54 percent) compared to tracts within St. Croix County (34 percent), potentially due to greater numbers of student housing in that county. The average household size of an owner-occupied housing unit was 2.68 people per household, higher than the 2.17

people per household estimate for renter occupied units. The division of renter occupied and owner-occupied housing in the community has remained fairly consistent of the past few years, balancing around 50 percent.

**Figure 1. Housing Tenure**



Source: Updated Demand Estimates for the City of River Falls, Maxfield Research & Consulting, LLC

Owner-occupied and renter occupied units include many different housing types, from detached single family to apartments or condos. While most multifamily housing can be assumed to be renter occupied housing, all housing types can be renter occupied. For example, nearly 16 percent of renter occupied housing in 2019 was in single-family attached dwellings (e.g., townhomes).

**Table 2. Number and Type of Units in Structure**

Housing Type	Owner-Occupied		Renter Occupied	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1 unit, detached	2139	76.1%	228	8.4%
1 unit, attached	523	18.6%	432	15.9%
2 units, apartments	13	0.5%	158	5.8%
3 to 4 units, apartments	7	0.2%	100	3.7%
5 to 9 units, apartments	8	0.3%	276	10.2%
10 or more units, apartments	24	0.9%	1477	54.5%
Mobile home or other type of housing	96	3.4%	40	1.5%

Source: 2019 ACS

## Technical Memorandum - Housing

### Housing Cost and Value

According to the 2019 Census American Community Survey (ACS), the median housing price in River Falls is \$200,300, with a slightly higher median in Pierce County (\$206,700) than St. Croix County (\$193,900). River Falls median housing price has increased approximately \$15,000 since 2010, up from about \$185,000.

To determine what is a “fair” market rent for an area, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) sets income limits to determine Fair Market Rent (FMR) for metropolitan areas. River Falls is included in the Minneapolis-St. Paul urban area, and these FMR values are then used to determine voucher amounts and income limits for affordable housing.

**Table 3. Fair Market Rent Values, 2021**

	Efficiency	One-Bedroom	Two-Bedroom	Three-Bedroom	Four-Bedroom
<b>2021 Values</b>	\$898	\$1,054	\$1,308	\$1,838	\$2,156

Source: US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2021

Limits for affordable housing are based on the area median income (AMI) for the area and adjusted based on the number of people in each family. Those considered “extremely low income” make less than 30 percent of the AMI, those considered “very low income” make less than 50 percent of AMI, and “low income” make less than 80 percent of AMI.

**Table 4. HUD Income Limits, 2021**

<b>River Falls Median Family Income \$104,900</b>	Income Limit Category	1-person family	4-person family	8-person family
	Extremely Low Income (30%)	\$22,050	\$31,450	\$44,660
	Very Low Income (50%)	\$36,750	\$52,450	\$69,250
	Low Income (80%)	\$55,950	\$79,900	\$105,500

Source: US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2021

In 2019 the median rent in River Falls was \$1,054, which is a 37% increase from 2010, when the median rent was \$767. According to the US Census, about 30 percent of River Falls residents are housing cost burdened, which means that they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs. This is a typical measure of when housing becomes unaffordable. This is down from 44 percent in 2010, a decrease

## Technical Memorandum - Housing

of nearly 15 percent. The decrease in the percent of households that are housing cost burdened is possibly explained by the discrepancy between income growth and mortgage payment growth. Between 2010 and 2019, median household income grew by about 25 percent, while median monthly mortgage payments increased by only 3 percent. This may indicate that the community has access to more affordable housing options or that the cost of housing has increased at a slower rate than local wages.

### Housing Age

The housing stock in River Falls varies in age from pre-1940's housing to modern-day construction. The 2019 ACS estimates the number of units constructed by decade, including those built in the last eight years. According to these estimates, 21 percent of the housing stock was built between 2000 and 2009. The median year structures were built was estimated to be 1974, according to the 2019 ACS, with a median year built for owner occupied structures was 1970 and 1977 for renter occupied structures.

While the ACS data provides a broad picture of the age of structures across the last eighty years, the estimate of 211 structures built after 2014 does seem representative of the number of structures recently constructed. Recent building permit records the construction of over 300 residential units, including 90 single family units, 62 duplexes and townhomes, and 14 apartments varying between 8 and 50 units.



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### HOUSING NEEDS/PROJECTIONS

As a part of the Focus River Falls planning process population projections were created for the City of River Falls to inform growth, amenity and service needs. These projections estimated a growth of by 6,331 people between 2020 and 2040. This represents a five year growth rate of 6.8 percent and correlates with an average annual population growth rate of 253 residents. This broad growth projection was developed to inform all elements of the Comprehensive Plan for the year 2045. An estimate of 2,600 additional housing units would be needed to support the projected growth, based on the current average of 2.4 people per household.

The 2022 Housing Study explored specific housing and population projections for the next 5 and 10 years of the community based on market factors and recent housing construction. These forecasts project a growth of 472 households over the next 10 years or a growth of 0.8 percent each year. This forecast not only responds to population growth but also considers the increase in housing needed to improve accessibility and affordability.

	Population		Households	
	Count/Projection	Percent Change	Count/Projection	Percent Change
2000 Census	12,560	--	4,269	--
2010 Census	15,000	7.9%	5,150	11.0%
2020 Census	16,182	2.5%	5,719	3.2%
2027 Forecast	16,903	1.9%	6,081	3.0%
2030 Forecast	17,100	1.2%	6,191	1.8%

Source: US Census, ESRI, Maxfield Research & Consulting

Continued housing production at the more recent rate would exceed housing need based on population growth, however, the number of new multifamily units varied drastically year to year, while single-family development was much more consistent. Additionally, a greater portion of the multifamily units will be occupied by renter households, which, on average, are smaller (2.11 people) than owner occupied households (2.64 people). If housing production would remain more similar to rates going back to 2000, housing production would be well balanced with projected population growth.

# HOUSING STRATEGIES AND TOOLS

## MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

The design and function of housing development can impact the supply of housing and affordability of housing throughout a community. Properly designed, compact housing development and redevelopment can increase housing supply and maintain and protect the existing identity of the community.

One common strategy communities take to help address these housing goals is to encourage the development of “Missing Middle Housing”. “Missing Middle Housing is a range of house-scale buildings with multiple units-compatible in scale and form with detached single-family homes – located in a walkable neighborhood.”<sup>1</sup> Because missing middle housing is in structures that are similar in size and form to single-family housing, the general idea is to increase housing density and provide more variety in housing types and cost levels without negatively affecting or changing the feel of the community. According to MissingMiddleHousing.com, housing types that are typically considered Missing Middle include duplexes, fourplexes, townhomes, and courtyard buildings.



<sup>1</sup> Missingmiddlehousing.com

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Duplex	Fourplex	Townhome	Courtyard Building
<p>A small (1 to 2-story), detached structure that consists of two dwelling units arranged side-by-side or on top of each other, each with an entry from the street. This type has the appearance of a small-to-medium single-unit house and may include a rear yard.</p>	<p>A detached (2 to 2.5-story) structure with four dwelling units, two on the ground floor and two above, with shared or individual entries from the street. This type has the appearance of a medium-sized single-unit house and may include a rear yard.</p>	<p>A small-to medium-sized attached structure that consists of 2 to 16 multi-story dwelling units placed side-by-side. Entries are on the narrow side of the unit and typically face a street or courtyard. The street façades have entrances and avoid garages.</p>	<p>A medium to large sized detached structure consisting of multiple side-by-side and/or stacked dwelling units oriented around a courtyard. The courtyard replaces the function of a rear yard and is more open to the street in low intensity neighborhoods and less open to the street in more urban settings.</p>
			

Additional housing units may also be considered to support the provision of Missing Middle Housing. For example, Tiny Homes are a residential unit type that support a new housing style that can be more affordable. The tiny home model provides a single-family home with a smaller footprint, allowing a smaller lot to be used to limit the overall investment and maintenance costs. Additionally, accessory dwelling units (ADU) within single-family residential areas can be used to provide additional housing options at a more affordable scale. The ADU model can range from a standalone guest house to a basement unit within a single-family structure.

# Technical Memorandum - Housing

## Missing Middle Housing Diagram.



Source: [MissingMiddleHousing.com](http://MissingMiddleHousing.com)

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING TOOLS

A variety of strategies can be taken by local governments to help increase the amount of affordable housing within their community. Those strategies include housing stock preservation, infill development, compact development, and others. Each can address a different aspect of providing housing at various cost levels.

### Housing Preservation

Many communities have embraced housing preservation and rehabilitation as a key strategy to help address housing affordability concerns and maintain an affordable rental housing stock. Often, preserving an existing home is more affordable than constructing new affordable housing options. According to the National Housing Trust, while more than 100,000 affordable apartments are built each year, nearly twice as many units are lost “annually due to deterioration, abandonment, or conversion to more expensive housing.” This underlines the importance of preserving the existing affordable housing stock in addition to constructing new affordable units. Rental inspections are encouraged within communities based on data and reports such as this, as these programs help to identify potential losses prior to a full loss of residential area. The community can continue to evaluate the rental inspection program within state requirements as an action of this planning process.

## Technical Memorandum - Housing

As a community's housing supply begins to age it is important that efforts are made to preserve the housing stock in good condition to avoid losing those units. Opportunities exist for communities to encourage the rehabilitation and preservation of those units. Programs include:

- **USDA Housing Preservation Grants** – provides grants to sponsoring organizations, such as local governments, for the repair or rehabilitation of housing units that are owned or occupied by low-income individuals.

### Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing

Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing are multifamily rental properties that meet affordability standards but are not subsidized by federal programs.<sup>2</sup> Many of these properties were built between 1940 and 1990 and are at risk of being lost to deterioration or conversion to less affordable housing. Communities can combine their housing preservation efforts with the identification of these properties to ensure that they are maintained in good condition as affordable housing units.

### Financial Tools

One of the more difficult aspects of developing and maintaining affordable housing options within a community is determining how to properly fund it. Various federal funding opportunities exist that local governments or private developers can pursue to help subsidize affordable housing projects:

- **Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)** – can be used for the construction of new affordable housing and can help property owners invest in older existing or historic buildings by converting them into an income producing use, such as low-income housing.
- **HOME Grants** – A federal block grant program where funds can be used for a variety of housing based purposes. All HOME funds are required to support households at or below 80 percent of area median income.
- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** – A federal block grant program where funds can be used for either community development or housing purposes. Seventy percent of funds are required to be used to support households at or below 80 percent area median income.
- **National Housing Trust Fund** – A federal block grant program that is administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Funds are intended to be used in the creation, rehabilitation, preservation, or operation of rental housing for very low and extremely low income households.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://noahimpactfund.com/impact-investing-affordable-housing-minnesota/what-is-noah/>

## Technical Memorandum - Housing

### Housing and Rent Assistance Tools

A community's house stock provides diverse options doesn't completely solve housing access needs. Various circumstances and conditions can create barriers to secure housing. West CAP is a key community partner that provides programs and services to community members. The following housing and rent assistance programs are some of those provided by West CAP.

- **Wisconsin Help for Homeowners Program** – A statewide program that help with overdue bills (e.g., mortgage payments, property taxes, etc.). Program is available to homeowners with and without a mortgage.
- **Housing Choice Vouchers/Section 8** – A federal program that provides rent support for participating developments.
- **Homeless Intervention** – A program that provides rent assistance to individuals and family experiencing homelessness.
- **Habitat for Humanity** – A non-profit organization that helps families build and improve places to call home. Their work supports the development of affordable housing or access to affordable supplies and tools for maintenance activities.

### SENIOR HOUSING

As the population ages, it is important that the community has housing options available for older adults. Whether it is aging in place, senior housing facilities, or other options, communities should have policies in place that encourage the development and preservation of housing that is safe and comfortable for older people. As was discussed above, many survey respondents stated that they believe that the community needs more options for senior housing. In addition to developing additional senior housing facilities, communities can employ the following options to help address their senior housing needs.

#### Aging in Place

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines aging in place as “the ability to live in one’s own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level.” Local governments can employ programming to help their older population successfully age in place. A variety of tool kits exist that are intended to assist local governments:

- [Aging in Place: A Toolkit for Local Governments](#)

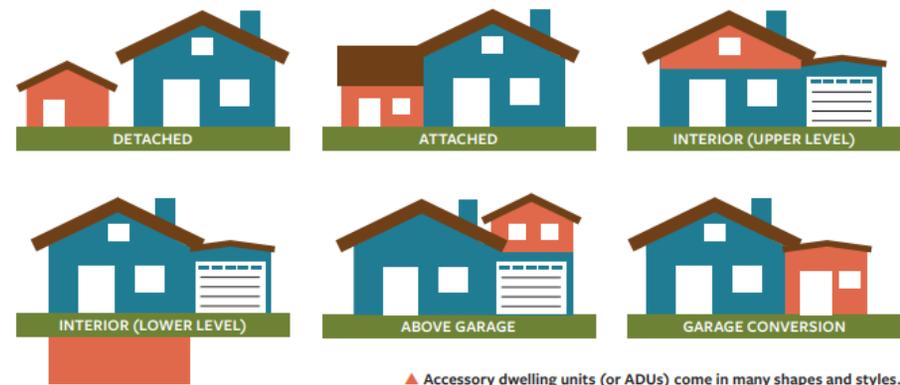
## Technical Memorandum - Housing

### Accessory Dwelling Units

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are secondary dwelling units, typically a one or two bedroom apartment, that are located on the same parcel as a single-family dwelling. Often referred to as “mother in-law apartments” or “granny flats” they can be attached to the primary dwelling or detached in another structure, such as a garage.

While ADUs do not only cater to older adults, they can help older adults stay in their home for longer. They can provide housing for a caregiver, provide supplemental income for homeowners, or allow other family members to live on the same property. Additionally, if homeowners are looking to downsize as they age, they can move into the ADU, allowing them to remain on their property and rent the primary dwelling out.

**Figure 1. Types of Accessory Dwelling Units**



# AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT ANALYSIS

## INTRODUCTION

This technical memorandum provides data, detailed analysis, and additional information that is intended to supplement the Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources Element within the Focus River Falls Comprehensive Plan. Included in this analysis is an overview of community input related to these resources, data outlining the existing assets within the community, and an overview of strategies related to River Falls resource priorities. Additionally, the memo includes detailed information about the tools and resources that are available to assist the city in reaching its goals.



## ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

### Engagement Themes:

- Quality resources that are accessible.
- Support of practices and action that build a sustainable future.

Engagement efforts throughout the Focus River Falls process provided an understanding of current issues and opportunities experienced by the community, along with ideas for action and implementation. Through online activities and surveys the community echoed the importance of the community's resources and focus on resiliency as two key foundational elements of engagement. The natural and cultural resources of the community and region are tied deeply to the identity of River Falls, and desire to maintain or improved the quality of and access to these resources was heard throughout engagement. The community also embraces the sustainability and resiliency planning and action of the city, and desires efforts to continue.

Early in the planning process, the community was asked to share their perspectives on resource management within the city. Overall, the community agreed or strongly agreed that preserving agricultural, natural, and cultural resources was important and that access to these resources is important. There were two areas where the community had varying input regarding the resources:

## Technical Memorandum - Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

- **The River Falls Community does a good job celebrating and exhibiting its history and culture.** While many agreed with this statement, this statement also received the highest number of disagree and strongly disagree statements. The results showed an opportunity for growth, specifically in the management of cultural resources.
- **River Falls businesses and residents have a strong connection to local farmers and local food production.** Responses to this statement centered around the neutral point of the scale, varying from agree to disagree. The results could be interpreted in two ways: one, there is an opportunity for increasing connection with local food production within the community, or two, there is an opportunity for educating the community on what is available locally.

## AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES CONTEXT

### DEFINITIONS

The physical resources of a community are frequently connected to why the community was established in the first place. Typically, locations along rivers for trade and transportation, or high yielding crop land were sought. These resources are important to the community and can be organized into three groups.



#### AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Resources that support agricultural activity within the community including the preservation of agricultural soils and farmlands.



#### NATURAL RESOURCES

Existing resources that comprise the natural environment the community, including wetlands, rivers, soils, steep slopes, and vegetation.



#### CULTURAL RESOURCES

Historic and current community components like land recognition, historic structures, community celebration, and cultural inclusion that continue to form and shape the identify of River Falls.

# Technical Memorandum - Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

## AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES OVERVIEW

Agriculture is one of the primary industries in the Midwest and the State of Wisconsin. River Falls supports this industry through the agricultural program at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls (UWRF) and extraterritorial ordinances that preserve farmland. While there are limited agricultural uses within city limits, there are many active agricultural uses and farmland preservation policies in the adjacent counties and towns that the City is supportive through extraterritorial ordinances and cooperative agreements.

### University of Wisconsin-River Falls Laboratory Farms

Agricultural programs at the UWRF campus teaches students animal sciences, horticulture, crop and soil science, environmental science, and agricultural engineering technology. The University operates two laboratory farms in the community - the Campus Farm and the Mann Valley Farm- that are integrated into the program and support the production of crops and animal husbandry, including horse, beef and dairy cattle, swine, and sheep. The farms provide students the education and employment for potential careers in farm management, nutrition, breeding education, and more. There are also educational and volunteer opportunities that are open to the public. The city will continue to maintain the partnership with the university for collective planning and efforts for future agricultural programming.

Campus Farm	Mann Valley Farm
<b>Size:</b> 130 acres	<b>Size:</b> 475 acres
<b>Focus:</b> Horse operations	<b>Focus:</b> Beef, dairy, sheep, and swine operations
<b>Farm Features:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Riding Areas</li> <li>• Mare and colt barn</li> <li>• Classroom space</li> <li>• Rodeo arena</li> <li>• Pasture and hay land</li> <li>• 32 acres for horticulture research</li> <li>• 8 acres of environmental science and forest projects</li> </ul>	<b>Farm Features:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beef, dairy, sheep, and swine barns and lots</li> <li>• St. Croix valley bull test station</li> <li>• Dairy learning center</li> <li>• Crop land</li> <li>• Classroom space</li> <li>• Pavilion for instruction and workshops</li> <li>• Feed processing, grain drying, and storage units</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary composing research program</li> </ul>

## Technical Memorandum - Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

### St. Croix County Farmland Preservation Program

Farmland preservation plans and programs are tools utilized by counties and municipalities to solidify policies for agricultural preservation and supporting zoning regulations. County Farmland Preservation Plans must be certified by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). St. Croix County adopted a Farmland Preservation Plan in January of 2012, with continuous efforts to support and preserve farmland with future plans to update their policies and goals. A vision for agriculture in St. Croix County is defined as: "In the year 2035, the farms and agricultural enterprises operate efficiently and effectively, and the farmers are good stewards of the land, preserving it for future generations. St. Croix's agricultural sector is particularly important to its residents. The County works to maintain farming as an occupation for families and as an active land use. The County recognizes that agricultural land is not undeveloped land waiting for other uses but is a valuable and productive resource that supports a healthy agricultural industry. The County's agricultural industry includes farms of all types and sizes supported by a variety of economic and land use techniques."

While the county's farmland preservation policies do not apply to areas within city limits, farmland preservation areas are identified in the adjacent towns of Troy and Kinnickinnic. These preservation areas should be monitored as the city grows outside of city limits.

In addition to the farmland preservation designation of the plan, the Town of Troy has established an Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA). An AEA is a community led effort to designate areas important to Wisconsin's agricultural future, according to DATCP. The Town of Troy has established AEA, that is managed by the Town. The county's **Farmland Preservation Plan** and associated resources should be referenced to assess current farmland and AEA designations.

### Pierce County Farmland Preservation Program

Pierce County adopted a Farmland Preservation Plan in September of 2013, similar to St. Croix County. The plan identifies the county's desire to remain an agricultural community. Similar to St. Croix County, farmland preservation areas with the Town of River Falls and Town of Clifton are identified within the Pierce County plan. Areas immediately adjacent to the City of River Falls are identified as non-farm planning areas; however, farmland preservation areas are identified within 1 mile. Neither the Town of Clifton or Town of River Falls have established AEAs at this time. The tools and policies of the **Pierce County Farmland Preservation Plan** should be referenced as growth is planned outside of River Falls.

## Technical Memorandum - Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

### Local Food Access

The Midwest is known as an agricultural production hub, supporting the production of many crop and animal products throughout the United States. However, the industrialization of the agricultural industry has created gaps in access to locally grown foods and educational opportunities to learn about how food is grown. There are many efforts and tools that can be explored regarding local food access, from community gardens to early elementary education. There are two community organizations that support efforts to increase the community's access to local foods, each described below. However, other programs and tools may also be explored.

<p><b>Grow to Share</b></p>	<p>Grow to Share is a non-profit community organization that manages community gardens and local food education. The Grow to Share Gardens are located within Hoffman Park just north of First National Bank Stadium. The community garden plots are managed and maintained by the organization. The garden not only provides a space for the community to grow their own produce, but the organization donates produce to local organizations (1,250 pounds in 2021) and provides educational opportunities on site. The City and Grow to Share have an agreement for use of the park which notes that the use may need to be relocated if desired by the city.</p>
<p><b>WE Market Co-Op</b></p>	<p>The WE Market Co-Op provides the community with access to locally grown and produced foods and materials within the core of the community. The locally owned and managed organization sources as much material and goods from local suppliers, including dairy, meats, baked goods, and brews. This community based effort not only provides access to locally produced goods but fosters a sense of community and connection where people can grow and learn from one another.</p>
<p><b>River Falls Farmers Market</b></p>	<p>The River Falls Farmers Market supports local food growers within 35 miles of the community. Venders are welcomed every Saturday and Tuesday to sell locally produced vegetables, plants, fruits, local cheese, canned and baked goods, eggs, flowers, and more.</p>
<p><b>University of Wisconsin – River Falls and School District of River Falls Food Services</b></p>	<p>The UWRF and School District of River Falls both support locally grown foods through their purchase and use as part of their food service offerings. UWRF also supports resiliency efforts in food offerings through the use of reusable containers.</p>
<p><b>Local Growers</b></p>	<p>Many local farmers and growers utilize pop-up shops for the sales of goods within the community. Whether through a roadside stand or from the bed of a truck, these opportunities allow growers to sell goods and increase exposure in the community.</p>

# Technical Memorandum - Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

## NATURAL RESOURCES OVERVIEW

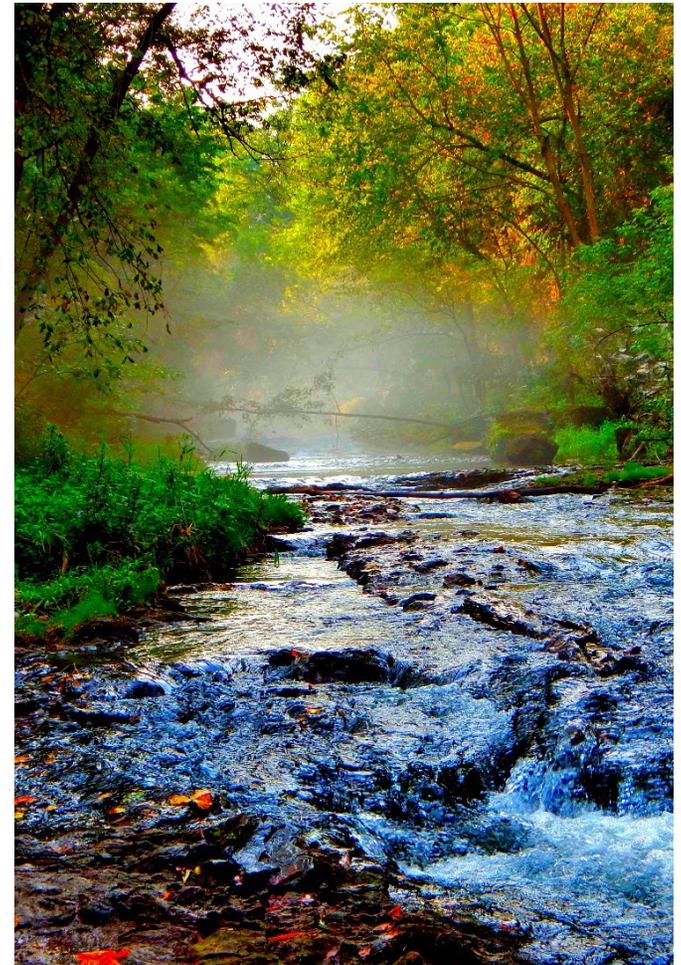
### Wetlands and Floodplain

Wetlands and floodplains are important because they are key identifiers of landscape and are important resources for access to fresh water. Additionally, impacts to these resources have the potential to impact existing built investments through climate change, rising water levels, and pollution.

Wetlands include rivers, lakes, and streams. Floods can occur from ocean waves, heavy rainfall, fast melting snow or when dams or levees break in which the excess liquid could no longer be held in the surface water areas. The community’s waterbodies are a key element of its identity and sense of place. River Falls is bisected by the Kinnickinnic River (“The Kinni”), located within the Kinnickinnic River watershed, which includes 25 miles of Class I trout water and is listed as an Outstanding Resource Water according to the WI Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The river is found to be a popular fishery area with brown and brook trout. In 2018 the river was assessed by the WDNR for thresholds for the Fish and Aquatic Life Use and was determined to continue to meet the designated use and is not considered impaired.

Within city limits, the river stretches approximately 2.5 miles from the northern boundary to the southwestern portion of River Falls expanding almost another nine miles northeast into the Town of Kinnickinnic, known as the “South Fork”. Currently, Lake George and now drained Lake Louise are two impoundment areas in the middle of the city that were a result of the construction of two hydroelectric dams, the Powell Falls dam and Junction Falls dams. They have been the focus of municipal utilities and community planning for some time now. The community and local partners continue to study the potential removal of the dams and restoration of the river included in the **Kinni Corridor** a planning effort completed in 2019.

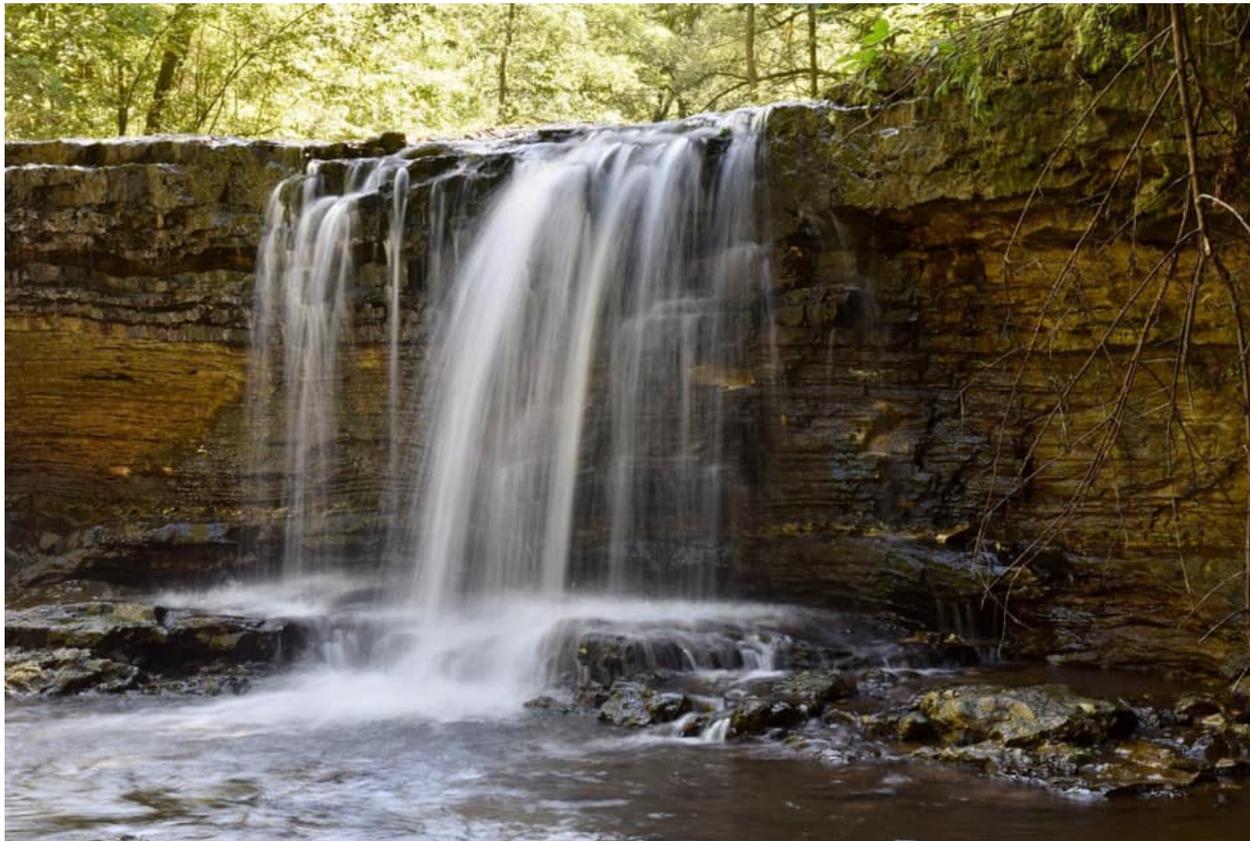
From the presence of Kinni there are a number of small wetlands scattered throughout the community. These wetlands vary in size and location and contribute to the overall wetland system. While smaller in nature, these wetlands provide a number of benefits to the



## Technical Memorandum - Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

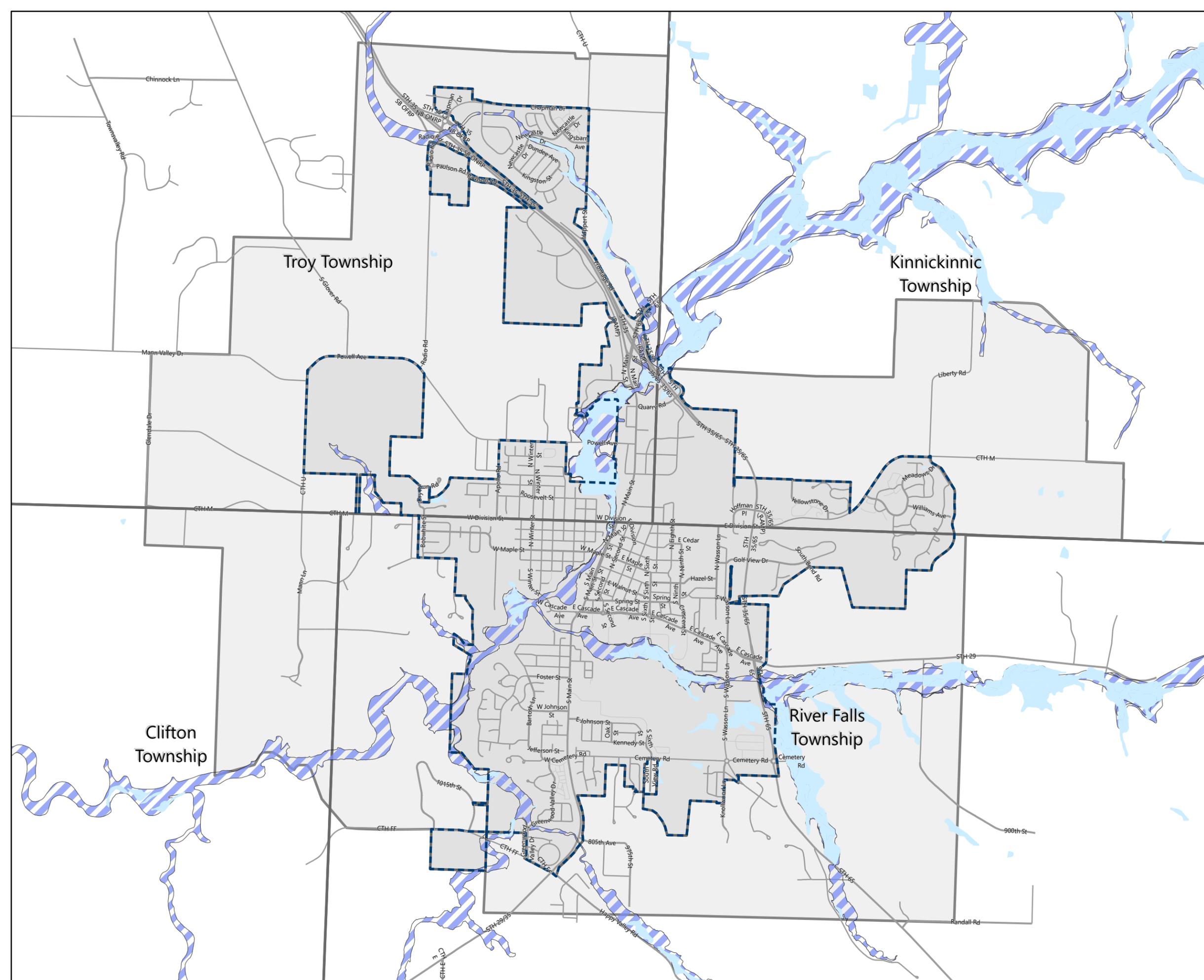
community, from habitat for local species to stormwater management. Depending on the size and location, they also provide a recreational value from ice skating in the winter to visual breaks in the urban environment.

There is also a 100-year floodplain that extends along the river shores, which will need to be considered in any future land use development. The City's Zoning Ordinance includes the specific regulations. Floodplains are established on the federal level by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to identify areas of higher risk to impacts during flood events. The rate and breath of impacts is changing as the world's climate also changes, and the identified floodplains are a base tool for understanding and assessing risks. These floodplain areas have specific development regulations that are established to prevent, to the extent possible, impacts to investments as a result of a flood event. However, these areas can be used as a resource planning tool.



# Legend

- Wetlands
- 100 Year Flood Plain
- River Falls City Limits
- Urban Area Boundary
- Township Boundaries



# Wetlands and Floodplain

## Technical Memorandum - Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

### Steep Slopes

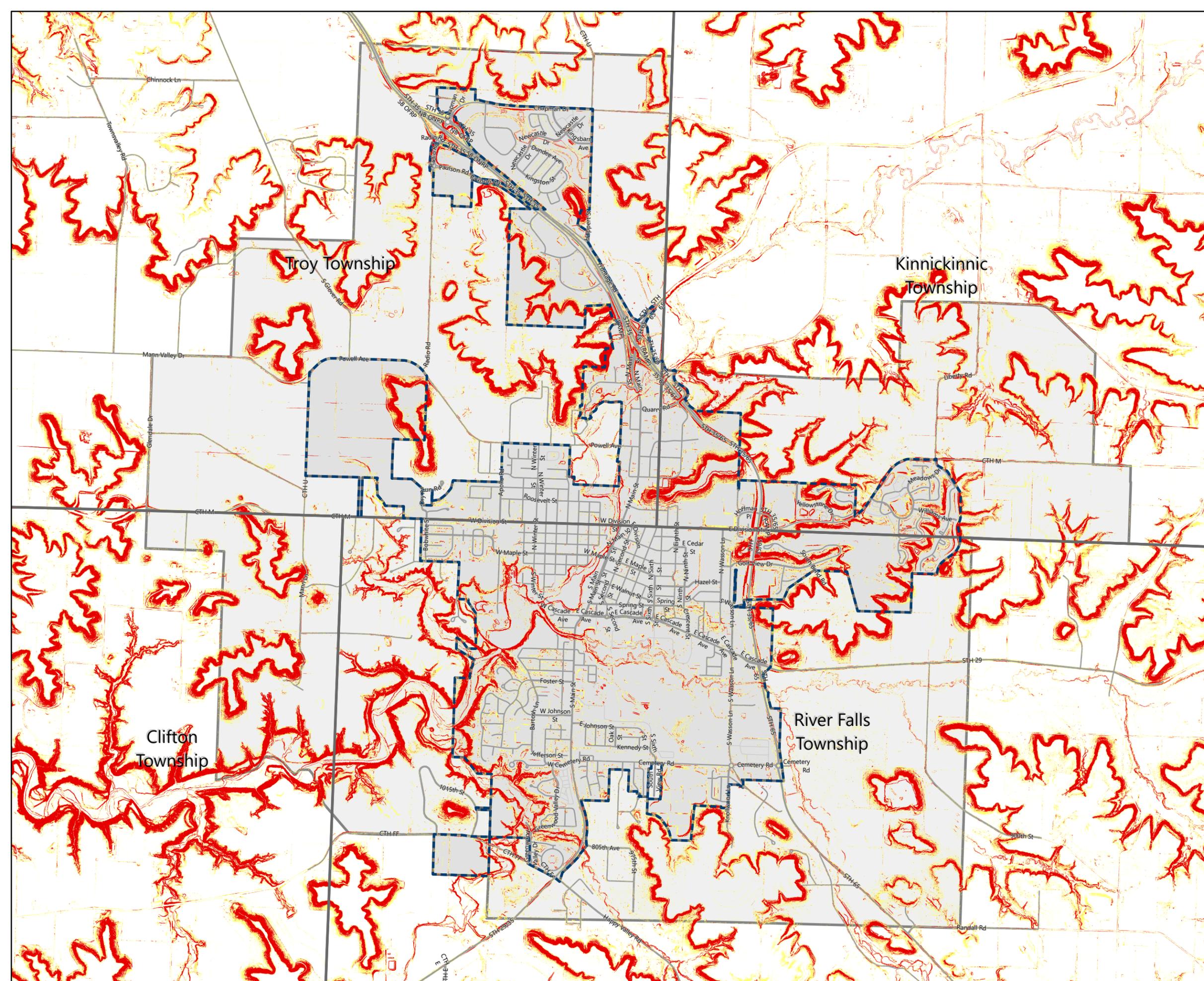
The topography throughout the community is another key identifier of River Falls and must be considered as growth and development occur. The existing slopes within the community were explored to identify steep slope areas which should be analyzed during development and maintenance activities. The City has determined steep slopes as considered those with a grade of over 20 percent. These steep slope areas are scattered throughout the community, and including existing hills and valleys, but were also created through the building of structures and infrastructure, including existing highways. While steep slope areas may not be suitable for development, they may be used to support recreational activities and trails to enhance community amenities.

Existing regulations are established for the management of steep slopes within the community. Section 16.12.050 of the Municipal Code defines the management and preservation policies. Key considerations for how steep slopes should be managed with new development include:

- No construction or grading can occur within steep slope areas
- Steep slopes are not considered part of a buildable area of a lot
- Overland stormwater management must utilize an on-site infiltration system before sending water down a steep slope

### Conservancy Areas

Conservancy areas are identified throughout the community to protect and preserve valuable natural resources, open space, and visual character. These areas include a variety of resource types including steep slopes, prairie, hillsides, forestland, wetlands, stormwater facilities, and floodplains. These conservancy areas identify both existing natural features and manmade features such as stormwater management areas. The designation of these areas aids in the preservation of these important resources but maintain the community identity and sense of place. Additionally, these areas can be used for recreational and trail areas the availability of community amenities and connection to these resource areas.



### Legend

- River Falls City Limits
- Over 25% Slopes
- 15 to 25% Slopes
- Urban Area Boundary
- Township Boundaries



# Steep Slopes

# Technical Memorandum - Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

## City Designations

The many natural resources in the community can be highlighted by various programs that have been created by resource organizations to identify communities with common social or natural preservation goals. Communities that believe they meet the criteria to be officially designated can voluntarily participate in these programs to emphasize their support and commitment to the activity. These designations are important for the community's identity and can foster economic development. There are various standards and actions that must be completed to receive and maintain various designations. The City of River Falls has a number of designations, each summarized below.

<b>Tree City USA</b>	The Tree City USA program was established by the Arbor Day Foundation and is one of their oldest programs. The program is designed to support the preservation and stewardship of trees within municipalities. The city was originally designated as a Tree City in 2007 and has maintained the designation since.
<b>Bird City Wisconsin – Communities Helping Birds</b>	The Bird City Wisconsin program has a mission to implement sound bird-conservation practices. Efforts of a Bird City support a community's pride, conservation efforts, education, and goals to improve the environment. River Falls has had this designation since 2010.
<b>Monarch City</b>	The Monarch City program is a voluntary program where communities can commit to the preservation and enhancement of monarch ecosystems and needs.
<b>Bee City USA</b>	The Bee City USA program is the latest endeavor for the City of River Falls is pursuing. The program is designed to provide a framework for communities to collaborate to conserve native pollinators by increasing the abundance of native plants, providing nest sites, and reducing the use of pesticides. There are two designations within the program, Bee City USA and Bee Campus USA, of which both the community is identified as.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES OVERVIEW

### Historic Resources

Preserving River Falls' historic resources is very important because it helps us recognize the history of the community, including lessons learned and times of celebration and also supports the character and quality of life for the community.

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) actively educates, protects, and enhances River Falls cultural heritage, sites, and values. The City became a Certified Local Government (CLG) in 2003 by the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and supports the creation of the HPC.

## Technical Memorandum - Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

There are seven locally designated landmarks include City of River Falls, including the five locations on the National Register of Historic Plans, identified below. The two additional sites include the Junction Mill, located at 401 S. Winter Street and Governor Knowles Birthplace at 127 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street.

In addition to properties and structures listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places or locally landmarked, areas and structures within the community can provide local historic value. The HPC has identified 45 sites and structures within the community that have a historic significance to the community.

- Swinging Bridge, Glen Park
- Glen Park Swimming Pool, Glen Park
- Prairie Mill Building, 421 N. Main Street
- Masonic Hall, 122 E. Walnut Street
- Junction Mill Smokestack, 401 S. Winter Street
- Gladstone Hotel, 121-123 S. Main Street
- Lord Livery Building, 101 S. Main Street
- Brackett Building, 128 S. Main Street
- Johnson & Ellertson Hardware Store, 126 S. Main Street
- White Front Bakery, 124 S. Main Street
- Rosenberg Building, 122 S. Main Street
- Unnamed Building, 120 S. Main Street
- Unnamed Building, 6-118 S. Main Street
- S. D. Dodge Building, 114 S. Main Street
- A. P. Roberts Building, 100 S. Main Street
- Lime Kilns, Lower Kinnickinnic
- Foster Cemetery, Lower Kinnickinnic
- South Fork School, 817 S. Main Street
- George Farnsworth House, 722 W. Cedar Street
- Ole Ostness House, 521 W. Cedar Street
- Thomas Walker House, 403 E. Division Street
- Kimble House, 211 E. Elm Street
- William Alton House, 603 W. Elm Street
- Andrew Lund House, 127 S. Fourth Street
- R. W. Freeman House, 220 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street
- R. N. Jenson House, 121 Fremont Street
- F. Hardy House, 321 Fremont Street
- Charles Parker House, 315 E. Maple Street
- Unnamed House, 431 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street
- Stella Deneen House, 120 N. 6<sup>th</sup> Street
- John Reed House, 127 S. 6<sup>th</sup> Street
- Hocking House, 127 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street
- R. S. Freeman House, 220 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street
- Ferris White House, 518 W. Walnut Street
- The Academy, 211 N. Fremont Street, former Junior High School and High School, longest continuing school site in this area.
- Ole H. Olsen House, 210 N. Fremont Street
- Jens Larson House, 214 N. Fremont Street
- Olive G. Davis House, 315 W. Maple Street
- G. T. Smith House, 323 W. Maple Street
- W. P. Knowles House, 127 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street
- North and South Hall, 410 E. S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and 320 E. Cascade Ave., UWRF campus
- Silas Symes House, 309 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street P. W. Ramer House, 104 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street
- Thomas Tubbs House, 302 E. Walnut

# Technical Memorandum – Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

The National Register is an honorary designation for historic buildings and sites that are recorded and preserved by state and regional organizations. Five locations within River Falls are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. These locations were deemed to have significant historic or cultural value and are protected by the National Register’s policies and regulations. In addition, two of these properties have been identified as location of state significance (marked in blue) and local significance (marked in green). The River Falls HPC works closely with the St. Croix Historic County Historical Society, Pierce County Historical Association and WI Historical Society.



**North Hall-River Falls State Normal School**



**Glen Park Suspension Footbridge**



**Roscius and Lydia Freeman House**



**South Hall-River Falls State North School**



**Glen Park Swimming Pool**

### Cultural Resources

The definition of cultural resources varies amongst agencies and communities, centering around evidence of past human activity that may contribute to the heritage of a place. Many state and federal agencies have identified specific definitions for cultural resources to provide guidance and direction for preservation or enhancement of resources through federal or state funding. For example, the WDNR includes archaeological sites, historic structures, and other important resources, including burial areas, as a list of cultural resources. The City of River Falls has the opportunity to define the specific cultural resources within the community and identify opportunities to celebrate, preserve, and enhance the resources that contribute to the heritage and sense of place of River Falls today.

There are many aspects of River Falls' history and culture that can be identified, celebrated, and preserved. From the traditions and lifestyle of the original inhabitants of Wisconsin, the Ho-Chunk (Winnebago), Menominee, Ojibwe (Chippewa) and Potawatomi, to the establishment and industrialization of the region to current arts activities, there are a number of resources to be highlighted. Cultural resources can also include a celebration of the current population and the history and traditions we celebrate. As the community continues to grow in diversity, inclusive celebrations that provide opportunities for the community to connect with the culture and traditions of their neighbors enhances the sense of place and resources of the community.

## RESOURCE STRATEGIES AND TOOLS

### GREEN CORRIDORS

There are a number of individual resources that are critical to the ecosystem, identity, and sense of place within River Falls. While each resource has its own tools and resources for management and preservation, this planning process explored the creation of a system of resources to aid the community in preservation, enhancement, conservation and recreation. This Green Corridor concept explored the connected system of wetlands, parks and open spaces, floodplains, and steep slopes (greater than 15 percent) within the community for the creation of a policy tool that can conserve natural spaces and provide corridors for human recreation and wildlife pathways in and through the community. The resulting green corridor network highlights key resource areas throughout the community that can be preserved or enhanced through the development process. This network is provided in the following figures.

## Technical Memorandum – Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

### Green Corridor Recreation Connections

The Green Corridors were established based upon the location of existing features. As a result, there are physical gaps that can be used as a future conservation tool. Development will have an impact on these Green Corridors and could result in the shrinkage of the network. However, development could also close existing gaps in the network through the dedication of new parks or open spaces or conservation easements.

### Green Corridor Strategy

As an implementation tool of this plan, the city can establish policies and tools for the maintenance of the Green Corridors. These are tools that should be vetted by the community. Preservation of these green corridors can range from maintenance in its original, natural state or enhancements to support the health of the resources – including compatible park and open space uses, will serve to maintain a high level of environmental quality in the area, protect the natural landscape, and provide valuable recreational opportunities. Preservation techniques may avoid the creation of serious and costly environmental and developmental problems such as flood damage, poor drainage, wet basements, failing pavements and other structures, excessive infiltration of waters in sanitary sewers, and water pollution.

The Green Corridor designation is not intended to supersede any regulatory action required by a state or federal agency specific to the resource. For example, the floodplain ordinance should be considered as a part of the regulatory framework with the Green Corridors, as applicable. Additional policies and considerations may be established related to proposals within or near a Green Corridor. A plan to connect the corridors and determine the outdoor recreation locations should be established. The following example regulations and polices could be included:

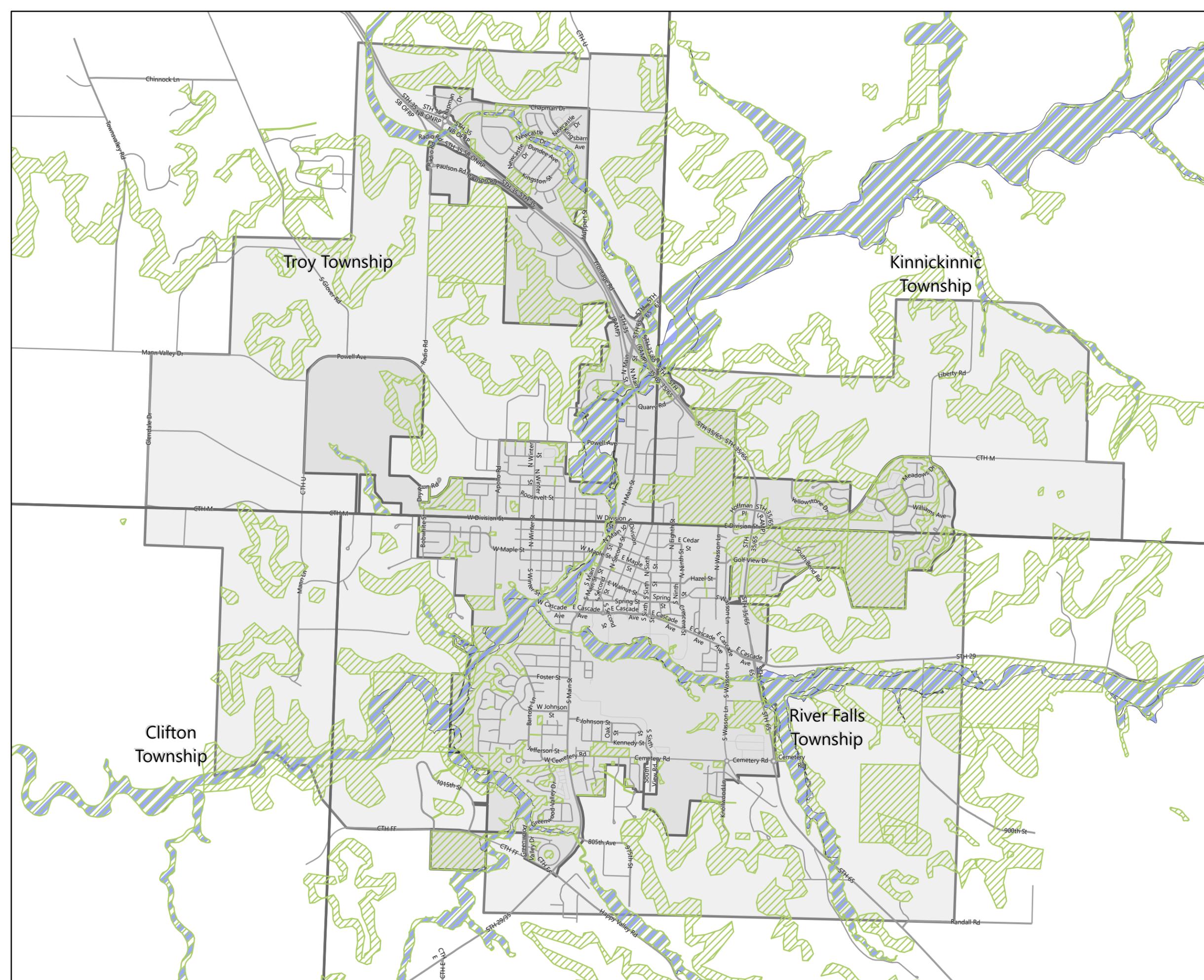
## Technical Memorandum – Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

- Transportation and Utilities:** All transportation and utility facilities proposed within a Green Corridor may be considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure sensitivity to and minimal disturbance of resources. Where applicable, resources should be restored to preconstruction conditions.
- Residential Development:** Residential development within or near Green Corridors should also be considered on a case-by-case basis. For example, residential development may be accommodated in upland areas, if buildings are kept off of steep slopes and viewsheds aren't impacted. The maximum number of units may also be limited in proximity to a Green Corridor.
- Commercial and Industrial Development:** Where possible, commercial and industrial development should be avoided in Green Corridors due to larger site impacts. Mitigation and minimization efforts should be used when Green Corridors are included within a proposed development.



# Legend

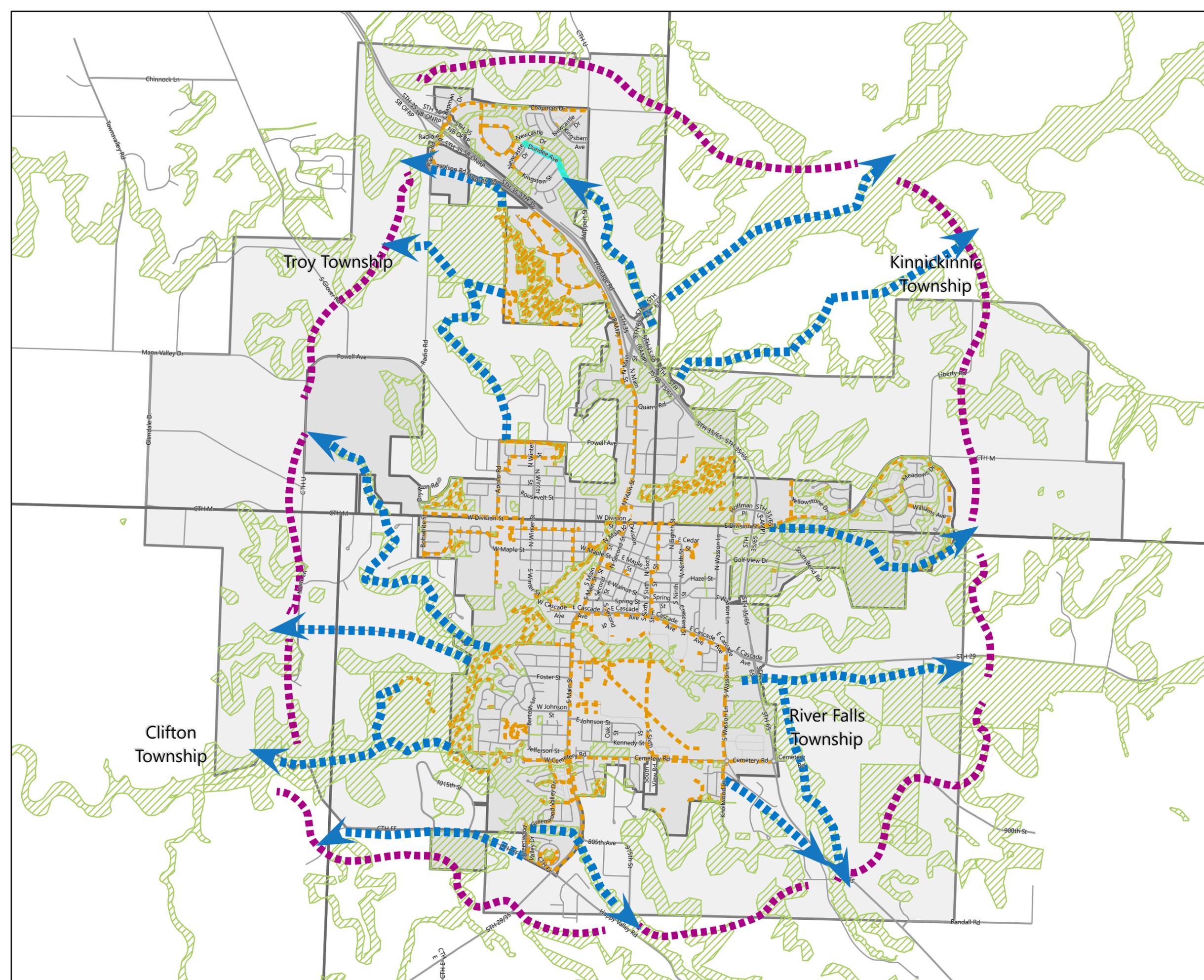
-  Green Corridors
-  100 Year Flood Plain
-  River Falls City Limits
-  Urban Area Boundary
-  Township Boundaries



# Green Corridors

# Legend

- Recreation Opportunities
  - Pedestrian/Bicycle Connection Opportunities
  - Green Corridor Recreation Loop Opportunity
  - Existing Trails and Sidewalk Connections
- Green Corridors
- River Falls City Limits
- Urban Area Boundary
- Township Boundaries



# Green Corridor Recreation Opportunities

## Technical Memorandum – Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

### PARTNERSHIPS

There are a number of agencies and organizations that play a role in the preservation and maintenance of agricultural, natural, and cultural resources throughout the region and the state.

#### **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) provides resources, partnerships and tools in an effort to secure the Nation and reduce disaster risk. The USACE plays a number of roles, supporting environmental stewardship, infrastructure development, and community resiliency through planning, design and funding. Current collaboration with the USACE is focused around the Kinnickinnic River and dam removal.

#### **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources**

The WDNR offers many grant and loan programs to governments that develop and support projects that protect “public health, the environment and outdoor recreation” Use of these funds can directly support the goals described in the Outdoor Recreation Plan and this Comprehensive Plan. Grants available through the WDNR include those for conservation and wildlife, forestry, motorized transit, recreation, recycling, remediation, and water.

#### **Pierce County Historical Association**

The Pierce County Historical Association is a nonprofit organization founded in 1941 with the mission to preserve the county’s heritage by promoting the study, appreciation, and interpretation of the county’s history. The association maintains a list of identified sites of historic significance and can continue to be resource for the preservation and enhancement of local resources.

#### **St. Croix County Historical Society**

The St. Croix County Historical Society provides historical research, exhibits, and information for sites and locations throughout the county. The resources and information produced by the historical society can help the community grown and shape the cultural and historic identity of River Falls.

#### **State Historic Preservation Office**

As administrator of the Wisconsin portion of the National Register of Historic Places, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) manages the preservation, maintenance, and updates to historic structures in Wisconsin. They also certify projects eligible for state and federal income tax credits.

## Technical Memorandum – Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources

### Wisconsin Wetland Association

The Wisconsin Wetland Association (WWA) is a non-profit organization that shares information about wetlands and helps support and create groups to improve them. They utilize wetlands as solutions to water-related issues and share how wetland improvements can benefit the community, the natural environment, and the local economy. Utilizing WWA resources can help shape policies that support wetland protection, restoration, and management.

### University of Wisconsin-River Falls and University of Wisconsin Extension

The University of Wisconsin-River Falls Campus and the University of Wisconsin Extension support education, leadership and connection with municipalities and the local community. Both entities offer classes, informational materials, and services to the community that help support a healthy environment. Examples include soil and forage testing, information on locally grown foods, and guidance for local gardeners. These resources are beneficial in ensuring residents can interact on a personal scale with environmental activities and utilize the vast knowledge available through the University of Wisconsin.

### Kinnickinnic River Land Trust

A community-based land trust dedicated to working with the community to conserve and protect the beauty and health of the Kinnickinnic River and its watershed. KRLT is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and accepts donations in the form of membership dues, cash gifts, stock gifts, property, or development rights. Founded in 1993, the KRLT has over 600 members and has protected more than 3,000 acres and over 10 miles along the Kinni River.

### Kinni Collaborative

The Kinni Collaborative is a local organization working with the community to create a free-flowing Kinnickinnic River Corridor for all to enjoy. The Collaborative is active in the community to support Kinnickinnic River activities and efforts, particularly supporting those identified in the Kinni Corridor Master Plan. They also support the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust with activities to support the Community Forest.

### Prairie Enthusiast

The Prairie Enthusiast community group is a key partner whose work supports the inclusion and stewardship of natural and native plantings within the community.

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### Regional Communities

The location of River Falls provides access and opportunities to collaborate with a number of regional communities, including those in nearby Minnesota. Each agency has individual focus and capacity to preserve and enhance the resources that are important to them, and when managed regionally and result in greater results. There may also be opportunities for shared resources such as funding, information, or staffing to support strong and healthy natural and cultural resources.

### Sovereign Nations

The lands within River Falls were first inhabited by first nations, occupying the area for many functions including hunting, fishing, gathering, and practicing traditional lifeways. There are 11 federally recognized tribes throughout the State of Wisconsin, and the Ho-Chunk Nation and St. Croix Chippewa were known to inhabit the area. Identification of historic and cultural resources could be completed with first nations to ensure the people and impact of these communities are accurately represented in River Falls.

## CULTURAL AND HISTORIC TOURISM

Cultural and historic tourism involves visitors who travel specifically for education and experiences surrounding physical and intangible elements of a place’s culture and history. Examples include traveling for specific festivals, visiting historic landmarks, exploring national parks, or gathering information at a museum. This type of tourism benefits the local destination, as it allows the city to benefit from their local traditions, culture, and history through enhanced character and economic benefit. The economic impacts of cultural tourism have the potential to fund maintenance and preservation of these resources, enhance the local economy, and increase tourism to the general region.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), in collaboration with the community, updated the Historic Preservation Plan in 2019 to highlight the resources within community and plans and programs for the continue maintenance and stewardship. This Comprehensive Plan is intended to support the studies and support completion as part of this planning process. Specifically, the plan focused on tools and resources focused on five themes:

<b>Quality of Life</b>	Enhance the quality of life and ensure provision of community services for residents.
<b>Character</b>	Maintain and respect the City’s unique personality, sense of place, and character.
<b>Urban Form</b>	Promote a compact urban form that encourages sensitive and compatible infill development.

## Community-Oriented Development

Orient new development to the community; foster public life, vitality and community spirit.

## Regional Perspective

Maintain a regional growth management and historic preservation perspective, and work with other private and governmental entities toward that goal.

In addition to applying the key themes of the plan to the management of resources, there are three additional elements that should be carefully included in future decision making. The first is the identification of existing and historic character and development. The Historic Preservation Plan details the changes in land use patterns over time and key architectural styles that influenced the community today and should be considered for preservation. The second is the identification of historic resources and sites within the community. These elements were highlighted earlier in this memorandum under the cultural resources overview. The final, and very important section is the implementation section that identifies guiding and implementing policies to inform and shape decisions of cultural resource management. These policies, as identified in the plan are supported and included within the Comprehensive Plan Update.

### Guiding Policies

- G-1. Foster municipal and community awareness, positive appreciation, and support for River Falls' archeological, cultural, architectural, and historic resources.
- G-2. Identify and assess archeological and historic resources (manmade) for the aesthetic, educational, economic, and scientific contributions they make to River Falls' quality of life.
- G-3. Respect and sensitively manage archeological, cultural, and historic patterns, resources, and symbols, preserving the contributions they make to understanding River Falls' characteristic, cultural tradition.
- G-4. Preserve the cultural, historic, and visual qualities of River Falls.
- G-5. Ensure that City, state, and federal policies and regulations for historic preservation are followed.

### Implementing Policies

- I-1. Educate the community about the value of historic resources through this Plan and by organizing workshops and training for city officials, residents, and special interest groups including youth, the design and development community, business people, and the media.
- I-2. Lead by example through the integration of sensitive treatment of historic resources in City-sponsored public works and park and recreation maintenance and construction projects.

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- I-3. Strengthen and encourage partnerships with non-city historic preservation entities, including those at the federal, state, local, and private levels through participation and special projects, offering and receiving technical assistance, accepting grant funds, programming, and by disseminating information about such to the public through educational opportunities.
- I-4. Determine the appropriateness of developing management objectives and standards for historic resources beyond the municipal boundary.
- I-5. Investigate and determine options for providing local levy tax or other incentives for the preservation and maintenance of archaeological and historic resources.
- I-6. Encourage early consultations with representatives of proposed development to ensure that potential development is consistent with River Falls' historic patterns of land use and construction.
- I-7. Encourage and participate in the preparation of the State and the National Register of Historic Places nominations for resources which qualify for such listings.
- I-8. Investigate and determine options for acquiring real historic properties and interpreting it for the community's benefit.
- I-9. Support the adjacent town and county efforts to further develop and implement a historic preservation program and ensure consistency between the City's preservation philosophy and programs.
- I-10. Continue existing efforts to survey and resurvey resources. Identify unrecorded historic resources and consider them for management objectives.
- I-11. Expand existing resource survey efforts to include recording characteristics or unique physical features and historic development patterns. The character of River Falls; historic areas are defined by more than just buildings. Many other features are recognized as making a collective contribution to the City's distinctive landscape. Such features should be identified and recorded locally and include street forms and physical attributes, bridges, yard walls and fences, and other manmade cultural landscape elements.
- I-12. Preserve structures in neighborhoods that exhibit individual architectural merit and that collectively exhibit the sense of place that River Falls possesses through review of the preservation ordinance and design guidelines.
- I-13. Examine and determine the appropriateness of altering existing zoning designations to ensure compatibility of density, use, and physical character within established neighborhoods and historic areas.
- I-14. Continue to identify, pursue, and capture state, federal and other funds to support historic preservation.

## RESILIENCY

Changes to the climate will have strong impacts on the entire community, not just our natural, cultural, and historic resources. To respond to the changing conditions, resiliency and sustainability initiatives should be incorporated into the city's decision-making structure. Resiliency can protect resources and populations through adaptation and mitigation. Adaptation means to modify existing activities or policies to become

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more responsive to the environment or situation. Mitigation actions are in direct response to activities or disasters and typically occur after a major event. Including resilience measures in city planning ensures that River Fall is actively managing and protecting its resources and investments and is capable of responding to change.

The City of River Falls continues to grow its sustainability and resiliency efforts to plan for a better tomorrow. For example, the city's construction of the first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified city hall in Wisconsin. Additionally, the City owns two hydroelectric dams on the Kinnickinnic River, the Junction Falls dam is functional today, while the Powell Falls dam was breached in the 2020 flood and is still in place, but is no longer producing hydroelectricity. The electricity produced by Junction Falls dam powers less than two percent of the City's electric demand. Through 2017 and 2018 the Kinni Corridor planning process engaged the community about the dams and the river and at the end of 2018, the City Council passed a resolution to remove both dams over time to support a free flowing Kinnickinnic River. Today the City is working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to determine if a river restoration project would be a candidate for federal funding through the USACE. The study will take 18-24 months and then the City Council will consider the outcomes and determine the path forward.

Efforts of the Renewable River Falls program have included the purchase of renewable energy blocks. Through this green energy participation, the city supports renewable energy use that compares to the fossil fuel use by all city buildings. There are seven buildings that have "gone green" through the program, including City Hall and the Public Library. The Renewable River Falls campaign has led this effort under the following goals:

- Raise awareness about Renewable River Falls in the community and beyond;
- Celebrate the community's past accomplishments in conservation and energy efficiency as we prepare for our transition to renewable energy;
- Recognize the City's statewide and national leadership role in green energy participation; and
- Engage the public in Renewable RF activities; and
- Encourage and support residents and businesses in going 100% renewable.

The City of River Falls is thoughtful in the planning and management of stormwater in the community and its contributions to a sustainable and resilient community. There are many actions the city takes to maintain the Kinnickinnic River and watershed in a healthy and vibrant manner. Existing polices, plans and actions to support stormwater and floodway management include:

- The 1995 "Water Management Plan for the Kinnickinnic River and Its' Tributaries (City of River Falls)
- Kinnickinnic Watershed DNR Priority Watershed Plan (WDNR)

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- Strategic Action Plan with the Kinnickinnic Watershed Partnership (City of River Falls)
- Recent successful projects include:
  - The Lake George Project
  - Rain Garden Demonstration Project
  - West Side Stormwater Demonstration Project

The city should continue to support its resiliency and sustainability efforts through the exploration of tools resources and programming. Efforts may include:

- Tree preservation to maintain an urban tree canopy, reducing the heat island effect
- Promotion and use of residential solar systems
- Hazard mitigation planning efforts

### CULTURAL RESOURCES TOOLS AND PROGRAMS

Properties and structures on the National Register are eligible for a variety of funding programs to assist in their maintenance and preservation. These programs are available to a wide range of project scales and sizes. These include grant programs through the Historic Preservation Fund, local and state governments, and occasionally private organizations. There are also tax incentives for historic easements and rehabilitation of historic properties. Local tools can also be used to preserve and enhance locally important historic properties thought development standards and ordinances.

### PUBLIC ART

Public art is a form of expression that shares a message, reinforces an identity, or connects with residents and visitors of a place. From murals to sculptures, public art installations are a mechanism to share and emphasize who River Falls is. The community established the River Falls Creates program to provide funding, selection, creation and maintenance of public art. The objectives for River Falls Creates include:

- Increase the understanding and enjoyment of public art by River Falls residents.
- Promote public interaction with public spaces.
- Provide unusual and challenging employment opportunities for Artists.
- Encourage collaboration between Artists, Architects, and Artists and Engineers.
- Support Artist participation in planning public projects.



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There are many agencies and resources, local and statewide, that could be great partners or inspiration for solidifying what public art looks like in River Falls for years to come. For example, COMPAS and Springboard for the Arts are organizations that support the establishment of a public art identity and opportunities for growth.

### CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Conservation easements are a tool that can be used to restrict the use of a location in an effort to protect its ecological or open space values. This voluntary, legally binding agreement limits the uses of an area and prevents development from taking place now and in the future. Wisconsin statutes authorize conservation easements for the following purposes:

- Protect natural, scenic or open-space values of real property
- Assure availability of real property for agricultural, forest, recreational and open space use
- Protect natural resources
- Maintain or enhance air and/or water quality
- Preserve a burial site, as defined by Wisconsin Statute
- Preserve the historical, architectural, archaeological or cultural aspects of real property

A conservation easement is an agreement between the city and a landowner where the landowner voluntarily donates or sells certain rights associated with their property, such as the right to subdivide and the city agrees to hold the landowner's promise to not exercise those rights and serves as the easement holder. As the easement holder, the city will monitor the property and enforce restrictions to serve the conservation of the area.

### GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Green infrastructure is a cost-effective, resilient approach to managing stormwater that reduces and treats stormwater closer to its source, while delivering environmental, social, and economic benefits. During rainfall events, water hits the surface of the earth and: a) Runs off of impermeable surfaces, such as concrete and asphalt, picking up road pollutants, trash, bacteria, and heavy metals and transferring swiftly and into stormwater drain pipes, which discharge directly into water bodies. OR b) Filters through the ground via permeable surfaces that are vegetated--as in natural, or undeveloped areas--or allow infiltration, such as permeable pavers. In this case, surface water velocity is slowed, and groundwater sources are recharged. Green infrastructure uses vegetation, soils, and other design elements to mimic the performance of natural, vegetated areas to restore the natural processes required to manage stormwater and create healthy urban environments.

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Low Impact Development (LID) and Best Management Practices (BMPs) are other terms that are similar in the approach of Green Infrastructure but vary in scale (regional approaches vs. site-specific detailed engineering). The underlying principles are the same:

- treat water as close to the source as possible
- integrate natural approaches into the design of streets, sites, and communities
- create green buffers around bodies of water where stormwater is released

### KINNI CORRIDOR PLAN – NATURAL RESOURCES + RIVER ECOLOGY

The Kinni Corridor Plan represents a multi-year planning process to prepare a vision for the Kinni River Corridor that meets the needs and desires of residents, reflects community values, and protects the river for future generations. This effort focused on efforts to determine the future of the two hydroelectric dams on the Kinni. This planning process explored land use, ecology, and economic development considerations related to the Kinni. Specific to this plan element, the plan identified natural resources and river ecology implementation strategies to support the health and stability of the river and its tributaries.

A number of planning concepts were identified for implementation within the plan and will be supported for implementation through this planning process.

#### Kinni Corridor Recommendation Goals

- Improve floodplain Area
- Improve streambank stability
- Improve water quality
- Improve/protect the rivers ecology
- Build long-term project support through community interaction, education and stewardship

<b>DAM REMOVAL AND RIVER RESTORATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare dam removal and river restoration design and engineering plans</li> <li>• Implement dam removal and river restoration</li> <li>• Create and implement long-term management strategy to ensure sustainability of river restoration efforts</li> </ul>
<b>CONSERVATION EASEMENTS/ NATURAL BUFFERS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish additional public and/or private conservation easements in the corridor</li> <li>• Utilize natural buffers to protect and enhance river ecology and water quality</li> <li>• Protect wooded areas and streambanks in the corridor</li> <li>• Protect Kinnickinnic River and its tributaries</li> <li>• Protect wetlands and floodplain areas in the corridor</li> <li>• Review Shoreland ordinance and amend if necessary to ensure long-term performance of natural buffers</li> </ul>
<b>GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE/ STORMWATER BEST PRACTICES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate green infrastructure/stormwater best management practices, including Bioswales; Rain gardens; Detention basins; Treatment wetlands; Permeable pavement systems; Green streets and alleys; and Urban tree canopy.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus green infrastructure in highly developed/impervious areas such as downtown and surrounding neighborhoods – streets and parking lots</li> <li>• Infiltrate and filter stormwater runoff at its source to improve water quality and control thermal fluctuations in river</li> <li>• Incorporate additional treatment ponds/wetlands in Lake George impoundment after dam removal</li> </ul>
<p><b>NATURE CENTER/ ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and build a nature center in the Lake Louise impoundment area</li> <li>• Event/educational spaces – indoor and outdoor classrooms</li> <li>• Outdoor/river programmed activities</li> <li>• Interpretive trails</li> <li>• River access</li> <li>• Bird-watching » Guided tours</li> </ul>
<p><b>COMMUNITY GARDENS</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and build community gardens where feasible to encourage access to healthy food</li> <li>• Sustainable urban agriculture demonstration/model gardens</li> </ul>
<p><b>MANAGEMENT</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invasive plant species removal and management</li> <li>• Native species plantings</li> <li>• Riparian restoration</li> <li>• Streambank stabilization</li> </ul>

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT ANALYSIS

## INTRODUCTION

This technical memorandum provides data, detailed analysis, and additional information that is intended to supplement the Economic Development Element within the Focus River Falls Comprehensive Plan. Included in this analysis is an overview of community input related to economic development, data outlining the community's economy, and an overview of strategies related to River Falls economic development priorities. Additionally, the memo includes detailed information about the tools and resources that are available to assist the city in reaching its economic development goals.



## ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Feedback from the community throughout the engagement process was used to guide the development of the Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan. In particular, Community Survey respondents were asked to comment what they believed "is one thing River Falls can be proud of?" Many responses called out pride in the community's local businesses, stating:

- "Community Support to small business owners."
- "A close community with strong local business."
- "The commitment to supporting local businesses."
- "Small business support."

Despite the strong support for local businesses, when asked "what is one issue or concern for the future of River Falls", respondents discussed the limited retail/shopping options within the community:

- "Adding housing and not having retail establishments that can support it."
- "More amenities for consumers."
- "Attracting commerce."
- "Shopping that doesn't need to take place in Hudson, WI."

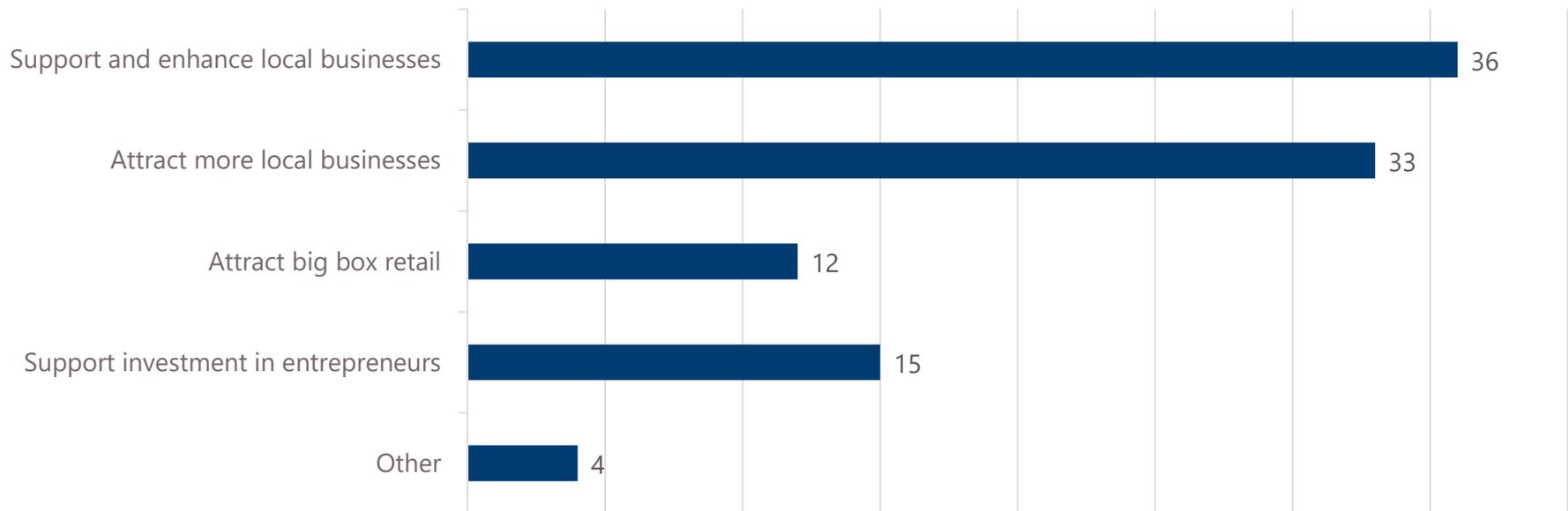
## Technical Memorandum – Economic Development

- “Lack of business diversity or interesting things to do in the winter.”

These comments are somewhat supported through responses to other questions within the community survey.

**Question:** What should River Falls’ economic development goals be? (select all that apply)

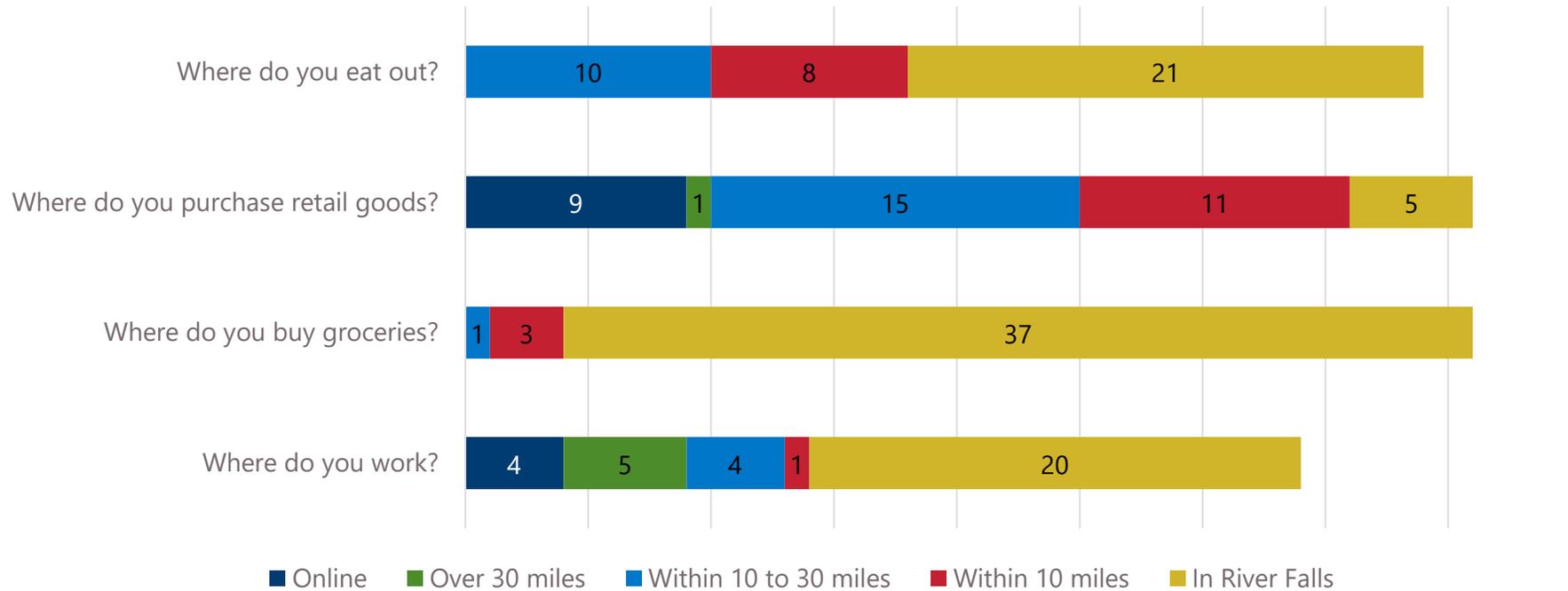
**Key Takeaway:** Supporting the comments discussed above, responses to this question indicate that the community has an affinity with the River Falls’ local businesses and the community would like to see community development efforts to support and enhance local businesses in the community.



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**Question:** How do you participate in the economy in River Falls?

**Key Takeaway:** While most survey respondents work, eat out, and get their groceries in River Falls, most respondents answered that they do not complete their retail shopping within the city. Consistent with some of the responses above, this could indicate that residents believe there is a shortage of retail shopping opportunities within the city.



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The City of River Falls also participates in the National Community Survey (NCS) every other year. The NCS provides additional information and insight into community opinions and values. Various results from the 2021 NCS are applicable to the Economic Development Chapter:

- In 2021, 69 percent of respondents rated overall economic health as excellent or good, slightly down from 2015 (74%), 2017 (74%), and 2019 (73%).
- Additionally, 87 percent of respondents stated that a community focus on overall economic health was essential or very important.

Further, the following table outlines responses to economic development related questions:

**Please rate each of the following in River Falls:**

(% excellent or good)	2015	2017	2019	2021
River Falls as a place to work	45%	55%	57%	53%
River Falls as a place to visit	67%	69%	71%	71%
Quality of businesses and service establishments	61%	64%	59%	61%
Variety of business and service establishments				38%
Vibrancy of downtown/commercial area	61%	56%	54%	55%
Employment opportunities	31%	36%	46%	35%
Shopping Opportunities	27%	34%	26%	20%
Cost of living	53%	51%	44%	41%

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

### ECONOMIC PROFILE

#### Income and Poverty

The financial health of a community is generally examined using median household income and per capita income. Median household income is calculated by combining the income of all people living in a single housing unit. Per capita income is calculated by taking the income of an entire area and dividing it by all people living there (including those not earning income such as children).

**Table 1. Median and Per Capita Income, 2019**

	River Falls	Pierce County	St. Croix County	Wisconsin	United States
Median Household Income*	\$59,440	\$72,323	\$84,756	\$61,747	\$62,843
Per Capita Income**	\$28,119	\$33,061	\$39,287	\$33,375	\$34,103

\*2019 adjusted dollars, 2015-2019, \*\*2019 adjusted dollars, past 12 months; Source: 2019 ACS

River Falls has lower median household and per capita income compared to county, state, and national levels. This is likely skewed by the large number of students living within city limits, who generally have lower income. Although significantly less than Pierce and St. Croix Counties median household income averages, the city is relatively close to Wisconsin and United States average median household income.

In addition to ACS data, per capita income information is available through the Job Center of Wisconsin. According to that data, St. Croix County has slightly higher incomes than Pierce County and the State of Wisconsin.

**Table 2. Per Capita Income, 2016-2020**

County	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Pierce County	\$43,314	\$44,636	\$45,936	\$47,114	\$48,775
St. Croix County	\$49,494	\$52,858	\$55,543	\$57,326	\$59,602
State of Wisconsin	\$47,426	\$48,970	\$50,756	\$53,227	\$55,593

Source: Job Center of Wisconsin, <https://jobcenterofwisconsin.com/WisConomy/>

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### Population by Poverty Level

**Table 3. Poverty Levels, 2019**

	Count
Total Number below Poverty Threshold	2,108

Poverty is determined by the thresholds set by the United States Department of Health and Human Services and vary by the number of people in a household, age, and pre-tax income. For example, in 2020 the poverty threshold for a family of four was a household income of about \$26,000 per year. Services provided by the city are generally used more frequently by those residents who fall under the poverty threshold – such as public transit. It should be noted that the income thresholds are based on national trends and may not reflect unique factors at the city level, such as local cost of living. Another method of determining poverty is utilizing the Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) affordable housing guidelines. This is discussed more in the housing section, but it is a specific value set for each municipality that is based on their median income and housing values.

Overall, about 12 percent of River Falls residents experience poverty. Of the 2,108 residents below poverty levels in 2019, 78 percent were between the ages of 18 and 34. While the Census Bureau does not break down poverty by age any narrower than that, some of the poverty within this age group can likely be explained by the presence of University of Wisconsin-River Falls and Chippewa Valley Technical College in the city. Additionally, 97 percent of these residents identified as White. Proportionally, the majority of River Falls identifies as white, and this value is reflective of that population disbursement.

### Unemployment

Unemployment data is tracked and monitored by several organizations at varying geographic levels. For example, the Wisconsin Department Workforce Development records unemployment numbers and trends at the county and metropolitan area level monthly. In 2022, Pierce County had an average monthly unemployment rate of 3.1, with 787 County residents unemployed each month on average. Similarly, St. Croix County had an average unemployment rate of 2.9, with 1,498 residents unemployed each month on average.

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**Table 4. 2021 County Unemployment Rates**

Month	Pierce County		St. Croix County	
	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
November 2022	668	2.7	1,315	2.6
October 2022	686	2.7	1,336	2.6
September 2022	742	3	1,475	2.9
August 2022	785	3.1	1,486	2.9
July 2022	790	3.1	1,515	2.9
June 2022	834	3.2	1,619	3.1
May 2022	697	2.7	1,320	2.5
April 2022	804	3.2	1,542	3
March 2022	969	3.8	1,786	3.5
February 2022	981	3.8	1,771	3.4
January 2022	879	3.5	1,667	3.3
December 2021	607	2.4	1,149	2.2
<b>Average</b>	<b>787</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>1,498</b>	<b>2.9</b>

Source: Wisconsin LMI Data, Department of Workforce Development

Additionally, the US Census estimates unemployment rates at the local level. Overall, the City of River Falls has an unemployment rate of 1.9 percent with 67.4 percent labor force participation rate (based on 2019 estimates). Of the unemployed, most (9.2 percent) are 20 to 24 years old. That high rate may be explained by the presence of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and Chippewa Valley Technical College, since a high percentage of that age group are students. Comparatively, Pierce County has an unemployment rate of 2.4 percent, and St. Croix 2.0 percent as of 2019 estimates.

It is important to note, because American Community Survey is a survey, there is a natural error. With some age groups, unemployment rates are showing zero percent, however it is unlikely that no people in the age group are unemployed.

## Technical Memorandum – Economic Development

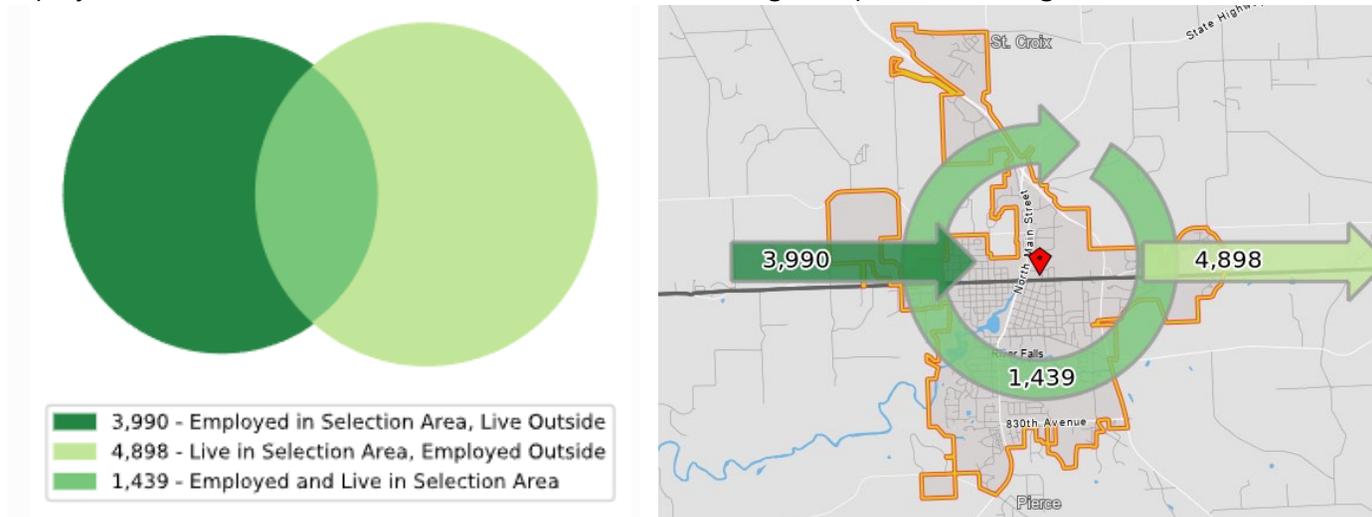
**Table 5. Unemployment Rate by Age Group, 2019**

Age	16-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60-64	65-74	75+
Unemployment Rate	0.0%	9.2%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: 2019 ACS

### Commuting

The employment trends and patterns within the city are a key indicator of River Falls’ overall economic health. Employment patterns impact the city’s tax base, transportation, housing needs, and overall land use. Based on 2019 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a total of 4,898 River Falls residents were employed outside the city, 1,439 both live and work in the city, and 3,990 live outside the city but were employed in River Falls. There is a relatively equal balance of those commuting into and out of the city, with generally few residents finding both housing and employment within city limits. While only 1,439 or 26.6 percent of employees live in the City of River Falls, an additional, 969 employees live within 10 miles of the community. Therefore, 44.4 percent of employees commute less than 10 miles to jobs within River Falls. Additionally, 29.3 percent of employees travel between 10 and 24 miles and the remaining 26.3 percent travel greater than 25 miles.

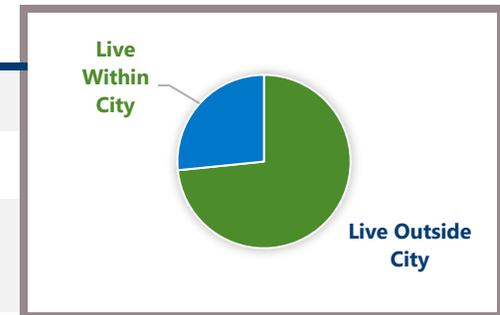


Source: OnTheMap 2019

## Technical Memorandum – Economic Development

**Table 6. Where Workers Live with Primary Jobs in River Falls**

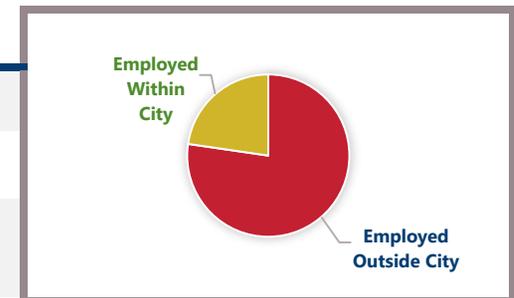
	Count	Percent
Employed in River Falls but Live Outside City	3,990	73.4%
Employed in River Falls and Live Within City	1,439	26.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,429</b>	<b>100%</b>



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019

**Table 7. Where River Falls Residents are Employed**

	Count	Percent
Live in River Falls and are Employed in the City	1,439	22.7%
Live in River Falls and are Employed Outside the City	4,898	77.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,337</b>	<b>100%</b>



Source: American Community Survey, 2019 Estimate

### Worker Age

Most River Falls workers are 30 to 54 years old (47 percent), mirroring county, state, and national trends.

**Table 8. Worker Age, 2019**

Age	29 and younger	30 to 54	55 and older
Percent of Workforce	29.3%	47%	23.7%

Source: 2019 ACS

## Employment by Industry

River Falls had a total of 5,429 jobs according to 2019 ACS estimates, most of which were in the educational services or health care and social assistance fields. Approximately 20 percent of the workforce was employed in educational services, likely a large proportion with the University of Wisconsin – River Falls and Chippewa Valley Technical College. There were also large portions of the workforce employed in accommodation and food services (15.3 percent), retail trade (10.4 percent), and manufacturing (9.0 percent).

**Table 9. Employment by Industry**

Industry	Count	Share	Industry	Count	Share
Ag., Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0	0.0%	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	32	0.6%
Mining, Quarrying, Extraction	0	0.0%	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	317	5.8%
Utilities	38	0.7%	Management of Companies and Enterprises	17	0.3%
Construction	124	2.3%	Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	291	5.4%
Manufacturing	488	9.0%	Educational Services	1,108	20.4%
Wholesale Trade	64	1.2%	Health Care and Social Assistance	918	16.9%
Retail Trade	562	10.4%	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	145	2.7%
Transportation and Warehousing	49	0.9%	Accommodation and Food Services	829	15.3%
Information	23	0.4%	Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	118	2.2%
Finance and Insurance	204	3.8%	Public Administration	102	1.9%

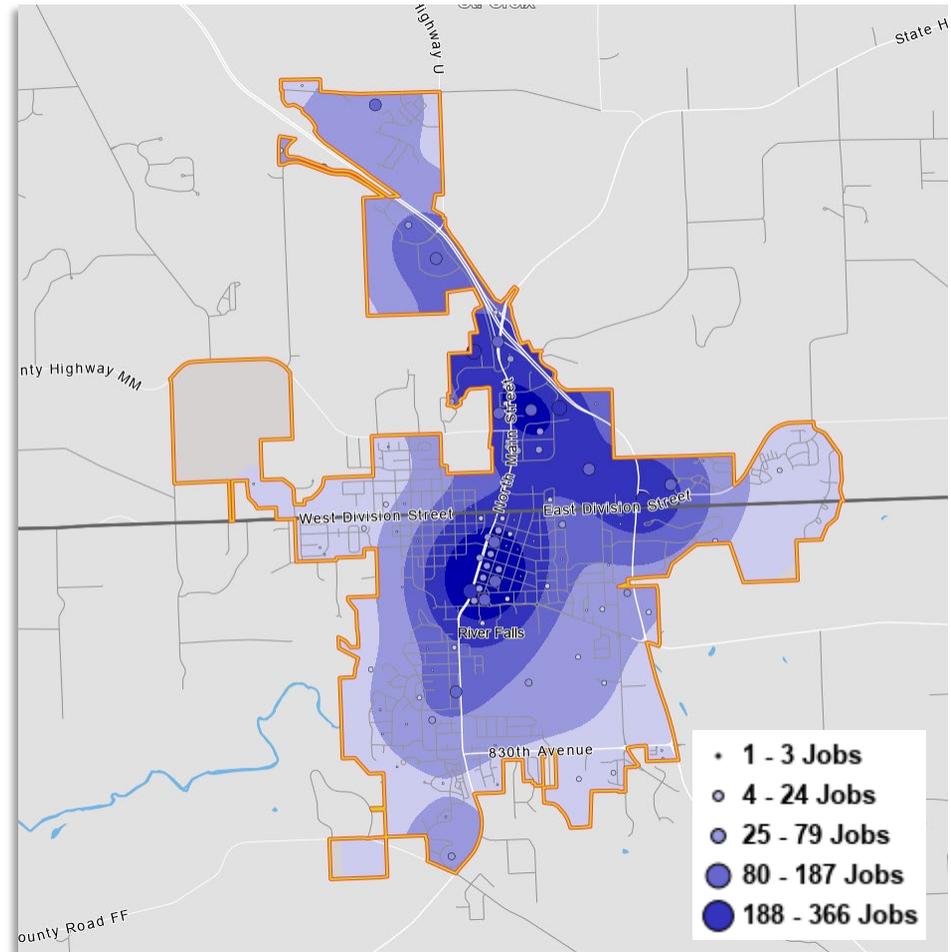
Source: 2019 ACS Estimate

# Technical Memorandum – Economic Development

## Employment Density

Based on 2019 data from ACS, employment is generally clustered along two main roadways: Main Street and Highway 35. This corresponds to the downtown area, and the retail strip along Main Street. There is also a strong concentration in the Northwest corner of the city, which is where the Sterling Ponds and Whitetail Ridge Corporate Parks are located.

### Employment Density



Source: 2019 ACS

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND TOOLS

## FUNDING RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS

The following programs and organizations, provided at the regional, state, and federal level, are available to communities within Wisconsin to help communities financially support various economic development efforts.

### Partnerships

- **River Falls Economic Development Corporation (RFEDC)** – a voluntary non-profit organization that collaborates with the City to support economic development efforts and increase opportunities for employment throughout the River Falls community.<sup>1</sup> The current Strategic Action Plan included six goals:
  - RFEDC will assist and support the St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center (SCVBIC) Management Committee in the areas of financial management, marketing, tenant relations and recruitment.
  - Create a long-term financial plan for RFEDC.
  - RFEDC will organize, convene, and support regular economic development meetings quarterly with regional stakeholders.
  - RFEDC will support the River Falls industrial community.
  - Clarify and define roles and responsibilities of RFEDC as it relates to deal making.
  - Review and rewrite bylaws.
- **Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)** – works with partners, including local governments and regional economic development organizations, all over the state to help enhance communities, support business development, advance innovation, and develop a talented workforce in Wisconsin.
- **Public Finance Authority (PFA)** – provides low cost, tax-exempt funding to local governments and other eligible entities to help fund projects that will contribute to social and economic growth and improve the overall quality-of-life within a community.<sup>2</sup>
- **River Falls Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau** – founded in 1955, the River Falls Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau includes members ranging from large corporations to local non-profits. The Chamber provides resources such as relationship building, education opportunities, promotional opportunities, and other services for River Falls based businesses.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.rfcity.org/452/River-Falls-Economic-Development-Corpora>

<sup>2</sup> <https://pfauthority.org/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.rfchamber.com/>

## Technical Memorandum – Economic Development

- **Regional Economic Development Partners**
  - Pierce County Economic Development Corporation
  - St. Croix County Economic Development Corporation
  - Momentum West

### Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a funding mechanism which allows communities to use tax money generated from development to make infrastructure improvements within the TIF district. Wisconsin State Statute 66.1105 gives River Falls the authority to create Tax Increment Financing Districts (TID's) for the purpose of eliminating blight, rehabilitating or conserving the areas, or promoting industrial or mixed use development. State law limits the equalized value of taxable property located in TIDs to 12 percent of the total equalized value of taxable property in the city, and limits the total debt of a city to five percent of equalized value.

The City of River Falls updated their Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Policy in May 2018. The TIF policy allows the City to create Tax Increment Financing Districts (TIDs) to help stimulate redevelopment. Currently, the City has TID's, making up about 693 total acres. The largest TID, totaling 311 acres, is TID 5 – Whitetail Ridge, located in the northwest portion of the city. A map of TIF Districts can be seen in **Figure 2**.

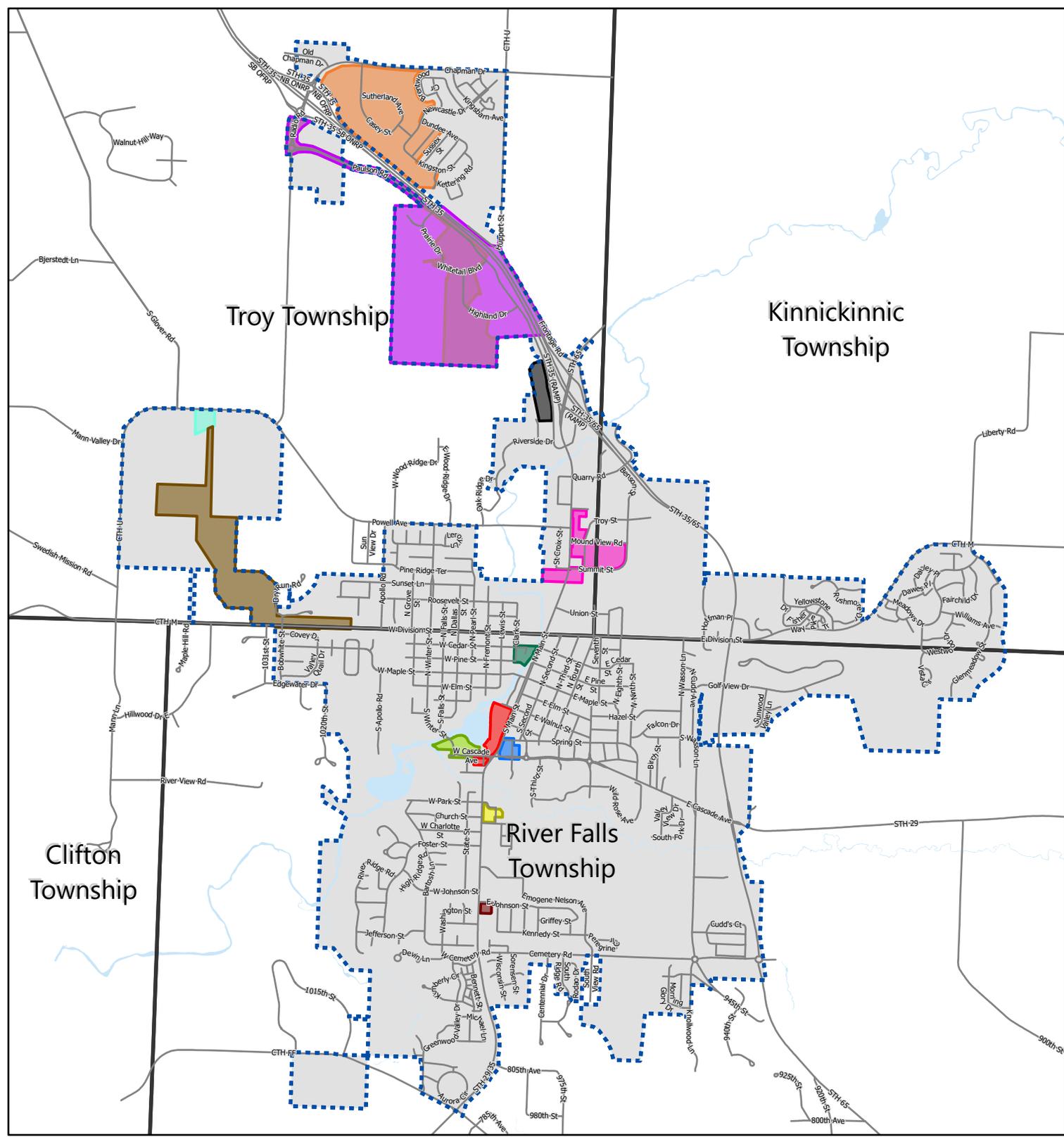
The City's TIF policy provides detailed guidance on the implementation of the TIF program in River Falls.<sup>4</sup> The program has been used in recent years to leverage developments such as the Whitetail Ridge and Sterling Ponds Corporate Parks, Tattersall Distilling, The Sycamore of River Falls, Family Fresh Development, redevelopment at 203 & 213 West Cascade Avenue, the Best Western hotel, as well as Downtown and Neighborhood Revitalization projects.

According to that policy, eligible TIF projects must fall into one of the following categories:

1. Public Improvements of General Public Use.
2. Public Improvements of Development Specific Use.
3. Cash Grants to Owners, Lessees, of Developers.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.rfcity.org/DocumentCenter/View/3155/TIF-Policy-2018?bidId=>



## Legend

- River Falls City Limits
- Township Boundaries
- Roads
- Lakes and Rivers

## TID Tax Increment Districts

- TID 5 - Whitetail Ridge
- TID 6 - Downtown Hotel
- TID 8 - West Cascade
- TID 9 - Family Fresh Market
- TID 10 - Sterling Ponds
- TID 11 - RF Industrial Park
- TID 12 - WinField United
- TID 13 - Whitetail Ridge II
- TID 14 - The Depot
- TID 15 - The 1300
- TID 16 - Milltown-Mann Valley
- TID 17 - Former Shopko
- TID 18 - 700 S Main St



**Figure 2. Tax Increment Districts**

## Technical Memorandum – Economic Development

### Other Funding Resources

- **Wisconsin Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)** – operated by the State of Wisconsin Department of Administration, CDBGs is a federal grant program through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that is intended to support the communities through the provision of affordable housing, a suitable living environment, and expansion of economic opportunities.<sup>5</sup>
- **Community Development Investment Grant (CDI)** – helps to transform communities by supporting local development that is as unique as the communities in Wisconsin. CDI funding can be used for building renovation, historic preservation, demolition, new construction and infrastructure improvements.<sup>6</sup>
- **Connect Communities** – intended to help Wisconsin support revitalization efforts, by providing participants access to operation assistance such as education workshops, webinars, and conferences, networking opportunities, and online resource guides.<sup>7</sup>
- **Certified Sites Program** – provides a consistent set of standards for industrial site certification in Wisconsin. For communities with a certified site, WEDC will provide marketing assistance to complement the communities own marketing efforts.<sup>8</sup>

### SMALL AND LOCAL BUSINESS SUPPORT AND NEEDS

As is discussed above, the River Falls community is proud of its local businesses. The city can continue or expand its economic development programming to help support these businesses.

- **Makerspaces and Community Workshops** – Makerspaces and community workshops are areas where students and others can collaborate in the development of ideas and things that require access to high tech tools or no tech tools. They allow visitors to innovate and develop ideas for a new business without experiencing the high upfront cost needed to acquire capital. The University of Wisconsin-River Falls has a makerspace as a part of the college of business and economics.



<sup>5</sup> <https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/CommunityDevelopmentPrograms.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> <https://wedc.org/programs-and-resources/community-development-investment-grant/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://wedc.org/programs-and-resources/connect-communities/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://wedc.org/programs-and-resources/certified-sites/>

## Technical Memorandum – Economic Development

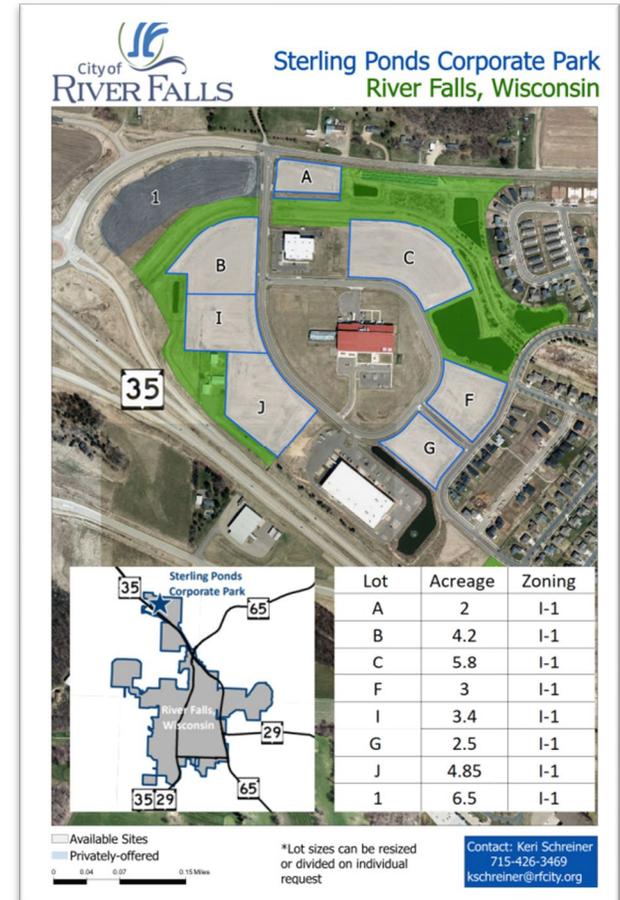
- **Home Occupation/Business Regulations** – Local zoning codes often have limitations on what types and size of businesses residents are allowed to run from within their homes. Since many zoning codes were developed and implemented, small business needs have shifted, and outdated codes can limit opportunities for residents to create and expand businesses. By reviewing and updating codes, the City of River Falls can provide additional opportunities for residents to start and grow businesses as appropriate within their own homes. For example, River Falls' existing codes allows one non-family employee, must be completely kept within the home, and cannot have visible evidence outside the home. There may be opportunities to amend these controls to allow more variety in home businesses while still maintaining protections on health, safety, and welfare of the surrounding neighborhood.
- **Broadband Internet and Connectivity** – Access to high-speed communications technology is vital for starting, growing, and operating a successful business. The City should continue to ensure that all members of the community have access to high speed internet and other communications technologies.
- **Other Regulations** – Other regulatory standards should be explored to identify opportunities for standards to be amended to allow for additional small business opportunities. For example, the City could explore options to allow for food truck permitting, which will allow for alternate food preparation opportunities for residents looking to start or growth a food service business.

# Technical Memorandum – Economic Development

## EMPLOYER RETENTION AND ATTRACTION

In addition to supporting small businesses, opportunities exist for River Falls to provide support to larger corporations to enter and stay in the local market. In addition to some of the funding options discussed above, various programs, supported by the City can assist in business attraction and retention.

- **Business Retention and Expansion (BRE)**
- **Built-to-Suit, Lease-to-Own Program** – The River Falls Economic Development Corporation (RFEDC) has, on several occasions, partnered in the construction of Corporate Parks, that provide opportunities for businesses to locate within River Falls. Through the Built-to-Suit, Lease-to-Own program, the RFEDC has constructed and financed a building, and provide an initial lease with purchase option of the tenant. This program allows businesses access to capital that they may not otherwise have, giving them the opportunity to grow in facilities that meet their needs. The following centers were constructed through this program:
  - River Falls Enterprise Center – built in 1990, later sold to a private investor who leases it to various businesses.
  - River Falls Enterprise II – built in 1996, was initially leased to Designer Doors and later sold to the second business to lease the building, Magma Flooring.
  - BioDiagnostics – built for BioDiagnostics who purchased the property in 2004.
  - Rush River Brewery
- **Corporate Parks** – The City of River Falls currently has three business parks available for development. The parks include the River Falls Industrial Park, Sterling Ponds Corporate Park, Whitetail Ridge Corporate Park, and Mann Valley Corporate Park.



## Technical Memorandum – Economic Development

### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION

Workforce development is a key aspect of ensuring a robust local economy. Due to the University of Wisconsin, River Falls (UWRF) and Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC), the city is in a unique position relative to workforce development. A skilled and ready workforce supports the maintenance of a community's economy and triggers opportunities for growth. Educational attainment needs vary from position to position within a community, with a need for all skill levels. For example, the City's largest employers have positions open that range from a high school diploma or GED to PHD. While a diverse economy supports all types of education, many industries are struggling to build a skilled and ready workforce based on the level of education and/or training needed. For example, many trades do not require a college degree, but do require specific training. Access to these trainings and overall education on these fields is important at a young age to support these trade industries.

- Partnerships with UWRF, CVTC, and the School District of River Falls can be used to build training and educational programs that support local workforce needs.
- Programs with local businesses to develop internship and apprenticeship programs for employees to gain valuable experience in specialized sectors.
- Continue to make River Falls a great place live, allowing the community to retain more UWRF and CVTC graduates.
- Implementing the communities housing goals, to ensure that there is a diverse range of high quality, affordable, and safe housing choices for residents of all income levels.
- Ensuring adequate access to human and social services and public facilities, including childcare, public health, transportation, and educational opportunities.
- Attracting jobs and employment opportunities that pay a living wage.

# TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT ANALYSIS

## INTRODUCTION

This technical memorandum provides data, detailed analysis, and additional information that is intended to supplement the Transportation Element within the Focus River Falls Comprehensive Plan. Included in this analysis is an overview of community input related to transportation, a review of existing conditions, and an overview of strategies related to transportation priorities. Additionally, the memo includes detailed information about the tools and resources that are available to assist the city in reaching its goals.



## ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Information obtained through the engagement process was used to guide the development of the Transportation Element. Through early engagement efforts the community was asked to identify opportunities and concerns for the future of River Falls. Responses ranged across a variety of topics, with direct connections to transportation:

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Focus on sustainability and investment in renewable and clean energy
- Support growth that creates connection to the greater region

### CONCERNS

- Sidewalk and trail infrastructure that is safe and connected
- Desires for roadway network improvements
- Desires for increased public transit

# Technical Memorandum – Transportation

Specific comments were received throughout the planning process regarding targeted improvement within the transportation system, along with general infrastructure improvements. Key themes that emerged for transportation focused on a connected system that is safe and accessible for all community members and visitors. Early engagement efforts also identified a desire among community members to shift their primary mode of transportation. As noted in the graphic below, community members primarily move throughout River Falls in a personal vehicle today; however, their desired mode of transportation is walking, followed by biking, and then followed by traveling alone by personal vehicle.

How do you currently move?		What is your desired way to move?	
1	Personal Vehicle – Travel Alone	1	Walk
2	Walk	2	Bike
3	Bike	3	Personal Vehicle – Travel Alone
4	Personal Vehicle Carpool	4	Public Transportation (Taxi)
5	Public Transportation (Taxi)	5	Personal Vehicle – Carpool
6	Other	6	Ride Share Service
0	Ride Share Service	7	Other

# TRANSPORTATION CONTEXT

## TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

The city's transportation network includes a combination of infrastructure (e.g., roadways, trails) and programming (e.g., transit service) to provide mobility for goods and people. An overview of the existing facilities is broken into three categories below.

### Local Roadways and Highways

Mobility throughout the community was built from the traditional roadway model, creating physical infrastructure that moved vehicles and people within a defined space. As a result, the local roadway and highways of the community primarily provide for the movement of personal vehicles throughout River Falls. Generally, the roadway network has been designed for the safety of all users, while focusing on the efficient movement of vehicles.

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure



Sidewalks and trails within the community provide dedicated bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. There are over 90 miles of sidewalks, paths, and trails within the community, mostly consisting of paved sidewalks. Efforts to continue to expand and connect this infrastructure are identified within the **Bike and Pedestrian Plan** completed as part of the Focus River Falls planning process.

### Local and Regional Transit

Similar to many communities of similar size, local and regional transit options are limited within the community. Regional transit options are limited as well but are important for many groups within the community. The following table outlines the transit options available within the community.

# Technical Memorandum – Transportation



	Provider	Description
Local Transit	ARDC of St. Croix County	The Aging and Disability Resource Center (ARDC) of St. Croix County, in collaboration with the city, provides the River Falls RideShare service seven days a week to persons over 18 with a disability and individuals over the age of 60.
	River Falls Taxi Service	<p>The City of River Falls receives State and Federal grant dollars to help fund a shared-ride taxi program. The taxi service is open to anyone and covers the area within the City of River Falls as well as five miles outside the city limits. Currently, Running, Inc. is contracted as the shared-ride taxi provider. This on demand transit service is provided seven days a week at a fee.</p> <p>Local trips are available to the community from 6a.m. to 6p.m. Monday through Friday at a fee. The taxi service also operates 8a.m. to 1p.m. on Saturday and 8a.m. to 3p.m. on Sundays. UWRF students can receive free rides to specific community destinations with a student I.D. Taxi service has been in operation within the community since 1985. The 2022 estimated operating budget is \$313,500. St. Croix and Pierce Counties pay about 4 percent of this budget.</p>
Regional Transit	Greyhound	While in close proximity to the Twin Cities Metro, there are limited regional transit options that connect River Falls to the metro area. For example, Greyhound Bus Services has routes that connect Minneapolis/St. Paul to Madison and Milwaukee that utilized I-94, but the nearest dedicated stops are located within Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN or Eau Claire, WI.
	Groome Transportation	Groome Transportation is a shuttle service that connects Hudson, WI to the Minneapolis/St Paul International Airport. Community members can utilize this service with a taxi ride to Hudson to connect with the Groome connection route.
Intercity Transit	Amtrak	Amtrak’s Empire Builder route provides rail connections near the community, connecting the region from Chicago to Seattle/Portland. Stations in St. Paul and Red Wing are the closest to the community.

## Technical Memorandum – Transportation

### FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

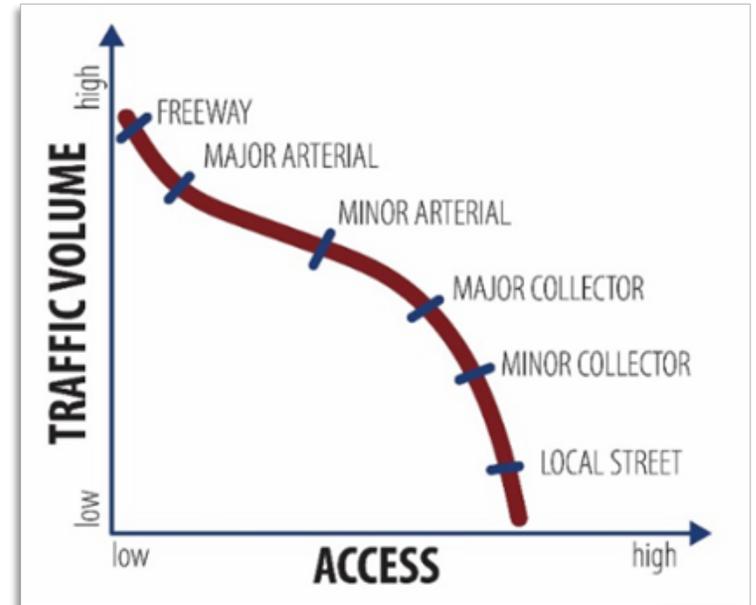
Roadways are organized into different functional classifications based on their volume, length, speed, and accessibility. These classifications align with the management and operations of the roadway. There are four main functional classes as described below.

#### Principal Arterials

Principal arterials are the highest classification of roadway and typically carry the largest traffic volumes. These roadways are meant to transport long-distance travelers and provide high mobility. Access to principal arterial highways is provided through grade separated interchanges (in- and off-ramps located on a raised structure) to limit access opportunities. Local roadways identified as principal arterials can include a variety of intersection types. Principal arterials benefit the local residents by connecting users to the regional highway system with efficiency. There is a loop of principal arterial roadways within the core of River Falls. This loop includes State Highways 35, 65, and 29 and three local roadways, Main Street, Cascade Avenue, and Cemetery Road (WIS 29).

#### Minor Arterials

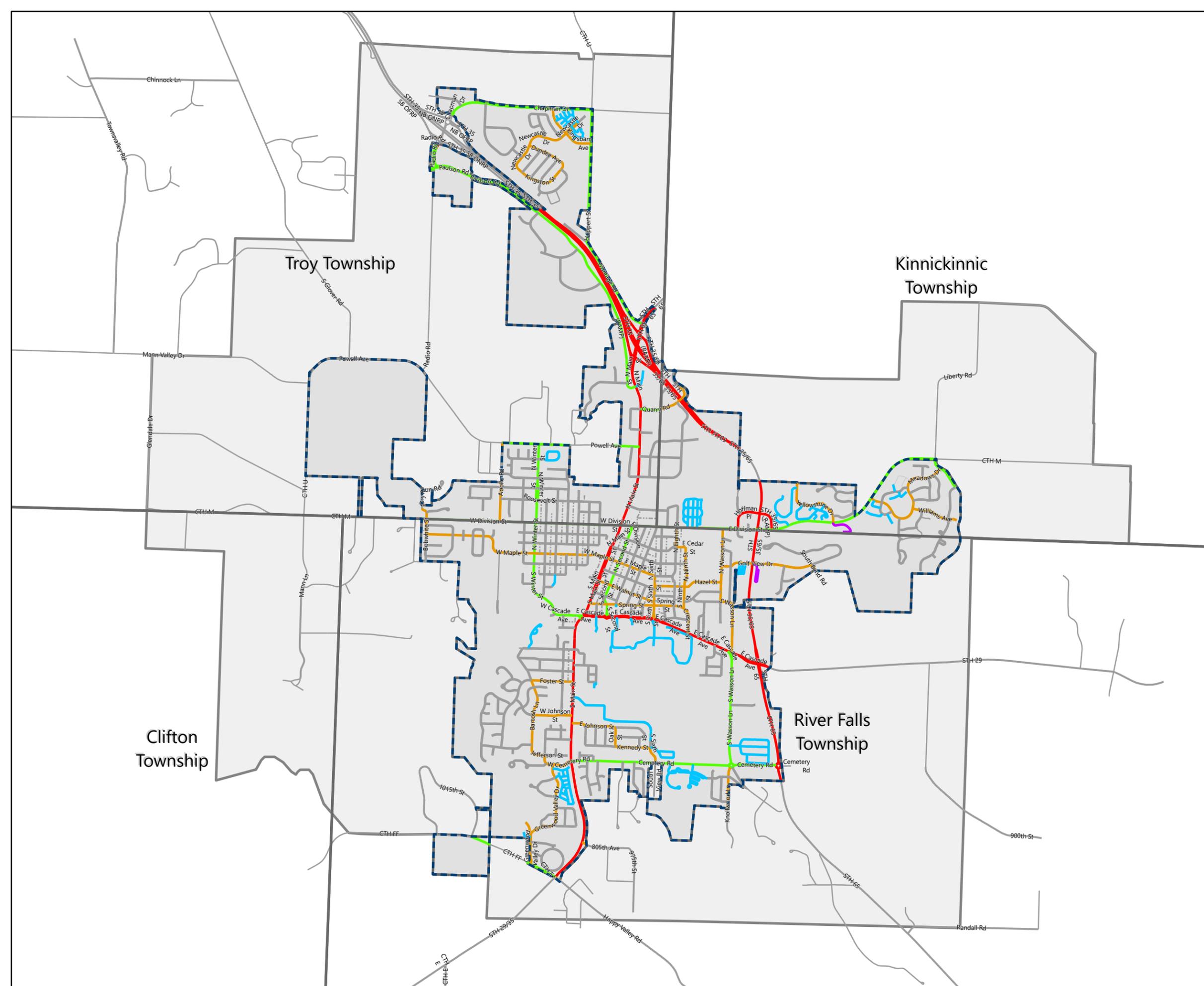
A minor arterial roadway connects communities and carries higher traffic volumes. They serve an important connection between regional routes (principal arterials) and local connectors while providing limited access. Examples of minor arterial roadways within River Falls include Division Street, Powell Avenue, and Winter Street.



# Legend

## Functional Classification

- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Collector
- Local
- Alleyway
- Private
- Other
- River Falls City Limits
- Urban Area Boundary
- Township Boundaries



# Functional Classification

## Technical Memorandum – Transportation

### Collectors

Collectors are roadways that primarily connect community destinations. They connect neighborhoods, retail centers, industrial areas, and many other land uses with their moderate speeds and lower traffic volumes. Their main purpose is to collect and distribute traffic between local streets and arterials. Wasson Lane and Huppert Street are examples of collector roadways within the community.

### Local Roads

Local roadways support the lowest traffic volumes with the most access opportunities. Their main purpose is to connect residents and travelers from their destinations to collector and arterials roadways.

## COMMUTING PATTERNS

Most River Falls residents (84 percent) commute alone in a car, truck, or van, mirroring county trends according to US Census Bureau 2019 estimates. This data also estimates that of the 3,721 jobs within the community, only 25 percent are held by residents of the community. Nearly 2,800 employees commute into the community for employment on a regular basis. Additionally, nearly 80 percent of employed River Falls residents commute out of the community for work. Of the nearly 5,000 residents who commute out of River Falls, 37 percent travel less than 10 miles for work. Common employment locations include Hudson (11.4 percent), St. Paul (3.2 percent), and Eau Claire (1.9 percent). Most workers are traveling either to the Northwest for jobs in or near the Twin Cities or the East/Southeast for jobs in Pierce County.



## Technical Memorandum – Transportation

### REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIPS

The city's relationship with regional partners is an important component of the overall function of the transportation system and will continue to be over the next twenty years. These partnerships include collaboration with agencies that have jurisdiction over roadways within the community and regional planning authorities.

#### Wisconsin Department of Transportation

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is the agency that maintains the state's transportation infrastructure, including vehicular, freight, rail, bicycle/pedestrian, and transit movements. In addition to the three state highways located within the community, state and regional planning efforts inform policy and investments within the community. Continued collaboration with WisDOT regarding local and regional infrastructure investments in policies will help support the community's transportation goals.

#### St Croix and Pierce Counties

St Croix and Pierce Counties maintain county transportation facilities within the community and region. In addition to the maintenance of the county highways, transportation services and active transportation planning are provided by the Counties. For example, the St Croix County Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) provides local transit service within the community. The city will continue to collaborate with the counties to support maintenance and investments to county infrastructure and programming that support the transportation needs of River Falls residents.

#### Adjacent Towns

Each of the four adjacent towns have jurisdiction over roadways within the regional network. Their role for the local roadways is similar to the roles and responsibilities of the city with their local network. Collaboration with each town as annexation occurs is important as the city takes over the jurisdiction of town roadways.

#### West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (RPC)

The West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission is charged with the responsibility of planning for the physical, social and economic development of the region. The region includes Barron, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Polk and St. Croix Counties. The RPC provides a broad range of services, including support for transportation issues. Collaboration efforts with the RPC include guidance on transportation investments across municipal boundaries or for the greater region, other efforts may include safe routes to school studies and grant writing opportunities.

# Technical Memorandum – Transportation

## Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC)

The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission provides a similar function to the West Central Wisconsin RPC for the nine county region of Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Trempealeau, and Vernon. Opportunities for collaboration with MRRPC also include participation in region wide planning efforts and support of local investments through funding opportunities or extension of staff.

## Metropolitan Council

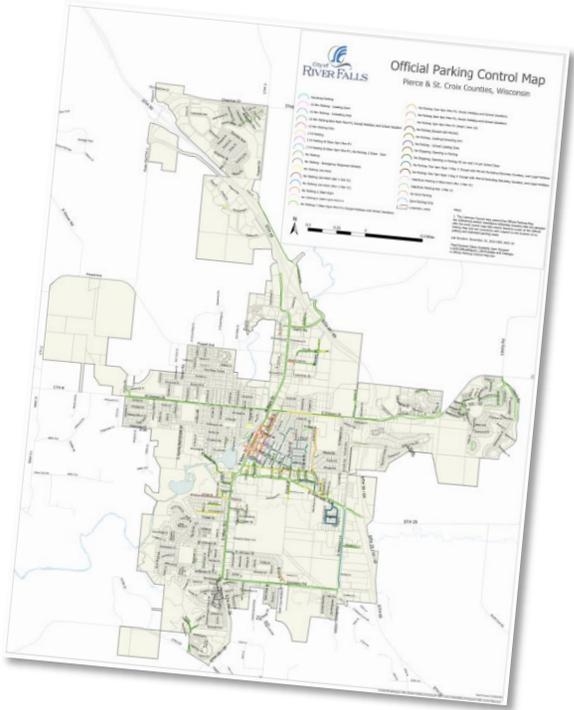
The Metropolitan Council is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Twin Cities and is responsible for establishing priorities for federal transportation dollars within its seven county region. The City of River Falls is not currently a member of the MPO, but nearby cities and counties in Minnesota are a part of the MPO. Monitoring the regional transportation policies and investments identified by the Metropolitan Council can be used to inform investment and decision making at the city level. Additionally, the City of River Falls is located within the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Statistical Area and may be included in some of the region’s planning activities.

## PARKING

Vehicular parking is an important part of the transportation network, connecting people to their final destination. Parking within the city is currently managed in two ways: on-street parking and on-site parking. On-street parking includes policies and programs to manage the physical parking of vehicles on local roadways, while on-site parking establishes the regulations of how many parking stalls must be provided to support a specific development.

## On-Street Parking

The regulation of parking on local streets is a common practice to support both the community need and the design and function of the roadway. The parking controls created by the community create the policy framework for managing the location and timing of parking to support the community’s needs. The City of River Falls maintains the **Official Parking Control Map**, which identifies the parking regulations and controls in use by the city. Parking regulations within the community include no parking during specific time periods, length of parking restricts, odd/even parking days, and allowed vehicle parking type. The regulation types used within the community are identified below with the physical elements that influence these controls.



## Technical Memorandum – Transportation

Physical Element	Description	Parking Control Examples
<b>Roadway Design</b>	Is the roadway designed with enough space to provide safe on-street parking lanes while allowing for the continued flow of traffic?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Parking</li> <li>• No Semi Parking</li> </ul>
<b>Roadway Function</b>	The winter climate brings another consideration to the maintenance of the transportation network – snow. Parking controls and regulations to assist with snow removal needs are a common occurrence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Parking</li> <li>• No Semi Parking</li> <li>• No Parking during specified hours</li> </ul>
<b>Surrounding Land Uses</b>	Adjacent land uses influence the need for on-street parking, particularly tied to the on-site regulations discussed below. These uses can inform the overall need and timing of parking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Stopping</li> <li>• Permit Parking Areas</li> </ul>
<b>Surrounding Land Uses and Length of Stay</b>	Beyond the general use of surrounding development, the need to move vehicles to support economic development or other movement should be considered. For example, downtown shopping areas support parking time limitations to provide opportunities for patrons to find parking. Additionally, school zone parking and support pick-up and drop-off circulation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 Minute Parking</li> <li>• 2 Hour Parking</li> <li>• No Parking during specified hours</li> <li>• Handicap Parking</li> </ul>
<b>Seasonal Parking</b>	The winter climate brings another consideration to the maintenance of the transportation network – snow. Parking controls and regulations to assist with snow removal needs are a common occurrence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Odd/Even Parking</li> <li>• No Parking during specified seasons</li> </ul>

### On-Site Parking

On-site parking requirements are established within Title 17 of the Municipal Code. Specific minimum parking regulations are established to support the parking needs of various uses. For example, 2 parking stalls are required for each single-family residential home and each new single-family home must provide at least 2 parking stalls on the lot. Similarly, minimum parking regulations are established for other residential, commercial, industrial, and public uses. The traditional minimum parking requirement is created with the goal of providing adequate parking

# Technical Memorandum – Transportation

for the specific use during their peak hours. In many cases, parking minimums can create a large amount of underutilized parking during normal operations, that may only be filled a few days a year.

On-site parking regulations continue to be an emerging topic with municipalities across the county. Traditional parking standards have created vast parking lots and underutilized spaces within commercial and industrial areas that could provide a better use for the community. Additionally, parking minimums can be a challenge for site planning and design for smaller businesses and developments, when balancing open space and other amenity needs. Additionally, the reduction in the overall need of impervious surface areas to support parking uses can support a community’s resilience and sustainability goals.

Cities and regions throughout the United States have been exploring the use of parking maximums in addition to (or in replacement of) parking minimums. This tool provides the municipality with tool to limit the amount of parking that a development may construct and can be developed in a manner that best suits the needs of the community. Examples of parking maximum regulations used throughout the United States are identified in the table below. While the context of the community may be different, there are lessons learned and concepts that could be tailored to River Falls.

Community	Parking Program Description	Link to Code
<b>Denver, Colorado</b>	Parking minimums are established for uses, but special approval must be granted to provide parking over the required minimum.	<a href="#">Sec. 30-50. Parking</a>
<b>Flagstaff, Arizona</b>	Parking maximums are established at 5 percent above the parking minimum. Therefore, a restaurant that is required to have minimum 25 parking stalls on site also has a maximum allowed parking of 26 stalls.	<a href="#">Division 10-50.80: Parking Standards</a>
<b>New Haven, Connecticut</b>	Parking maximums are established specifically for mixed-use developments where shared parking may naturally occur.	<a href="#">Section 45 – Regulations for parking</a>

# TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES AND TOOLS

## ACCESS MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

To promote safe and efficient access to roadways, River Falls may consider implementation of access management guidelines. Access management refers to a set of standards that control the number and spacing of access points along a roadway based on their functional classification. The number of access points typically increases as speed and travel volumes decrease – so there may be very few access points along an interstate, but many along a local street. By requiring landowners to adhere to these standards, the safety and efficiency of the transportation system improves. It also makes travel easier for commuters of all modes by reducing the number of conflict points and simplifies decision making. Pedestrians and bicyclists benefit greatly from these guidelines, as they have much fewer interactions with vehicles. WisDOT maintains a set of best access management principles, which River Falls can monitor and build from to create community specific standards. Access management guidelines are typically assigned for roadways that carry greater traffic volumes, such as arterials and freeways. The arterial roadways within River Falls include a combination of state and local roadways. Specifically for those local roadways considered principal or minor arterials, access management guidelines would provide safety and mobility benefits.

## EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

The technologies available within the transportation space are ever evolving, with an influx of new types and methods of transportation. For example, electric and autonomous vehicles will require shifts in the way the city constructs roadways, manages traffic, installs signage and signals, and plans for the future. River Falls has taken initial efforts to respond to these emerging technologies and integrate them within the existing system with considerations for planning ahead.

### Electric Vehicles

Electric Vehicles (EVs) have a strong hold in the transportation marketplace and will continue to expand as federal and state policy encourage their creation and use. For example, the Wisconsin Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Plan was approved by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in 2022. This plan identifies policies to support and implementation of investments in EV infrastructure throughout the state. I-94 is identified within the plan as a Designated Alternative Fuel Corridor with two potential charging stations located in St Croix County.

With their lack of reliance on fossil fuels, EVs release no tail-pipe pollutants and greatly reduce noise pollution. With an expected 100 million EVs in the United States over the next twenty years, the environmental, community, and transportation benefits are immense. To support residents owning and utilizing these types of vehicles, the City of River Falls should continue to support infrastructure and policies that expand

## Technical Memorandum – Transportation

access to charging stations and infrastructure. For example, the River Falls Municipal Utilities Electric Vehicles Charging Program supports increased access to charging infrastructure within the community. The program provides \$500 to residents for the purchase a Level II charging station at their own homes. Multifamily complexes are also eligible to participate in the program. There are also available charging stations located throughout the community at various businesses and destinations.

EVs are not limited to personal vehicles, but large vehicles like transit buses. As the city explores various transportation options, exploration of the use of electric buses and the needed infrastructure could be considered. Collaboration with regional partners will also help to expand EV offerings throughout the region.

### Autonomous Vehicles

An autonomous vehicle is one that moves with little or no human interaction. These types of vehicles have made large strides over the past decade, and many are on the road today. The technology needed to ensure autonomous vehicles can safely navigate roadways is continuously improving, and many features such as park-assist and lane-departure alerts have existed for some time. The city will monitor changes to autonomous vehicles and the changes that will need to be made on local systems.

## PAVEMENT PRESERVATION

Pavement preservation is a key component of successful system management. It includes roadway maintenance activities that extend the life of pavement while optimizing available funding. Factors such as traffic loading, weather conditions, heavy (commercial) vehicle traffic, and soil conditions can greatly impact pavement condition and lifespan. Although maintenance cannot preserve a roadway indefinitely, well timed maintenance activities can significantly extend the useful life of pavement. By implementing a pavement preservation program, the city will maximize the condition and lifespan of the transportation network while minimizing the overall lifecycle costs.

It may seem counter-intuitive, but when it comes to maintaining a city's system, roadways that receive attention are the ones that are in fairly good condition. The primary goal of a pavement preservation plan is to be proactive by keeping good condition roadways in good condition, when repairs for these roadways are less costly. With a worst-first reactive approach, repairs occur when roadways are in poor condition and repairs are costly, often four to five times the cost of those performed when the roadway is in good condition.

The City of River Falls utilizes an annual pavement maintenance plan that includes a variety of technologies for preserving pavement of the local roadways. Tools currently used within the plan include crack seal, chip seal, mill and overlay, seal coating, and more. Continued use of this programming will support the preservation of existing investments within the transportation network. Additionally, continuing to monitor new and emerging preservation techniques and tools will help the community support these efforts.

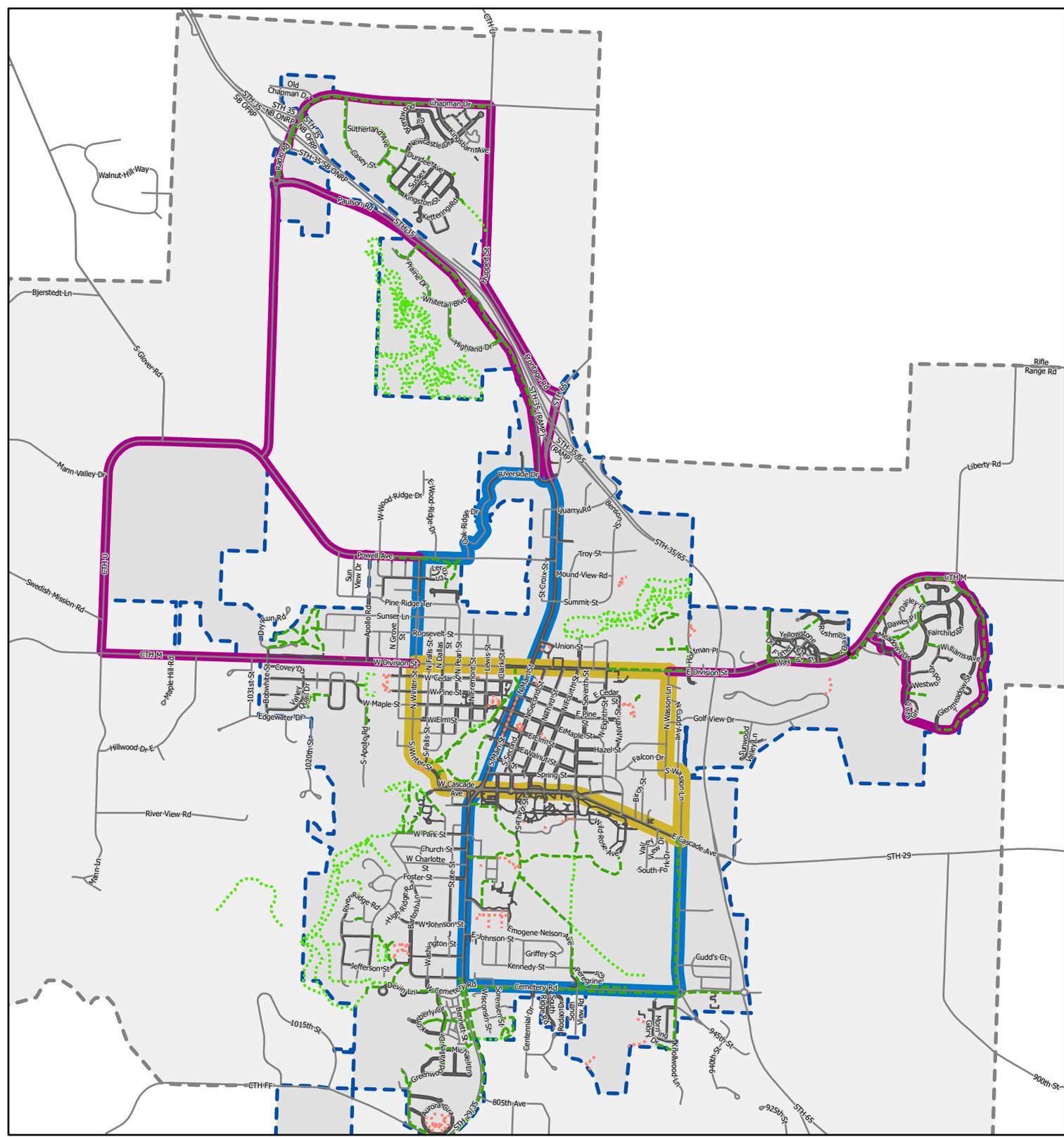
## Technical Memorandum – Transportation

WisDOT also has established pavement preservation guidance through its MAPSS Performance Improvement system. This program identifies preservation tools and implementation for 12,000 miles of pavement. The state’s goal is to maintain 90 percent of the pavement in a fair condition or better through the use of cost-effective improvement methods.

### COMMUNITY LOOP

Desires for a connected, healthy, and vibrant community were commonly heard throughout the planning process. The opportunities to identify community loops that connect neighborhoods and community destinations creates an opportunity to support recreation, health, and transportation. Potential loop alignments were explored throughout the planning process, from new trail alignments circling the existing urban area to internal loops that promote movement within the community’s core. As a result, a community loop concept was created that utilizes the existing transportation network, identified bike and pedestrian improvements, and existing/planned land uses. The intent of the loop is to create another layer of the community’s transportation network that emphasizes the core of the community, supports healthy choices, and supports economic development.

***How can the community loop be implemented?*** There are multiple ways the city can build the community loop concepts. Initial recommendations could range from the designation of the loop on the city’s official map, updates to the wayfinding plan to create specific signage, or policies that support land use and development along the loop. Implementation of the community loop could also be expanded into the broader community. While the identified loop creates an over 2.5 mile network, opportunities to connect existing neighborhoods and new growth areas back into the core and the community loop should be explored. For example, the future development of Mann Valley will include a variety of employment opportunities on the western edge of the community. County Highway M/Division Street creates an opportunity to connect the new development area to the identified loop.



## Legend

### City Loop

 City Loop

 Secondary Loop

 Loop Connector

### Sidewalks and Trails

 Bridge

 Tunnel

 Underpass

 Sidewalk

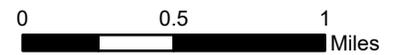
 Paved Path

 Dirt Trail

 Other

 River Falls City Limits

 Urban Area Boundary



## City Loop

# Technical Memorandum – Transportation

## COMMUNITY TRANSIT CONSIDERATIONS

Community transit options are currently limited within River Falls. Running, Inc. currently provides on demand transit services for the community with fee structures that include base, senior, and student rates. The desire for broader transit options was heard throughout the engagement process. As the city continues to explore transportation improvements, multiple transit services and options could be explored. These transit networks should consider both intercity opportunities and regional connections outside of the community. Various transit options are described in the following table. The general level of impact (what is the benefit) and complexity (how hard is it to achieve) are also identified.

Transit Option	Description	Impact	Complexity
Shared Ride Taxi	Shared Ride Taxi or On Demand Service includes the use of a for-hire vehicle by one or more passengers to their destination. On Demand Service is currently available within the community through city hosted programming and operated by Running, Inc. Continued support of this service supports small scale transit options. Opportunities to expand this service regionally with neighboring communities (Hudson and New Richmond) can be explored to expand the reach and offerings of the service.	●●○	●●○
Specialized Transit	Specialized transit service includes transit operations that provide alternative transportation options for specific locations or groups within the community. For example, the senior transit options available through the St. Croix County ADRC is considered specialized transit. This transit option provides a high level of impact for the specific groups it supports, does not support the community as a whole.	●○○	●●○
Autonomous Shuttle	Self-driving or autonomous transit offerings are being explored throughout the county and the Midwest, providing a new transit option for urban and rural communities. This emerging technology, while still under development, has potential for a community like River Falls. The technology will need to grow, before it could be implemented in the community. However, lessons and experiences from a current pilot program in Northern Minnesota can be used to begin the conversation.	●●○	●●●

## Technical Memorandum – Transportation

### Case Study: goMARTI Shuttle – Grand Rapids, Minnesota

An 18-month self-driving shuttle pilot, known as the goMARTI (Minnesota’s Autonomous Rural Transit Initiative) shuttle is currently underway within the City of Grand Rapids, MN and will conclude in the spring of 2024. This pilot provides fixed-route service to a community of nearly 12,000 residents in greater Minnesota. The shuttle is operated during select hours Tuesday through Sunday, offering connections to nearly 70 destinations within the community. The pilot includes a fleet of five autonomous vehicles, three of which are wheelchair accessible. There are four identified goals of the goMARTI pilot:

- Advance and inform the operation of automated vehicle technology in rural, winter conditions
- Engage and educate the local community by providing real-world automated vehicle experiences
- Provide safe, accessible mobility for residents, especially those with transportation challenges
- Understand what economic development this innovative pilot brings while attracting future talent and technology to the Iron Range



*Source: Minnesota Department of Transportation*

This pilot is a collaboration of the Minnesota Department of Transportation, City of Grand Rapids, local organizations, operators, and regional agencies. In the first months of the pilot, usage of the service met and exceed initial expectations within the community, and further data will be published as the pilot progresses.

# Technical Memorandum – Transportation

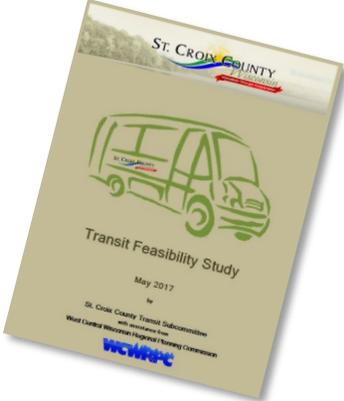
## Long-Range Transit Considerations

While transit opportunities provide a variety of benefits to the community, the viability and benefit are tied to a number of factors. The overall community size and funding options are two of the biggest considerations. The size of the community is a key factor from both a number of residents (or potential riders) and overall physical size. When there are not enough riders within the service area, operating costs and generated revenue do not add up. Additionally, the overall physical size of the community and the density or concentration of riders influence the number of routes and destinations and the frequency of routes (how long between stops). When covering too large of an area, fiscal risks and impacts to users must be considered. Citywide Fixed Route Transit and County-wide Transit are two transit options that are used elsewhere throughout the state. However, the overall size of the community and surrounding region do not support these as viable transit options within the planning horizon of this plan. However, these options should be recognized in long-range planning efforts.

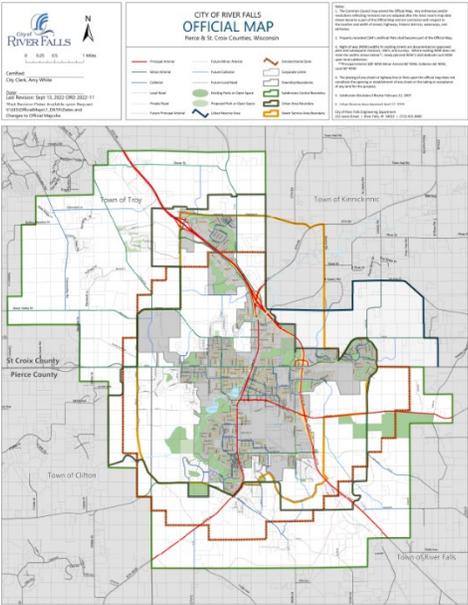
Transit Option	Description	Impact	Complexity
Citywide Fixed Route Transit	The development of a citywide fixed route transit service responds to the existing transportation gap but comes with a large investment for the community. There are 20 communities throughout the state that have established fixed route systems. A fixed route transit system includes the development of specific transit routes and buses to provide the fixed route service. Initial implementation can include a single route that can be expanded as ridership grows.	●●●	●●●
County-wide Transit System	County-wide transit systems provide similar route and destination services to the citywide transit system but provide service to the entire county. There are ten counties within the state that provide county-wide transit, the nearest of which is Dunn County. The implementation of a county-wide system requires support from multiple jurisdictions.	●○○	●●●

# Technical Memorandum – Transportation

St. Croix County completed a Transit Feasibility Study in May of 2017 to explore transit options throughout the county. The analysis explored the overall transit demand and reviewed transit service offers of the greater region. Fixed route service was explored within the study, including the identification of four routes. Two of these routes would connect River Falls to other destinations within the county. A route that connects Hudson and River Falls via WIS 35 and a route that connects River Falls to New Richmond via WIS 65 were considered viable within the study. The existing parking ride within the community would be used to support these routes.



## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



A transportation network that provides safe and efficient connections for all users was a common theme heard throughout the Focus River Falls process. While there are over 200 miles of roadway, trails, and sidewalks in the community, there are many opportunities to bridge gaps that will increase safe and efficient movement by all. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan analyzed the gaps in the sidewalk and trail network throughout the community and developed a list of recommended investments to improve connections throughout the community. The city’s official map provides an opportunity to monitor and address future roadway connections within the community and new growth areas.

The **Official Map** is assessed regularly and updated as needed to identify the existing roadway functions and identification of future roadway needs to support connection and mobility within new growth areas. The future minor arterial and collector roadways identified within the map were used to inform the future land use plan identified within the Land Use chapter, ensuring that connections are planned for new growth areas back into the core of the community. The key future roadways used to inform the future land use plan are identified below. If shifts regarding the location of function of these roadways shifts with future Official Map updates change, the future land use plan should be assessed for any needed updates.

# Technical Memorandum – Transportation

Roadway	Future Functional Classification	Connection Points
Casey Street	Collector	Chapman Drive to Glover Road
Paulson Road	Minor Arterial	Radio Road/County Highway U to Glover Road
New Roadway	Collector	Paulson Road to Radio Road/County Highway U
South View Road and Knollwood Lane	Collector	Extension of existing city street to Subdivision Boundary
South Bend Road	Collector	Golf View Drive to WIS 65
Cemetery Road	Minor Arterial	WIS 29/WIS 65 to South Fork Road

## WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

Wayfinding is a coordinated system of signage designed to make it easier for residents, visitors, and commuters to find destination, amenities and attractions throughout the community. Wayfinding can be designed to provide direction for all modes, supporting the efficient movement of everyone throughout the community. The city developed a wayfinding and signage plan that is currently being implemented throughout the community. The thoughtful design is specific to River Falls and helps support a sense of place throughout the community. From public parking signage to park monuments, the city continues to implement the plan. Active efforts to continue to support the implementation of the wayfinding plan and updates to respond to changing conditions and needs.



## UNIVERSAL DESIGN/COMPLETE STREETS

It is important for the City to create and maintain a vibrant, safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system for all people and modes. The City has not established design guidelines related to complete streets, but will continue to evaluate the need for a Complete Street Policy or Universal Roadway Design to ensure that all streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. WisDOT had developed policies and guidance for complete streets at the local

## Technical Memorandum – Transportation

level. The development of policies and implementation of roadways designed for all users are supported by WisDOT from both a policy and funding approach.

### REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

The City of River Falls is located in a unique position, with close proximity to the Minneapolis/St. Paul urban area and connections to greater Wisconsin. This location creates unique opportunities for the movement of goods and people within the greater region for employment and recreation. The city will continue to play an active role to ensure the transportation system and policies support a connected and efficient system for all users.

#### Connection to Minneapolis/St. Paul

River Falls is approximately a 35 minute drive from the heart of the Minneapolis and St. Paul via I-94. The existing transportation network expands the connections throughout the metropolitan area. The connections to the region open employment and recreational connections for the community, bringing people to the community to support economic development and providing additional employment opportunities for residents. WIS 35 and I-94, both maintained by WisDOT, are the primary routes to connect River Falls to the metropolitan area. As discussed previously, the direct connection is primarily available via personal vehicle. Exploration of additional transportation options to connect the community to the metro area will be important for maintaining the economic and recreational support.

#### Connections to Greater Wisconsin

River Falls is connected to the St Croix and Pierce County region through a number of state highways. These are key to not only the economic development of River Falls, but to the other neighboring municipalities. These state highways are not managed or maintained by the City of River Falls, but the city should continue to participate in planning and investment decisions that impact these roadways, working to maintain and improve River Falls' role as a node of regional activity.

#### Regional Rail Connections

Rail connections from Chicago, Illinois to the Twin Cities Metro are on-going conversations between state and federal agencies. While Greyhound and Amtrak provide bus and rail connections, respectively, opportunities for more efficient and direct service are being explored. This regional system of rapid rail transit is being explored at a larger level, with support heard at the local level. Should this service be actualized and constructed, the City of River Falls, and its regional partners, should collaborate to explore how a stop or connection between this new service and the community can be provided. For example, what type of local transit option could be created to support connection between River Falls and the nearest station.

# UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT ANALYSIS



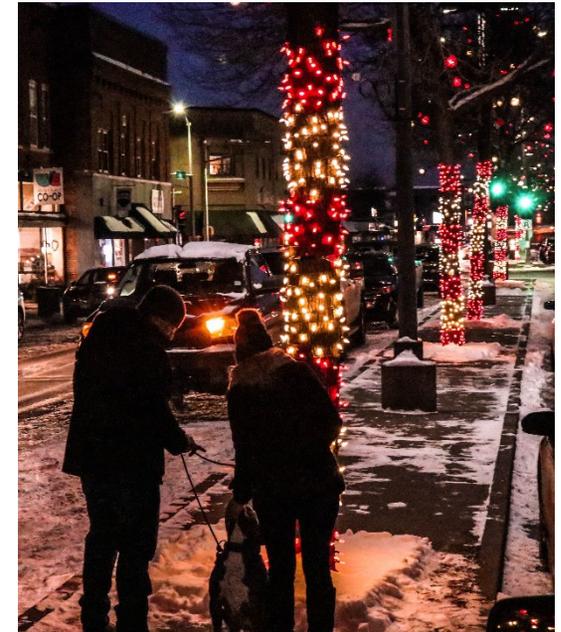
## INTRODUCTION

This technical memorandum provides data, detailed analysis, and additional information that is intended to supplement the Utilities and Community Facilities Element within the Focus River Falls Comprehensive Plan. Included in this analysis are maps showing the City's water, wastewater, and stormwater systems, details about the utilities that serve the city, and information about community safety. Additionally, the memo includes detailed information about the tools and resources that are available to assist the city in reaching its goals.

## ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Throughout the engagement process, comments were provided by the public that help to inform the Utilities and Community Facilities chapter. For example, community Survey respondents were asked a variety of questions about the city's utilities and infrastructure, many of these comments were used to develop goals and implementation steps related to utilities and community facilities.

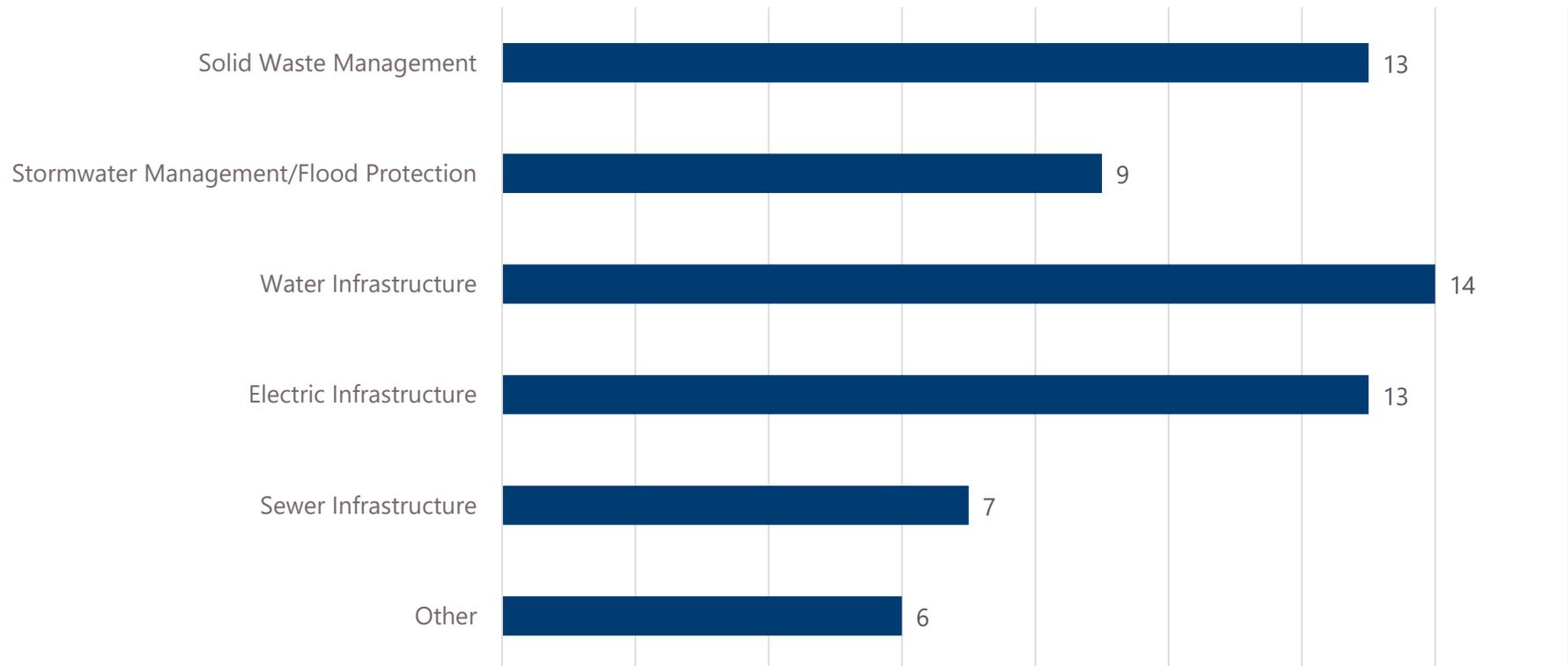
The following pages outline a portion of this feedback. For a full overview of engagement activities and responses, see [Appendix C](#).



## Technical Memorandum - Utilities and Community Facilities

**Question:** Where would you like to see increased investment to improve or enhance the quality of general utilities in the City of River Falls?

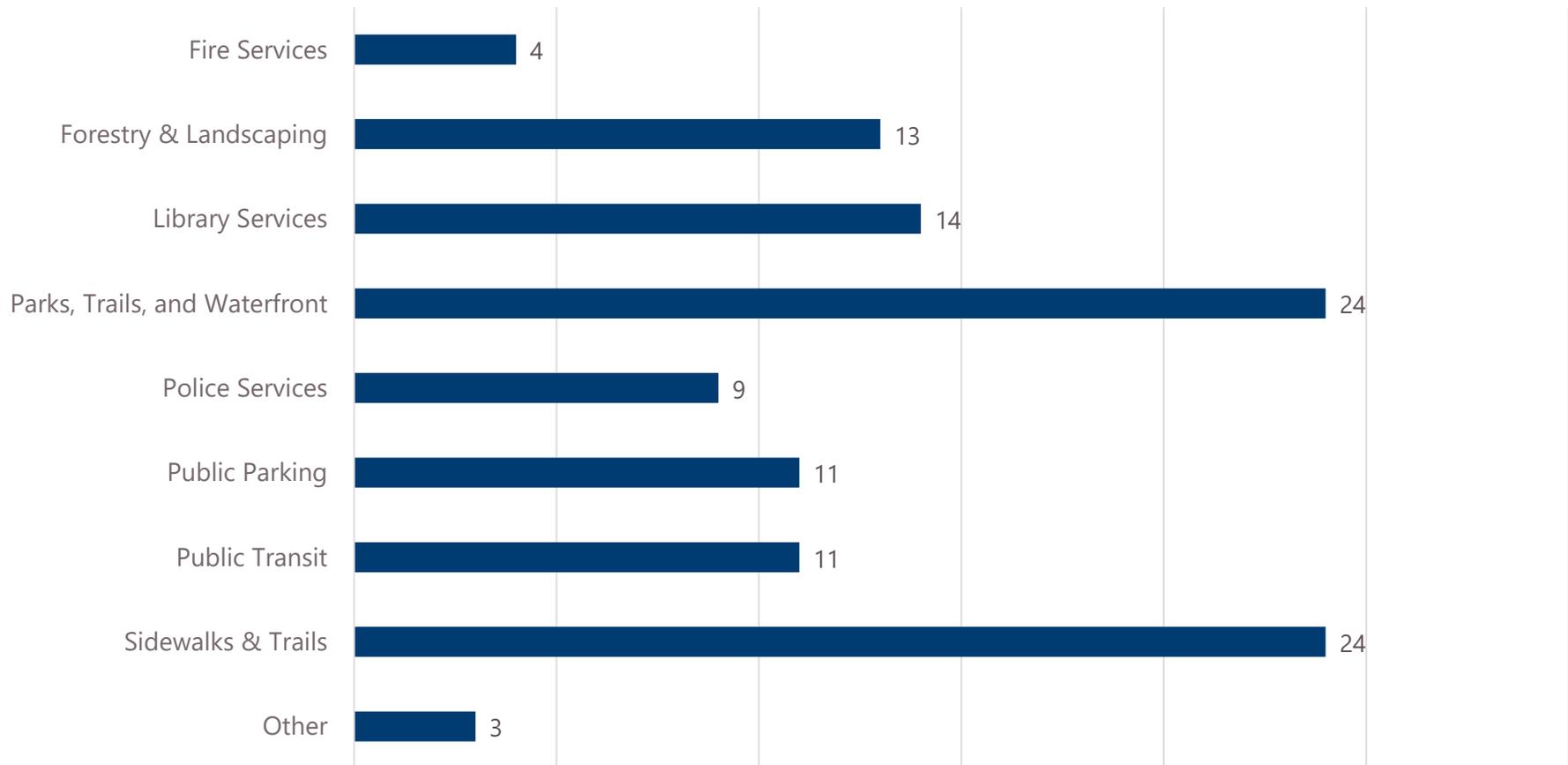
**Key Takeaway:** Water infrastructure, solid waste management, and electric infrastructure received the most responses, indicating that survey respondents want to see increased investments in those areas.



## Technical Memorandum - Utilities and Community Facilities

**Question:** Where would you like to see increased investment to improve or enhance the quality of community services and facilities in the City of River Falls?

**Key Takeaway:** Based on the group of residents who completed the Community Survey, the largest group would like to see the city invest further in parks, trails, waterfront, and sidewalks. However, there may be need to collect further input to fully understand the community opinion on city investments.



## UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES CONTEXT

In the context of the Focus River Falls Comprehensive Plan and this technical memo, utilities and community facilities include the infrastructure and services that are vital to support and maintain a high quality of life in River Falls. Included are traditional utilities, such as water, wastewater treatment, electricity, and solid waste removal, stormwater management, community safety, programming, and other services, including educational facilities, community centers, libraries, and others.

### RIVER FALLS MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

River Falls Municipal Utilities (RFMU), a department of the City, is the primary utility provider for the City of River Falls. They provide and manage the provision of water, wastewater treatment, electricity, and solid waste disposal (contracted).



River Falls  
**MUNICIPAL UTILITIES**

### Water System

The City of River Falls water is sourced by five production wells that draw water from two different aquifers, including two wells into the Jordan Aquifer and three wells into the Prairie du Chien Aquifer. The wells vary in depth between 379 feet and 568 feet at their deepest point. The River Falls Municipal Utilities Water Department releases an annual [Water Quality Report](#), which documents water contaminants that were detected in the drinking water supply over the past five years.

### Wastewater System

The River Falls Municipal Utilities Department Sewer Department provides wastewater treatment services for the community. The River Falls Wastewater Treatment Facility is located on the west side of the

### Water and Sewer Connection Fees

Beginning in July of 2002, the City began charging water utility impact fees and sanitary sewer connection fees to all new developments. The fees are intended to help cover the initial cost of extending/expanding water and sewer service to serve the new development.

These fees help to assure that the development bears an appropriate share of the costs associated with extending services to them.

city along the Kinnickinnic River. The facility, originally built in 1963 and later upgraded in 1980 has capacity to treat nearly 2,000,000 gallons of wastewater per day.<sup>1</sup> Three main systems make up the treatment process:

- **Primary Treatment System** – Wastewater is collected and transported to the treatment facility through a series of sewer mains and lift stations. The primary treatment system consists of two-grinders/bar screen, four pump lift stations, a magnetic flow meter, multiple primary static screens, dewatering screw conveyors, and a compactor.
- **Secondary Treatment Process** – Secondary Treatment includes two parallel oxidation ditches and two final clarifiers.
- **Bio-Solids Building** – The bio-solids building, which came online in 2016, houses the dissolved air flotation thickening (DAFT) unit, which is used to thicken solids in an effort to reduce the cost of hauling the remaining waste product.



### Electricity Utility

The River Falls Municipal Utilities Electric system is one of the 2,200 publicly owned power systems in the country. The utility acts as a nonprofit with the one main goal of “providing customers with safe and reliable services as the best overall value”. RFMU is a member of WPPI Energy, an electricity cooperative that supplies power to nearly 200,000 residents throughout Wisconsin, Iowa, and Michigan.

The River Falls Municipal Utility Electric Department has received multiple awards in recent years, many of which display the utilities commitment to providing a high level of service and supplying customers with electricity from renewable sources:



**Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3) Platinum Designation** – American Public Power Association (APPA).

**2021 Certificate of Excellence in Reliability** – American Public Power Association (APPA).

**National Recognition for 2021 Renewable Energy Efforts** – U.S. Department of Energy, National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)

<sup>1</sup> River Falls Sewer Department. <https://www.rfmu.org/612/Wastewater-Treatment>.

**NREL Green Power Participation Rates** – as of December 2021, River Falls Municipal Utilities was ranked in the top 10 utility providers that have Green Pricing Programs for Green Power Participation Rate and Green Power Sales Rate.<sup>2</sup> Green pricing programs allow customers to purchase and use green power through their electric utility. The following table shows the top ten electric utilities nationwide for green power sales rate and participation rates.



**Table 1. National Renewable Energy Laboratory, 2021 Green Power Sales and Participation Rate**

Green Power Sales Rate			Green Power Participation Rate		
Rank	Utility	Sales Rate	Rank	Utility	Participation Rate
1	Portland General Electric (Green Future Choice)	21.9%	1	Portland General Electric	26%
2	Waterloo Utilities	18.16%	2	<b>River Fall Municipal Utilities</b>	<b>14.58%</b>
3	Springfield Electric	16.13%	3	PacifiCorp (Blue Sky Usage & Habitat)	10.02%
4	Oak Ridge Electric Department	7.9%	4	Puget Sound Energy (Green Power & Solar)	6.84%
5	PacifiCorp (Blue Sky Usage & Habitat)	7.71%	5	Naperville Public Utilities- Electric	5.96%
6	Portland General Electric (Green Future Enterprise)	6.74%	6	Muscoda Utilities	5.28%
7	<b>River Falls Municipal Utilities</b>	<b>6.28%</b>	7	Austin Energies (GreenChoice)	5.26%
8	Austin Energy (Green Choice)	5.80%	8	Stoughton Utilities	4.8%
9	PacifiCorp (Blue Sky Block – Bulk Purchase)	4.9%	9	PacifiCorp (Blue Sky Block)	4.3%
10	Tippah Electric Power Association	3.9%	10	Holy Cross Energy (Wind Energy Program)	4.28%

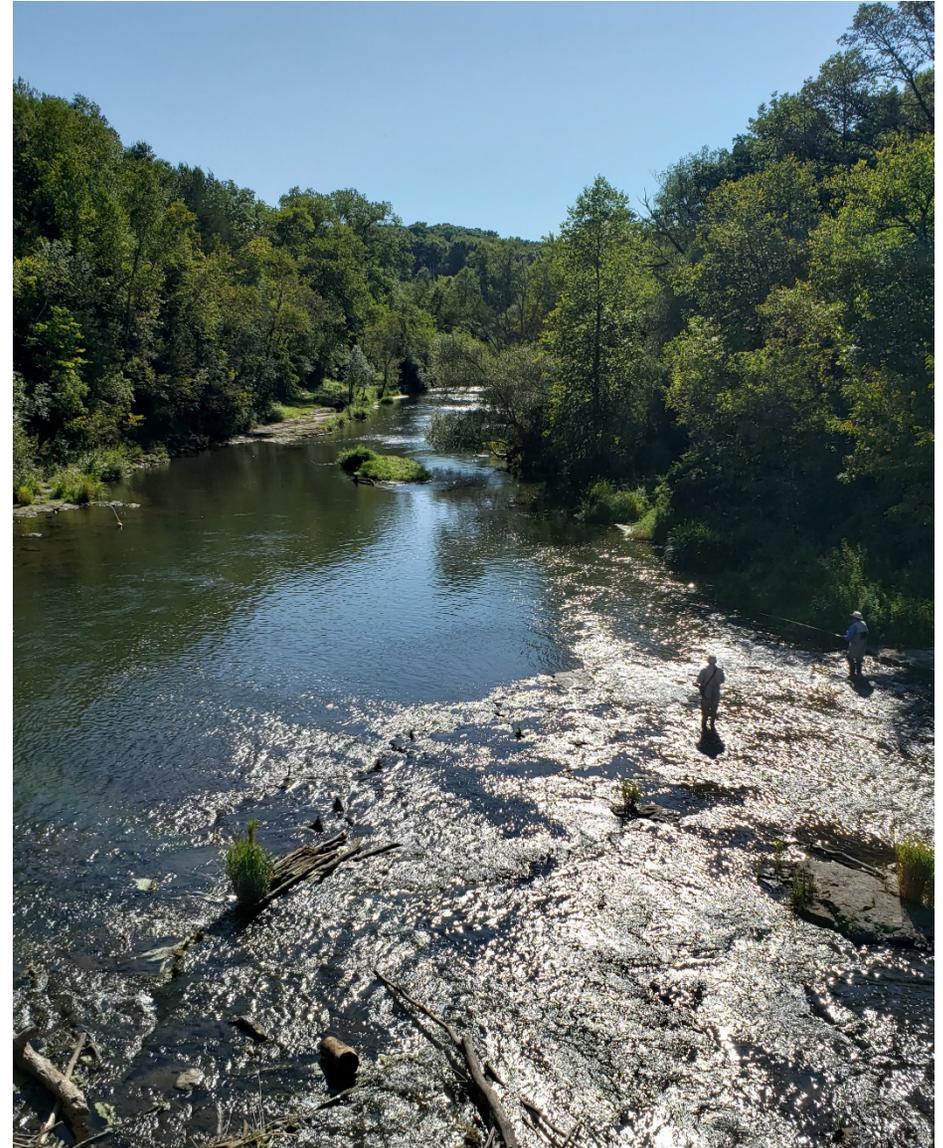
Source Top Ten Utility Green Pricing Programs (2021 data). National Renewable Energy Laboratory. <https://www.nrel.gov/analysis/assets/pdfs/green-pricing-top-10-2021-data-archives.pdf>

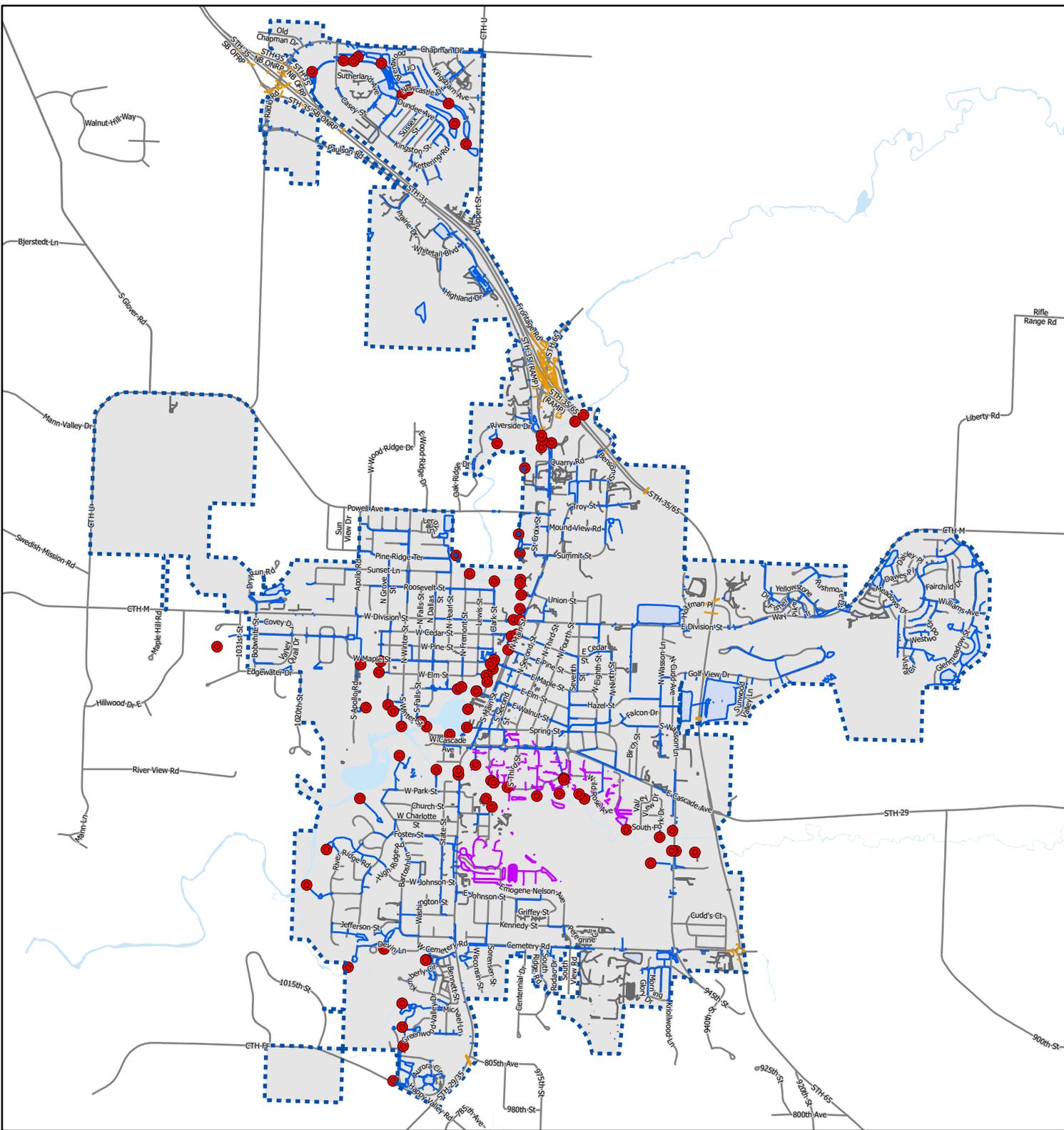
<sup>2</sup> Top Ten Utility Green Pricing Programs (2021 data). National Renewable Energy Laboratory. <https://www.nrel.gov/analysis/assets/pdfs/green-pricing-top-10-2021-data-archives.pdf>

## STORMWATER SYSTEM

The River Falls stormwater management system includes a series of drainage pipes, stormwater retention ponds, and stormwater outfalls, which release water into existing water bodies. The various pipes and ponds are owned and managed by either the city, one of the counties, the state, University of Wisconsin-River Falls, or private landowners.

Effective stormwater management is important for maintaining surface and ground water quality, reducing the flooding effects of large storm events, and providing public safety by limiting standing water along roadways. The city owns and maintains 120 stormwater treatment structures, including 39 wet detention basins, 28 dry detention basins (dry ponds), 28 infiltration basins, 10 rain gardens, 8 grassed swales, 3 grassed swales over rock trenches, 2 pervious pavement areas, 1 rock trench, and 1 bioretention/filtration basin. The following figure shows the various stormwater facilities that serve the city.



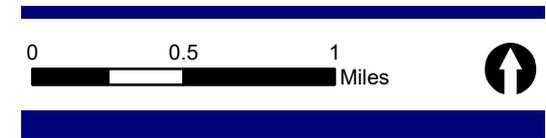


## Legend

- River Falls City Limits
  - Roads
  - Lakes and Rivers
  - Stormwater Outfall
- ### Stormwater Pipes
- City Storm Pipe
  - County Storm Pipe
  - Private Storm Pipe
  - State Storm Pipe
  - UWRF Storm Pipe

### Stormwater Ponds

- City Pond
- County Pond
- Private Pond
- State Pond
- UWRF Pond



# River Falls Stormwater Facilities

## Technical Memorandum - Utilities and Community Facilities

### COMMUNITY SAFETY

Community safety in River Falls is provided by the River Falls Police Department, the River Falls Fire Department, and Allina Health Emergency Services (Allina EMS).

#### Police

The River Falls Police Department staffs twenty-five sworn police officers, and three civilian staff members. The department manages approximately 6,000 service calls per year and serves the City of River Falls.

#### Fire

The River Falls Fire Department consists of one station with fifty volunteer members and a full-time chief. The department covers approximately 150 square miles, which extends beyond the city and covers the Town of River Falls, most of the Town of Clifton, the Town of Kinnickinnic, some of the Town of Troy, and some of the Town of Pleasant Valley.

#### Allina Emergency Medical Services

Beginning in November 2020, Allina Emergency Medical Services became the primary ambulance provider in River Falls. Allina EMS provides ambulatory services for River Falls and surrounding communities.

Allina EMS operates an ambulance station out of River Falls and includes a full-time staff of trained first responders.



## EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

River Falls is home to the City of River Falls School District, the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, and a Chippewa Valley Technical College campus. Together, these educational opportunities provide unique opportunities for the community as it continues to grow.

### City of River Falls School District

Based on information provided by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, the City of River Falls School District had a total enrollment of 3,427 students in the 2020-2021 school year. Schools in the district include:

- River Falls Virtual/e-School
- Renaissance Charter Academy
- Westside Elementary School
- Rocky Branch Elementary School
- Community Based Preschool
- St. Bridget Parish School
- River Falls Public Montessori
- Greenwood Elementary School
- Meyer Middle School
- River Falls High School
- Private Schools



### University of Wisconsin-River Falls

River Falls is home to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, which enrolls approximately 6,000 students annually. Although not operated by the city, the University plays an important role in the economic, cultural, and social development of the city. The University includes spaces for lectures, collaboration, labs, housing, and entertainment. Enrollment for the University has experienced a decline in recent years.



### Chippewa Valley Technical College

In addition to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, the Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) has a campus in the City of River Falls. Across all campuses, in 2021, CVTC had 15,537 total students, which was a decline from 18,910 in 2019.



### RIVER FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Library is the center of River Falls community life. It is a public hub of lifelong learning, entertainment, culture and creativity. The Library provides a wide array of programs on diverse topics for people of all ages. Multi-functional meeting spaces are available for community group meetings and events. Public computers with internet access are available for use, as well as printers, copiers and a fax machine. Public Wi-Fi service can be accessed in and around the library. A variety of physical collections can be checked out with a library card. This includes books, DVDs, CDs, magazines, newspapers, many different types of technology tools, and special collections like book club bags, puzzles, and activity kits. The library provides access to many electronic collections like Value Line (for investors), video tutorials, and more. It also provides access to Wisconsin's Digital Library of eBooks, eVideos, eMagazines, and eAudio material. The Public Library provides a variety of resources and amenities for the community, including the following metrics from 2022:

- Total circulation for was **205,261**. This is the total number of times that a physical item (books, DVD, CDs, equipment, magazines, newspapers, various types of kits, etc.) was checked out.
- Total circulation via Interlibrary loan of **31,760 physical items** from other libraries to our patrons.
- Public computers with internet access were used more than **8,000 times**.
- The website was visited more than **83,000 times**.
- The service desk staff answered over **6,000 reference questions**.
- The library welcomed over **111,000 visitors**.
- Library patrons used *Electronic Materials* (E-Books, E-Audio, E-Video) more **50,000 times**.
- River Falls *Electronic Collections* (database subscriptions like ValueLine, Tumblebooks, Niche Academy, Dear Reader & Book News) were accessed over **12,000 times**.
- Over **275 programs** were hosted in the summer. In total, these programs were attended by over **6,000 times** (in-person, virtual live and virtual recorded attendance).

## Technical Memorandum – Utilities and Community Facilities

### OTHER COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

There are a variety of community facilities that work together to serve River Falls residents. Below is a high-level overview of the existing inventory of community facilities in the city (note that not all are managed directly by the City of River Falls):

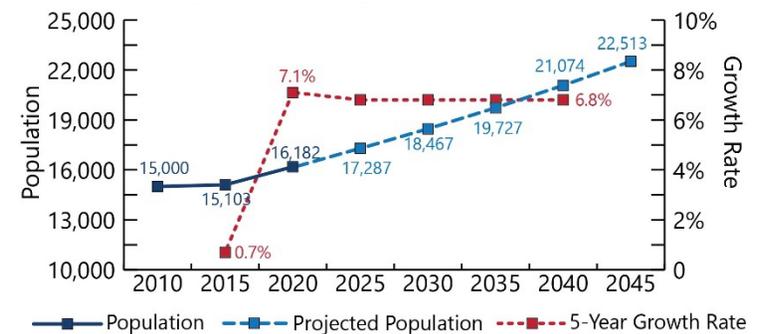
<b>River Falls School District Facilities</b>	Nine schools offering education to elementary, middle, and high school students
<b>University of Wisconsin-River Falls</b>	Classroom, collaboration, and event space provided for students and staff. Some facilities available to general public.
<b>Senior Center (located in Wellhaven Senior Living)</b>	Offers limited education, well-being, recreation, and social opportunities for senior citizens.
<b>River Falls Recreation Programs</b>	Programs offered for aquatic, youth, and adult focuses.

## INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH

The City of River Falls is projected to grow by approximately 6,300 people between 2020 and 2045 based upon the population projections developed for the Focus River Falls process. Assuming a consistent 2.4 people per household, the community will need an additional 2,600 housing units from 2020 to 2045 to house the growth. In order to support that population growth, the community will need to expand the provision of community services, utility systems, and transportation infrastructure.

The Land Use Chapter (Chapter 8) of the Comprehensive Plan includes a future land use map, identifying preferred land uses through the city limits and intended expansion areas. The Future Land Use Map includes areas where both commercial and residential uses are preferred (also known as mixed use development), areas where redevelopment could result in higher densities, and potential residential growth areas, that are currently located outside the city limits. As these areas are developed or redeveloped, they may create an additional need for infrastructure services.

**Population Projections, 2020 - 2045**



## Technical Memorandum – Utilities and Community Facilities

While outward expansion will be necessary to accommodate the projected population growth, the City should prioritize compact, mixed use development in areas that are already served by utilities and infrastructure. Further, when expanding outward and extending utilities, care should be taken to ensure that development standards are making full use of the financial investments necessary to install the facilities.

Various land use, annexation, and development decisions will impact the need for the city to extend services to new areas. As such, the fiscal and environmental impacts of infrastructure expansion should be considered when making these decisions. The following implementation actions from the Comprehensive Plan should be considered when expanding utility services to new locations:

The city will be developing service territory plans for utilities, including water, wastewater, and electricity intended to address future expansion. As a part of that planning process, consideration should be the potential future need for a new well in the northwest quadrant of the community and need that should be considered when/if the area around Radio Road and Powell Avenue is annexed and developed.

The city should incorporate metrics into service territory plans to track the effects of system expansion and the impacts of community growth on community services and facilities. Some metrics include the ratio of new/redevelopment that is located within the planned utility service area vs. development that is located outside the planned utility service area, annexed area developed density, and school enrollment and school class size.

## TOOLS AND RESOURCES

### STORMWATER MANAGEMENT TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Communities can implement a variety of strategies to improve their stormwater management. Those strategies range from regulation, to education, to infrastructure projects. In River Falls, the Kinnickinnic Rive Corridor Plan provides some planning related to protecting and enhancing water quality in the Kinnickinnic River. Those strategies should be implemented in collaboration with the programming identified in this plan.

The following guidance outlines a variety of tools and resources that can be used by River Falls to improve the management and treatment of stormwater.

### Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Permitting

In accordance with state and federal law, the City of River Falls is required to have a Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System Permit (MS4) issued by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. MS4 permits require cities to reduce the pollutants contained in stormwater runoff by adopting stormwater management programs that increase the use of best management practices (BMPs). Typical permitting requirements include:

- Public Education and Outreach
- Public Involvement and Participation
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- Construction Site Pollutant Control
- Post-Construction Stormwater Management
- Pollution Prevention Practices for the City
- Development Urbanized Area Standard
- Storm Sewer System Maps

### Wisconsin DNR Resources

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides several resources that are intended to help municipalities implement and improve their stormwater management and water quality programs and regulations. Those resources include:

- **The Stormwater Technical Standards, Models, and BMPs** provides guidance that is intended to assist communities and private entities design, install, and maintain stormwater management and erosion control measures. Information includes technical standards, modeling to help practitioners understand runoff, and general best management practices (BMP) guidance.<sup>3</sup>
- **The Wisconsin Stormwater Manual** provides technical design guidelines for stormwater management practices. Published by the Wisconsin DNR, the manual is intended to be used by local governments, planners, and engineers that work in stormwater



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<sup>3</sup> Stormwater Technical Standards, Models, and BMPs. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Stormwater/standards>

## Technical Memorandum – Utilities and Community Facilities

management and runoff. The guidance included in the manual is intended to help practitioners create and implement projects that address both the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff.<sup>4</sup>

- **The Healthy Waters, High-Quality Waters Action Plan** “lays the foundation for greater balance between restoration and protection” of Wisconsin’s surface waters. The plan includes action steps directing the DNR to provide greater guidance for local jurisdictions and organizations looking to improve watershed health.<sup>5</sup>

### Local Stormwater Management Programs

Localities can adopt ordinances and programs intended to reduce the negative impacts of stormwater runoff, including regulating land development to ensure it has stormwater management facilities that are sufficient to serve the development. In particular, River Falls has developed various projects in an effort to further the community’s stormwater management goals. Those projects include the Lake George Project, a Rain Garden Demonstration Project, and the West Side Storm Water Demonstration Project.



<sup>4</sup> The Wisconsin Stormwater Manual. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/stormwater/documents/StormwaterManual2-TechnicalDesign.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Healthy Waters, High-Quality Waters. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/SurfaceWater/HQW.html>

## Technical Memorandum – Utilities and Community Facilities

There are a variety of programs that communities can use to help enhance their community wide stormwater management. Example programs from other jurisdictions are as follows:

- **Madison, WI** has a variety of programs and initiatives with the goal of getting community residents involved with improving the city’s water quality and stormwater management. Many of these programs are a collaboration between the City and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Programs include:
  - Permeable Pavement Test Site – The City uses the test site to educate community members about the importance of stormwater management.
  - Roger Bannerman Rain Garden Program – Run by the University of Wisconsin’s-Madison’s Engineering Department, provides community members with the resources necessary to construct DIY rain gardens at their homes.
  - Storm Drain Murals – Public art on storm drains is intended to encourage residents to pay attention to what flows into the drain and learn about the importance of keeping stormwater clean.
- **Hudson, WI** hosts an Interactive Public Stormwater Facility Map and storyboard. The map shares important information about the city’s many stormwater management facilities.
- **Eau Claire, WI** in collaboration with the Chippewa Valley Storm Water Forum has sponsored an education campaign called Rain to Rivers, intended to educate the public about protecting and improving the quality of local lakes, streams, rivers, and watersheds.
- **Charlotte, SC** in collaboration with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services hosts an interactive map to show stormwater management projects in the area.

## SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

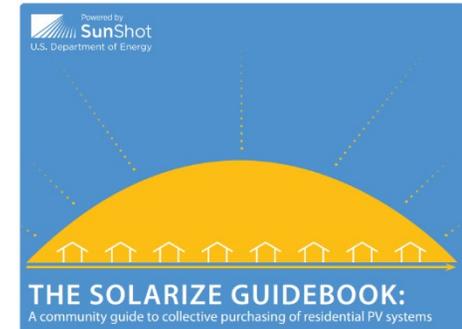
The general concept of resilience has been identified as a as a key theme in this plan. This plan defines resilience as “city’s/community’s ability to endure and recover from unexpected occurrences.” The City’s utility and infrastructure system is a key aspect of ensuring and maintaining a high quality of life for the communities’ residents and businesses. Keeping that in mind, a sustainable and resilient infrastructure system is one that provides the necessary services to support the community, while minimizing the negative environmental, economic, social, and fiscal impacts of the system. Further, a sustainable and resilient system is adaptable to changing environmental and climate circumstances and minimizes the amount of time that any one system is non-operational.



## Technical Memorandum – Utilities and Community Facilities

Additionally, the RFMU and the River Falls community have embraced renewable energy as a key source of electricity. Continuing these efforts will not only improve the environmental sustainability of the electricity system, but it will also help to diversify the community's electricity production portfolio. Maintaining and enhancing the various programs can help continue the movement towards sustainable energy:

- **River Falls Community Solar** – The City of River Falls owns a solar array that residents, local businesses, and local governments can subscribe to use. Subscribers can purchase a share of the system, and in return receive a credit towards their monthly electric bill.
- **Group Purchasing** – Similar to a community solar system, group purchasing allows individuals to purchase solar systems for their homes or businesses together. A group purchase allows all purchasers to receive a volume discount.<sup>6</sup>
- **Hydro Generation** – Hydropower has been an element of the city's electric generation for the last 123 years through two dams. The Junction Falls dam is functional today, while the Powell Falls dam was breached in the 2020 flood and is still in place, but is no longer producing hydroelectricity. The electricity produced by Junction Falls dam powers less than two percent of the City's electric demand. Through 2017 and 2018 the Kinni Corridor planning process engaged the community about the dams and the river and at the end of 2018, the City Council passed a resolution to remove both dams over time to support a free flowing Kinnickinnic River. Today the City is working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to determine if a river restoration project would be a candidate for federal funding through the USACE. The study will take 18-24 months and then the City Council will consider the outcomes and determine the path forward.




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<sup>6</sup> The Solarize Guidebook. National Renewable Energy Laboratory, U.S. Department of Energy. <https://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy12osti/54738.pdf>

# LAND USE ELEMENT ANALYSIS

## INTRODUCTION

This technical memorandum provides data, detailed analysis, and additional information that is intended to supplement the Land Use Element within the Focus River Falls Comprehensive Plan. Included in this analysis is an overview of community input related to land use and development, data outlining the community's existing land use conditions, and an overview of strategies related to River Falls land use priorities. Additionally, the memo includes detailed information about the tools and resources that are available to assist the city in reaching its goals, including detailed information about the future land use plan, and discussions about key land use and development topics such as mixed-use development, design and performance standards, green corridors, and development and zoning regulations.



## ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Information obtained through the engagement process was used to guide the development of the Land Use Element and the Future Land Use Plan. Through the Community Survey, community members were able to provide their feedback on the preferred growth patterns, built form, and development style for the community. Because Land Use reaches across so many topic areas, responses that helped to direct the development of this element covered a range of topics, that also helped to inform other topic elements within the Focus River Falls Comprehensive Plan.

The following commentary is a portion of the feedback received throughout the engagement process, see Appendix C for a full overview of engagement.



## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

In particular, when Community Survey respondents were asked “what is one thing that River Falls can be proud of”, responses addressed a variety of topic areas:

Small-Town Feel	Environmental Amenities	Downtown and Town Aesthetics	Growth
<p>“Small town feel, safe.”</p> <p>“We’re growing but living here still feels like a small town. I feel safe here”</p> <p>“As of now has a rural, laid-back feel.”</p> <p>“Our small town-ness”</p> <p>“Small town, community feel.”</p>	<p>“Nature.”</p> <p>“River”</p> <p>“The Kinnickinnic River”</p> <p>“Great natural spaces.”</p> <p>“The Kinni is an amazing resource. It attracts so many people to RF, but is not easily accessible.”</p>	<p>“Main Street.”</p> <p>“How the people and government respect and want to keep the aesthetic of the town beautiful.”</p> <p>“Downtown.”</p> <p>“A vibrant small town downtown”</p>	<p>“Recent growth.”</p> <p>“Great growing community.”</p>

**Question:** If new growth occurs within River Falls, identify the locations and types of growth you’d support. (Select all that apply)

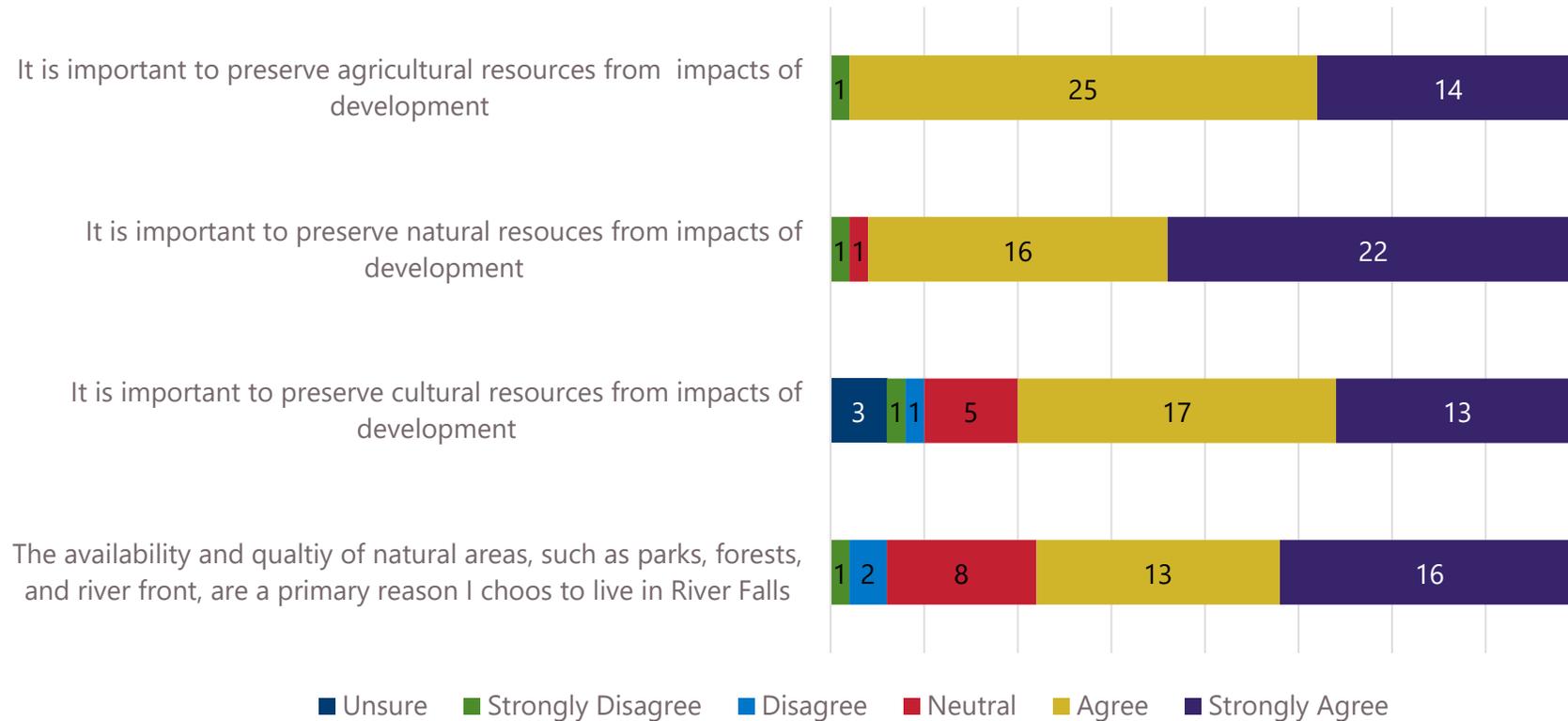
**Key Takeaway:** While Community Survey respondents seem to support the need for new growth in River Falls, they would like growth to happen through infill and increased density in the city. Sixty-eight percent of respondents support development of vacant properties, 58 percent support infill of vacant or undeveloped properties, and 73 percent support redevelopment of existing properties.



## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

**Question:** Rate your level of agreement with the following statements.

**Key Takeaway:** Community Survey respondents understand and support the protection of agricultural, natural, and cultural resources within the community. Responses support land use policies that will work to protect these areas from development.



## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

The City of River Falls also participates in the National Community Survey (NCS) every other year. The NCS provides additional information and insight into community opinions and values. Various results from the 2021 NCS are applicable to the Land Use Chapter:

- 70 percent of respondents stated that the overall layout of residential and commercial areas is excellent or good.
- 85 percent of respondents rated their neighborhood as a place to live as excellent or good.

Further, the following table outlines responses to community design related questions:

<b>Please rate each of the following in River Falls:</b> (% excellent or good)	<b>2015</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2021</b>
Well-planned residential growth	-	-	-	61%
Well-planned commercial growth	-	-	-	44%
Well-designed neighborhoods	-	-	-	59%
Preservation of the historical or cultural character of the community	-	-	-	69%
Public places where people want to spend time	76%	75%	77%	70%
Variety of housing options	63%	63%	45%	48%
Availability of affordable housing	55%	49%	34%	39%
Overall quality of new development	65%	58%	65%	54%
Overall appearance	87%	89%	89%	78%

## LAND USE CONTEXT

The following section explores existing land use data, zoning, and planning elements that affect existing land use patterns. Each of these items plays a role in planning for future land use issues within River Falls and provides the base conditions for the Future Land Use Plan.

### RIVER FALLS CITY ZONING

River Falls Code of Ordinances and official zoning map include 15 distinct zoning districts. As is typically the case, the districts fall across five traditional use categories 1) residential; 2) commercial; 3) industrial; 4) institutional; and 5) open space and agricultural. The dominant zoning, accounting for nearly 43 percent of the city’s total land area, is single family low density, which is the traditional single family zoning district for River Falls. The second largest zoning district is the University zone, which accommodates the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and its various land use and zoning needs. See the following pages for the zoning map and Table 1 for a description of each zoning district.

**Table 1. Zoning Districts in River Falls**

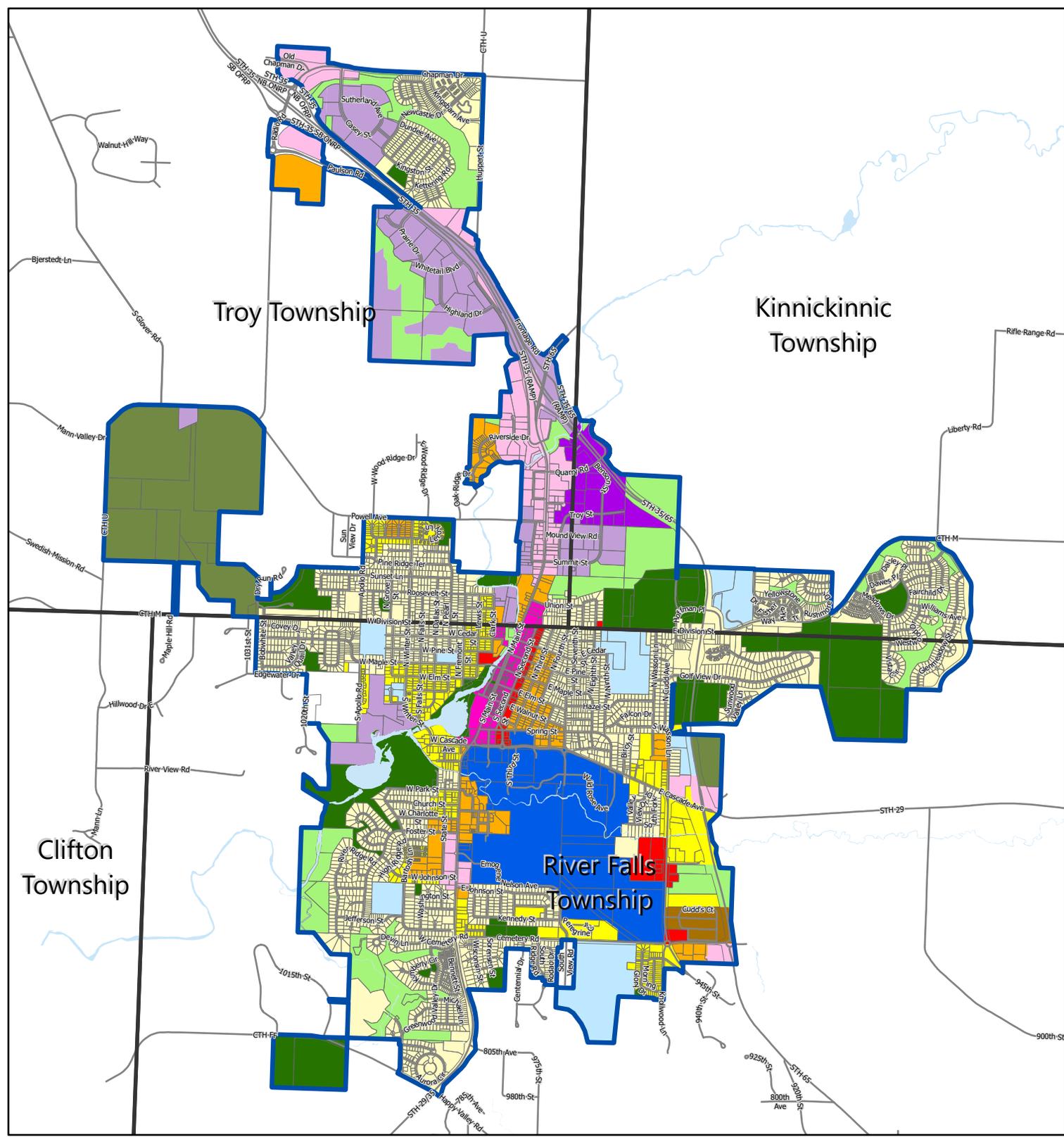
Code	Zone Name	Zone Purpose/Intent	Acres	Percent
R1	Single Family Low Density	The R-1 district is intended to provide a quiet, pleasant, and relatively spacious living area protected from traffic hazards and intrusion of incompatible land uses.	5,301	42.7%
R2	Multiple Family Medium Density	The R-2 district is intended to provide a limited or medium density multiple-family living area that is compatible with existing single-family dwellings.	802	6.5%
R3	Multiple Family High Density	The R-3 district is intended to provide a district of higher density housing in multiple-family structures and related complimentary uses.	280	2.3%
MHP	Mobile Home Park	The purpose of this chapter is to enforce minimum standards for mobile home parks; promote the public health, safety and welfare; establish requirements for the design, construction, alteration, extension and maintenance of mobile home parks and related facilities and utilities; authorize the issuance of permits for construction, alteration and extension of mobile home parks; authorize the licensing of operators of mobile home parks; authorize the inspection of mobile home parks; regulate the location of mobile homes; and fix penalties for violations.	31	0.2%

## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

Code	Zone Name	Zone Purpose/Intent	Acres	Percent
TND	Traditional Neighborhood Development	The purpose of this district is to allow for the development of fully integrated, mixed-use pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods. The intent is to minimize traffic congestion, suburban sprawl, infrastructure cost and environmental degradation. Its provision adapted urban conventions, which were normally in the United States and the City of River Falls until the 1940's and historically were based on the design principals.	188	1.5%
U	University	The U district is intended to provide an orderly process whereby institutions of higher education can develop needed facilities yet exist and function in a manner compatible with surrounding land uses and the community as a whole.	1,857	15.0%
B3	Highway Commercial	The B-3 District is intended to provide for service-oriented enterprises and for quasi-industrial and commercial enterprises that have considerable contact and a dependence upon transient trade and traffic.	984	7.9%
B1	General Commercial	The B-1 district is intended to provide for a business or shopping district enhanced by a central location, ease of access and proximity to one another.	128	1.0%
B2	Limited Business	The B-2 district is intended to provide a transition zone between B-1, General Commercial and Residential by allowing limited commercial uses which are compatible with commercial on one side and residential on the other, while preserving the scale and character of the existing neighborhood.	549	4.4%
I1	Industrial	The I-1 district is intended to provide an area for light industrial uses which do not detract from an adjacent area of less intense land use or become a blighting influence on the area.	594	4.8%
I2	Heavy Industrial	The purpose of the I-2 district is to provide a district for heavy industrial and manufacturing uses in areas generally separated from other sections of the city.	151	1.2%
HZ	Hospital Zone	The purpose of the HZ district shall be to provide an area for the exclusive use of hospitals and auxiliary and accessory uses and structures, to create a zone in which this type of land use may be engaged in as a permitted use of property, free of conflicts with other types of land uses permitted or conditionally permitted in districts in which hospitals constitute special permit land uses.	32	0.3%
SZ	School Zone	The purpose of the SZ district shall be to provide an exclusive area for use by elementary and secondary schools and technical colleges, together with customary accessory uses and structures and to create a zone in which auxiliary types of this land use may be engaged in as a conditionally permitted use.	174	1.4%

## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

Code	Zone Name	Zone Purpose/Intent	Acres	Percent
P	Park	The Parks district encompass recreation facilities and serve an important role in maintaining the quality of life in the urban environment and provide for a broad range of leisure activities, including, but not limited to, swimming pools, tennis courts, sports fields, recreation centers, music, picnic areas and playgrounds.	520	4.2%
C	Conservancy	The purpose of the C district is to protect and preserve valuable natural resources, open space and visual character. Natural resource areas exhibit diversity and balance, including prairie, hillsides, forestland, waters of the state, wetlands, stormwater facilities, and floodplains, and are managed for nature-based recreation and education activities.	449	3.6%
A	Agriculture	The purpose of the A district is to provide suitable areas for exclusive agricultural use, to conserve good farming areas, preventing the uncontrolled spread of development and secure economy in the provision of public services.	375	3.0%
<b>Total</b>			<b>14,415</b>	<b>100%</b>

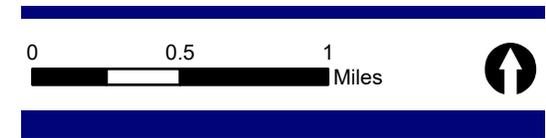


### Legend

- River Falls City Limits
- Township Boundaries
- Roads
- Lakes and Rivers

### City Zoning

- A - Agriculture
- B1 - General Commercial
- B2 - Limited Business
- B3 - Highway Commercial
- C - Conservancy
- HZ - Hospital Zone
- I1 - Industrial
- I2 - Heavy Industrial
- MHP - Mobile Home Park
- P - Park
- R1 - Single Family Low Density
- R2 - Multiple Family Medium Density
- R3 - Multiple Family High Density
- SZ - School Zone
- TND - Traditional Neighborhood Development
- U - University



# River Falls City Zoning Map

## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

### EXTERRITORIAL CONTROLS

Wisconsin State Statute 63.23(7a) gives first-, second-, and third-class municipalities the power to have official zoning and development controls over the areas up to a three miles outside their city limits while fourth class cities and villages can extend up to one and a half miles. River Falls is a third-class city, so it has the option to exert zoning controls on land up to three miles outside its corporate limits. Further, the city has extraterritorial review jurisdiction over the subdivision of land located outside of city limits. By using its extraterritorial zoning power, cities can protect their future growth planning by ensuring that property that is developed outside of the city is consistent with city growth plans.

### Extraterritorial Zoning

While state law allows extraterritorial zoning to extend up to three miles, the City of River Falls includes extraterritorial zoning control over areas up to approximately 1.5 miles outside of the city limits. The City’s extraterritorial area includes 7,881 total acres and includes nine different zoning designations. The dominant zoning category is agricultural, with 39 percent of the total area identified as Exclusive agricultural (A1), and 35 percent identified as Agricultural (A). Table 2 below describes the various zones, including the amount of land that is included within each one.

**Table 2. River Falls Extraterritorial Zoning Districts**

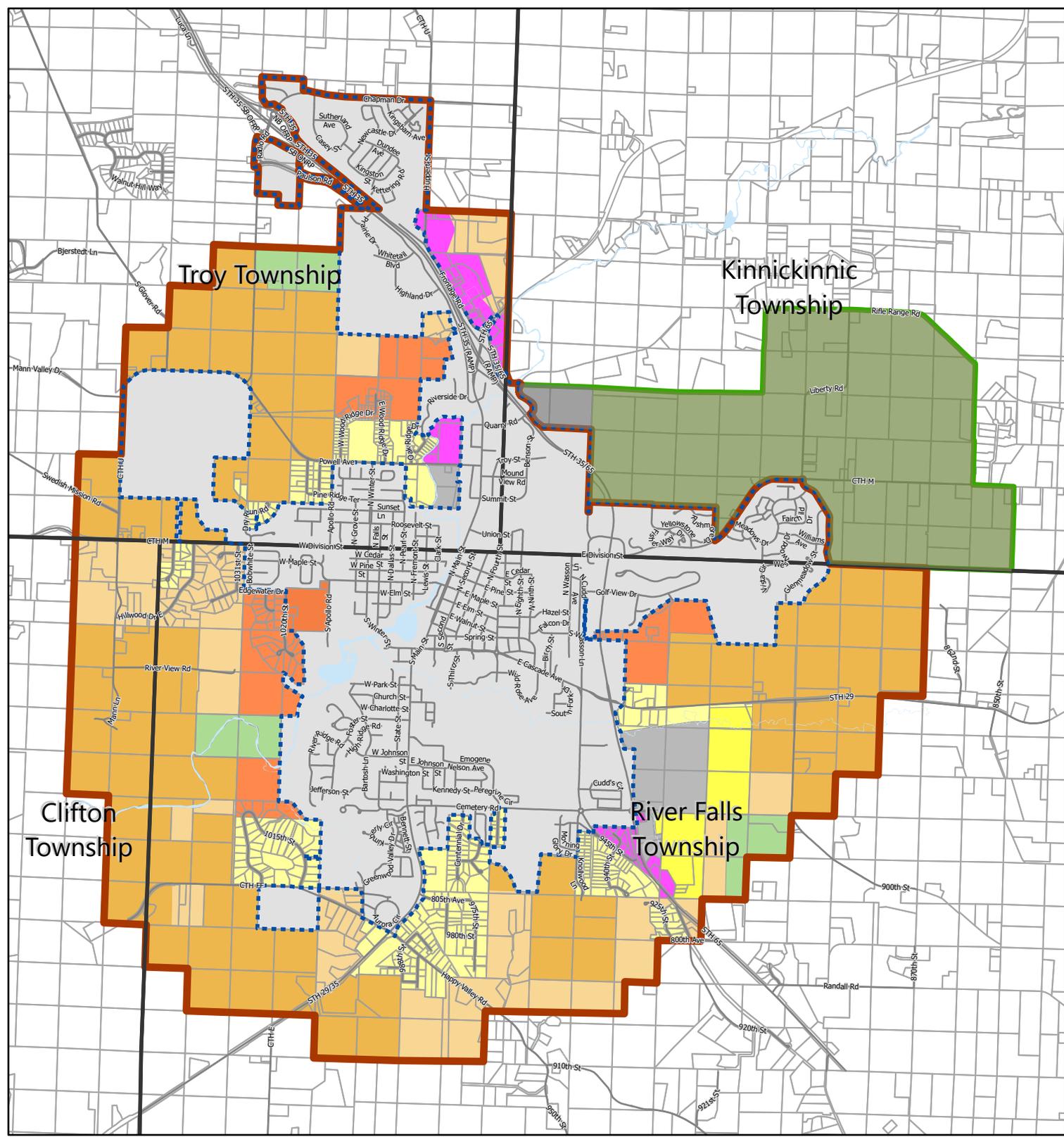
Code	Zone Name	Zone Purpose/Intent	Acres	Percent
A1	Exclusive agricultural	The A1 district provides for exclusive agricultural uses. The intent is to preserve productive agricultural soils, maintain agriculture as a permanent, viable land use and economic activity, control untimely and uneconomical expansion of urban facilities and services, avoid conflicting land uses and comply with the provisions of the Farmland Preservation Law to permit eligible landowners to receive tax credits, as per Wisconsin Statutes.	3,068	38.9%
RS	Single-family suburban residence	The RS district is intended to provide a pleasant and spacious living area. The larger lot sizes shall encourage preservation of wooded areas and other green space, yet enable development.	461	5.8%
R1	Single-family residence	The R1 district is intended to provide a quiet, pleasant, and relatively spacious living area protected from traffic hazards and intrusion of incompatible land uses.	798	10.1%
R2	Multiple-family residence	The R2 district is intended to provide a living area that is pleasant, but not as spacious as the R1 district.	177	2.2%

## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

Code	Zone Name	Zone Purpose/Intent	Acres	Percent
C	Highway commercial	The C district is intended to provide for commercial activities related to the vehicular traffic along highways.	176	2.2%
I	Industrial	The I district is intended to provide for industrial and manufacturing uses in areas separated from other sections of the city.	190	2.4%
I2	Heavy Industrial	The I2 district is intended to provide a location for heavy industrial and manufacturing uses in areas generally separated from other sections of the city.	59	0.7%
A	Agricultural	The A district provides exclusively for agricultural uses. The intent is to help conserve good farming areas and prevent uncontrolled, uneconomical spread of residential development which results in excess costs to the community for premature provision of essential public improvements and services (sewer and water lines).	2,718	34.5%
W	Conservancy	The W district is intended to provide a district which is established to preserve and perpetuate in an open state, certain areas, such as wetlands, marshes, woodlands and other areas of aesthetic and scenic value which, because of their physical features, are desirable as water retention areas, natural habitat for plant and animal life, green space, or other uses beneficial to the community. The W district is also intended to prevent uncontrolled, uneconomical spread of development and to help discourage intensive development of marginal lands so as to prevent potential hazards to public and private property.	235	3.0%
<b>Total</b>			<b>7,881</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Exterritorial Planning and Growth Boundaries

In addition to extraterritorial zoning, the city has an extraterritorial subdivision boundary. Properties within the subdivision boundary are required to request approval from the City for any subdivision. Standards governing the splitting of land in these areas are included in River Falls Code of Ordinances [Chapter 16.10 Extraterritorial Subdivisions](#). The city also has an existing Urban Area Boundary, which is described on [page A6-17](#) of this memorandum. The Urban Area Boundary was introduced in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan to delineate the long-term growth area for the city, where urban development principles are intended to be applied. The following figure displays these boundaries.



### Legend

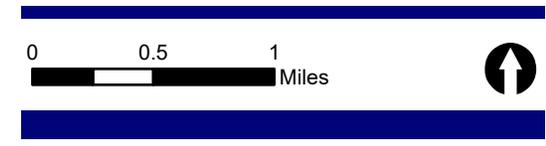
- River Falls City Limits
- Extraterritorial Zoning Boundary (ETZ)
- Urban Reserve Area Zoning - Kinnickinnic Township
- Roads
- Township Boundaries
- Lakes and Rivers

### Urban Reserve Area Zoning - Kinnickinnic Township

- A - Agriculture
- I2 - Heavy Industrial

### Extraterritorial Zoning

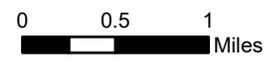
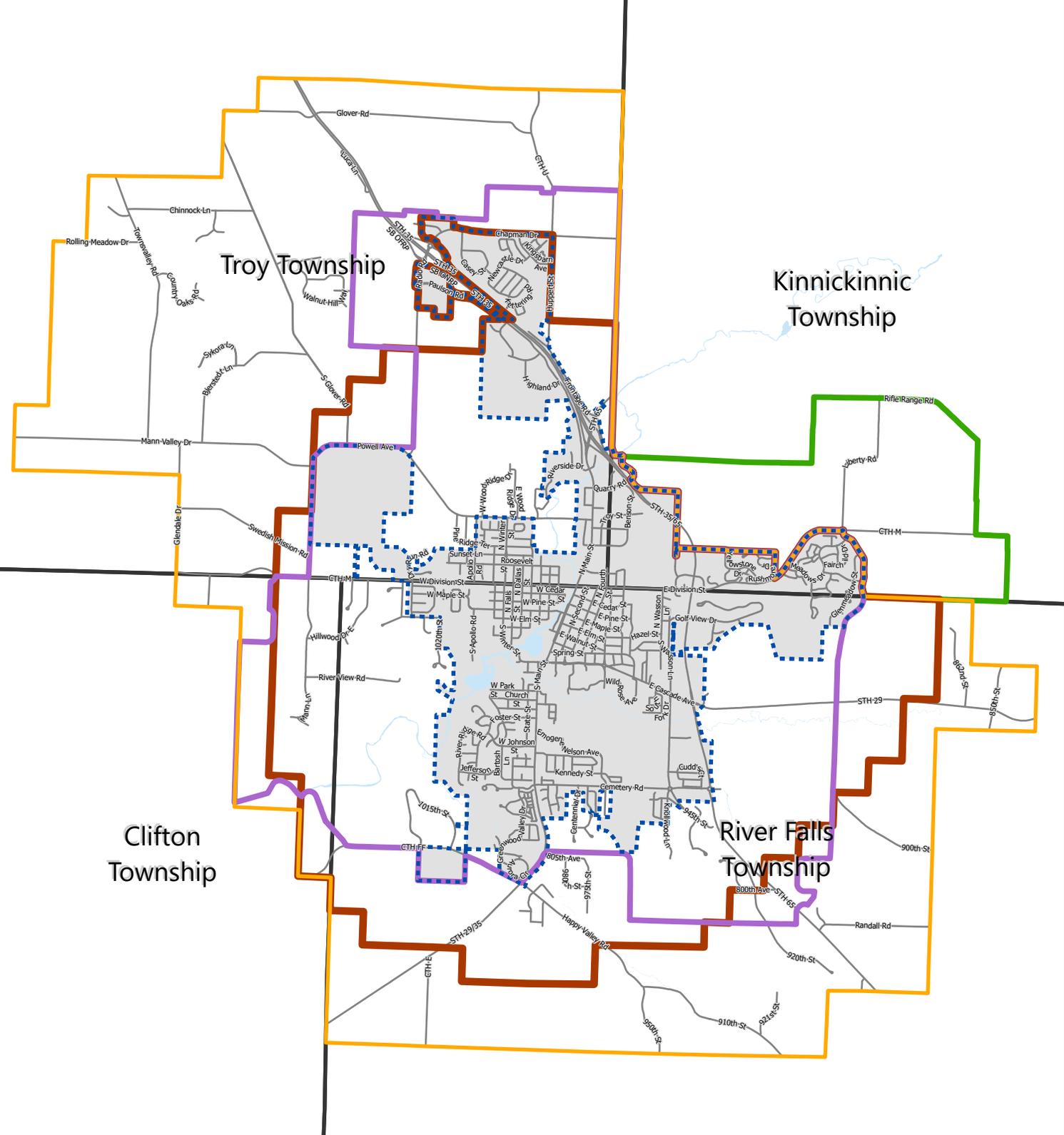
- Agriculture
- Exclusive Agriculture
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Single Family
- Multiple Family
- Residential Suburban
- Conservancy



# Extraterritorial Zoning Map

# Legend

-  River Falls City Limits
-  Township Boundaries
-  Roads
-  Lakes and Rivers
-  Existing Subdivision Control Boundary
-  Extraterritorial Zoning Boundary (ETZ)
-  2005 Urban Area Boundary
-  Urban Reserve Area Zoning - Kinnickinnic Township



# River Falls Extraterritorial Boundaries

## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

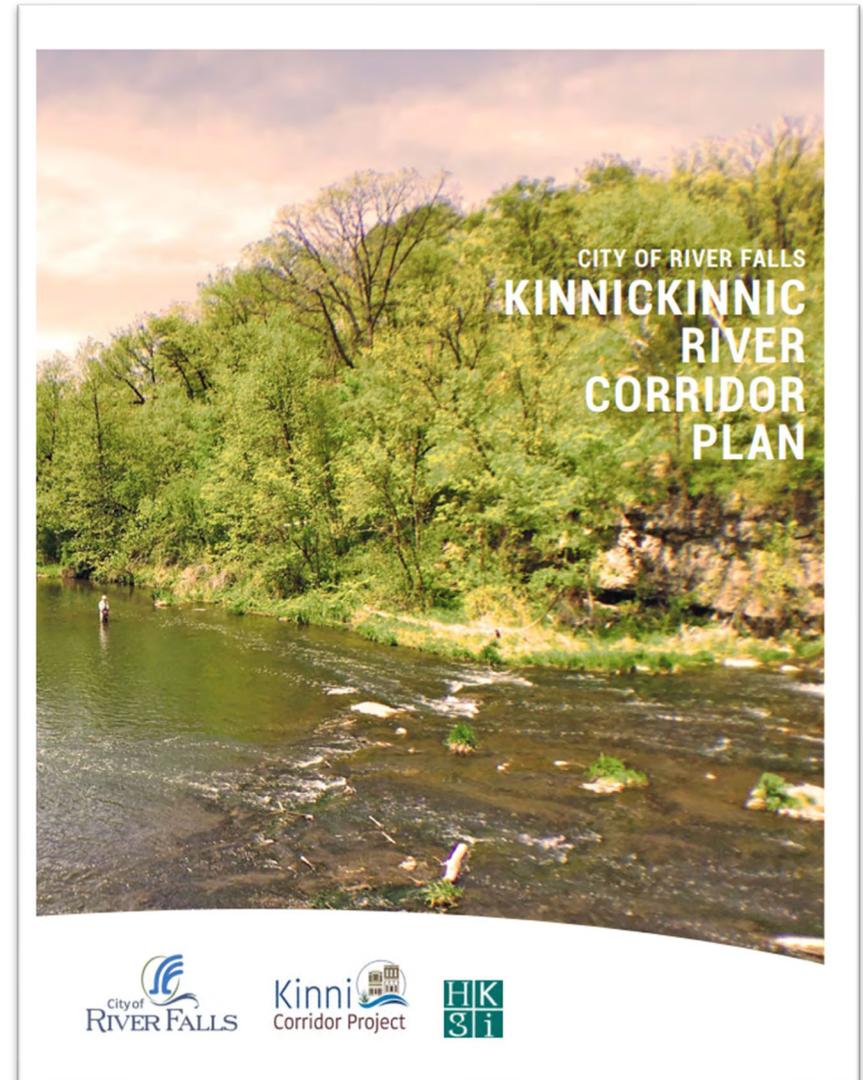
### KINNICKINNIC RIVER CORRIDOR PLAN

Running through the center of River Falls is the Kinnickinnic (Kinni) River. To help the community understand the role and value the Kinni Corridor brings to River Falls, the city adopted the Kinnickinnic River Corridor Plan (Kinni Corridor Plan) in 2019. The plan is intended to serve as a guide for elected officials, city staff, and the public to pursue improvements to the Kinni Corridor that protect, maintain, and enhance the river.

To guide decision making on a high level, the plan identifies a vision and guiding principles for the corridor. More specifically, the document includes a Master Plan, which has recommendations that are grouped into four categories: 1) Natural Resources and River Ecology; 2) Parks and Recreation; 3) Land Use and Economic Development; and 4) Access and Connectivity. Each of these categories is addressed within the River Falls Comprehensive Plan and implementation of each plan should occur simultaneously.

#### Kinni Corridor Vision

*The Kinni River Corridor will serve as an asset for the City and community of River Falls. The River Corridor provides opportunities for economic vitality, improves and restores ecological stability of the river and its tributaries, connects residents and visitors to nature and year-round recreational opportunities, strengthens the sense of place and community identity, balances the desire for public use with adjacent property rights, preserves and promotes the history and culture of the region through education, and improves the quality of life for future generations.*



## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

### Kinni Corridor Guiding Principles

*Strengthen and support the Kinni Corridor's:*

1. *Heritage, culture and community character*
2. *Social, environmental and economic sustainability*
3. *Ecological health, performance and stewardship*
4. *Inclusiveness and sense of place*
5. *Economic vitality*
6. *Mix of uses and activities*
7. *Physical, visual and social connections*
8. *Public health and wellness*
9. *Resiliency*
10. *Commitment to community engagement*

### Kinni Corridor Land Use Recommendations

The Land Use Element of the Focus River Falls Comprehensive Plan should work hand-in-hand with the land use recommendations included in the Kinni Corridor Plan. At a high level, those recommendations cover:

- Improve connections between downtown and the riverfront.
- Enhance the physical environment in the corridor.
- Plan for future development/redevelopment opportunities in the corridor.

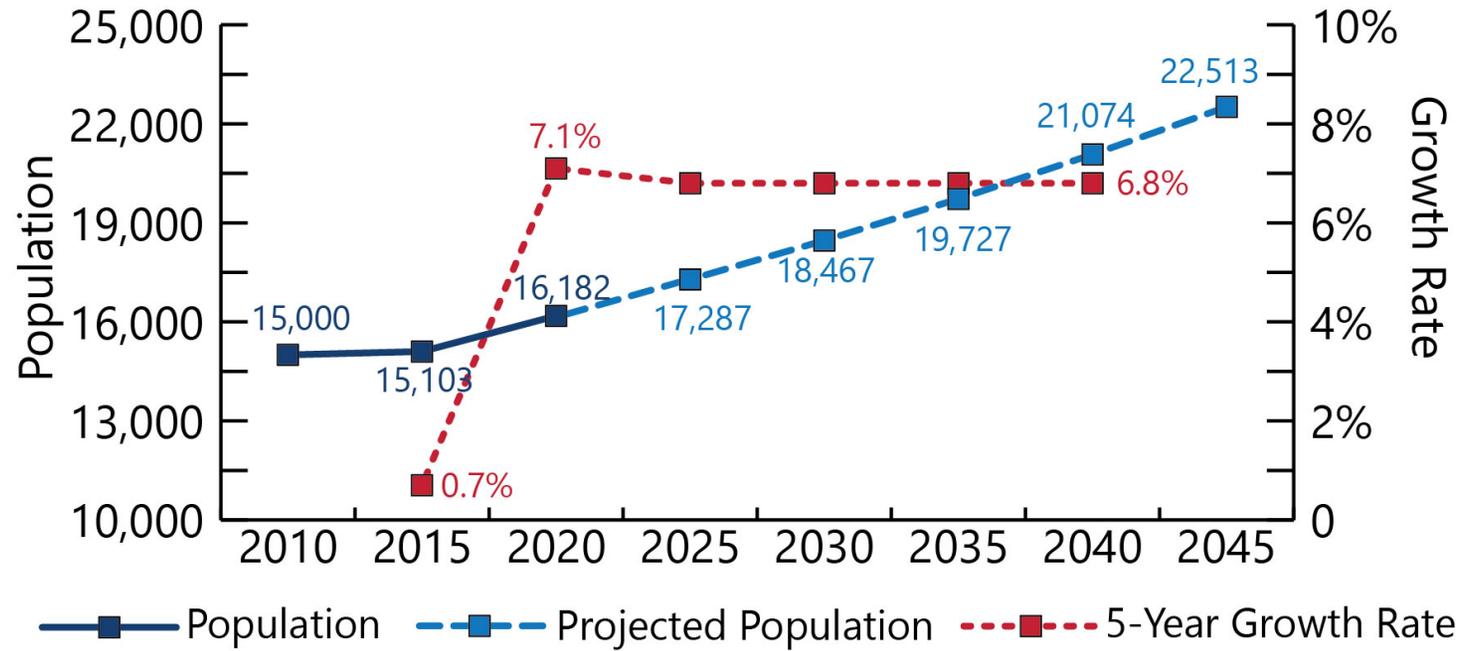
## DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES AND GROWTH

The City of River Falls is projected to grow by 6,331 residents between 2020 and 2045, which corresponds to a five year growth rate of just under 7 percent. Assuming a stable 2.4 people per household, that amount of growth will require annual new housing production of about 105 dwelling units per year. In addition to housing, the growth will necessitate additional services, jobs, and retail shopping options. The Future Land Use Plan needs to accommodate enough new development to provide the additional housing, businesses, and services to support the additional population. See Figure 4 for a graph of projected growth.

## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

River Falls Projected Growth, 2020-2045

### Population Projection, 2020-2045



## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

### FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

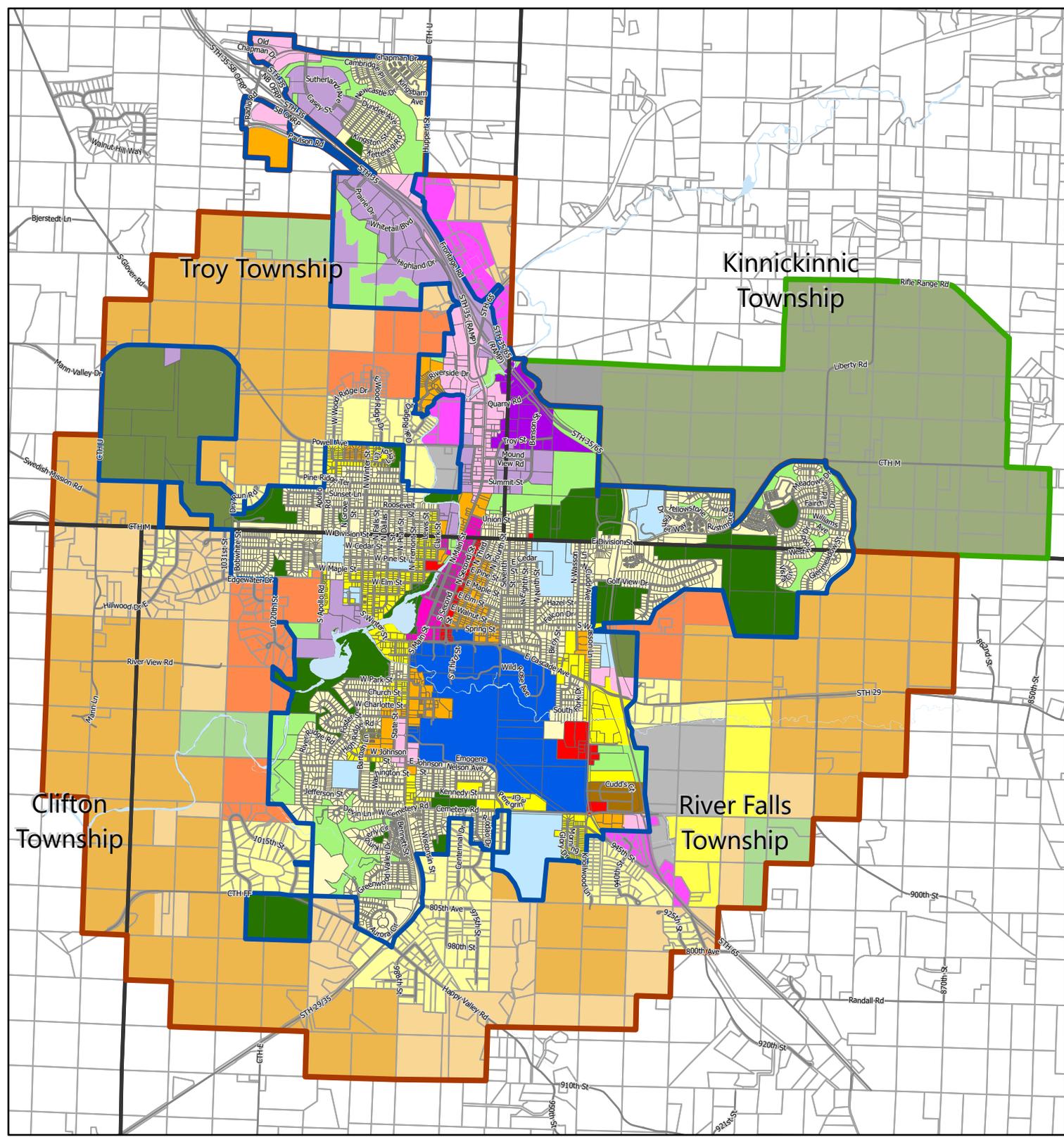
The City of River Falls is looking to manage growth in a manner that provides quality and diverse housing stock, supports local business, and provides a built environment that support community values and sense of place. This Future Land Use Plan builds on those goals to allow for development of additional residential dwellings to accommodate population growth; areas for commercial and industrial development that provides employment opportunities, goods, and services for the community; and protects, enhances, and maintains the natural environment.

### URBAN AREA BOUNDARY

The Urban Area Boundary (UAB) was initially established as a part of the 2005 River Falls Comprehensive Plan. It is intended to provide readily identifiable physical barriers to urban growth, such as existing property lines, roads, and topography. In practice, the Urban Area Boundary identifies a future growth area for the city, where urban development standards should be applied. As identified on the Future Land Use Map, all lands within the UAB have been assigned a future land use category, which should be applied upon annexation into the city. Development outside the city limits, but inside the UAB should reflect urban development standards consistent with the ideal form and design for River Falls.

In addition to the UAB, and as described above, the city has an established extraterritorial zoning boundary and subdivision control boundary which extend beyond the Urban Area Boundary. These control areas allow the City to ensure the development outside the immediate growth area are consistent with long term growth and preservation plans. Large expenditures for utility extension, the construction of roads, or allowing significant levels of new development beyond the UAB will run contrary to the growth management goals in this plan and could contribute to urban sprawl into the rural areas. Under state law, the City can extend subdivision and zoning control up to three miles outside the city limit, as such it should continuously review their extraterritorial zoning and subdivision control boundaries to ensure long-term growth and preservation priorities are being protected.





**Legend**

- River Falls City Limits
- Extraterritorial Zoning Boundary (ETZ)
- Urban Reserve Area Zoning - Kinnickinnic Township
- Township Boundaries
- Roads
- Lakes and Rivers

**City Zoning**

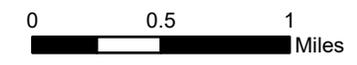
- A - Agriculture
- B1 - General Commercial
- B2 - Limited Business
- B3 - Highway Commercial
- C - Conservancy
- HZ - Hospital Zone
- I1 - Industrial
- I2 - Heavy Industrial
- MHP - Mobile Home Park
- P - Park
- R1 - Single Family Low Density
- R2 - Multiple Family Medium Density
- R3 - Multiple Family High Density
- SZ - School Zone
- TND - Traditional Neighborhood Development
- U - University

**Urban Reserve Area Zoning - Kinnickinnic Township**

- A - Agriculture
- I2 - Heavy Industrial

**Extraterritorial Zoning**

- Agriculture
- Exclusive Agriculture
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Single Family
- Multiple Family
- Residential Suburban
- Conservancy



**Zoning and Extraterritorial Zoning**

# Technical Memorandum – Land Use

## FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

The Future Land Use Map identifies the desired land use and intensity throughout the city. At their base, land use categories describe how land is being used, regardless of how it is currently zoned. In the context of the Future Land Use Map, use categories identify the preferred land use in the future. Each parcel is assigned a use category based on the desired use and the preferred intensity or density. All parcels within the Urban Area Boundary are assigned a Future Land Use Category. Those parcels located outside the existing city limits are identified as Extraterritorial Zoning (ETZ) areas, however the future land use categories are defined the same.

For parcels within the city limits, identified uses will guide city decision making for any future rezoning requests. For parcels located outside the existing city limits, the property should be zoned and developed in accordance with the use identified on the Future Land Use Map upon annexation.

The plan includes 10 land use categories that provide a connection to the zoning ordinance. The Future Land Use Categories are as follows:

### Residential Categories:

Category	Description	Compatible Zoning Districts
Low Density Residential (LDR)	Areas for residential development primarily consisting of single-family dwellings. However, duplexes are allowed. Development should occur at 6 dwellings per acre or fewer.	Single Family Suburban (RS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 2.9 dwelling units/acre</li> </ul> Single Family Low Density (R-1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 5.8 dwelling units /acre</li> <li>• Duplexes</li> </ul>
Medium Density Residential (MDR)	Areas reserved for residential development with a mix of housing types including single-family dwellings, duplexes, townhomes, and small and mid-sized multi-family apartment buildings. Development should occur at 6-12 dwelling units per acre.	Multiple Family (R-2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single Family = up to 5.8 dwelling units /acre</li> <li>• Two-family = up to 11.6 dwelling units /acre</li> <li>• Multi-family = up to 11.6 dwelling units /acre</li> </ul>

## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

Category	Description	Compatible Zoning Districts
High Density Residential (HDR)	Areas reserved for residential development that is primarily multi-family, including apartments, higher density townhomes, and manufactured housing parks. Multi-family development should occur at 12 dwelling units per acre or greater.	<p>Multiple Family (R-3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single Family = up to 5.8 dwelling units /acre</li> <li>• Two-family = up to 11.6 dwelling units /acre</li> <li>• Multi-family = maximum allowed of up to 12 dwelling units /acre (proposed)</li> </ul> <p>Mobile Home Parks (MHP)</p>

### Commercial, Industrial & Other Categories:

Category	Description	Compatible Zoning Districts
Mixed-Use	Areas reserved for a horizontal and vertical mix of residential and commercial uses. Areas within the Downtown District should have vertical mixed-use development, where commercial and residential uses are located within the same structure, with a residential density of 12 DU/acre or greater. Areas outside the Downtown District may have a horizontal mix of commercial and residential uses, where different uses are located on neighboring parcels or within other structures, and residential development occurs at 6 DU/acre or greater.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multifamily Residential (R2)</li> </ul>
Commercial	Areas intended for the location of a variety of commercial uses, including: retail sales, office, service, eating and drinking establishments, and other similar uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Commercial (B-1)</li> <li>• Limited Commercial (B-2)</li> <li>• Highway Commercial (B-3)</li> </ul>
Corporate Park	Areas intended for office, production, and administration uses. Acts as a transition between commercial and industrial uses by allowing higher intensity uses with limited customers on site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Commercial (B-1)</li> <li>• Highway Commercial (B-3)</li> <li>• Industrial (I-1)</li> </ul>

## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

Category	Description	Compatible Zoning Districts
Industrial	Areas intended for manufacturing, distribution, agricultural production, and other similar uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industrial (I-1)</li> <li>Heavy Industrial (I-2)</li> </ul>
Public/Institutional	Areas for schools, government buildings, churches, libraries, fire and police, and other institutional uses. Includes the Chippewa Valley Technical College.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School (SZ)</li> <li>Hospital (HZ)</li> </ul>
University	Areas intended for the University of Wisconsin-River Falls campus and other necessary land uses to support it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University (UZ)</li> </ul>
Park	Designated for park specific uses, including both public and private parks, recreational uses, golf courses, and other active and passive areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Park (P)</li> </ul>
Open Space	Areas reserved for programmed and non-programmed open space uses including natural resource, conservancy, and corridor protection areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conservancy (C)</li> </ul>

## Urban Area Boundary Future Land Uses

Category	Description	Compatible Zoning Districts
UAB – Urban Growth Preservation Area	Areas within the UAB that could support future growth and development; however, existing natural resources or access concerns create current barriers for development. While this area is identified for preservation of current uses, development may be explored and identified as deemed appropriate by city staff and the Plan Commission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All – Specific uses to be guided through analysis by the city staff and the Plan Commission</li> </ul>
UAB – City Edge Growth Preservation Area	Areas within the city’s edge that provide a transition between the city and growth areas and the surrounding townships. The existing uses, open spaces, and large tracts of land should be preserved. However, development may be considered and analyzed as deemed appropriate by city staff and the Plan Commission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All – Specific uses to be guided through analysis by the city staff and the Plan Commission</li> </ul>

## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

### FUTURE LAND USE MAP

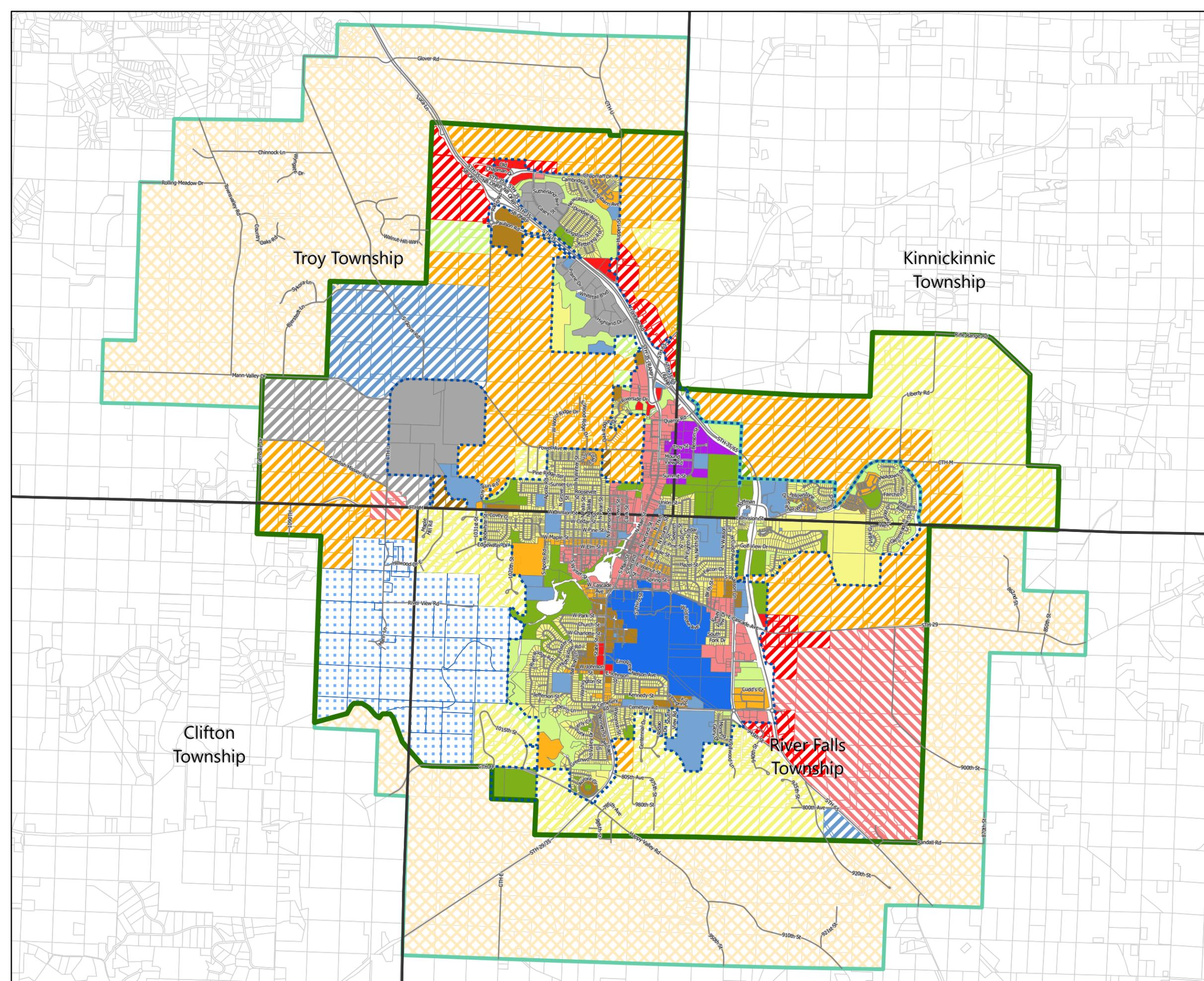
The Future Land Use Map identifies the preferred land use and intensity for each parcel within the city limits and the Urban Area Boundary. For the Future Land Use Map, parcels are assigned a use category based on the desired use for the future. Each category, described in detail above, identifies a primary use or uses and desired intensity or density. The map serves to guide planning staff, the Plan Commission, and the City Council when making rezoning decisions.

For parcels located outside the city limits, but within the Urban Area Boundary, the property should be zoned and developed in accordance with the use identified on the Future Land Use Map upon annexation.

See **Table 3** for total acreage of each category on the Future Land Use Map.

Natural features often present constraints on development, but technically and through regulatory standards. The development constraints figure overlays two key constraints on development, 100 year flood plain and slopes greater than 12 percent, on the Future Land Use Map. This can be helpful in identifying the development potential of different parcels throughout the city and in the Urban Area Boundary.

Future Land Use	Acres	Future Land Use (Urban Area Boundary)	Acres
Low Density Residential (LDR)	1,108	UAB - Low Density Residential	3,039
Medium Density Residential (MDR)	229	UAB - Medium Density Residential	2,467
High Density Residential (HDR)	166	UAB - High Density Residential	15
Mixed Use (MU)	315	UAB - Mixed Use	29
Commercial (C)	57	UAB - Commercial	350
Corporate Park (CP)	365	UAB - Corporate Park	407
Industrial (I)	79	UAB - Industrial	-
Public/Institutional (PI)	321	UAB - Public/Institutional	640
University (U)	360	UAB - University	-
Park (P)	396	UAB - Park	16
Open Space (OS)	475	UAB - Open Space	40
Conservation	-	UAB - Conservation	599
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,870</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>7,602</b>



- ### Legend
- River Falls City Limits
  - Township Boundaries
  - Urban Area Boundary
  - Existing Subdivision Control Boundary

- ### Future Land Use
- LDR - Low Density Residential
  - MDR - Medium Density Residential
  - HDR - High Density Residential
  - MU - Mixed Use
  - C - Commercial
  - CP - Corporate Park
  - I - Industrial
  - PI - Public/Insttutional
  - U - University
  - OS - Open Space
  - P - Park

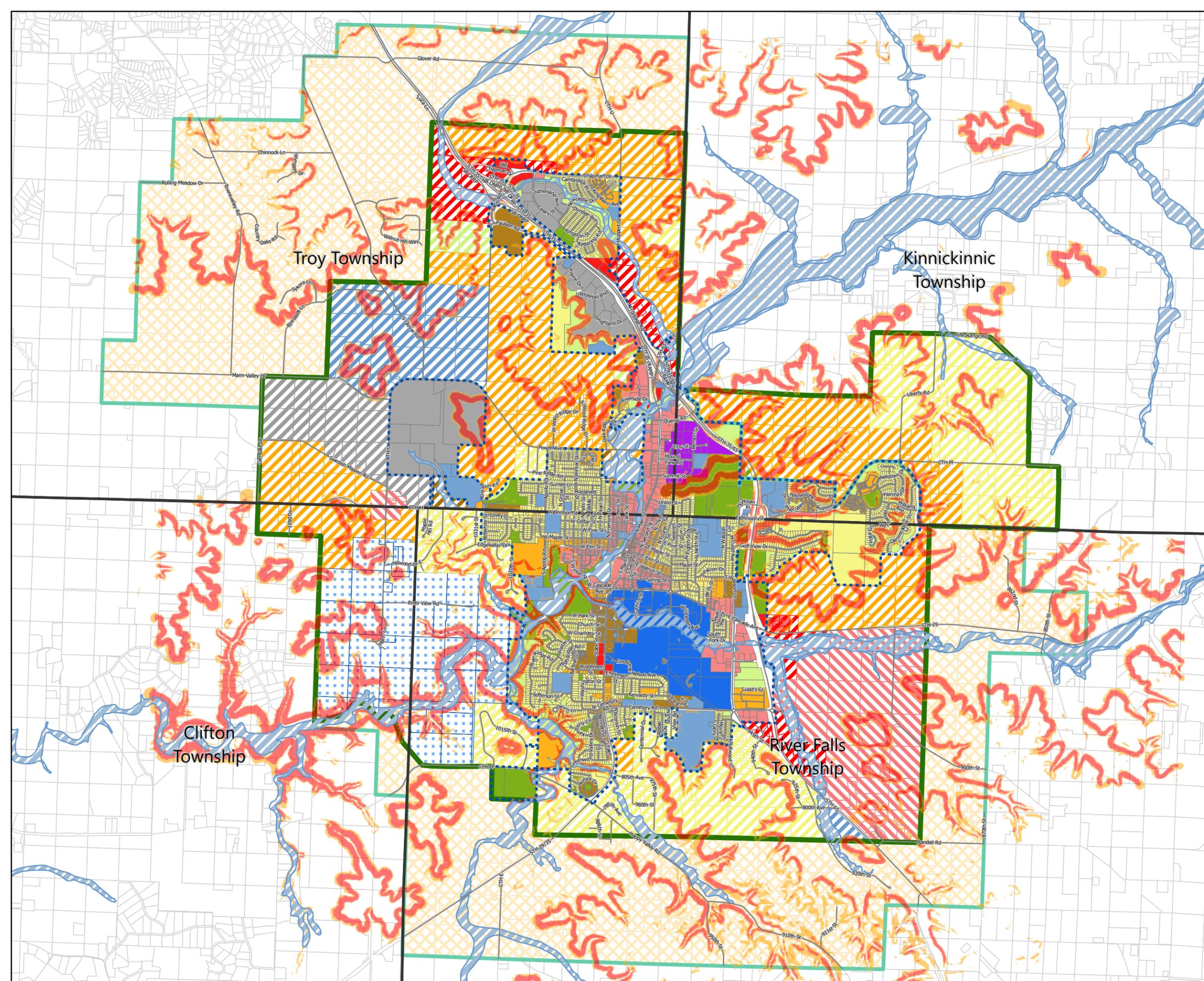
- ### Urban Area Boundary (UAB) Future Land Use
- UAB-Low Density Residential
  - UAB-Medium Density Residential
  - UAB-High Density Residential
  - UAB-Mixed-Use
  - UAB-Commercial
  - UAB-Corporate Park
  - UAB-Public/Insttutional
  - UAB-Open Space
  - UAB-Park
  - UAB-Urban Growth Preservation Area
  - UAB-City Edge Growth Preservation Area



Note: The Future Land Use Map should be used in tandem with the Development Constraint Map.



# Future Land Use Map



### Legend

- River Falls City Limits
- Township Boundaries
- Urban Area Boundary
- Existing Subdivision Control Boundary

### Future Land Use

- LDR - Low Density Residential
- MDR - Medium Density Residential
- HDR - High Density Residential
- MU - Mixed Use
- C - Commercial
- CP - Corporate Park
- I - Industrial
- PI - Public/Institutional
- U - University
- OS - Open Space
- P - Park

### Urban Area Boundary (UAB) Future Land Use

- UAB-Low Density Residential
- UAB-Medium Density Residential
- UAB-High Density Residential
- UAB-Mixed-Use
- UAB-Commercial
- UAB-Corporate Park
- UAB-Public/Institutional
- UAB-Open Space
- UAB-Park
- UAB-Urban Growth Preservation Area
- UAB-City Edge Growth Preservation Area

### Percent Slope Generalized

- 0 - 12%
- 12 - 20%
- > 20%
- 100 Year Floodplain

Note: The Development Constraint Map should be used in tandem with the Future Land Use Map.



## Figure 2. Land Use & Development Constraint Map

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_, 2023

# LAND USE TOOLS AND RESOURCES

## DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Zoning and development standards impact and limit how land is developed. With the adoption of a new comprehensive plan, communities should assess their zoning code and development standards to ensure they will help to implement the goals of the Future Land Use Plan. Zoning and development regulations that should be reviewed include:

- Available Zoning Districts – Ensure that the correct zoning districts exist to implement the different Land Use Categories identified on the Future Land Use Map.
- Residential Densities – Review and update residential zoning districts to ensure they are consistent with and allow for development as identified in the residential Land Use Categories shown on the Future Land Use Map.
- Commercial and Industrial Districts – Ensure that commercial and industrial zoning districts support the development of business parks and other commercial and industrial development as identified in the Future Land Use Plan.
- Subdivision and Street Design Standards – Ensure that subdivision and street design standards permit and encourage development design that supports multimodal transportation and reduces the dependence on cars.
- Other Standards – Review and update code to incorporate modern features, such as design standards/guidelines and/or form-based zoning standards (described in detail below).

### Design Standards/Guidelines (Performance Standards)

Design guidelines or standards can help to protect, enhance, and maintain a city or a neighborhood's sense of place and historic design patterns. Appropriately crafted design guidelines and standards have a significant impact on how people use public space and interact with the built environment. Many communities incorporate design guidelines or standards into their downtown or other redevelopment areas. The built environment has an outsized effect on how people use and interact with their community and depending on the overall goals, appropriately designed neighborhoods can encourage walking and bicycling and activate shared community areas. Communities adopt design guidelines or standards either as a part of their zoning and development code or within specific area plans. These standards typically apply to new development or full-site redevelopment and are not applied to existing development.

Design guidelines are often intended to maintain historic development design and enhance community sense of place. They often cover a variety of topics, including: 1) parking amount, lot design, and location; 2) commercial ground floor transparency to allow pedestrians to see into commercial areas; 3) signage to limit and control the types, size, and location of signs; 4) building materials, height, and articulation to

## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

ensure the structures fit the feel of the community and neighborhood and are appropriately bulked; 5) other standards including lighting, setbacks, and building entrance features.

### Form-Based Zoning

Traditional zoning, also called Euclidian zoning, focuses first on how land is used by regulating the allowed uses in each zone first. With form-based zoning, the built form of the buildings is the driving factor for regulation. Often form-based codes include standards for building bulk and massing, with an emphasis on the relationship between buildings, the scale of streets and types of blocks, and the overall design/look of buildings. Form-based codes focus on community feel and character, allow a natural mix of uses, rather than segregating uses types, and encourage the development of communities that are focused on livability.

Traditional zoning often results in auto-dependent communities, where people live being separated from where they work and access goods and services. By moving away from traditional zoning, development can become more compact and accommodate a mix of uses, often resulting in a more walkable, bikeable, and livable community.

According to the Form-Based Code Institute, form-based codes should include five main elements<sup>1</sup>:

1. Regulating Plan – A plan or map of the regulated area designating the locations where different building form standards apply.
2. Public Standards – Specifies elements in the public realm: sidewalk, travel lanes, on-street parking, street trees and furniture, etc.
3. Building Standards – Regulations controlling the features, configurations, and functions of buildings that define and shape the public realm.
4. Administration – A clearly defined and streamlined application and project review process.
5. Definitions – A glossary to ensure the precise use of technical terms.

In addition, the Form-Based Code Institute has identified other options elements that can be included in form-based codes:

1. Architectural Standards – Regulations controlling external architectural materials and quality.
2. Landscaping Standards – Regulations controlling landscape design and plant materials on private property as they impact public spaces.
3. Signage Standards – Regulations controlling allowable signage sizes, materials, illumination, and placement.

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<sup>1</sup> Form-Based Codes Defined. Form-Bases Codes Institute. <https://formbasedcodes.org/definition/>

## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

4. Environment Resource Standards – Regulations controlling issues such as storm water drainage and infiltration, development on slopes, tree protection, solar access, etc.
5. Annotation – Text illustrations explaining the intentions of specific code provisions.

Form-based zoning can be incorporated into zoning codes at various levels:

- Fully transition zoning code to form based zoning.
- Incorporate aspects of form-based zoning into the overall zoning code, while maintaining a key focus on use types.
- Development and adopt form-based zoning for special areas within the community.

## MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

A key aspect of implementing the Future Land Use Plan is encouraging mixed use development throughout the city. Allowing for mixed use development will help the city achieve housing, transportation, and land use goals. If implemented correctly, mixed use development will allow densities sufficient to accommodate future growth within the city, reduce dependence on the automobile, and place people in close proximity to everyday necessities.

Primarily located along, and extending east and west from Main Street, the Future Land Use Map identifies a significant portion of the city for mixed use development. The Mixed-Use Future Land Use Category allows for a vertical or horizontal mix of residential and commercial uses, refer to text box for details. Areas in the Downtown District, should be developed with a vertical mix of uses, while areas outside the Downtown District can be developed with a horizontal mix of uses.

Traditionally, downtown areas were developed with a vertical mix of uses, typically with commercial on the ground floor and residential above. As communities developed under traditional Euclidian zoning standards with the automobile in mind, different uses were separated, making communities dependent on cars for transportation. By encouraging compact, mixed use, multimodal, development, River Falls can become more walkable,

### Vertical vs. Horizontal Mixed Use

There are two common types of mixed-use development, vertical and horizontal. While the core concept for each is to allow varying types of uses on the same or neighboring lots, the built form that each category takes varies.

*Vertical mixed-use development* typically has differing uses located within the same building. The most common type includes commercial on the first floor and residential above. Areas within the Downtown District should be developed with a vertical mix of uses.

*Horizontal mixed-use development* typically allows differing uses located in different structures or on neighboring lots. Areas outside the Downtown District may be developed with a horizontal mix of uses.

## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

reducing the need for people to use their cars to access everyday necessities. Residents are more able to access goods, services, employment, and recreation opportunities in close proximity to their homes.

Additionally, the Mixed-Use Future Land Use Category allows for residential densities that are greater than your typical single-family neighborhoods. Mixed use areas within the Downtown District should have residential densities of 12 units per acre or greater, consistent with the High Density Residential Land Use Category. Similarly, mixed use areas outside the Downtown District should be developed at a residential density of 6-12 units per acre, consistent with Medium Density Residential Land Use Category. Allowing higher densities will help the city accommodate a portion of the projected growth within the existing city limits, which is preferred by the community.

Implementing the Mixed-Use Land Use Category will likely necessitate updates to zoning code to allow varying types of mixed-use development. Communities take a variety of approaches to accomplish this. For example, some include a downtown zoning district that allows, or requires, vertical mixed-use development at the preferred densities. Typically, allowed uses include a variety of commercial uses, such as office and retail sales, while requiring residential development on all upper stories. Further, to allow for horizontal mixed use, communities establish a horizontal mixed use zoning district, which allows a mix of residential uses and/or commercial uses. Residential uses are limited to the types that will create the preferred amount of density, and commercial uses are limited to only those that are appropriate adjacent to residential uses.

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

The River Falls community is particularly proud of their downtown core area. As the city grows, it is important that land use, development and growth patterns do not result in a disinvestment from the downtown area. As was evident from Community Survey Results, the River Falls community prefers growth that supports the existing community over outward expansion. With that in mind, it is vital that the City makes land use and development decisions that keep people coming to the city core.

There are a variety of strategies that the City can use to ensure that growth supports the existing community. While the tools and resources discussed above will also help achieve this goal, the City should consider:

### Annexation

In Wisconsin, the process for annexing new land into a city is prescribed by state law. Annexations can be triggered by a property owner or elector or the community, however, in River Falls, annexations are rarely initiated by the City and are typically driven by property owner petition. The following two processes are outline in State Statute:

*Elector- or property owner-initiated* annexations are triggered by a community member. They follow the following steps: 1) petition and notice; 2) petition circulation; 3) petition filing; 4) referendum; and 5) enactment of an annexation ordinance.

*City- or village-initiated* annexations follow the following process: 1) adoption of resolution; 2) circuit court filing; and 3) referendum.

## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

- Developing a Downtown/Main Street Master Plan to guide development in downtown and ensure the existing sense of place is preserved. The Kinni Corridor Plan can be used to inform this process.
- Prioritizing redevelopment and infill development, consistent with the land uses identified on the Future Land Use Map. Strategies could include: 1) identify underutilized parcels located in the core of the community, where potential exists for infill development; 2) identify incentives for infill development; and 3) review zoning code standards and consider opportunities to encourage infill, such as reduced setbacks and reduced parking requirements.
- Establishing smart growth guidelines that encourage a greater mix of housing choices, neighborhood design that is designed at a human-scale, and efficient use of land.
- Limiting new development on greenfield sites, unless the new development is easily served by utilities, is designed to minimize automobile dependence, and is connected to the rest of the community, allowing access using multiple transportation options.



## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

### SMALL AREA PLANS

In addition to the future land use planning completed for the community, small area planning was used to explore development and investment potential for three areas within the community’s core. This planning exercise provided an opportunity to assess the existing conditions and potential within each site and explore investments and solutions that could be envisioned to support the overall goals of the Comprehensive Plan. The following pages detail the analysis and recommendations for each area.

#### Locust and Winter Small Area Plan

The Locust and Winter Small Area Plan is an area of unique opportunity for future investments. The connection to the Kinnickinnic River, existing trails and open spaces, historic resources, and future changes in public use create unique opportunities for investment in the area. The resulting small area plan explores redevelopment and reuse potential.

#### Existing Conditions

##### *Current Uses and Development*

The study area includes a combination of public/institutional (school district and City of River Falls uses), recreation and open space, and residential uses.

Uses	Description
Recreation and Open Space	Recreational uses are located along the Kinni and include a combination of active (trails) and passive (open space areas) recreation opportunities.
Residential	Residential uses are located on the northern edge of the study area and include single family homes, consistent with the surrounding neighborhoods.
Public/Institutional	<p>Public and Institutional uses include a combination of School District of River Falls and City of River Falls development. The three primary uses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School District Bus Garage: The existing site currently houses a bus garage for the School District’s fleet.</li> <li>• City Compost Site: This site is currently operated as a compost facility where residents can bring their yard waste. The site is monitored by on-duty staff.</li> </ul>

## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

- **Municipal Power Plant:** The existing power plant at the Junction Falls Dam support hydroelectric generation from the dam. Additionally, Power Plant Park is an identified pocket park within the city's park system.

### *Transportation Network*

Winter Street, Locust Street, and Elm Street provide vehicular circulation within the small area. There are limited dedicated pedestrian facilities in the study area, with sidewalks on either side of Winter Street south of Locust Street. Existing trails connect pedestrians to the north along the Kinni with a connection at the intersection of Winter Street and Falls Street.

### **Small Area Plan Strategies**

The small area planning effort explored opportunities for redevelopment and reinvestment within the study area – specifically focused around development opportunities and investments within the transportation network.

### *Development Opportunities*

Development opportunities were explored within the study area to align with the updated future land use plan. For the Locust and Winter Small Area Plan, the redevelopment potential focused on mixed-use and commercial development opportunities. Additionally, new programming was explored within the study area.

### *Mixed-Use*

A majority of the redevelopment opportunities within the study area were identified as mixed-use, including some combination of residential and commercial uses. General building forms were identified to support the overall form and massing potential. The mixed-use development opportunities are generally grouped into two areas:

- **Bus Garage Redevelopment:** The redevelopment of this site provides many opportunities for commercial and residential uses with ample space for parking and development. In addition to upper floor residential development in the primary structure, smaller scale commercial development could be well suited to support neighborhood commercial needs for the surrounding areas. Additionally, the increased recreational offerings within the study area could draw additional users and patrons for commercial uses.
- **Existing Residential Development:** Opportunities for redevelopment to support residential and potential limited commercial uses was also identified on the parcels that are currently used for single-family residential. These redevelopment sites were identified to support the goals of increased density within the community's core, but also have great potential with increased neighborhood commercial development and new recreational uses.

## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

### *Recreation and Open Space*

There are a number of open space and recreation areas within the study area today. The small area plan looks to maintain those uses with opportunities for additional investment and programming. From a use perspective, the existing recreational and open spaces along the Kinni are identified to be maintained. The existing compost site is identified for relocation elsewhere in the City and the site may be reused for recreational amenities and stormwater management.

### *Commercial*

Two commercial development opportunities anchor the southern portion of the small area plan, with the redevelopment of the municipal power plant. The property is currently owned by the City of River Falls and may remain under municipal ownership which will inform development potential of the site. However, future study may explore the potential for redevelopment. This redevelopment potential could include the construction of a new building to support commercial development on the northern part of the site and the reuse of the existing plant on the Kinni. The existing structure is a component of the city's history and culture and maintaining the exterior through redevelopment provides unique opportunities. The structure could be reused for a number of uses, examples include a brewery/tap room, flex office space, or shops/boutiques.

### *Programming*

Programming opportunities and investments were also identified through the small area planning process that do not include the construction of new or redeveloped structures. There are two primary programming opportunities identified within this small area plan – reuse of the compost site and activation of the riverfront.

### *Compost Site*

The City has plans to relocate the compost site to another location, providing opportunities for reuse of the existing site. The small area plan recognizes the existing green space and resources available on site and proposes the maintenance of this character with potential investments. Programming improvements could include opportunities for recreational programming, through formal infrastructure investments or passive recreation opportunities. With access to Locust Street, the site could support parking that could open the area to community members and visitors that connect to the trail network. Additionally, a stormwater detention/retention basin on the site will support stormwater capture and treatment before it continues to the Kinni.

### *Kinni Riverfront*

The existing trail along the Kinni creates a connection to bring residents and visitors to the site, and the existing parking lot and amenities enhance the offerings. This small area plan explored opportunities to expand these recreational offerings to the south along the Kinni

## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

through trail connections and recreational programming. Future trail connections are identified to connect users from existing facilities to proposed programming opportunities. A key opportunity for this site is the development of a kayak launch/takeout system to facilitate recreational water travel on the Kinni. The launches and with portage connection would create opportunities for the community to access the river and would also facilitate continued movement on the Kinni to avoid the current dam and future reinstatement of the falls. Further exploration of programming opportunities could include additional improvements with river access, from learning to fishing through a nature center or other format.

### ***Transportation Networks***

Bike and Pedestrian infrastructure improvements are identified with this small area plan. Winter Street is identified within the Bike and Pedestrian Plan as a high priority sidewalk infill location. Additionally, new trail connections have been identified to facilitate movement from east to west through the site.

## Cascade and Main Small Area Plan

The proximity to Downtown River Falls and the University of Wisconsin-River Falls campus creates unique opportunities for this small area. In addition to exploring opportunities for the area to support the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, the recommendations identified within the Kinni Corridor Plan and Campus Corridor Plan were incorporated into this small area plan.

## Existing Conditions

### ***Current Uses and Development***

A majority of the study area is currently used for single and multi-family residential, benefiting from connections to the Downtown, UWRF campus and Glen Park. Commercial uses within the study area are limited to the Dairy Queen and auto shop in the northeast corner along Main Street. Additionally, the proximity to the Kinni is an amenity for existing uses.

### ***Transportation Network***

Cascade Avenue and Main Street are two major roadways within the community and intersect within the study area. Additionally, Cascade provides one of the crossings of the Kinni within the community, serving as an important east/west connection. There is an existing trail along the southern edge of the Kinni, connecting Cascade Avenue to the north. Additionally, the historic Swinging Bridge is located along the southern edge of the study area connecting to Glen Park and uses to the south.

## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

### Small Area Plan Strategies

The small area planning effort explored opportunities for redevelopment and reinvestment within the study area – specifically focused around development opportunities and investments within the transportation network.

#### *Development Opportunities*

Development opportunities were explored within the study area to align with the updated future land use plan and previously completed planning efforts. For the Cascade and Main Small Area Plan, the redevelopment potential focused on mixed-use and multi-family residential development opportunities. Passive recreation opportunities were also identified along the Kinni.

#### *Mixed-Use*

Mixed-use development opportunities are identified as an extension of Downtown River Falls and continue along the northern side of Cascade Avenue. The redevelopment of the existing Dairy Queen and auto repair shop create unique opportunities for traditional vertical or horizontal mixed use with the proximity to downtown. The form of the buildings was specifically laid out for this area to maintain a visual connection to the Kinni through the Main Street and Cascade Avenue intersection. Additional mixed-use opportunities identified in the small area plan create potential for the introduction of smaller-scale neighborhood commercial within multi-family development.

#### *Multi-Family Residential*

A majority of the small area plan was envisioned for multi-family development to align with the medium and high density designations within the future land use plan. In some locations this development could include the rehabilitation or reconstruction of existing multi-family structures and other locations would include the redevelopment of sites to support increased density. This multifamily development could take many forms, from apartments to townhomes.

#### *Recreation and Open Space*

Passive recreation uses have been identified near the existing Junction Falls Dam to provide a physical location to connect the community to the river. This site provides opportunity to serve as an improved overlook and park area. Additionally, the existing City storage facility in this area could remain and serve as recreational development potential housing private or public recreational uses.

#### *Commercial*

A single commercial opportunity was identified with this small area plan in the northwest corner. This site provides an opportunity to redevelop as a commercial use that could support community connection due to its location. Commercial uses could include a café or gathering space but could also include a maker's space or community room for people to gather.

## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

### ***Programming***

Programming opportunities and investments were also identified through the small area planning process that do not include the construction of new or redeveloped structures. Passive recreation programming is the primary opportunity identified for this small area plan. The area to the south of the Junction Falls Dam provides an opportunity for passive recreation, including benches, picnic tables, bird watching, etc. The existing trail connection along the Kinni provides a connection point for this recreational use, with proposed trail connections to facilitate movement to the south.

### ***Transportation Networks***

Cascade Avenue and Main Street area both identified for linear improvements within the Bike and Pedestrian Plan. A buffered bike lane is proposed for Cascade Avenue within the study area and a protected bike lane for Main Street. Additionally, the intersection of the two roadways is identified for an intersection improvement and an enhanced crossing was identified to connect the Swinging Bridge and trail to the north across Cascade. In addition to recognizing these improvements, proposed trail connections were identified along the South Fork to create connections and additional recreation opportunities. The intersection of Cascade and Main is also identified for enhancements for bike/ped crossing to increase safety.

## Cascade and Wasson Small Area Plan

This small area plan serves as a gateway to the community from Highway 35/65 and provides the main entrance to and connections between the UWRF and CVTC campuses. This location creates opportunities for increased residential density and reinvestment along Cascade as the major roadway.

### **Existing Conditions**

#### ***Current Uses and Development***

Existing uses within the small area plan primarily include single and multi-family residential. The existing development takes many forms, from apartments to individual homes, with varying ages and styles. Uses to the south of Cascade Avenue introduce residential attached dwelling units and institutional uses with the First Baptist Church.

#### ***Transportation Network***

Cascade Avenue and Wasson Lane are key roadways within the community, serving not only this small area, but connections to the greater community. The intersection of Cascade Avenue and Highway 35/65 is located just outside of the study area, funneling local and regional traffic within the study area. There are limited sidewalk facilities within the study area.

## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

### Small Area Plan Strategies

The small area planning effort explored opportunities for redevelopment and reinvestment within the study area – specifically focused around development opportunities and investments within the transportation network.

#### *Development Opportunities*

Development opportunities were explored within the study area to align with the updated future land use plan and goals of the Focus River Falls process. For the Cascade and Wasson Small Area Plan, the redevelopment potential focused on mixed-use and multi-family residential development opportunities.

#### *Mixed-Use*

Mixed-use development opportunities were introduced with frontage along Cascade Avenue. The proximity to the UWRF campus and visibility along Cascade provide a unique opportunity for the inclusion of commercial uses within other residential development. The redevelopment of these areas will also influence the visitor experience for travelers coming to campus. A mixed use development opportunity was also identified at the First Baptist Church site based on its visibility and opportunity to support adjacent residential uses.

#### *Multi-Family Residential*

A majority of the small area plan was envisioned for multi-family development to align with the medium and high density designations within the future land use plan. In some locations this development could include the rehabilitation or reconstruction of existing multi-family structures and other locations would include the redevelopment of sites to support the increased density. This multifamily development could take many forms, from apartments to townhomes.



## Technical Memorandum – Land Use

### *Recreation and Open Space*

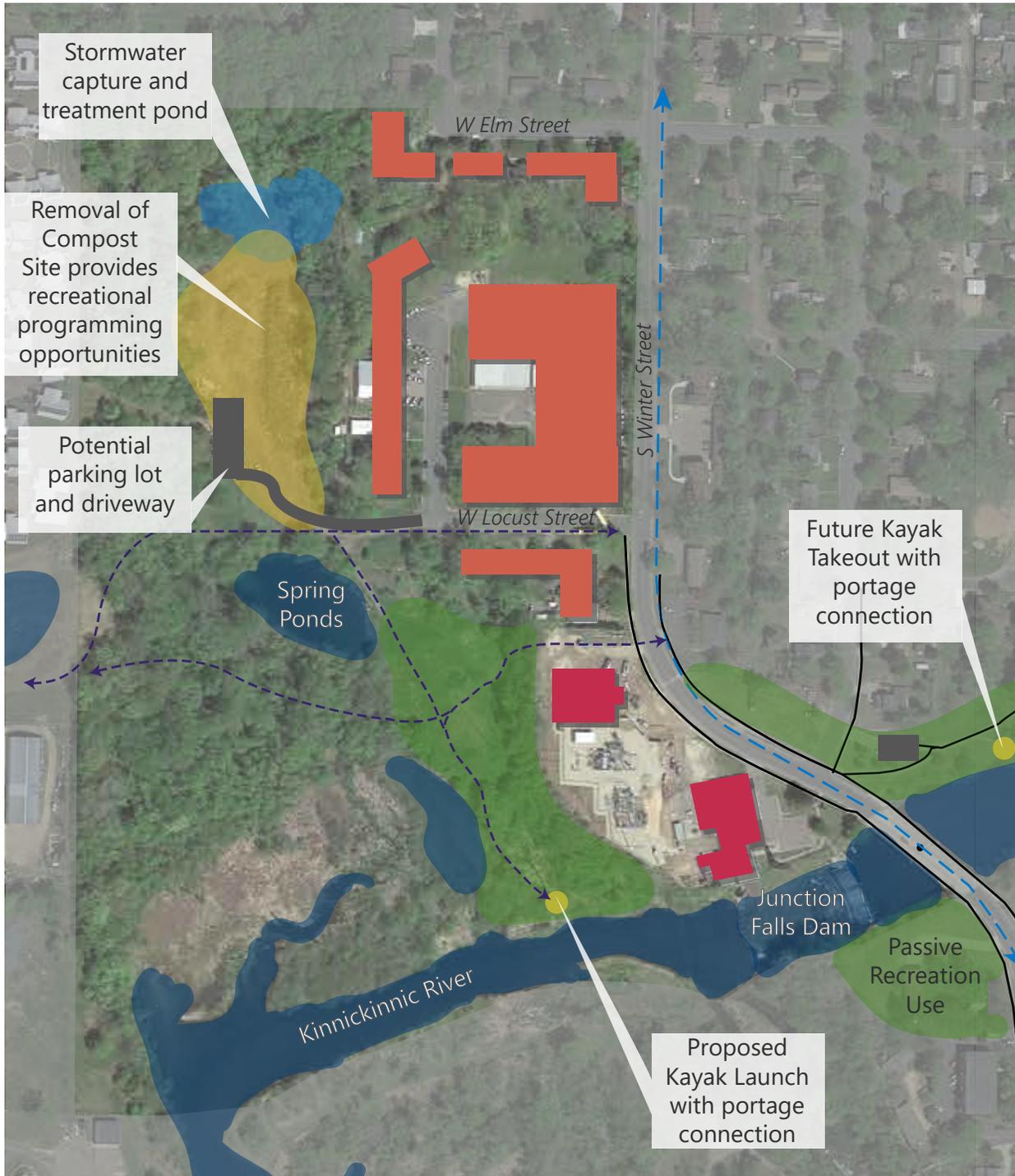
Community open spaces were identified in two locations within the study area. The existing conditions of these areas include existing vegetation and topography that can be maintained to support natural resource stewardship and provide amenities to the neighborhood. The programming of these spaces can vary from stormwater management to limited recreational uses.

### *Transportation Networks*

Cascade Avenue and Wasson Lane area both identified for linear improvements within the Bike and Pedestrian Plan. A buffered bike lane is proposed for Cascade Avenue within the study area and a shared use path for Wasson Lane. Additionally, the intersection of the two roadways is identified for an intersection improvement. An enhanced crossing was also identified just to the west of the study area to provide a crossing of Cascade Avenue to campus. A proposed trail connection identified internal to this small area plan to emphasize the connection between the UWRF and CVTC campuses. This connection would utilize the new roadway alignments proposed within the small area plan. The 2024 reconstruction of S Wasson Lane will provide an urbanized section of roadway, new trail on the west side of the road and a roundabout at the Cascade/Wasson intersection which will also upgrade pedestrian connections for increased safety.

This small area plan proposes modifications to the internal roadway network to create shared access points from Cascade Avenue and improve internal circulation. The proposed improvements would utilize the existing veterinary hospital drive as a new local street connection and would close the Birchcrest Drive access to Cascade. Ideally, the new connection would be extended to the north to connect to Wasson Court; however, the topography may limit the connection.





## Legend

### Development Opportunities

- Mixed Use Development
- Multi-Family Residential Development
- Recreational Development
- Commercial Development

### Transportation Networks

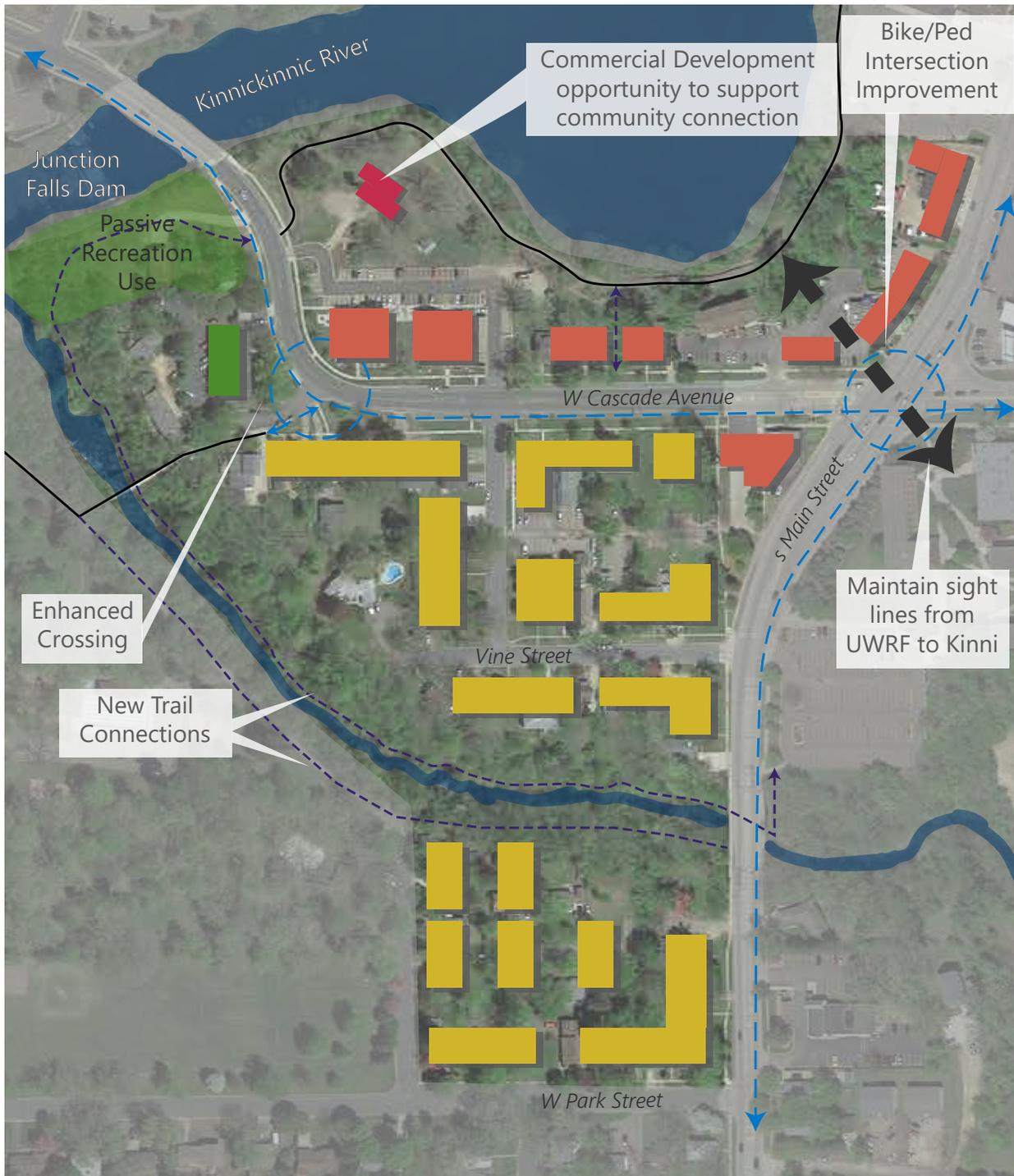
- Existing Trail/Sidewalk
- Bike/Ped Proposed Improvement
- Potential Trail Connection
- Potential Roadway Connection
- Existing/Proposed Parking Lots

### Programming Opportunities

- Recreation/Open Space
- Change of Use
- Stormwater Management



# Locust and Winter Small Area Plan



## Legend

### Development Opportunities

- Mixed Use Development
- Multi-Family Residential Development
- Recreational Development
- Commercial Development

### Transportation Networks

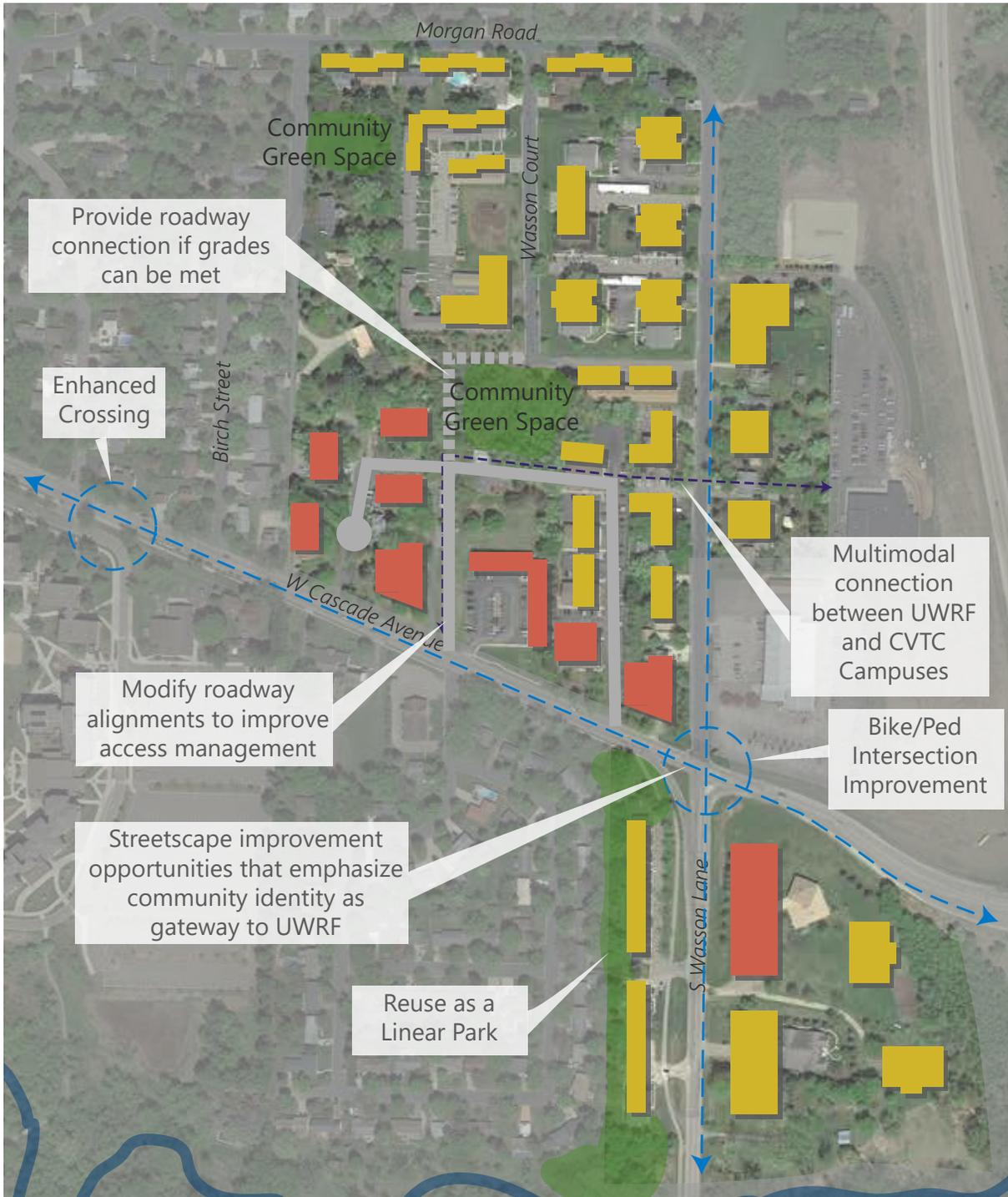
- Existing Trail/Sidewalk
- Bike/Ped Proposed Improvement
- Potential Trail Connection
- Potential Roadway Connection

### Programming Opportunities

- Recreation/Open Space
- Change of Use



# Cascade and Main Small Area Plan



## Legend

### Development Opportunities

- Mixed Use Development
- Multi-Family Residential Development
- Recreational Development
- Commercial Development

### Transportation Networks

- Existing Trail/Sidewalk
- Bike/Ped Proposed Improvement
- Potential Trail Connection
- Potential Roadway Connection

### Programming Opportunities

- Recreation/Open Space
- Change of Use



# Cascade and Wasson Small Area Plan

# RECREATION ELEMENT ANALYSIS



## INTRODUCTION

This technical memorandum provides data, detailed analysis, and additional information that is intended to supplement the Recreation Element within the Focus River Falls Comprehensive Plan. Included in this analysis are maps showing the city's park system, details about recreation facilities and programs, and information about engagement conducted. Additionally, the memo includes detailed information about the tools and resources that are available to assist the city in reaching its goals.

The Outdoor Recreation Plan, completed as part of the Focus River Falls Planning process, provides a detailed analysis of outdoor recreation offerings and needs for the community.

## ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

### Early Engagement Events: February 2022

The first phase of community engagement for the Focus River Falls process included opportunities for the community to share issues and opportunities identified through their experience. Engagement activities focused on the nine required plan elements of the Comprehensive Plan, along with specific activities to support the Focus River Falls companion plans. Data collected during this phase provided valuable information that was used to identify the goals and focus areas of the plan. There were three common themes that emerged during this phase that related to the community as a whole: **Recreational Amenities and Activities, Connected Community, and Sustainability**. In response to the broad concentration of recreation during the early phases of engagement, a decision was made to add a recreation element to the Comprehensive Plan.

### Stakeholder Conversations: July 21 & 22, 2022

Between July 21 and 22, the project team hosted seven stakeholder conversations at River Falls City Hall (the topics discussed were recreation, inclusion & sense of place, natural resources & resilience, large tract property owners, local businesses, and housing).

## Technical Memorandum - Recreation

Community members expressed the importance that community recreation holds in River Falls, especially youth sports. Several members shared the sentiment that there are not enough youth sports facilities in the city overall. There was also a discussion on increasing multi-use areas or building a community center. The input collected through this engagement event emphasized the importance of maintaining the diverse range of recreation offerings throughout the community.

### Pop-up Events: Sept 10 & 17, 2022

In September 2022, three pop-up events were held at Art on the Kinni (September 10), a Youth Football Tournament (September 17), and the Food Pantry (September 28th). Between the three events, approximately 100 people participated in discussion and voting board exercises with similar questions to the outdoor recreation survey. The topics discussed included what new amenities there is a need for and seasonal recreation activities.

Themes that emerged through conversations with attendees included:

- Community members desire an outdoor seasonal ice rink within the community
- Community members value the existing splash pad and recognize the value it provides to the community
- The community desires several new amenities (i.e. new kayak launches, sensory gardens, all-abilities playgrounds, etc.),
- There was also discussion on the prospect of a community center in River Falls. Attendees showed interest in this, as it would help support youth sports; provide indoor recreation opportunities, that may include a pool; and allow for recreation during all four seasons.

### Outdoor Recreation Survey: September 1 – October 7, 2022

The outdoor recreation survey was live for one month, with options to complete it online at the project website ([EngageRF](#)) or through a paper copy returned to staff. The survey received 390 total responses. Questions included similar topics to those covered in pop-up event activities, such park amenities, accessibility in parks, mobility and recreation, and questions for youth. The survey results help to identify the needs and desires of the community regarding existing and future parks and recreation in River Falls.

## Technical Memorandum - Recreation

The following survey results help provide community insight on these topics:

### Question: How would you describe recreation in River Falls?

# of responses	Theme	Summary
76	Limited / Work in Progress	The parks are getting there but could use some more range of recreation options.
71	Good	The recreation in River Falls is good as is, there are enough options for parks and enough things to do.
53	Variety of options	There is a wide variety of recreation activities in River Falls (for example, play baseball/ softball/ soccer, walk along the trails on the river, etc.).
23	Okay	The recreation in River Falls is okay / average, lacking options especially in the winter and for indoor recreation.

### Question: The community has access to a limited number of the following facilities. Please rank your perception of the need for the development of new facilities.

**Key takeaway: there is a strong desire from the community for a seasonal ice rink.**



## Technical Memorandum - Recreation

**Question: What amenities do you think river falls has too little? (i.e. what would you like to see/ see more of?)**

# of responses	Theme	Summary
64	Trails / Paths	More trails / paths for walking / hiking and biking, that provide more connectivity. Potential dedicated bike lane.
32	Softball Fields	River Falls needs more softball fields, particularly for youth softball.
29	Indoor Facilities	Indoor recreation opportunities / community center.
26	Pool	There is a need for an indoor pool and/ or an updated outdoor pool.
18	Winter Activities / Recreation	More opportunities for winter activities / recreation.
14	Ice Rink	There is a desire for a public ice-skating rink.

## Technical Memorandum - Recreation

**Question: How accessible do the current outdoor recreation offerings feel to you?**

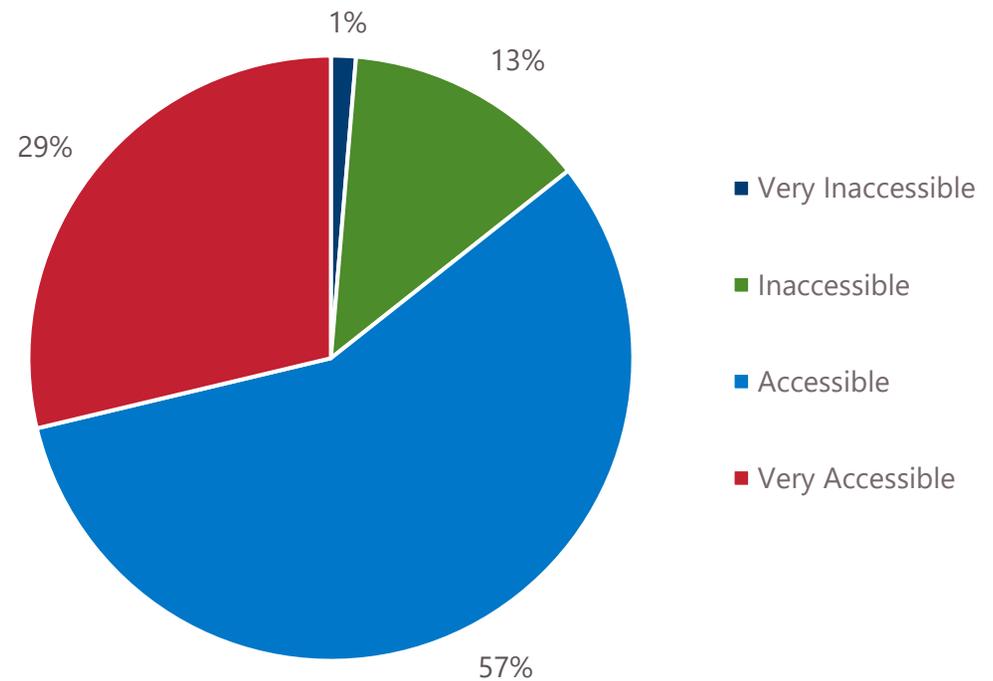
**Key takeaway: The majority of respondents believe that the city’s outdoor recreation facilities are easily accessible, however, some comments (shown below) identified some accessibility issues for individuals with disabilities.**

Survey comments regarding accessibility:

“A plethora of options but an increase in accessible play equipment for those with mobility issues would be welcome. A parent child swing and a wheelchair swing at our main parks would be amazing.”

“An abundance of parks and green spaces. I’d like to see improved access to recreation, specifically a wheelchair accessible kayak launch..”

“There are multiple children who are either walker or wheelchair users in both River Falls and surrounding communities (my child included). Having just one accessible playground (Tri Angels) simply isn't enough. For us a big obstacle is no rubber playground turf.”



## RECREATION CONTEXT

### EXISTING PARK SYSTEM

The existing park system includes 28 parks and recreation sites. Each of the parks fall into one of five park classification types. The classifications are identified in the Outdoor Recreation Plan and are described in the table below. These park types were initially identified in alignment with the Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan park types and guidance. The description of each park type was then updated to specifically align with the River Falls recreation system. An inventory of the amenities offered within each city park was completed in the early phases of the planning process. This exercise identified the number of sports fields and courts, playgrounds, and other recreational amenities. The inventory is available within the Outdoor Recreation Plan.

#### Existing Park System

Park Type	Description	Park Names
<b>Regional Park</b>	<p>Regional Parks are designed to serve several neighborhoods or an entire community, meeting the needs of all age groups. Whereas neighborhood parks cater to younger children, a regional park will contain features geared toward teenagers and an adult population. Although size is not always a sound criterion for classifying parks, it is generally recognized that regional parks are more spacious than neighborhood parks or playgrounds. Most regional parks have an average size of between 20 and 35 acres, but may be larger. Regional parks have an effective service area of one to three miles (or an entire municipality).</p> <p>Regional parks provide a combination of intensive and non-intensive development ranging from play apparatus to trail systems. In addition to the kinds of facilities provided at neighborhood parks, regional parks may provide facilities such as swimming pools, formal playing fields, sports complexes, community centers, amphitheatres, and other facilities serving a large population base. Parking is typically provided within the park, with the amount determined based on the types of uses the park will accommodate.</p>	<p>DeSanctis, Glen, Hoffman, Golfview</p> <p><b>Why are these classified as Regional Parks?</b></p> <p>These four parks were identified as Regional Parks due to their size, amenities, and larger user draw. For example, Golf View was classified as a Regional Park due to its focus on soccer fields and the wide audience it attracts.</p>

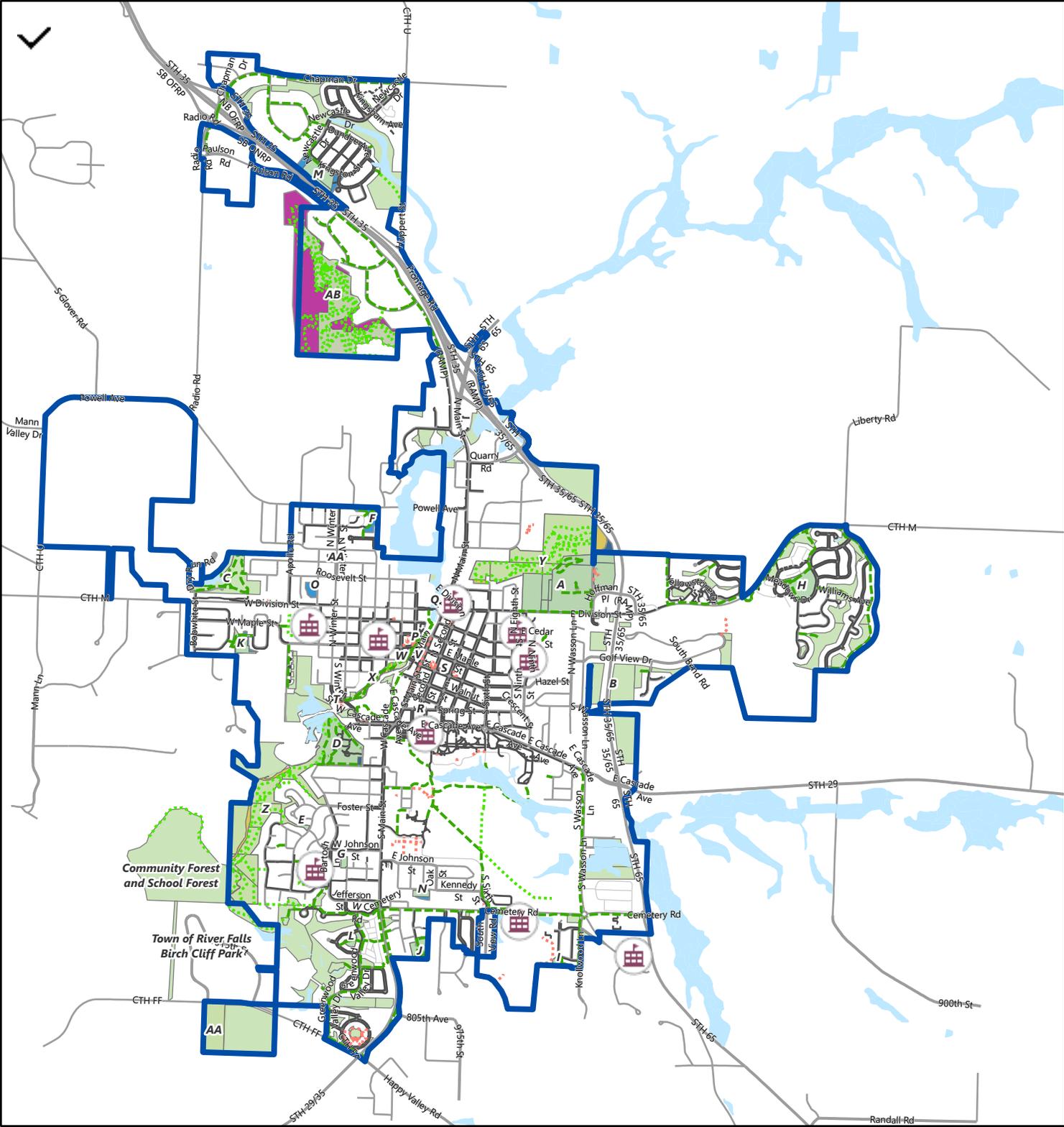
Park Type	Description	Park Names
<p><b>Neighborhood Park</b></p>	<p>Neighborhood parks are designed to meet the immediate active and passive recreation needs of those people living within a short distance of the park (usually between ¼ and ½ miles uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers). These parks serve as the recreational and social focus of their neighborhood, helping to establish a neighborhood identity.</p> <p>The average neighborhood park serves from 500 to 1,500 people. Neighborhood parks commonly range from 5-10 acres in size. The design focus is typically on children (five to fifteen years old) and families, although the demographic composition of the neighborhood should determine if facilities for other population groups are warranted.</p> <p>Neighborhood parks will usually provide play apparatus for preschoolers and school age children. They typically provide informal recreational facilities, stressing versatility to accommodate multiple recreational pursuits. Examples include multi-purpose turf fields and paved court areas, and lawn areas that may be used for intermittent activities (horseshoes, lawn games, badminton, etc.) and seasonal activities (ice rinks, etc.). Other features found in neighborhood parks may include picnic shelters, restroom facilities, and maintenance or storage buildings. They may include passive recreation areas with naturalized landscaping.</p> <p>As neighborhood parks are intended to meet the needs of persons living within a walkable distance, vehicle parking will usually be provided on the street, rather than in the park. Connections to the sidewalk and trail system, along with bicycle parking are great additions.</p>	<p>Brandan's, Collins, Hamilton, Highview, Knollwood, Larson, Rolling Hills, Spring Creek, Sterling Ponds, Wells, Westdale</p> <p><b>Why are these classified as Neighborhood Parks?</b></p> <p>These parks were classified as neighborhood parks due to their overall size and key amenities that are targeted to support families and smaller groups.</p>

Park Type	Description	Park Names
<p><b>Pocket Park</b></p>	<p>A Pocket Park is a small site used to address limited, isolated, or unique recreational needs. These parks may be found in any type of setting. Examples might include a downtown mini park or plaza, a memorial or historic site, or small open areas. These parks may be either active or passive, but speak to a specific recreational need rather than a particular population density.</p>	<p>Inlow, Corner, Power Plant, City Hall Plaza, Ostness, North Winter Parkway, Veterans</p> <p><b>Why are these classified as Pocket Parks?</b></p> <p>Specifically, the smaller size and limited amenities within each of these parks were the primary reasons for designating these parks as Pocket Parks.</p>
<p><b>Special Use Park</b></p>	<p>A special use park is often created to satisfy demand for a particular sport, recreational activity, or special event. Examples might include a sports park, water park or pool, arena, community center, fitness center, or theater/event center. These are needs that are not generally found in neighborhood or regional parks, greenways, or trail corridors, or may be incompatible with passive, nature-based outdoor recreation. The actual size of a special use park is determined by land availability and facility/market demand for special uses or recreation programs. These parks may be designed as a revenue-generating enterprise.</p>	<p>Whitetail Ridge</p> <p><b>Why are these classified as Special Use Parks?</b></p> <p>Whitetail Ridge provides special recreation uses for mountain biking and gathering within the park, which supports the designation as a special use park.</p>

# Technical Memorandum - Recreation

Park Type	Description	Park Names
<p><b>Linear Park</b></p>	<p>Linear Parks and Greenways serve similar functions within a community. Greenways are corridors providing connections between parks or other community destinations, and may preserve significant environmental resources in the area. The majority of land area within greenway corridors is used to preserve natural features such as floodways, wetlands, river corridors, and woodlands. Trails will often be found located within the greenway. Other active and passive uses may be found at nodes within the greenway system. Greenways may be owned and maintained by the local or county governments, as well as conservation organizations and others.</p> <p>Linear Parks include similar features to a Greenway and are typically longer than they are wide. Linear parks support of a variety of recreational functions, primarily including trails as associated uses. However, they may provide some other specific recreation uses at a trail head or similar location.</p>	<p>Mound, River Hills, River Falls Dog Park, Kinnickinnic Pathway, Heritage Park</p> <p><b>Why are these classified as Linear Parks?</b></p> <p>The general shape and function of these parks supported their identification as a linear park.</p>





### Legend

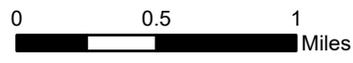
#### Park Names

- A Hoffman
- B Golf View
- C DeSanctis
- D Glen
- E Brandon's
- F Collins
- G Hamilton
- H Highview Meadows
- I Knollwood
- J Larson
- K Rolling Hills
- L Spring Creek
- M Sterling Ponds
- N Wells
- O Westdale
- P City Hall Plaza
- Q Inlow
- R Corner
- S Ostness
- T Power Plant Park
- U North Winter Parkway

- V Veterans Park
- W Heritage
- X Kinnickinnic Pathway
- Y Mound
- Z River Hills
- AA River Falls Dog Park
- AB Whitetail Ridge
- Wetlands

#### Sidewalks and Trails

- Bridge
- Tunnel
- Underpass
- Sidewalk
- Paved Path
- Dirt Trail
- Other
- Other
- Open Space and Recreational Areas
- Public and Private Schools



# River Falls Parks

## Technical Memorandum - Recreation

### Existing Park Amenities Needs Assessment

The Outdoor Recreation Plan includes a qualitative assessment of park amenity needs throughout the community using National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) guidelines. The NRPA guidance and metrics help communities meet the recreation and park needs of their residents, based on the community population as a standard. As part of documenting existing conditions for the city, a needs assessment was calculated based on NRPA standards and guidance.

After running this analysis, River Falls was calculated to have a surplus of park land and parks per 1,000 residents (compared to national standards). NRPA guidance also helps to assess specific recreation facility needs and determine future needs based on projected population growth. This acreage calculation includes all lands within a park boundary, including those with a specific recreation function, general open spaces and natural resource areas in alignment with NRPA guidance. A full analysis of needs shows a 2045 deficit of one skate park and can be viewed as a part of the River Falls Outdoor Recreation Plan.

### Existing Natural System

The Kinnickinnic River runs through the City and offers a unique interconnectedness between the built and natural environment. As a part of community engagement, many community members emphasized the importance of protecting the natural resources in the community. This includes conservation efforts and habitat protection.

The Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources element of the Comprehensive Plan explore the system of natural resources within the community, from waterbodies to steep slopes. This analysis includes the creation a Green Corridor system that identifies key resources that should be reviewed as part of the development review process and supported through active resource stewardship. Additionally, this system of resources can be enhanced through future action by filling gaps with the designation of new park and conservancy areas. See the **Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources** element for greater detail.

### Trail System

River Falls has an extensive trail system with options that support use by users of varying abilities and mobility types. The Kinni Trail runs along the Kinnickinnic River, with trailheads connecting to several different parks around the City: Heritage Park, Veteran's Park, Glen Park and River Hills Park. Mountain biking is a popular activity amongst residents and visitors and having the Whitetail Ridge Mountain Bike Trails makes River

## Technical Memorandum - Recreation

Falls a local mountain biking destination, with visitors coming from all around to enjoy it. Throughout the City and parks, there are paved and unpaved trails for recreational use as well.

### INDOOR RECREATION

Community members that participated in engagement events expressed desire for a community center to provide indoor recreation opportunities. River Falls is home to many indoor recreation sports clubs, both youth and adult, and a community center could provide more space to meet those activities' needs. Similarly, many community members stated that they would like another pool. Currently one outdoor pool, located at Glen Park, and one indoor pool, located at the High School (City hosted lesson programs are located here), that serve the community.

### SCHOOL DISTRICT OF RIVER FALLS – RECREATION RELATIONSHIP

A community's school system directly supplements the recreational offerings available to residents and visitors. The sports facilities, playgrounds, and other amenities available at the city's schools were included in the inventory completed as part of the Outdoor Recreation Plan, as they are open to the public. Additionally, the city's recreation programs currently depend on these amenities to support the variety of programs and capacity. A memorandum of understanding between River Falls and the School District establishes this important relationship, solidifying the use of the facilities and maintenance responsibilities.

The School District also owns and maintains the School Forest which provides an additional recreation resource for community members and the greater region.

### UNIVERSITY – RECREATION RELATIONSHIP

Being home to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls (UWRF) creates unique benefits and opportunities for the community, including access to the University's recreation facilities.

For example, the Falcon Center for Health, Education, and Wellness opened in 2017 and is home to a large fitness center, both academic and active learning classrooms, a performance lab, multi-purpose studios, indoor climbing center, auxiliary gym, and NCAA sports venues for several men's and women's sports teams. According to the University's published information, The Falcon Center opening increased membership sales by 184% and daily admission increased by 37%, proving that an indoor recreation center is a beneficial amenity to the

## Technical Memorandum - Recreation

University and surrounding community. The Falcon Center received the National Intramural and Recreational Sports Association “Outstanding Sports Facilities Award” to honor the facility and the institution’s dedication to recreation. Only 10 facilities are given this award each year.

### REGIONAL RECREATION RESOURCES

In addition to the city’s recreation infrastructure and School District infrastructure, there are other regional recreation resources that expand the breadth of offerings for the community and region. The Community Forest is an additional recreation resource, providing open space, hiking and hunting opportunities. Collaboration with the Kinnickinnic Land Trust and Kinni Collaborative is important for the preservation of this resource. Additionally, the adjacent towns maintain park and recreation areas that contribute to the overall system. For example, the Town of River Falls maintains the Birch Cliff Park located to the southwest of the Rocky Branch Neighborhood and providing an important connection between city parks and open spaces, the Community Forest, and the School District Forest.



# RECREATION TOOLS AND RESOURCES

## EXISTING RECREATIONAL PLANS

### Kinni Corridor Plan

The City of River Falls adopted the Kinni Corridor Plan in 2019 to prepare a future vision for the Kinnickinnic (Kinni) River Corridor that meets residents' needs and desires, reflects the values of the community, and protects the river for future generations. This multiyear planning process brought together the community, staff, and stakeholders to identify short-term and long-term improvements. The plan focuses recommendations and guidance to support a restored and ecologically healthy Kinnickinnic River in four areas – Natural Resources + River Ecology, Parks + Recreation, Land Use + Economic Development, and Access + Connectivity. The ten identified guiding principles were created from community input and informed the plan's recommendations are highlighted in the table below. Since its adoption, the Kinni Corridor Plan has been actively used to guide decision making and inform the Focus River Falls process. Additionally, the city is actively working with the WDNR and the Army Corps of Engineers for the planning and execution of the dam removal.

#### Guiding Principles

Strengthen and support the Kinni Corridor's:

1. Heritage, culture, and community character
2. Social, environmental, and economic sustainability
3. Ecological health, performance, and stewardship
4. Inclusiveness and sense of place
5. Economic vitality
6. Mix of uses and activities
7. Physical, visual, and social connections
8. Public health and wellness
9. Resiliency
10. Commitment to community engagement



## Technical Memorandum - Recreation

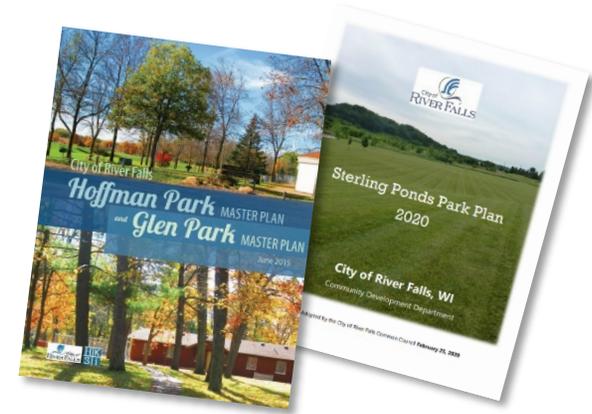
The planning process included extensive community engagement opportunities to inform the goals and recommendations of the plan. These engagement activities supplement the engagement received during the Focus River Falls process and were used to inform the qualitative assessment of this plan. Highlights of the community input that informed the implementation actions included within this plan are highlighted below.

<b>TOP 5 ACTIVITIES ON THE KINNI</b>	<b>TOP 5 AREAS OF INTEREST</b>	<b>RIVER ACCESS</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hiking/Walking</li> <li>2. Paddling</li> <li>3. Relaxing along the shoreline</li> <li>4. Fishing</li> <li>5. Picnicking</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Future of the dams</li> <li>2. River ecology</li> <li>3. Recreation/tourism</li> <li>4. Main Street's relationship to the river</li> <li>5. Impacts to corridor neighborhoods</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enhance river access for fishing, hiking, biking, and paddling</li> <li>2. Create loop trails</li> <li>3. ADA access improvements</li> <li>4. Enhance visibility of river in the community</li> <li>5. Improve parking</li> </ol>
<b>PARKS/RECREATION/ NATURAL SPACE</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>COMMUNITY INTEGRATION/CELEBRATION</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Add camping opportunities</li> <li>2. Enhance fishing opportunities</li> <li>3. Enhance paddling opportunities</li> <li>4. Enhance birding opportunities</li> <li>5. Enhance hiking opportunities</li> <li>6. Enhance biking opportunities</li> <li>7. More and enhance park spaces</li> <li>8. More natural areas</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mosquito control</li> <li>2. Better habitat management is needed</li> <li>3. Better management of public resources is needed</li> <li>4. Control commercial use (paddling)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Better integrate/connect the community with the river</li> <li>2. Celebrate the river</li> <li>3. Connect downtown better to the riverfront</li> <li>4. Embrace the river</li> <li>5. The river is the heart of the community</li> </ol>

## Technical Memorandum - Recreation

### Park Master Plans

The City of River Falls has developed park master plans to explore opportunities and identify recommendations and actions for parks throughout the community. Specifically, these master plans identify short- and long-term actions that guide investment decision making. Master plans have been completed for three of the community’s parks – Glen Park, Hoffman Park, and Sterling Ponds Park. These two documents explore the existing conditions of the park and the community, combined with community input to inform the overall master plan and specific recommendations for each park. Implementation of these plans has already begun, and key actions have been incorporated into the recommendations of this plan. The city will continue to use the master plan process as a tool to identify opportunities and recommendations for specific parks that support the needs and desires of the community. Recent implementation of these master plans include:



Hoffman Park	Glen Park	Sterling Ponds Park
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain social gathering spaces</li> <li>• Maintain partnerships with community organizations that provide recreational offerings (e.g., River Falls Baseball Club and Grow to Share)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construct parking lot and circulation improvements</li> <li>• Construct a new event building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction of trails</li> <li>• Preserve and maintain the miniature sledding hill</li> </ul>

### RECREATIONAL TOURISM

The city’s recreational infrastructure supports multiple functions within the community, including support of economic development. Existing parks and amenities draw visitors to the community from a broader region to play a new disc golf course, explore mountain bike offerings, or visit historic and cultural resources. When these visitors come into the community for recreation, they may also visit restaurants, shops, or other amenities in the community, supporting other uses. The community’s parks and recreation opportunities should be leveraged to assist and enhance tourism and economic development efforts. Strategies to leverage recreation resources, include providing connections and wayfinding between recreational areas and community destinations, community events that connect visitors to amenities, and the location of new recreational areas within new growth and investment areas.

## Technical Memorandum - Recreation

### PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH

Recreation is proven to benefit human health. Communities can support that by providing recreation facilities and programming. The Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH) is a query system developed by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) and provides data on measures of health throughout the state. According to WISH data, five out of ten Wisconsin adults meet the physical activity recommendation of at least 150 minutes of aerobic activity per week.

In addition, Wisconsin DHS has developed an “Active Communities Toolkit” through the Division of Public Health Chronic Disease Prevention Program. Communities can utilize this toolkit and its guidelines to help inform decisions, programs, and policies to contribute to the greater health and wellbeing of their residents.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has also gathered research on the physical and mental health benefits of recreation. It reports that the benefits of access to outdoor recreation are reduced risk of heart disease, premature death, and high blood pressure among others. Benefits to mental health include a positive effect on sleep habits, self-esteem, and potentially the immune system. <sup>1</sup>

Parks and recreation systems can help to promote and encourage these health benefits. Growing the resources available to the community could help spread the message of the importance of recreation.



<sup>1</sup> “Head Outdoors for Inspiration.” Head Outdoors for Inspiration | Time Spent Outside Proves Invaluable to Body and Mind | Wisconsin DNR, <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/wnrmag/2020/Summer/OutdoorInspiration>.

## Technical Memorandum - Recreation

### Social Environment

Recreation contributes to the welcoming, community-feel in River Falls by providing public spaces to gather, recreate, and socialize. It gives people the ability to have a place in their community. Adequate access to parks and recreation facilities is vital in upholding this community structure.

Outdoor recreation is linked to social benefits and interpersonal development, particularly for youth. Other benefits include crime reduction, active citizenship, and connection with the natural environment. Studies show that psychological outcomes (i.e. self-esteem, mental well-being) improved significantly for participants in sports programs.<sup>2</sup>

Beyond the social benefits, there are economic benefits to parks and recreation, in the revenue that they generate and the jobs that are created.

*An NRPA study from 2017 found that local park and recreation agency operating and capital expenditures across the United States generated \$166 billion in economic activity and supported over one million jobs.*

Overall, recreation is proven to benefit wellbeing, encourage social relationships and active citizenship, and promote a healthy, active lifestyle. There are endless benefits in supporting and enriching recreation and sports in River Falls for these reasons.



<sup>2</sup> Jugl, Irina, et al. "Do Sports Programs Prevent Crime and Reduce Reoffending? A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis on the Effectiveness of Sports Programs." Journal of Quantitative Criminology, 2021.

## Technical Memorandum - Recreation

### COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Community partnerships are instrumental in maintaining the connectedness that recreation and organized activities have with the River Falls community. These partnerships also help to further encourage the social benefits that recreation is proven to have on a community.

- Youth and adult organized sports: basketball, baseball, gymnastics, hockey, soccer, softball, swim, track and field, volleyball, wrestling, etc.
- The School District of River Falls plays an integral part of the parks and recreation system in the city by providing publicly available amenities for recreation and sports. The Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the School District which allows for public use of the School District facilities and allows greater access to recreation for the public.
- The City is home to a number of community and interest organizations. It is vital for the city to maintain mutually beneficial relationships through collaboration to support the recreational desires of the community.
- The Kinni Collaborative and Kinnickinnic Land Trust are two local organizations that support the preservation and enhancement of outdoor spaces within the community for both passive and active recreation uses. Continued collaboration with these organizations will support the existing infrastructure and future investments in recreation infrastructure.

### COMMUNITY CENTER

As discussed above, many community members expressed the need for a community center that can provide year-round recreational opportunities. If the city looks to pursue this, there are various funding opportunities that could assist. Those include:

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG):** The CDBG program provides annual grants to cities to aid in community development. Eligibility is assessed on a local level based on the community's needs and priorities. However, projects funded through the CDBG program should be catered to low and moderate income households. Funds are available for a multitude of activities including public facilities and community centers. CDBG funding encourages citizen involvement throughout the entire process.

**USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program:** This federal program offers a funding opportunity for community facilities in rural communities across the country. River Falls population being under 20,000 qualifies the City for rural funding opportunities. Funding through this program includes low interest direct loan and grants. Funding applications are prioritized based on a point system that evaluates population size and median household income.

## Technical Memorandum - Recreation

### Community Center Examples

#### Shoreview, Minnesota Community Center

The Shoreview Community Center was built in 1990 and expanded in 2017 and features an indoor waterpark, gym, indoor playground, fitness rooms, meeting rooms, and an outdoor deck. The 2017 expansions were funded through the city's capital project funds and bonds. Mayor at the time Sandy Martin noted that the community center has been a great success since it's opening in 1990 and is intended to be the social, recreational, and cultural center of their city.

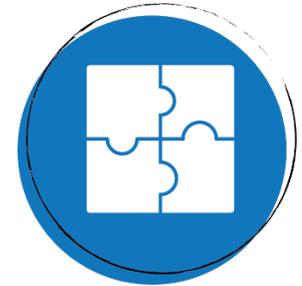


#### New Richmond, Wisconsin Centre

The New Richmond Area Centre opened in 2009 and serves the St Croix Valley Area of Wisconsin. The Centre is a nonprofit organization that aims to provide a welcoming environment to all visitors of all ages. Here, visitors and members alike can participate in fitness classes and programs, youth and adult sports, swimming, and group activities. The Centre also provides childcare and hosts group parties and meetings.



# INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION ELEMENT ANALYSIS



## INTRODUCTION

This technical memorandum provides data, detailed analysis, and additional information that is intended to supplement the Intergovernmental Cooperation Element within the Focus River Falls Comprehensive Plan. Included in this analysis is a review of the existing local, regional and statewide partnerships and agreements and an overview of the City’s statutory planning authority. Additionally, the memo includes detailed information about the tools and resources that are available to assist the city in reaching its goals.

## ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

The public engagement efforts of the Focus River Falls process were used to establish the plan goals and inform the element analysis for each of the topical areas. At a high level, the community supports collaboration to achieve success in working towards the established community goals. However, engagement activities did recognize the importance of active collaboration to achieve success. A few examples of where this was evident in the planning process include:

<b>Collaboration with the Towns and their community members</b>	Over 50 individuals joined the planning process for a Stakeholder Conversation aimed at connecting with large tract property owners (40 acres or more) within the extraterritorial subdivision boundary. This conversation provided an opportunity for education in planning practices and authority and the desire for continued and improved collaboration was voiced.
<b>Active relationships with local business and the Chamber of Commerce</b>	The community supports its local businesses and wants to maintain the local investments within the core of the community. Opportunities to support and grow these local businesses through financial and programmatic support is desired.
<b>Being a university community brings benefits and additional considerations</b>	There are many benefits to having the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and Chippewa Valley Technical College within the community, and their presence also brings additional considerations. Continued collaboration to help each organization achieve their long range goals were highlighted through various engagement efforts.

## Technical Memorandum – Intergovernmental Cooperation

Additionally, as a leader in the region, active intergovernmental cooperation helps River Falls remain transparent and have open communication with the community. The 2021 Community Survey identified that 57 percent of the community noted that the city was excellent or good at **being open and transparent to the public** and at **informing residents about issues facing the community**. While these numbers are similar to the benchmark for similar communities, there is also opportunity to grow communication and outreach efforts.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION CONTEXT

### EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS

The City of River Falls collaborates widely with local, regional, state and federal partners as it works to achieve the community’s goals and support a high quality of life for residents. These partnerships are vital to achieving the goals and actions established within the Focus River Falls process and other city efforts. The following pages identify existing partnerships at various levels and connection to the plan elements of the Comprehensive Plan. A description of the roles and goals of each organization is provided in the following table under “Description” along with current collaboration efforts and the connected Comprehensive Plan elements. These are key opportunities to consider when implementing the Comprehensive Plan.

The general topics, or Comprehensive Plan elements, where the city and agencies collaborated are also identified. The following icons are used to identify each plan element. The icons identified in color are those associated with that specific partner.



**Agricultural, Natural, & Cultural Resources**



**Economic Development**



**Housing**



**Intergovernmental Cooperation**



**Land Use**



**Recreation**



**Transportation**



**Utilities & Community Facilities**

# Technical Memorandum – Intergovernmental Cooperation

## Federal and State Partnerships

The City of River Falls collaborates with federal and state partners at a high-level, often utilizing programs or adhering to guidelines set forth by these groups. For example, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) sets standards for the management and review of impacts to natural resources and recreation areas within the community and often extends funding and grant opportunities to meet these standards.

Partner Organization	Description	Current Collaboration	Collaboration Topics
<b>Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)</b>	WisDOT’s mission is to provide leadership in the development and operation of a safe and efficient transportation system.	Collaboration is maintained through participation in highway and other statewide plans. Funding opportunities are also used to support local investment. The city also utilizes local planning tools and polices established by WisDOT.	
<b>Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)</b>	WHEDA’s mission is to stimulate the state’s economy and improve the quality of life for Wisconsin residents by providing affordable housing and businesses financing products.	Collaboration includes the use of WHEDA developed tools and resources and funding opportunities through grant programs.	
<b>Housing and Urban Development (HUD)</b>	HUD’s mission is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive community and quality, affordable homes for all.	Collaboration includes the use of tools and resources developed by HUD.	
<b>Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI)</b>	DPI’s mission is “Our mission is to ensure that every child, regardless of zip code, has access to quality public education programs, enrichment opportunities, and special education supports, so that all of our kids can be successful.”	Collaboration includes the use of tools and resources.	

# Technical Memorandum – Intergovernmental Cooperation

Partner Organization	Description	Current Collaboration	Collaboration Topics
<b>Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA)</b>	The DOA provides purchasing and financial management in an efficient and high-quality manner. They also provide tools and resources for the use at the local level including population projections and administers the decennial Comprehensive Plan updates.	Utilization of tools and resources and collaboration with Comprehensive Plan updates.	
<b>Wisconsin Wetland Association</b>	Wisconsin Wetland Association is dedicated to the protection, restoration, and enjoyment of wetlands and associated ecosystems through science-based programs, education, and advocacy.	Policies and guidance regarding wetland management practices.	
<b>National Park Service</b>	Agency of the federal government that manages national parks, monuments, and other conservation and historic properties, including the management of the National Register of Historic Places.	Policies and guidance for the management and preservation of local cultural resources.	
<b>Wisconsin Historical Society</b>	The mission of the Wisconsin Historical Society is to connect people to the past by collecting, preserving, and sharing stories.	Policies and guidance for the management and preservation of local cultural resources.	
<b>Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR)</b>	The DNR’s vision is to excel at protecting and managing natural resources while supporting the economy and the well-being of our citizenry.	Management and conservation practices of natural resources. Funding opportunities through grant programming. Approval and review of the Outdoor Recreation Plan.	

# Technical Memorandum – Intergovernmental Cooperation

## Regional Partnerships

Regional partners include counties, neighboring cities, councils, and organizations that serve a broader area beyond the City of River Falls planning area. Generally, the city has a more active role in engaging with these partners than the state or federal agencies.

Partner Organization	Description	Current Collaboration	Collaboration Topics
<b>St. Croix County</b>	The mission of St. Croix County is to strengthen its social and economic future by providing health, safety, and well-being for all.	Collaboration occurs in many forms, including facilities owned and maintained by the County (e.g., roadways) and participation in regional planning efforts. Policies, programs, and tools developed by the County are also integrated at the local level as appropriate.	
<b>Pierce County</b>	The Pierce County is the governmental unit that manages and execute the county’s authority of planning, investment, and action.	Collaboration occurs in many forms, including facilities owned and maintained by the County (e.g., roadways) and participation in regional planning efforts. Policies, programs, and tools developed by the County are also integrated at the local level as appropriate.	
<b>Regional Indigenous Communities</b>	The River Falls community was originally inhabited by indigenous communities and land was ceded via treaties. The Ho-Chunk Nation was a primarily inhabitant of the area, with the Dakota and Potawatomi Nations also traveling and hunting in the area.		

# Technical Memorandum – Intergovernmental Cooperation

Partner Organization	Description	Current Collaboration	Collaboration Topics
<b>West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC)</b>	<p>WCWRPC is statutorily charged with the responsibility for planning for the physical, social and economic development of a seven county region including Baron, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Polk and St. Croix Counties.</p>	<p>Participation in regional planning efforts and funding programs. Integration of policies, tools, and resources created to support local agencies.</p>	
<b>Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC)</b>	<p>The MRRPC provides planning and economic development services to improve the nine county region’s environment, economy and quality of life. The region includes Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Trempealeau, and Vernon Counties.</p>	<p>Participation in regional planning efforts and funding programs. Integration of policies, tools, and resources created to support local agencies.</p>	
<b>Metropolitan Council</b>	<p>The Metropolitan Council is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Twin Cities Metropolitan area. The Council provides long-range planning and essential services to create the foundation for a thriving region. Their key function is supporting transportation infrastructure and sanitary sewer infrastructure in the region, but also provide general planning support.</p>	<p>River Falls is not currently one of the Council’s 181 communities, but the regional planning efforts executed by the Metropolitan Council provide important information for the City of River Falls to understand planning trends and changes for the broader region.</p>	
<b>Town of Kinnickinnic</b>	<p>The Town of Kinnickinnic includes the unincorporated areas to the northeast of the City of River Falls and provides a limited number of services to its residents.</p>	<p>The City and Town have an established agreement to solidify a joint planning area identified as the Urban Reserve which established growth planning areas and roles between the two agencies.</p>	

# Technical Memorandum – Intergovernmental Cooperation

Partner Organization	Description	Current Collaboration	Collaboration Topics
<b>Town of Troy</b>	The Town of Troy includes the unincorporated areas to the northwest of the City of River Falls and provides a limited number of services to its residents.	The City and Town have established an agreement for the current extraterritorial boundaries and collaborate on planning and development decisions. The City and Town also have Fire and EMS service agreements to extend RFFD response.	
<b>Town of Clifton</b>	The Town of Clifton includes the unincorporated areas to the southwest of the City of River Falls and provides a limited number of services to its residents.	The City and Town have established an agreement for the current extraterritorial boundaries and collaborate on planning and development decisions. The City and Town also have Fire and EMS service agreements to extend RFFD response.	
<b>Town of River Falls</b>	The Town of River Falls includes the unincorporated areas to the southeast of the City of River Falls and provides a limited number of services to its residents.	The City and Town have established an agreement for the current extraterritorial boundaries and collaborate on planning and development decisions. The City and Town also have Fire and EMS service agreements to extend RFFD response.	
<b>City of Hudson</b>	The City of Hudson is located 12 miles to the northwest and is home to 15,000 residents. While similar sized communities, Hudson’s location along I-94 provides the community with different economic development opportunities that also serve the River Falls Community.	Collaboration in various long-range and short term planning efforts that mutually support each community.	

# Technical Memorandum – Intergovernmental Cooperation

Partner Organization	Description	Current Collaboration	Collaboration Topics
<b>Cities of Ellsworth, New Richmond, Baldwin and Prescott</b>	<p>The Cities of Ellsworth, New Richmond, Baldwin and Prescott are all within a 20 mile radius of the city, each with similar roles and functions to support their individual communities.</p>	<p>Collaboration in various long-range and short term planning efforts that mutually support each community.</p>	
<b>St Croix County Historical Society</b>	<p>The St Croix County Historical Society supports the collection, preservation and interpretation of cultural history of the community and people of St Croix County.</p>	<p>Policies and guidance regarding the management and enhancement of local cultural resources.</p>	
<b>Pierce County Historical Association</b>	<p>The Pierce County Historical Association is a nonprofit organization founded in 1941 with the mission to preserve the county’s heritage by promoting the study, appreciation, and interpretation of the county’s history. The association maintains a list of identified sites of historic significance and can continue to be resource for the preservation and enhancement of local resources.</p>	<p>Policies and guidance regarding the management and enhancement of local cultural resources.</p>	

# Technical Memorandum – Intergovernmental Cooperation

## Local Partnerships

The City of River Falls partners with local institutions, organizations, and groups to improve our quality of life. Local partnerships are often the most visible, as they involve community members and are often intertwined in the city’s activities.

Partner Organization	Description	Current Collaboration	Collaboration Topics
<b>River Falls Housing Authority (RFHA)</b>	RFHA manages, maintains and facilitates affordable housing in accordance with Federal and State Statute. Our mission is to partner with the community to assess housing needs and opportunities and to be proactive, creative and collaborative in the development and delivery of fair, safe, sustainable and inclusive housing programs.	Support housing options and financial tools for securing or maintaining housing, rental unit management, and updates and implementation of the housing study.	
<b>University of Wisconsin – River Falls (UWRF)</b>	UWRF was founded in 1874 with a vision of a student-centered institution that provides excellent, accessible academic programs that serve the needs of the region, the state and beyond.	Collaboration to support access to services for the community and university students. Efforts to support economic options, housing, stormwater management, and mobility for the university population.	
<b>Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC)</b>	The mission of CVTC is to deliver innovative, applied, and flexible education that supports a diverse community of learners, improves the lives of students, and adds value to our communities.	Collaboration to support access to services for the community and university students. Efforts to support economic options, housing, and mobility for the university population.	
<b>Local Recreational Organizations</b>	There are a number of local recreational organizations that support the community’s access to passive and active recreational opportunities.	Continue to engage organizations to support programming and infrastructure investments within the recreational system.	

# Technical Memorandum – Intergovernmental Cooperation

Partner Organization	Description	Current Collaboration	Collaboration Topics
<b>School District of River Falls</b>	The School District of River Falls provides a safe and collaborative environment to ensure the development of every student’s unique potential, so all can excel as responsible and global citizens.	Collaboration to support community access to education and services and connection to community programming and lifelong learning opportunities via a joint facilities agreement. Agreements for the use of recreational amenities to support city programming. Collaboration supported the planning for the School Forest and support for the Police liaison officer.	
<b>River Falls Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau</b>	The Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau is a membership organization that promotes and supports economic activity within the community. Their mission is to work together to connect, promote, and support its members to further enhance the local economy and cultivate a sense of community.	Support continued and new economic investment within the local community.	
<b>Kinni Corridor Collaborative</b>	The Kinni Corridor Collaborative is a community-led, non-profit organization working with the City and other stakeholders to implement the Kinni Corridor Plan. The organization was created after the planning process and was approved by the River Falls City Council	Support the implementation of the Kinni Corridor Plan.	

# Technical Memorandum – Intergovernmental Cooperation

## STATUTORY PLANNING AUTHORITY

### Long Range Planning

Municipalities and counties within the State of Wisconsin are given the authority to complete long range planning activities to guide the physical, social, and economic growth of the community in the form of a Comprehensive Plan in State Statute §66.1001. Specifically, the Comprehensive Plan shall inform city decision making that supports the health, safety, and general welfare of the community. There are nine elements required to be discussed within a Comprehensive Plan per State Statute, each identified below, with the identification of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs to be included for each. Comprehensive Plans should be updated every ten years to comply with state law and to provide relevant guidance for decision making.

**According to State Statute §62.23(3)(a), a Comprehensive Plan or “Master Plan” shall:**

“be made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the municipality which will, in accordance with existing and future needs, best promote public health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, or the general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development.”



**Issues & Opportunities**



**Housing**



**Transportation**



**Utilities & Community Facilities**



**Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resources**



**Economic Development**



**Intergovernmental Cooperation**



**Land Use**



**Implementation**

## Technical Memorandum – Intergovernmental Cooperation

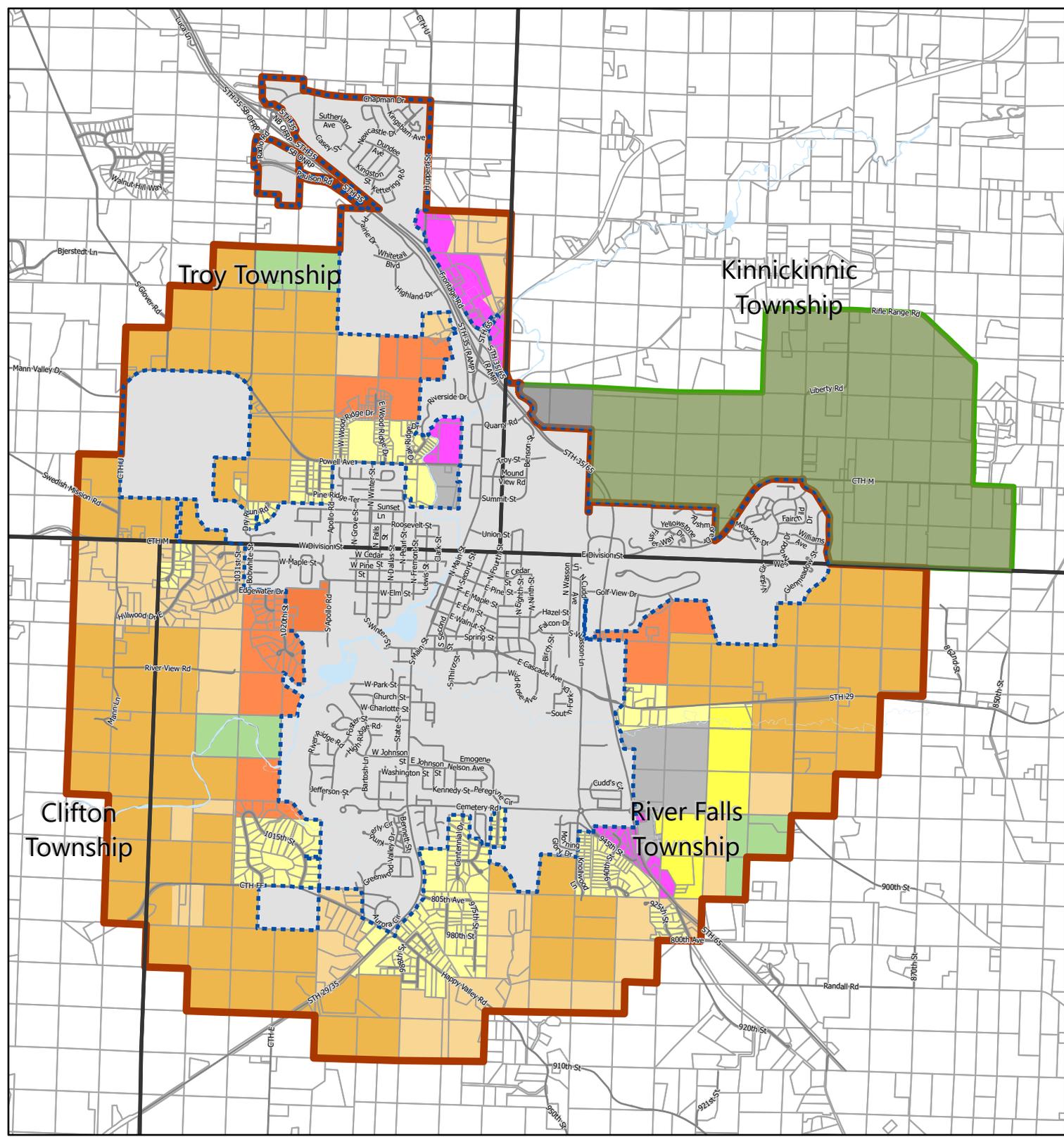
This long-range planning authority gives cities the opportunity to establish a vision, goals, and metrics that serve as a decision making tool for staff, elected and appointed officials, and community members. The Comprehensive Plan can guide a range of decisions, from the development of an annual work plan for the Planning and Community Development Department to updates to the zoning ordinance. Specifically, State Statute notes that each of the following ordinances should be consistent with a city's Comprehensive Plan.

- Official Mapping Ordinances (§62.23(6))
- Local Subdivision Ordinances (§236.45)
- City Zoning Ordinances (§62.23(7))
- Shorelands or Wetlands in Shoreland Ordinances (§59.692, §61.351, §61.353, §62.231, or §62.233)

### Extraterritorial Authority

State Statutes grant cities with the power or authority to execute a number of tasks in the management of the community. These powers include the establishment of departments (e.g., police, fire, and public works) and allow for the adoption of codes and regulations. The power to execute city planning activities is granted within §62.23 which provides authority to create a Plan Commission, official map, and zoning regulations. Cities that have created a Plan Commission and zoning ordinance may also exercise extraterritorial zoning authority, extending their zoning authority outside of city limits for the purposes of preserving and managing development activities within the community's growth areas. Cities with a population of over 10,000 residents according to the last federal census, including River Falls, have the authority to extend their extraterritorial zoning into unincorporated areas within 3 miles of cooperate limits. State Statutes lay out the process for the establishment and enforcement of the extraterritorial zoning ordinance, noting that a joint committee which includes representation from both the city and representative town will be used to establish regulations and updates. In addition to zoning authority, the approval of subdivision plats within the three mile extraterritorial area may also be executed by a city under §236.10.

The City of River Falls has exercised their extraterritorial authority with the establishment of Extraterritorial Subdivision Control and Extraterritorial Zoning Control boundaries. Both boundaries extend into the Town of Troy in St. Croix County and the Towns of Clifton and River Falls in Pierce County. The regulations within these three areas are discussed further in the **Land Use Chapter** and **Land Use Technical Memorandum**. Extraterritorial zoning was first established by River Falls in 1974, establishing an ETZ district of 3 miles beyond city limits. These boundaries have been modified through discussion and collaboration with each of the four towns with one agreement established with the Town of Kinnickinnic, including a reduction to a 1.5 mile ETZ. In addition, the city has an established Extraterritorial Zoning Committee with three appointed members from the Plan Commission to coordinate activities, reviews and approvals within the extraterritorial boundaries.



### Legend

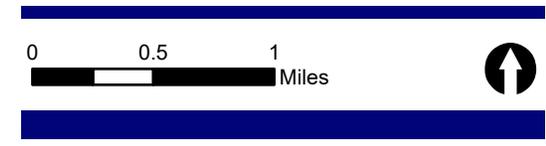
- River Falls City Limits
- Extraterritorial Zoning Boundary (ETZ)
- Urban Reserve Area Zoning - Kinnickinnic Township
- Roads
- Township Boundaries
- Lakes and Rivers

### Urban Reserve Area Zoning - Kinnickinnic Township

- A - Agriculture
- I2 - Heavy Industrial

### Extraterritorial Zoning

- Agriculture
- Exclusive Agriculture
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Single Family
- Multiple Family
- Residential Suburban
- Conservancy



# Extraterritorial Zoning Map

## Technical Memorandum – Intergovernmental Cooperation

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The partnership between the City of River Falls and its residents is one of the most important and impactful partnerships of all. The 2018 Strategic Plan establishes six values for the community that include putting people first, pursue excellence, act with integrity, embrace change, serve our community, and consideration future generation. Maintaining and acting upon these values will require active collaboration with the community to ensure that residents’ voices are heard, impact decisions at the city level, and help shape the future direction of River Falls. Community engagement can be woven into many aspects of city functions, from participation in advisory groups to public meetings for a long-range plan and public comments through a public hearing approval process. The City of River Falls will continue to offer a variety of engagement events and will consistently assess opportunities to utilize new and innovative techniques. Although not a comprehensive list, the variety of engagement techniques below are some the city uses to engage with the community.

OPEN HOUSES	SURVEYS	COUNCIL AND COMMISSION MEETINGS
<p>An open house is an opportunity for the community to learn more about an effort, provide feedback, and have conversations with city staff. These events can be held in-person or virtually and can be recorded to share online. Open houses can be used to collaborate with the public and stakeholders on a variety of functions, including long range planning efforts and budget processes.</p>	<p>To understand project needs and facilitate feedback on proposals, community surveys are a productive tool. These can be distributed online, through paper copies, over the phone, or facilitated in person. Surveys are an efficient manner of gathering a wide variety of feedback and can help collect an understanding of the entire population or a smaller subset.</p>	<p>The City Council, Plan Commission, and other commissions/committees/boards meet on a regular basis to discuss current activities, recommend outcomes, or take action on decisions/investments. While these meetings are open to the public, creating a welcoming and collaborative environment creates a space where the public is welcome to engage with city leaders and be active in the community.</p>

# Technical Memorandum – Intergovernmental Cooperation

<p><b>OFFICIAL CITY WEBSITE AND OTHER ONLINE SITES</b></p>	<p><b>SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATES</b></p>	<p><b>NEWSLETTERS AND EBLASTS</b></p>
<p>Creating and updating information through the city’s website is a great supplement to in-person events, as it allows residents to access information at anytime from anywhere. Event information, surveys, updates, and contact information can all be provided in a widely accessible format.</p>	<p>The city’s social media platforms are a great avenue for sharing information and updates with followers. The sharing of links, surveys, and event information via social media is an instant connection with interest stakeholders.</p>	<p>Maintaining and utilizing a Listserv of interested stakeholders and residents where information can be disseminated via email is an easy way for sharing news and upcoming events.</p>
<p><b>DIRECT MAILINGS</b></p>	<p><b>INFORMATIONAL EVENTS</b></p>	<p><b>PUBLIC HEARINGS</b></p>
<p>Direct mailings are a physical alternative to virtual surveys, websites, and information sharing. These can be sent as a stand-alone document, or as part of a regularly received service such as a water or gas bill.</p>	<p>In addition to open houses, specific events can be held to share information, gather feedback, and facilitate discussion. These can be specific to the project or can occur at events that are already happening within the community.</p>	<p>Public hearings are a required form of community engagement for the approval of specific items through a city process. Though a required step, public hearings provide an opportunity for the public to share likes, dislikes, concerns, or opportunities as the City Council and commissions take action on decisions.</p>

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION STRATEGIES AND TOOLS

### PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Maintaining and enhancing mutually beneficial partnerships with existing and new partner agencies will assist the city in achieving its goals and long range vision. While these partnerships should continue to evolve and change to respond to the needs of each organization, the following table outlines opportunities to enhance collaboration.

Collaboration Opportunity	Detail
<b>Maintain and Expand partnership opportunities with Counties</b>	The City of River Falls should continue to maintain individual relationships with each of its partner counties to ensure activities respond to mutual needs. Maintaining an inventory of the active partnerships and programs within each county will organize the efforts and opportunities, but also helps to identify gaps for improvements.
<b>Utilize cooperative agreements to solidify role and responsibilities</b>	Cooperative agreements are used to solidify the city’s roles and responsibilities for a variety of efforts. Whether agreements with Towns regarding extraterritorial authority or with the School District for use of recreation amenities, these agreements are critical tools for preserving the city’s investments.
<b>Monitor Metro Region activities, tools and initiatives</b>	Planning activities within the Twin Cities Metro continue to involve new tools, resources, and initiatives that can be explored in River Falls. While not a member community, active review of Metro Area activities can aid the city’s implementation efforts.
<b>Coordinate with the Housing Authority</b>	Providing access to housing options, for all residents, is a key focus area for the community and will require the maintenance of the existing housing stock and growth of new opportunities to achieve. Coordination with the Housing Authority will identify investment opportunities and policies to assist the city’s efforts.
<b>Enhance engagement opportunities with Towns</b>	Collaboration with the Towns and their residents is a key consideration for executing the city’s growth management policies. Beyond the required engagement through the extraterritorial committee, there are opportunities to enhance existing outreach and education with the towns and their residents.

## Technical Memorandum – Intergovernmental Cooperation

### COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

Cooperative agreements are used to solidify roles and outcomes between two parties regarding a variety of topics. For example, cooperative agreements can be used to determine the jurisdiction with planning authority over a certain area, outline the use of facilities and amenities owned by another organization, or solidify how funding can be used to support investments.





# APPENDIX B:

## Community Context



## INTRODUCTION

The community profile is a summary of the existing conditions in River Falls, and is used to guide the development, content, and implementation of the long range planning process that will update the Comprehensive Plan, Bike and Pedestrian Plan, and Outdoor Recreation Plan. At a high level, this profile reviews current and historic population, socioeconomic, housing, transportation and economic development patterns. *While this data provides a baseline understanding for who the River Falls community is today and the historic changes that have shaped it, the data presented within this profile doesn't represent all data that may be collected and analyzed through the planning process.* More information will be collected, reviewed and analyzed to inform the planning process. The data utilized in this analysis comes from a variety of sources and is the most updated version at the time of writing this profile. Data sources include:

**American Community Survey (2019)**

**United States Census (2020)**

**US Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Program (LEHD) (2019)**

**City of River Falls (2021)**

**Wisconsin Department of Administration (2013)**

**Community Profile Note:** Initial 2020 Census information was released in the early phases of the planning process (including total population). The data referenced within this document includes the most applicable and relevant data available at this time.

In order to understand changes that have occurred within River Falls, this analysis examines data through counts, estimates, and projections. All three of these data types will be used to infer scenarios about the future of our community and to craft a document that accurately responds to our population in 2040. For the sake of this document, data is organized into the following categories:

COUNT	ESTIMATE	PROJECTION
A count is representative of historic data developed from a verified study. A common example of count data is the decennial US Census.	An estimate is data developed on numerical analysis, which can be current or historic. Typically estimates are created using historic count data and using factors to arrive at an estimated total. A common example of an estimate is the American Community Survey.	A projection is a calculated inference of data for the future, such as a population projection. Similar to estimates, these values are usually calculated using count and estimate totals to infer a future value.

## COMMUNITY PROFILE BY PLAN ELEMENT

To develop a foundational understanding of the current conditions of a community, there are many data sources and systems that can be reviewed and explored. When combined, an understanding of who the community is today can be established, creating a baseline for the plan analysis from which to draw. The following table identifies the existing conditions explored for specific Comprehensive Plan elements. The Recreation Plan element is not included in this community profile, as the Outdoor Recreation Plan includes the existing conditions of the city's recreation infrastructure.

<p><b>Issues &amp; Opportunities</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population and Projections</li> <li>• Age, Race, People with Disabilities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Housing</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Characteristics</li> <li>• Housing Affordability</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transportation</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation Facilities</li> <li>• Roadway Jurisdiction</li> <li>• Commuting Patterns</li> </ul>	<p><b>Utilities and Community Facilities</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Storm Water Management</li> <li>• Inventory of Community Facilities</li> <li>• Educational Facilities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water Resources</li> <li>• Natural Resources</li> <li>• National Register Properties</li> </ul>	<p><b>Economic Development</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income and Poverty</li> <li>• Unemployment</li> <li>• Employment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Intergovernmental Cooperation</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional and Statewide Partners</li> </ul>	<p><b>Land Use</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoning</li> <li>• TIF</li> <li>• BID</li> </ul>

## Appendix B: Community Profile

# RIVER FALLS – THE BIGGER PICTURE

Covering an area of approximately seven square miles, the City of River Falls is home to over 15,000 residents. It is located in both St. Croix and Pierce Counties, with about 70 percent of residents living in the Pierce County portion of the city. River Falls is bordered by the Towns of River Falls, Troy, Clifton, and Kinnickinnic. Being located about 30 miles from Minneapolis, both St. Croix and Pierce County, and the municipalities within them, are considered part of the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Statistical Area. The Kinnickinnic River runs through River Falls, and is a vital part of the community’s ecological, recreational, and natural environment.

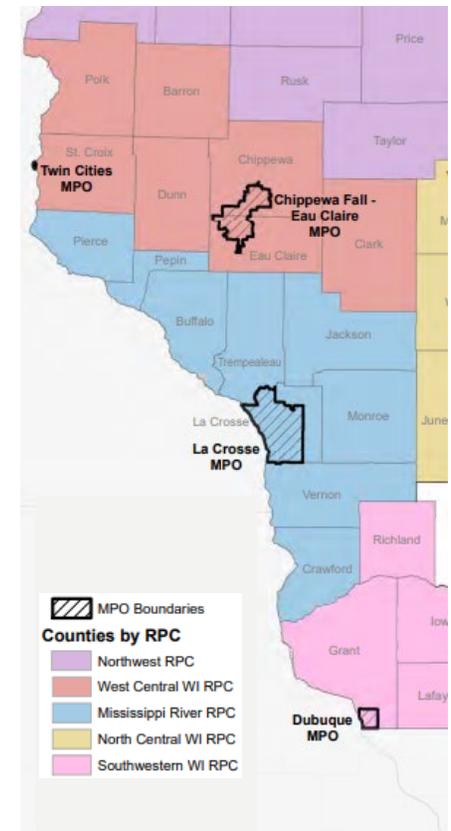
## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

The City of River Falls collaborates with partners at local, regional, and state levels. Proximity to the Minneapolis-St. Paul area creates an economic and social partnership between it and River Falls. Residents commonly work and shop in another regional city, and travel between them for recreation, education, and entertainment. The University of Wisconsin - River Falls campus also attracts residents from other communities, with a typical student body of around 6,000 students.

The City of River Falls is part of two regional planning commissions (RPCs), as both Pierce and St. Croix Counties belong to separate commissions. To the north, St. Croix County is part of the West Central Wisconsin RPC which includes the cities, villages, and towns across seven counties stretching east to Eau Claire. To the south, Pierce County is a member of the Mississippi River RPC which includes the cities, villages, and towns across nine counties. These RPCs provide planning services and assistance at a regional level and ensure coordination of large-scale transportation planning.



*Regional Planning Commissions*



## Appendix B: Community Profile



A variety of partners contribute to the vitality of River Falls, which impact all plan elements. The table below displays current partners along with elements of the Comprehensive Plan they can support and influence.

**Table 1. Intergovernmental Partnerships**

	HOUSING	TRANSPORTATION	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES	UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES	LAND USE
State of Wisconsin	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pierce County	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
St. Croix County	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Towns of River Falls, Troy, Clifton, and Kinnickinnic	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
River Falls Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism				✓		✓
School District of River Falls	✓	✓			✓	✓
University of Wisconsin – River Falls	✓	✓	✓			✓
Chippewa Valley Technical College – River Falls Campus	✓	✓	✓			✓
City of River Falls Departments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
River Falls Housing Authority	✓		✓			✓
River Falls Municipal Utilities	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
WPPI Energy	✓		✓		✓	
West Central Wisconsin Biosolids					✓	✓
Kinni Collaborative			✓	✓	✓	✓
Kinnickinnic Land Trust			✓	✓	✓	✓

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Understanding the current and projected population trends within River Falls will help estimate development trends over the next twenty years. These translate directly to existing issues and future opportunities within the city. This analysis will also guide the overall plan in ensuring the proper facilities, services, and policies are in place to serve the community.

### POPULATION

The City of River Falls gained approximately 6,000 residents since 1990, with growth slowing in recent years. Between 2010 and 2020, the city experienced a 7.9 percent increase to 16,182 people according to the 2020 Census. Between 1990 and 2000 and 2000 and 2010, the city grew by approximately 19 percent each decade (an annual growth rate of 1.9 percent). Consistent with growth trends throughout the region and the state, growth rates have slowed in the City of River Falls. For example, Pierce County grew approximately 1.2 percent annually between 1990 and 2010 and has since slowed to an annual growth rate of 0.4 percent between 2010 and 2020. St. Croix County saw an increasing growth rate between 1990 and 2010 but has now slowed to an average annual growth of 0.7 percent. St. Croix County is the third fastest growing county in the state, following Dane County and Menominee County. Comparable municipalities in the region such as Hudson, Ellsworth, and New Richmond have also seen an overall slowing of population growth, however Hudson and New Richmond continue to see higher growth percentages than River Falls. The State of Wisconsin’s growth has slowed significantly, with recent growth only one-third of growth seen in River Falls.

**Table 2. Historic City and County Populations**

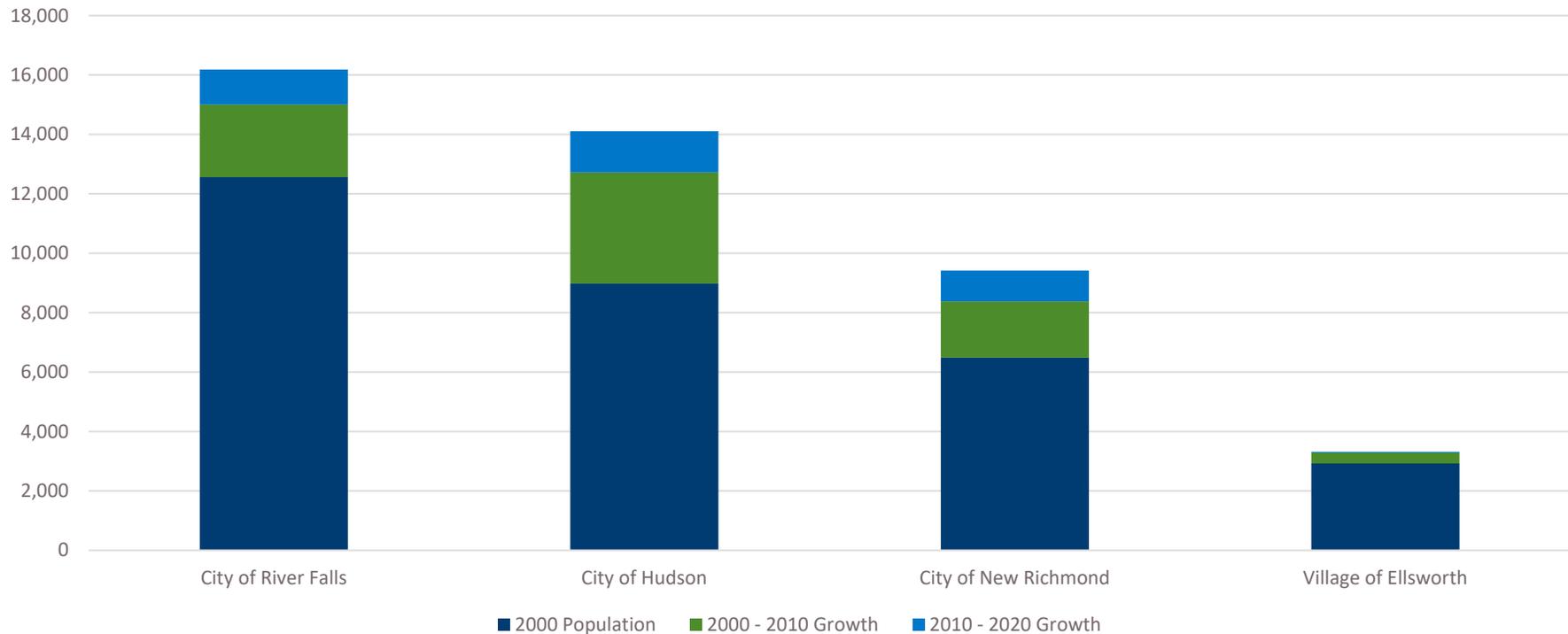
	1990				2000			2010			2020		
	Count	Count	Change	% Change	Count	Change	% Change	Count	Change	% Change	Count	Change	% Change
City of River Falls	10,610	12,560	1,950	18.4%	15,000	2,440	19.4%	16,182	1,182	7.9%			
Pierce County	32,804	36,819	4,015	12.2%	41,080	4,261	11.6%	42,754	1,674	4.1%			
St. Croix County	50,493	63,629	13,136	26.0%	84,406	20,777	32.7%	90,687	6,281	7.4%			
City of Hudson	6,437	8,974	2,537	39.4%	12,719	3,745	41.7%	14,103	1,384	10.9%			
Village of	2,768	2,922	154	5.6%	3,284	362	12.4%	3,317	33	1.0%			

## Appendix B: Community Profile

	1990	2000			2010			2020		
	Count	Count	Change	% Change	Count	Change	% Change	Count	Change	% Change
Ellsworth										
City of New Richmond	5,346	6,489	1,143	21.4%	8,375	1,886	29.1%	9,414	1,039	12.4%
Wisconsin	4.90M	5.28M	380,000	7.8%	5.67M	390,000	7.4%	5.82M	150,000	2.6%

Source: US Census, 1990, 2000, 2010 & 2020

**Figure 1. Historic Population Growth**



Source: US Census, 2000, 2010 & 2020

### PROJECTIONS

Population projections are a planning tool used to understand what our community may need in the next decades. Projections are based on historic growth, regional factors, and expected change, but are only an estimation. These values can be derived from historic city, county, or state population counts. Historically, the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) has created population projections for all of Wisconsin’s counties, cities, villages, and towns to provide a statewide planning tool. These projections have been used by State and regional entities to inform various planning activities (e.g., Wisconsin Department of Transportation travel demand model). The last update of projections from the DOA occurred in 2013 utilizing the 2010 Census data, and due to the age, the applicability of the data must be analyzed for each municipality.

The DOA projected the City of River Falls will reach a population of over 18,000 residents by the year 2040. While these projections were established nearly ten years ago, the 2020 population projection was found to be accurate, projecting a population just seven people short of the 2020 Census count. The existing projection continues to represent growth over the next 20 years using varied five year growth rates that represent slowing growth over time.

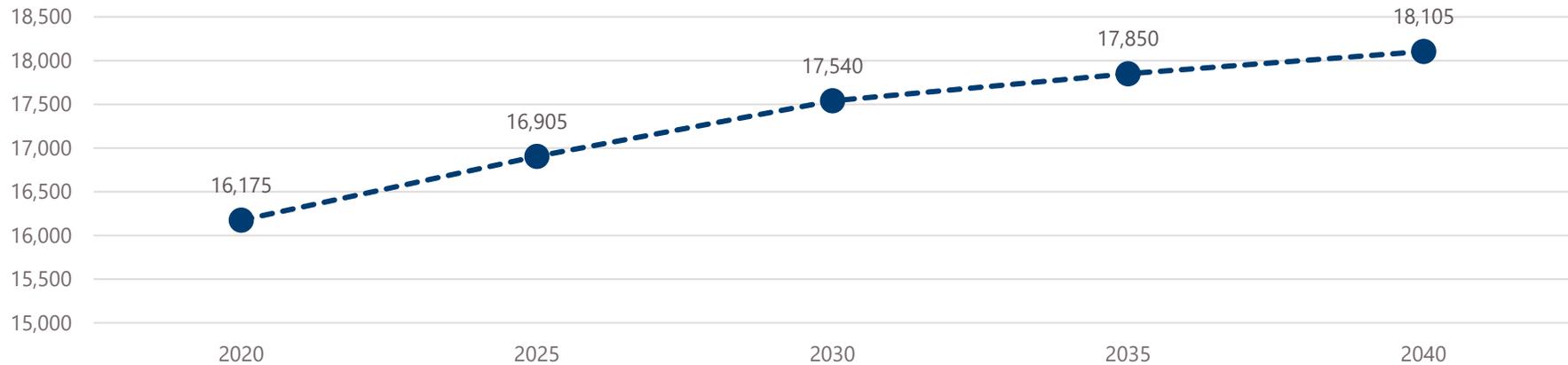
**Table 3. DOA Population Projections, 2013**

Projection Method	Population Projections	2020		2025		2030		2035		2040	
		Projection	Projection	% Change							
DOA	City of River Falls	16,175	16,905	4.5%	17,540	3.8%	17,850	1.8%	18,105	1.4%	

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2013 Projections

## Appendix B: Community Profile

**Figure 2. DOA River Falls Projected Population, 2013**



Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2013 Projections

The DOA projections are utilized by various state and regional agencies as a planning tool to inform planning exercises and analyses. For example, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation utilizes these projections to inform future travel demand modeling. While these projections were found to align with the 2020 Census count, the methodology for projecting the population beyond 2020 is becoming outdated. To further analyze growth potential for River Falls, historic trends and other projections completed for River Falls were explored. This analysis began by applying the recent growth rates experienced between Census counts to develop additional 2045 projections to be considered.

Population growth is influenced by two factors, migration and birth rates, and projecting future population change requires assumptions to be made about both of these factors. A review of historic trends and the external factors that influenced these growth rates can help inform future growth potential. For example, the 5-year average growth rate experienced between 2000 and 2010 includes population growth before and during the great recession, while the 2010 to 2020 rate is likely impacted from the recovery or rebuilding from that time. Using these historic rates, population projections from 18,364 to 25,708 were calculated, representing growth from approximately 2,000 to 9,500 over the next 25 years.

## Appendix B: Community Profile

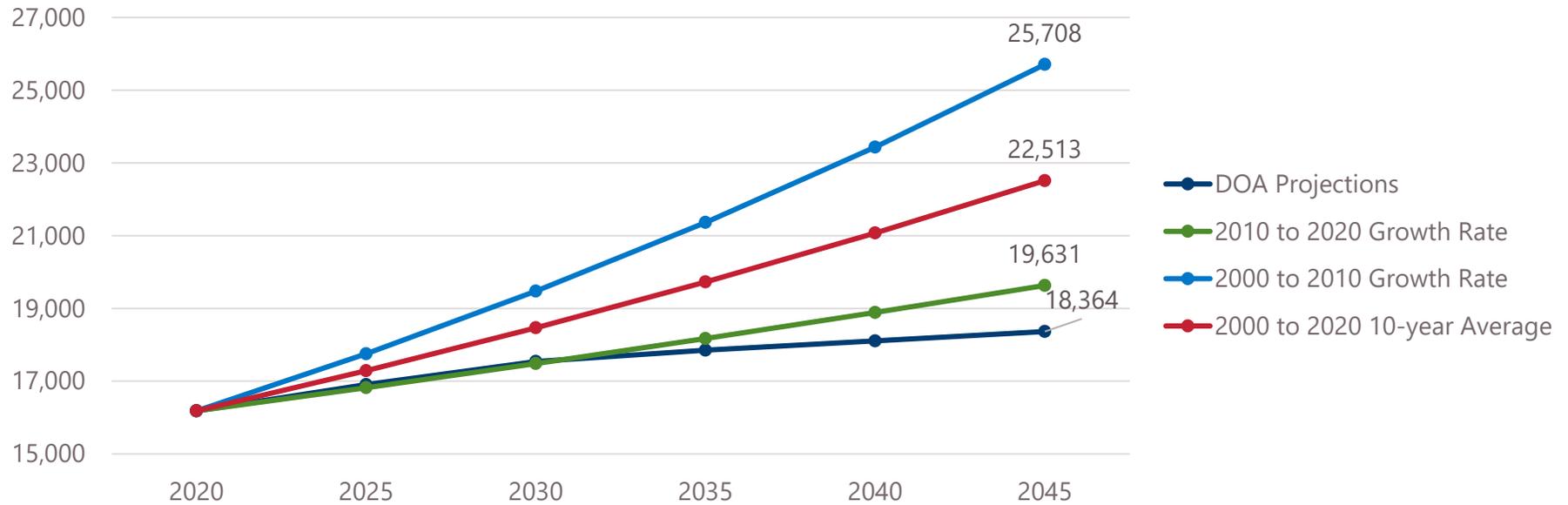


**Table 4. Population Projections**

	5 year rate of change	2020	2025		2030		2035		2040		2045	
<b>DOA Projections</b>	Varies	16,182	16,905	4.5%	17,540	3.8%	17,850	1.8%	18,105	1.4%	18,364	1.4%
<b>2010 to 2020</b>	3.9%	16,182	16,820	3.9%	17,482	3.9%	18,171	3.9%	18,887	3.9%	19,631	3.9%
<b>2000 to 2010</b>	9.7%	16,182	17,752	9.7%	19,474	9.7%	21,363	9.7%	23,435	9.7%	25,708	9.7%
<b>Average for 20 years</b>	6.8%	16,182	17,287	6.8%	18,467	6.8%	19,727	6.8%	21,074	6.8%	22,513	6.8%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2013 Projections, SRF Consulting Group

**Figure 3. Population Projections**



Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration, 2013 Projections, SRF Consulting Group

## Appendix B: Community Profile

Population projections serve as a planning tool that will be used to inform recommendations and tools within the Comprehensive Plan and companion plans. In practice, the future land use plan will guide enough development in each land use type to support the projected population. When using the projections, it is important to consider enough growth to provide a beneficial tool and not over project to over-plan resources and tools.

To understand the impact of these projections, the resulting housing needs to support this growing population can be analyzed. For example, the projection of 22,513 in 2045 represents an annual increase of 253 residents. Based on the current household size of 2.4 people per household, an additional 105 housing units would be needed annually to support this growth. Between 2000 and 2017, an average of 101 new units were permitted per year. More recently, between 2018 and 2021 the City of River Falls saw an average of 52 new single-family units and 156 multifamily units constructed per year. Continued housing production at the more recent rate would exceed housing need based on population growth, however, the number of new multifamily units varied drastically year to year, while single-family development was much more consistent. Additionally, a greater portion of the multifamily units will be occupied by renter households, which, on average, are smaller (2.11 people) than owner occupied households (2.64 people). If housing production would remain more similar to rates going back to 2000, housing production would be well balanced with projected population growth.

### Focus River Falls Projections

Using the projections analyzed within this exercise, the 2045 population projection of 22,513 has been identified as the preliminary projection for this planning process.

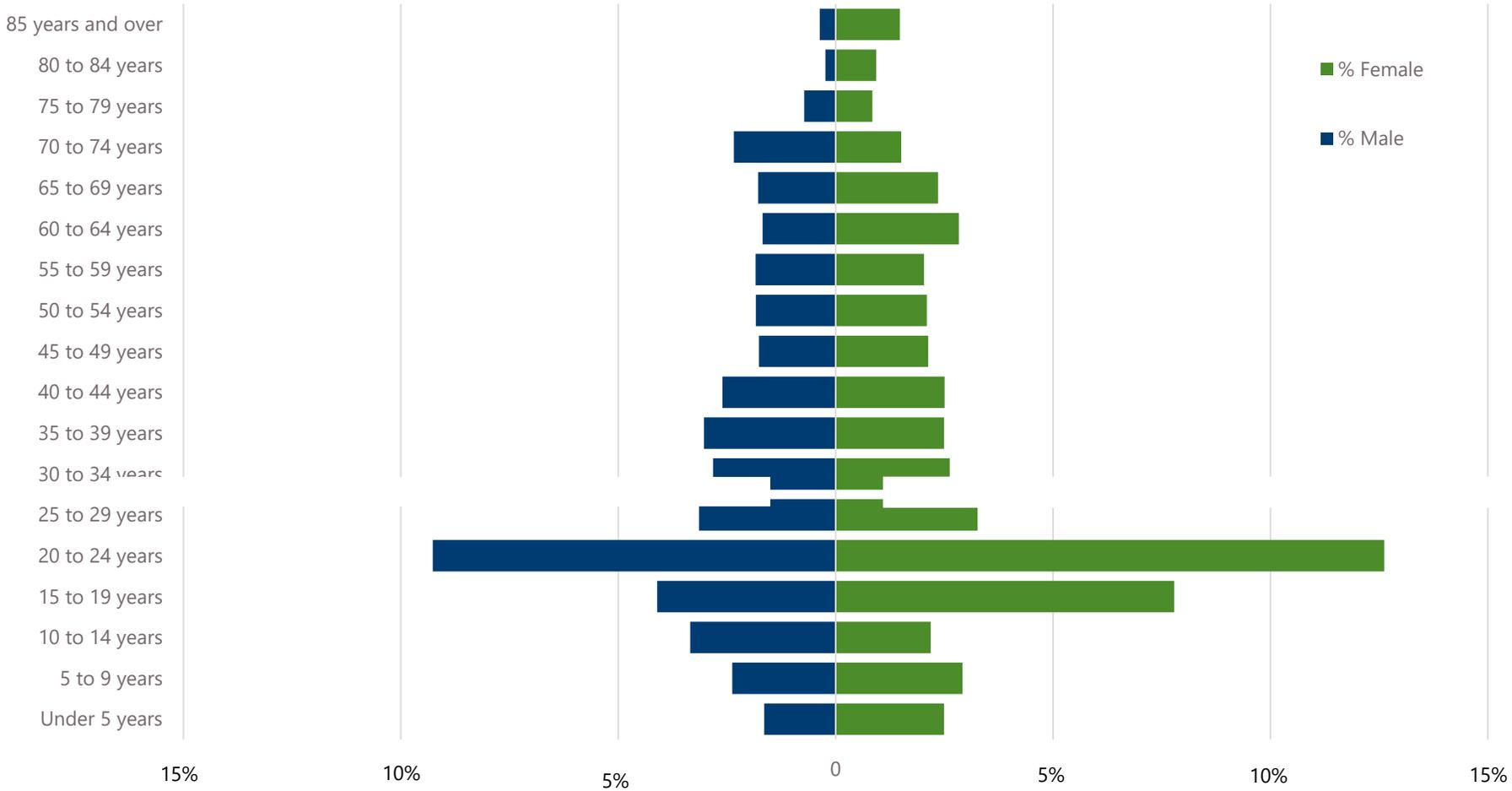
## POPULATION BY AGE

As services and needs vary by age, it is helpful to assess the population through age cohorts. One primary method of doing this is with a Population Pyramid, which analyses the breakdown of residents by gender and age group (generally in groups of five years). Population pyramids with a wide base suggest a growing population, with most the residents being in younger age groups. Conversely, a pyramid with a wide top indicates an aging population. These trends can help us create goals and recommendations in each plan that respond to specific needs of these age groups, such as providing transit, pedestrian facilities, youth services, or healthcare.

With the exception of those aged 20-24, the population pyramid of River Falls shows a relative equivalence across age groups (see Figure 3). The high percentage of overall population within the 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 age groups is likely due to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls enrollment, with average college age falling within those ranges. Based on data from the National Center for Education Statistics, the River Falls school district had a total of 3,517 school age children enrolled in 2020. 2019 estimates total the senior population (55 and over) at 1,965.

# Appendix B: Community Profile

**Figure 4. River Falls Population Pyramid, 2019**



Source: American Community Survey, 2019 Estimate

## Appendix B: Community Profile

### RACE

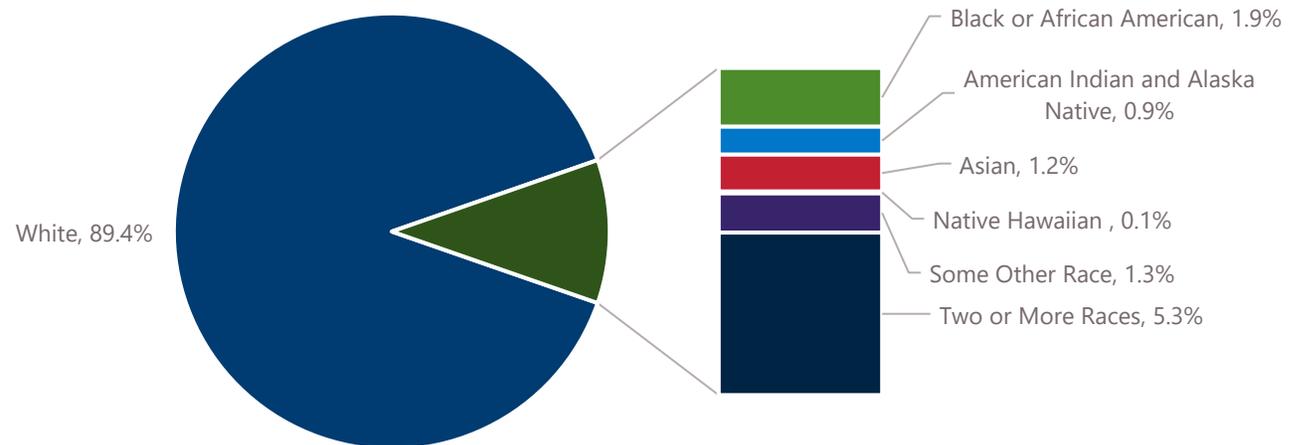
Approximately 90 percent of River Falls residents are White, with a majority of the non-White population identifying as two or more races or Black or African American, with a small percentage identifying as American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander or “Some other race” (as defined by the Census).

**Table 5. Race, 2020**

Race	Total	Percent	Race	Total	Percent
White	14,461	89.4%	Asian	194	1.2%
Two or more races	855	5.3%	American Indian and Alaska Native	147	0.9%
Black or African American	309	1.9%	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	194	0.1%
Some other race	206	1.3%			

Source: US Census, 2020

**Figure 5. Race, 2020**

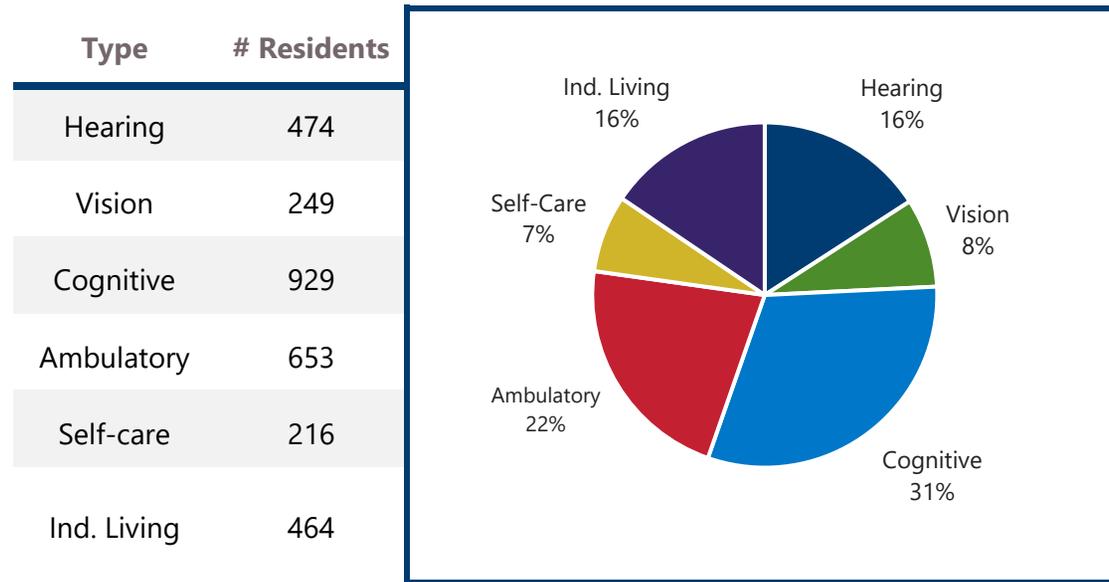


Source: US Census, 2020

## Appendix B: Community Profile

### PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

**Table 6. People with Disabilities, 2019**



Residents with disabilities may have unique needs from city services such as transportation, healthcare, or mobility needs. The Comprehensive Plan and its related implementation actions need to ensure proper access to employment, healthcare, and social services for these populations. As of 2019, about 1,7000 residents identify as having a disability. About 35 percent of this total is between 35 and 64 years old, followed by 21 percent in the 65-to-74-year age cohort. While some services will benefit many residents with disabilities, there are specific needs depending on type of disability. The majority of identified disabilities are cognitive, ambulatory, hearing, and independent living.

Source: 2019 ACS

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### INCOME AND POVERTY

The financial health of a community is generally examined using median household income and per capita income. Median household income is calculated by combining the income of all people living in a single housing unit. Per capita is calculated by taking the income of an entire area and dividing it by all people living there (including those not earning income such as children).

## Appendix B: Community Profile

**Table 7. Median and Per Capita Income, 2019**

	River Falls	Pierce County	St. Croix County	Wisconsin	United States
Median Household Income*	\$59,440	\$72,323	\$84,756	\$61,747	\$62,843
Per Capita Income**	\$28,119	\$33,061	\$39,287	\$33,375	\$34,103

\*2019 adjusted dollars, 2015-2019, \*\*2019 adjusted dollars, past 12 months; Source: 2019 ACS

River Falls has lower median household and per capita income compared to county, state, and national levels. This is likely skewed by the large number of students living within city limits, who generally have lower income. Although significantly less than Pierce and St. Croix median household income averages, the city is relatively close to Wisconsin and United States average median household income.

## POPULATION BY POVERTY LEVEL

**Table 8. Poverty Levels, 2019**

	Count
Total Number below Poverty Threshold	2,108

Poverty is determined by the thresholds set by the United States Department of Health and Human Services and vary by the number of people in a household, age, and pre-tax income. Services provided by the city are generally used more frequently by those residents who fall under the poverty threshold – such as public transit. It should be noted that the income thresholds are based on national trends and may not reflect unique factors at the city level. Another method of determining poverty is utilizing the Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) affordable housing guidelines. This is discussed more in the housing section, but it is a specific value set for each municipality that is based on their median income and housing values.

Overall, about 12 percent of River Falls residents experience poverty. Of the 2,108 residents below poverty levels in 2019, 90 percent were between the ages of 18 and 64. Additionally, 97 percent of these residents identified as White. Proportionally, the majority of River Falls identifies as White, and this value is reflective of that population disbursement.

### UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment data is tracked and monitored by a number of organizations at varying geographic levels. For example, the Wisconsin Department Workforce Development records unemployment numbers and trends at the county and metropolitan area level on a monthly basis. In 2021, Pierce County had an average monthly unemployment rate of 3.3 percent, with 822 County residents unemployed each month on average. Similarly, St. Croix County had an average unemployment rate of 3.3 percent, with 1,624 residents unemployed each month on average.

**Table 9. 2021 County Unemployment Rates**

Month	Pierce County		St. Croix County	
	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
December	510	2.1	967	1.9
November	427	1.7	812	1.6
October	485	1.9	960	1.9
September	566	2.3	1,141	2.3
August	819	3.3	1,651	3.3
July	812	3.2	1,673	3.3
June	986	3.9	1,926	3.8
May	833	3.4	1,652	3.3
April	973	4	1,909	3.9
March	1,125	4.6	2,233	4.5
February	1,250	5.1	2,424	5
January	1,081	4.5	2,146	4.4
<b>Average</b>	<b>822</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>1,625</b>	<b>3.3</b>

Source: Wisconsin LMI Data, Department of Workforce Development

## Appendix B: Community Profile

Additionally, the US Census estimates unemployment rates at the local level. Overall, the City of River Falls has an unemployment rate of 1.9 percent with 67.4 percent labor force participation rate (based on 2019 estimates). Of the unemployed, most (9.2 percent) are 20 to 24 years old. That high rate is explained by the presence of the University of Wisconsin at River Falls, since a high percentage of that age group are students. Comparatively, Pierce County has an unemployment rate of 2.4 percent, and St. Croix 2.0 percent as of 2019 estimates.

**Table 10. Unemployment Rate by Age Group, 2019**

Age	16-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60-64	65-74	75+
Unemployment Rate	0.0%	9.2%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

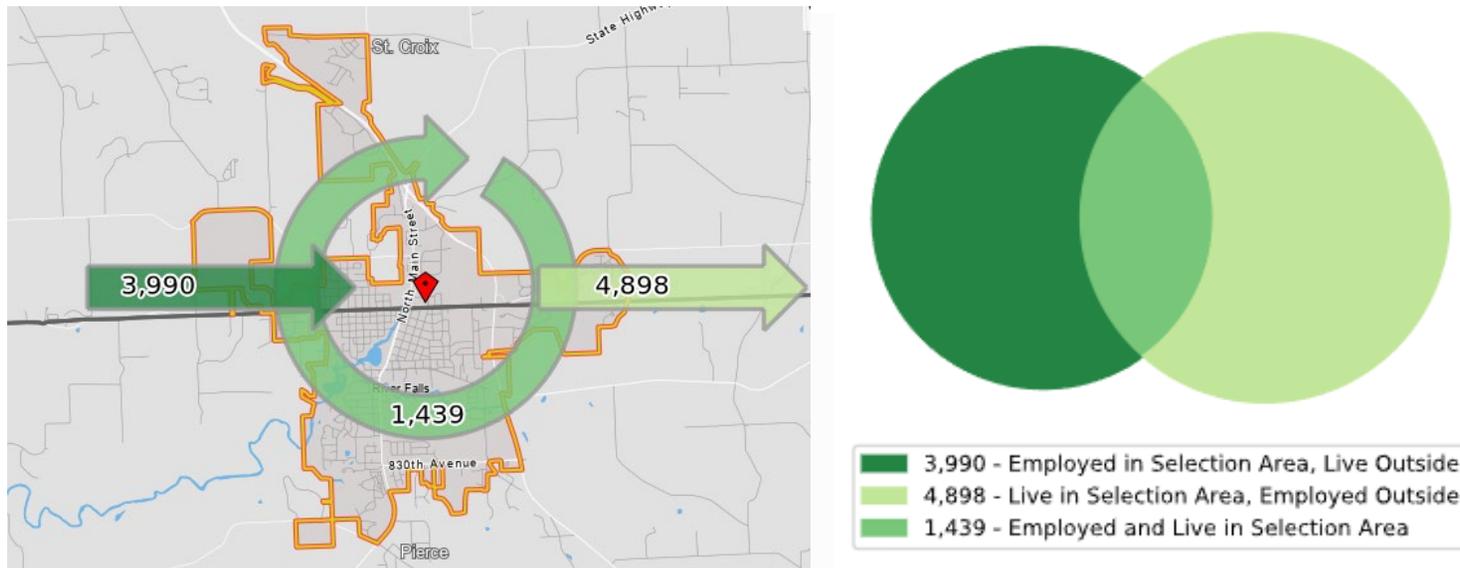
Source: 2019 ACS



## Appendix B: Community Profile

### COMMUTING

The employment trends and patterns within the city are a key indicator of River Falls overall economic health. Employment patterns impact the city’s tax base, transportation, housing needs, and overall land use. Based on 2019 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a total of 4,898 River Falls residents were employed outside the city, 1,439 both live and work in the city, and 3,990 live outside the city but were employed in River Falls. There is a relatively equal balance of those commuting into and out of the city, with generally few residents finding both housing and employment within city limits. While only 1,439 or 26.6 percent of employees live in the City of River Falls, an additional, 969 employees live within 10 miles of the community. Therefore, 44.4 percent of employees commute less than 10 miles to jobs within River Falls. Additionally, 29.3 percent of employees travel between 10 and 24 miles and the remaining 26.3 percent travel greater than 25 miles.

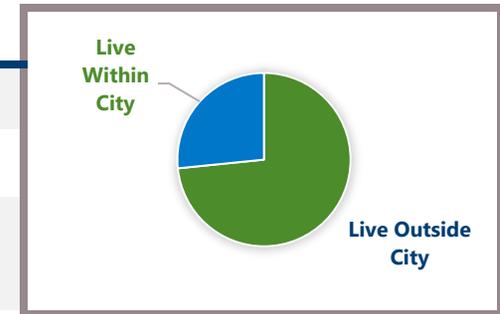


Source: OnTheMap 2019

## Appendix B: Community Profile

**Table 11. Where Workers Live with Primary Jobs in River Falls**

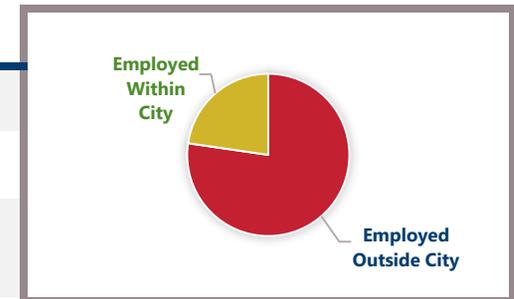
	Count	Percent
Employed in River Falls but Live Outside City	3,990	73.4%
Employed in River Falls and Live Within City	1,439	26.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,429</b>	<b>100%</b>



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019

**Table 12. Where River Falls Residents are Employed**

	Count	Percent
Live in River Falls and are Employed in the City	1,439	22.7%
Live in River Falls and are Employed Outside the City	4,898	77.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,337</b>	<b>100%</b>



Source: American Community Survey, 2019 Estimate

## WORKER AGE

Most River Falls workers are 30 to 54 years old (47 percent), mirroring county, state, and national trends.

**Table 13. Worker Age, 2019**

Age	29 and younger	30 to 54	55 and older
Percent of Workforce	29.3%	47%	23.7%

Source: 2019 ACS

## Appendix B: Community Profile



### EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

River Falls had a total of 5,429 jobs according to 2019 ACS estimates, most of which were in the educational services or health care and social assistance fields. Approximately 20 percent of the workforce was employed in educational services, likely a large proportion with the University of Wisconsin – River Falls. There were also large portions of the workforce employed in accommodation and food services (15.3 percent), retail trade (10.4 percent), and manufacturing (9.0 percent).

**Table 14. Employment by Industry**

Industry	Count	Share	Industry	Count	Share
Ag., Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0	0.0%	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	32	0.6%
Mining, Quarrying, Extraction	0	0.0%	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	317	5.8%
Utilities	38	0.7%	Management of Companies and Enterprises	17	0.3%
Construction	124	2.3%	Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	291	5.4%
Manufacturing	488	9.0%	Educational Services	1,108	20.4%
Wholesale Trade	64	1.2%	Health Care and Social Assistance	918	16.9%
Retail Trade	562	10.4%	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	145	2.7%
Transportation and Warehousing	49	0.9%	Accommodation and Food Services	829	15.3%
Information	23	0.4%	Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	118	2.2%
Finance and Insurance	204	3.8%	Public Administration	102	1.9%

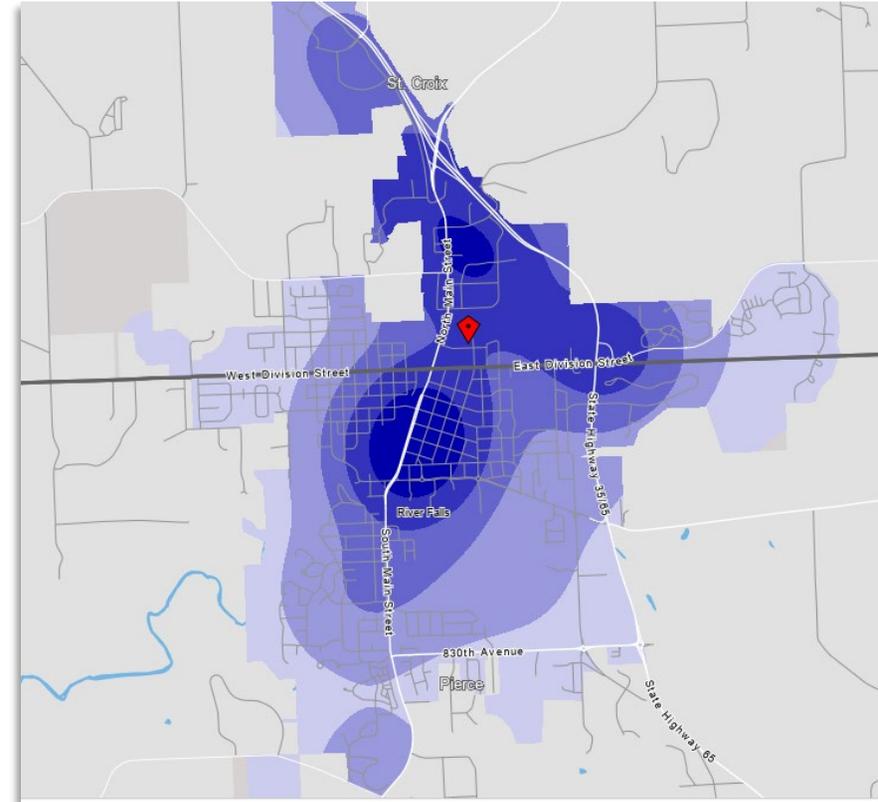
Source: 2019 ACS Estimate

## Appendix B: Community Profile

### EMPLOYMENT DENSITY

Based on 2019 data from ACS, employment is generally clustered along two main roadways: Main Street and Highway 35. This corresponds to the downtown area, and the retail strip along Main Street. There is also a strong concentration in the Northwest corner of the city, which is where the Sterling Ponds Corporate Park is located.

**Figure 6. Employment Density**



Source: 2019 ACS

# HOUSING

## TYPE OF UNITS

A total of 5,753 housing units are located within city limits, with a 4.2 percent vacancy rate. The majority of homes in River Falls are detached single-family homes, followed by attached single-family units and large apartment complexes (20 or more units). In 2019, It was estimated that there was a 0 percent vacancy rate for homeowner units and a 4.7 percent vacancy rate for rental units

**Table 15. Housing Units**

Units in Structure	1 unit-detached	1 unit-attached	2	3-4	5-9	10-19	20 or more	Mobile home
Total Number	2,459	955	179	107	320	548	1,049	136
Percent	43%	17%	3%	2%	6%	10%	18%	2%

Source: 2019 ACS

## TENURE

About 50 percent of residences in River Falls are owner occupied and 50 percent rental occupied. There is a slightly higher proportion of rental units in Pierce County (54 percent) compared to tracts within St. Croix County (34 percent), potentially due to greater numbers of student housing in that county. The average household size of an owner-occupied housing unit was 2.68 people per household, higher than the 2.17 people per household estimate for renter occupied units. The division of renter occupied and owner-occupied housing in the community has remained fairly consistent of the past few years, balancing around 50 percent.

**Figure 7. Housing Tenure**



Source: 2019 ACS

## Appendix B: Community Profile

Owner-occupied and renter occupied units include many different housing types, from detached single family to apartments or condos. While renter occupied housing can be assumed to be multifamily housing, all units can be renter occupied. For example, nearly 16 percent of renter occupied housing in 2019 was in single-family attached dwellings (e.g., townhomes).

**Table 16. Units in Structure**

	Owner-Occupied		Renter Occupied	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1 unit, detached	2139	76.1%	228	8.4%
1 unit, attached	523	18.6%	432	15.9%
2 units, apartments	13	0.5%	158	5.8%
3 to 4 units, apartments	7	0.2%	100	3.7%
5 to 9 units, apartments	8	0.3%	276	10.2%
10 or more units, apartments	24	0.9%	1477	54.5%
Mobile home or other type of housing	96	3.4%	40	1.5%

Source: 2019 ACS

## Appendix B: Community Profile

### HOUSING AGE

The housing stock in River Falls varies in age from pre-1940’s housing to current construction. The ACS estimates the number of units constructed by decade, including those built in the last eight years. According to these estimates, 21 percent of the housing stock was built between 2000 and 2009. The median year structures were built was estimated to be 1974, according to the 2019 ACS, with a median year built for owner occupied structures was 1970 and 1977 for renter occupied structures.

While the ACS data provides a broad picture of the age of structures across the last eighty years, the estimate of 211 structures built after 2014 does seem representative of the number of structures recently constructed. Recent building permit records the construction of over 300 residential units, including 90 single family units, 62 duplexes and townhomes, and 14 apartment buildings varying between 8 and 50 units. **To provide a clear picture of housing age, an analysis of city and county assessor data to understand housing age will occur during the plan analysis.**

### HOUSING VALUE

According to the ACS, the current median housing price in River Falls is \$200,300, with a slightly higher median in Pierce County (\$206,700) than St. Croix County (\$193,900). River Falls median housing price has increased approximately \$15,000 since 2010, up from about \$185,000.

### HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

To determine what is a “fair” market rent for an area, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) sets income limits to determine Fair Market Rent (FMR) for metropolitan areas. River Falls is included in the Minneapolis-St. Paul urban area, and these FMR values are then used to determine voucher amounts and income limits for affordable housing.

**Table 17. Fair Market Rent Values, 2021**

	Efficiency	One-Bedroom	Two-Bedroom	Three-Bedroom	Four-Bedroom
<b>2021 Values</b>	\$898	\$1,054	\$1,308	\$1,838	\$2,156

Source: US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2021

Limits for affordable housing are based on the area median income (AMI) for the area and adjusted based on the number of people in each family. Those considered “extremely low income” make less than 30 percent of the AMI, those considered “very low income” make less than 50 percent of AMI, and “low income” make less than 80 percent of AMI.

## Appendix B: Community Profile



**Table 18. HUD Income Limits, 2021**

<b>River Falls Median Family Income \$104,900</b>	Income Limit Category	1-person family	4-person family	8-person family
	Extremely Low Income (30%)	\$22,050	\$31,450	\$44,660
	Very Low Income (50%)	\$36,750	\$52,450	\$69,250
	Low Income (80%)	\$55,950	\$79,900	\$105,500

Source: US Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2021

### MEDIAN RENT

In 2019 the median rent in River Falls was \$1,054, which is a 37% increase from 2010, when the median rent was \$767. According to the US Census, about 30 percent of River Falls residents are housing cost burdened, which means that they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs. This is a typical measure of when housing becomes unaffordable. This is down from 44 percent in 2010, a decrease of nearly 15 percent. The decrease in percent of households that are housing cost burdened is possibly explained by the discrepancy between income growth and mortgage payment growth. Between 2010 and 2019, median household income grew by about 25 percent, while median monthly mortgage payments increased by only 3 percent.

## TRANSPORTATION

### TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

#### Interstate, US Highways, State Highways

River Falls is connected to the larger region via several State Highways such as State Highway 65, State Highway 29, and State Highway 35. Both State Highway 35 and State Highway 65 connect to I-94 to the north, which connects the city to greater Minnesota and Wisconsin communities. Although several minor arterials and collectors exist within River Falls, most roadways are local and serve to connect communities at a local level.

#### Jurisdictions

**Table 19. Roadway Jurisdictions**

Jurisdiction	Total Mileage	Percentage
State	22.74	20.1
County	9.90	8.9
City	78.98	71.0

Roadways are organized into jurisdictional classifications, depending on which governmental unit owns and maintains them. River Falls roadways are separated into State of Wisconsin, Pierce County, St. Croix County, and City of River Falls designations. Most roadways (71 percent) are managed and maintained by the City of River Falls.

Source: City of River Falls

#### Freight

The City of River Falls is not a primary freight destination, and therefore does not include abundant freight facilities. No railroads, intermodal facilities, or airports (excluding the hospital helipad) are located within the city. However, the state highways that traverse the city do play an important role in access to freight transportation and will be considered throughout this plan.

## Appendix B: Community Profile

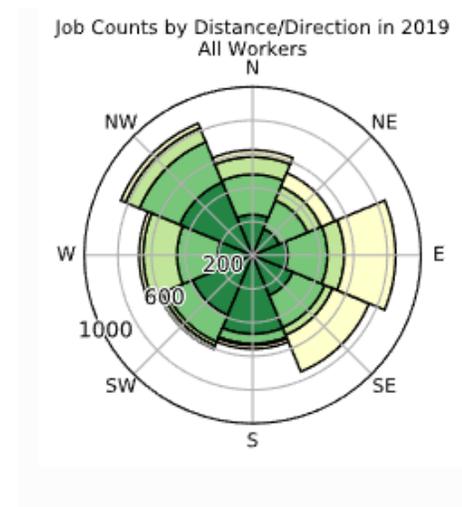
### COMMUTING PATTERNS

Most River Falls residents (84 percent) commute alone in a car, truck, or van, mirroring county trends. The graph below displays the direction and distance River Falls residents commuted in 2019. This data visualizes areas with high employment concentrations. Most workers are traveling either to the Northwest for jobs in or near the Twin Cities or the East/Southeast for jobs in Pierce County.

**Table 20. Commuting Patterns, 2019**

Method of Commute	River Falls	Pierce County	St. Croix County
Car, truck, or van (drove alone)	84%	82%	84%
Car, truck, or van (carpooled)	9%	8%	8%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	7%	10%	8%

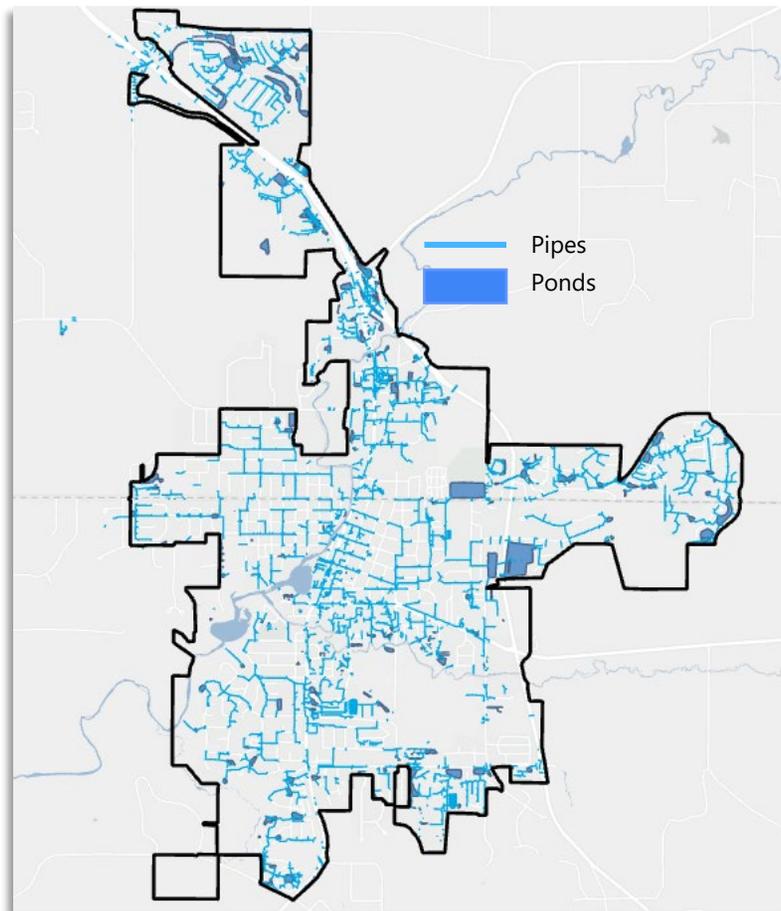
Source: 2019 ACS



Source: OnTheMap, 2019

# UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Utilities and community facilities includes both services and facilities available to River Falls residents. This includes things needed for daily living, such as infrastructure like water and sewer, public safety through police and fire departments, public health and education.



Source: City of River Falls

## INFRASTRUCTURE

The City of River Falls, along with local partners, maintains an extensive system of infrastructure to provide utility services to the community. This includes potable water, storm sewer, electricity, and sanitary sewer. Each of these systems provide services that are critical components of quality of life and economic growth. For example, the City's storm sewer system includes a variety of structures, such as manholes, outlets and aprons that work alongside stormwater pipes and ponds to keep water managed effectively.

## POLICE AND FIRE

The River Falls Police Department staffs twenty-five sworn police officers, and three civilian staff members. The department manages approximately 6,000 service calls per year and serves the City of River Falls.

The River Falls Fire Department consists of one station with fifty volunteer members and a full-time chief. The department oversees approximately 150 square miles, which extends beyond the city and covers the Town of River Falls, most of the Town of Clifton, the Town of Kinnickinnic, some of the Town of Troy, and some of the Town of Pleasant Valley.

## Appendix B: Community Profile

### EDUCATION

Based on information provided by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, the City of River Falls School District had a total enrollment of 3,427 students in the 2020-2021 school year. Schools in the district include:

- River Falls Virtual/e-School
- Renaissance Charter Academy
- Westside Elementary School
- Rocky Branch Elementary School
- Community Based Preschool
- River Falls Public Montessori
- Greenwood Elementary School
- Meyer Middle School
- River Falls High School
- Private Schools

### University of Wisconsin-River Falls

River Falls is home to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, which enrolls approximately 6,000 students annually. Although not operated by the city, the University plays an important role in the economic, cultural, and social development of the city. The University includes spaces for lectures, collaboration, labs, housing, and entertainment. Enrollment for the University has experienced a decline in recent years.

### Chippewa Valley Technical College

In addition to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, the Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) has a campus in the City of River Falls. Across all campuses, in 2021, CVTC had 15,537 total students, which was a decline from 18,910 in 2019.

### COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

There are a variety of community facilities that work together to serve River Falls residents. Below is a high-level overview of the existing inventory of community facilities in the city (note that not all are managed directly by the City of River Falls):

<b>River Falls School District Facilities</b>	Nine schools offering education to elementary, middle, and high school students
<b>University of Wisconsin-River Falls</b>	Classroom, collaboration, and event space provided for students and staff. Some facilities available to general public.
<b>Senior Center</b>	Offers education, well-being, recreation, and social opportunities for senior citizens.
<b>River Falls Public Library</b>	Provides book, catalog, and other media rentals along with collaboration and study space.
<b>River Falls Recreation Programs</b>	Programs offered for aquatic, youth, and adult focuses.

## AGRICULTURAL, NATURAL, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

River Falls has many natural and cultural resources within city limits, including lakes, rivers, parks, trails, and historic properties.

### NATURAL RESOURCES

#### Water

River Falls is bisected by the Kinnickinnic River, which expands into Lake George. Within city limits, the river stretches approximately 2.5 miles from the northern boundary to the southwestern portion of River Falls. As a result, a variety of wetlands are scattered throughout the community. There is also a 100-year floodplain that extends along the river shores, which will need to be considered in any future land use development.

#### Parks and Trails

The community is well served by parks and trails, with a variety of options for pedestrians and bicyclists. There are over 90 miles of paths and trails in River Falls, mostly consisting of paved sidewalks.

There are 28 parks within city limits, which include a variety of sporting facilities, camp facilities, playgrounds, pavilions, stages, picnic areas, and pools.

Trail Type	Length (Miles)
Sidewalk	56.6
Paved Path	21.2
Dirt Trail	17.7

Source: City of River Falls

#### Historic Properties



North Hall, University of Wisconsin-River Falls  
Source: National Register of Historic Places

Five locations within River Falls are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The North Hall-River Falls State Normal School and the Glen Park Suspension Footbridge are of state significance, while the Roscius S. and Lydia R. Freeman House, Glen Park Municipal Swimming Pool, and South Hall-River Falls State Normal School are of local significance.

### LAND USE

With a total of over 12,000 acres of land, River Falls is zoned primarily into residential and university classifications. 43 percent of parcels in the city are zoned R1-Single Family Low Density, and 15 percent zoned University. The next highest zoning district comes in at 8 percent, being Highway Commercial.

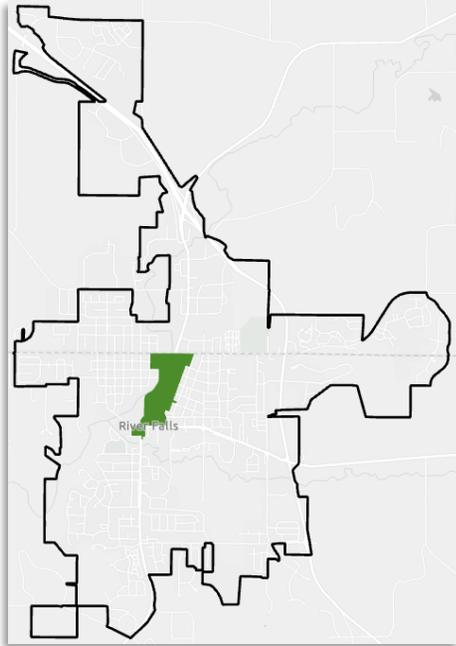
**Table 21. Existing Zoning**

Zoning Classification	Description	Acreage	Percentage
<b>R1</b>	Single Family Low Density	5,300.6	43%
<b>U</b>	University	1,857.1	15%
<b>B3</b>	Highway Commercial	970.6	8%
<b>R2</b>	Multiple Family Medium Density	802.3	6%
<b>I1</b>	Industrial	594.2	5%
<b>B2</b>	Limited Business	548.8	4%
<b>C</b>	Conservancy	449.2	4%
<b>P</b>	Park	520	4%
<b>A</b>	Agriculture	374.7	3%
<b>R3</b>	Multiple Family High Density	251.1	2%
<b>TND</b>	Traditional Neighborhood Development	188.3	2%
<b>B1</b>	General Commercial	128	1%
<b>I2</b>	Heavy Industrial	151.3	1%
<b>SZ</b>	School Zone	173.6	1%
<b>HZ</b>	Hospital Zone	32.4	0.3%
<b>MHP</b>	Mobile Home Park	30.9	0.2%
<b>Total</b>		<b>12,373.1</b>	

Source: City of River Falls

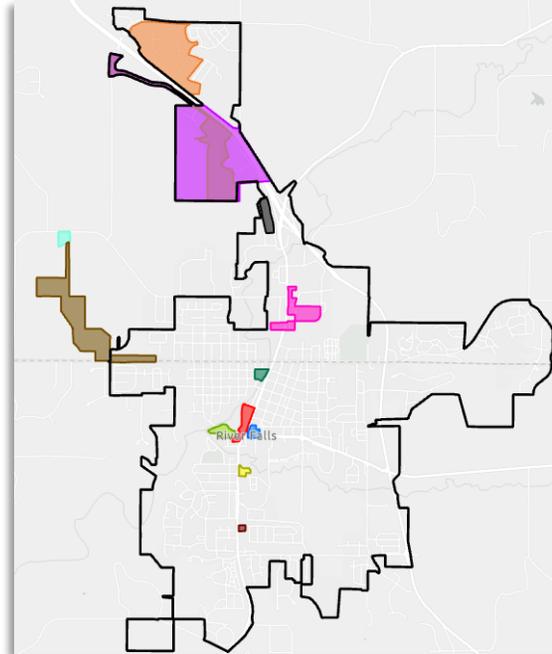
## BID AND TIF DISTRICTS

### Business Improvement District



Source: City of River Falls

### Tax Increment Financing Districts



Source: City of River Falls

BIDs (Business Improvement Districts) and TIFs (Tax Increment Financing) districts are economic development tools utilized by the city. At a high-level, these districts provide benefits to businesses within the limits of the district through tax programs. The City of River Falls currently has a BID in the downtown area, consisting of approximately 2 acres of land.

River Falls also has fifteen TIF districts which are dispersed across the city.

**FOCUS  
RIVER FALLS**

# APPENDIX C: ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

- C1: Public Participation Plan & Resolution**
- C2: Engagement Activity Summary**
- C3: Early Engagement Summary**
- C4: Stakeholder Conversation Summary**
- C5: Draft Plan Engagement Summary**
- C6: EngageRF Summary**





**RESOLUTION NO. 6642**

**APPROVING THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
AND COMPANION PLANS**

**WHEREAS**, the Common Council of the City of River Falls has determined engaging in a comprehensive planning process that includes land use, transportation, housing, bike, pedestrian, park and recreational planning and more is critically important to ensure that community direction is set, and short and long-term goals are achieved; and

**WHEREAS**, the comprehensive and companion plans (Bike and Pedestrian Plan, and the Outdoor Recreation Plan) will be data-driven, visionary, inclusive, systems-based, transparent, clear, concise, and actionable to ensure that issues of health, safety and general welfare are preserved and celebrated; and

**WHEREAS**, public participation provides opportunities for members of the River Falls community and stakeholders to participate in democratic decision making processes and a successful planning process will weave public participation through the project and is built from input that is received through all project phases; and

**WHEREAS**, the document sets inclusive public participation policies and provides a broad array of engagement opportunities in order to maximize participation through relevant, equitable and accessible processes; and

**WHEREAS**, public participation efforts will respond accordingly to our current public health situation with virtual, in person and hybrid options considered throughout the process; and

**WHEREAS**, the Public Participation Plan for the Comprehensive Plan, Bike and Pedestrian Plan and the Outdoor Recreation Plan provides for thoughtful community engagement, necessary transparency and essential input from residents, user groups and stakeholders throughout the planning process;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Mayor and Council of the City of River Falls approve the Public Participation Plan for the River Falls Comprehensive Plan and Companion Plans.

Dated this 11<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Toland", written over a horizontal line.

Dan Toland, Mayor

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy White", written over a horizontal line.

Amy White, City Clerk

# RIVER FALLS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND COMPANION PLANS

## Public Participation Plan

### OVERVIEW

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Public participation provides opportunities for members of the River Falls community to participate in the decision-making processes. The City recognizes that the community are sources of knowledge and expertise that can be harnessed to help find solutions to local issues as well as complex City challenges. A successful Comprehensive Plan is one that weaves participation from residents and stakeholders throughout the entire project duration and is built from the input that is received through all phases. This Public Participation Plan (PPP) describes the high-level process that has been designed to gather input from the public to inform all phases of the City of River Falls' Long-Range Planning Efforts. This PPP will describe the public engagement efforts to inform updates to the City's Comprehensive Plan, Bike and Pedestrian Plan, and Outdoor Recreation Plan. The PPP identifies the public engagement opportunities, along with roles, responsibilities, and actions for each event to be carried out. The PPP also identifies specific outreach efforts and opportunities that will be used to promote the engagement activities, including social media and traditional media opportunities. The City has hired consultants SRF Consulting Group, Inc. and Alta Planning + Design to work with the City throughout the comprehensive plan and companion plans process.

### DEFINITIONS

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The following terms are commonly used throughout this PPP, and the corresponding definitions provide a baseline for how the term is used.

**Community:** a group of individuals living, playing, and working within River Falls, with individual interests, investments, and goals.

**Stakeholder:** Groups or individuals with interests in River Falls, including community organizations, regional/state entities, and business groups.

**Engagement:** Opportunities to connect and collaborate with the community and stakeholders on a specific topic to inform, consult, involve, collaborate, or empower groups in a decision-making process.

**Social Inclusion:** Providing access for participation for all by improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of all groups.

**Promotion and Branding:** Activities and aesthetics to encourage education, participation, and awareness of the planning process and engagement activities.

# COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING

## RIVER FALLS IN CONTEXT

The City of River Falls contains approximately 7.2 square miles of land, located in west central Wisconsin. The City is home to more than 16,000 residents and is located in Pierce and St Croix Counties. Its economy spans industrial and commercial uses, and is home to two university systems, University of Wisconsin – River Falls and Chippewa Valley Technical College.

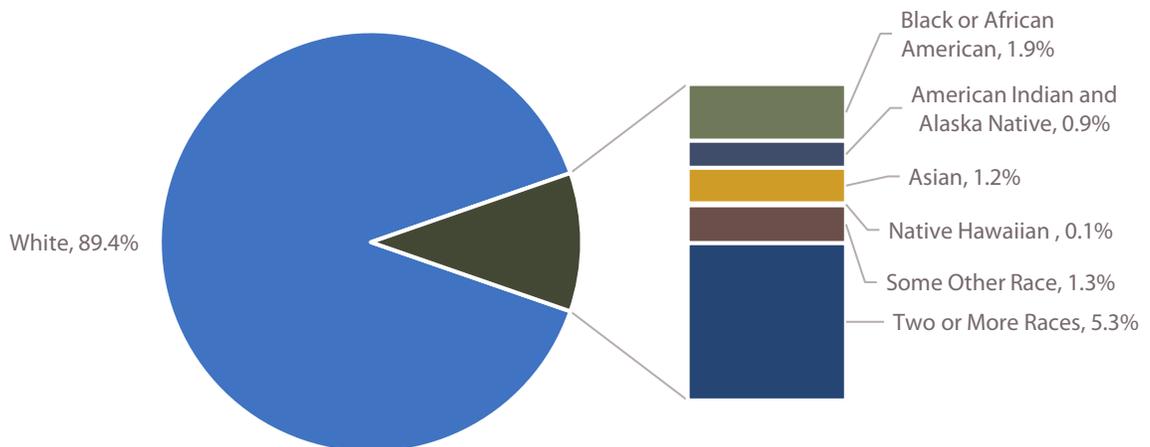
Located within a short commute to the Twin Cities metro area, River Falls is supported by the greater region. River Falls provides a number of amenities to residents from these and other nearby communities.

## SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

The City of River Falls’ population has steadily grown for the last 80 years, experiencing at least 10 percent population growth with each Decennial Census. The 2020 population of 16,182 represents a 12.1 percent increase from 2010, the smallest increase in eighty years. According to the Census website On the Map, 75 percent of the workforce in River Falls in 2019 lives outside of the community. Similarly, 80 percent of employed residents commute to jobs outside of the city. These 2019 ACS estimates show that there are over 2,500 individuals who become community members daily as they travel into River Falls for employment and may have different perspectives to gain from the engagement process.

The City of River Falls’ population is 89.4% White/Caucasian, 1.9% Black/African American, 1.2% Asian, 0.9% American Indian and Alaska Native, 1.3% Some Other Race, and 5.3% Two or More Races (see **Figure 1**). Additionally, 4.2% of the population identifies as Latinx.

Figure 1. City of River Falls Race, 2019

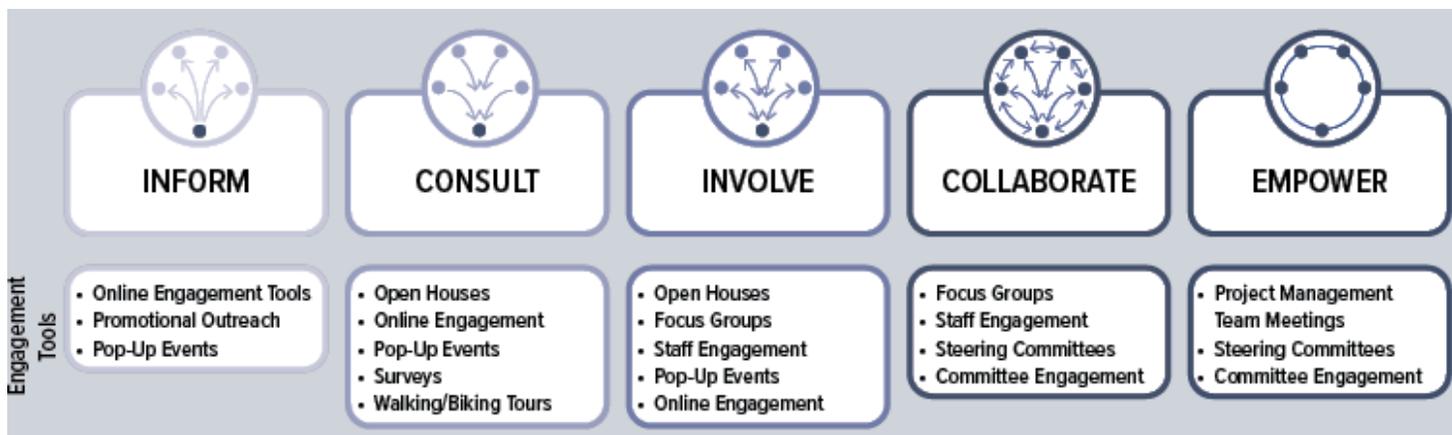


Source: 2020 Census Redistricting Data

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PRINCIPLES

The existing Comprehensive Plan and companion plans continue to serve the City but warrant updates to better align with current trends, policies, and public input. The City of River Falls is looking to update the Comprehensive Plan to address community changes over time and to ensure the plan includes a community-defined vision. Additionally, the Bike and Pedestrian Plan and Outdoor Recreation Plan were adopted in the 1990s and continue to be used by City departments. These plans will be updated in tandem with the Comprehensive Plan, each drawing input from the same engagement events.

Public engagement is a critical piece of any long-range planning effort. It provides opportunities to educate the public and stakeholders of the process; understand issues and opportunities from the people who live, work, and play in the community; and build consensus on a long-range vision and implementation actions to guide decision making. The input gathered through this process will impact the goals and policies that will shape future City decision making over the next ten years. Therefore, tools and events used throughout the participation process should strive to generally involve and collaborate with the public. The following graphic illustrates the five levels of public participation – ranging from informing the public of the process to empowering stakeholders to define solutions.



### The public participation principles for the long-range planning process include:

Engagement tools that strive for integrity and transparency with the public

Environments that are respectful of all opinions, beliefs, and goals

An open and inclusive planning process

Activities that provide opportunities for authentic input that accurately represents the community's desires

Collaborative efforts that bring the community together to build a shared vision

Broad community engagement, connecting with stakeholder groups and the public throughout the City of River Falls.

Provide accessible opportunities for public participation, including virtual engagement opportunities that are accessible for all. This includes the provision of materials for those with who may need materials provided in an alternative format

A timeline for engagement events that adequately informs the planning process while maintaining active engagement with the public

Facilitate dialogue among the public, business owners, and other stakeholder groups to identify issues and craft a community defined vision.

## CONTEXT

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The policy responds to the principles of democratic representation and social inclusion and guides the City to engage across a representative spectrum of socio-culturally diverse community members. The City will engage the community in processes that are relevant, equitable, and accessible.

The City's community and stakeholder engagement should address obstacles to participation. It will include identifying specific locations, creating focus groups and providing tailored pop- events as strategies and opportunities, where appropriate, to maximize the participation of:

- non-white residents;
- people with a disability;
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- people who are not residents but employed within the City;
- young people (under 25 years old) ; and
- LGBTIQ+ community

## TARGET AUDIENCE

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The City of River Falls' Comprehensive Plan and Companion Plan Update process is committed to an outreach process that is fun, informative, and looks to engage all sections of the community through various activities.

All residents of the City of River Falls are actively encouraged to participate in the long-range planning process. Outreach efforts will be tailored to engage with all demographics and geographic areas of River Falls. This will include publishing the notice of upcoming events on many platforms (described below in the Promotional Strategies section). Overall, the participation plan is devised to provide accessible engagement options for all City of River Falls community members.

The target audience for the engagement effort includes the entire community – regardless of demographic, status, etc. The engagement process must respond to the demographics and context of the community to collaborate with a cross-section of the community that includes all voices.

The flexibility in our approach will help to encourage increased participation by providing multiple opportunities for people to engage, especially by allowing them to participate in a way that works best for them. Additionally, each engagement tool is tailored to an audience, the size of which varies

depending on the tool. For example, engagement for an online survey can be measured by a sample size. A sample size is a tool to represent a large enough sample of the community, when it is unrealistic to get results from everyone. Based on the 2020 population of 16,182, a survey sample size of 267 responses provides a 90% confidence level and a 5% margin of error for River Falls. In all, the public participation process will look to engage as many community members as possible, while hoping to build momentum through each phase.

### STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

There are several agencies, organizations, and groups within the River Falls community that can be engaged as a conduit for promoting the planning process. The following list includes a sampling of stakeholder groups that have been identified by the planning team. Efforts will be made to identify and connect with specific groups in these categories and others as identified to not only promote the planning process but to gather feedback.

#### Stakeholder Groups

Educational Institutions

Economic Development

Limited Income Community

Athletic Clubs & Associations

Natural Resources Groups

Faith Based Groups

Non-Profit Organizations

Senior Community

Youth

### OUTREACH EFFORTS

The outreach process identifies virtual and in-person engagement techniques to help bring awareness to the process and gather input. The use of in-person, virtual, and hybrid tools provides opportunities for the public to participate in ways that work best for them. In-person activities provide opportunities for a direct connection with the public and project team, while virtual tools provide an opportunity for the public to participate where and when it works best for them. Hybrid tools provide options for the public to participate in whichever format works best for them.

Additionally, the use of virtual engagement responds to our current public health situation, and the SRF Team will ensure that outreach and methodology throughout the process is available to all. Efforts will be made to ensure that the meeting format responds to our current public health situation and social distancing requirements. Opportunities for in-person or hybrid engagement activities remain an option for the City, should in-person engagement be desired.

The public participation process occurs across the four major phases that are aligned to inform the tasks required to prepare a Comprehensive Plan Update. All outreach efforts will be incorporated into the four major phases of the Comprehensive Plan Update process outlined below. Additionally, these engagement events will gather feedback to inform updates to the companion plans.

### ONLINE ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

Online engagement tools provide an opportunity for continued engagement and collaboration with stakeholders throughout all aspects of the planning process. These tools may be used to provide updates and general project information with the public or allow for active engagement activities. The project team will maintain up-to-date information through these platforms.

#### Online Engagement Platform

An online engagement platform will be used to collaborate with residents throughout all phases of the planning process. This engagement platform will be established early in the planning process and updated with each engagement phase. The project team will utilize the online platform to continually engage the public in the planning process, focusing on key engagement phases. Monthly engagement activities will be added to the platform to keep the public engaged in the process.

A variety of online tools will be on the platform to gather community feedback, including public forums, mapping tools, prioritization tools, and open-ended questions. These tools will be tailored to specific topics for engagement. The community will have the opportunity to collaborate virtually with others' comments through these tools as well.

<b>ROLES</b>	<b>City of River Falls:</b>	Hosting of platform; Updating content throughout the process; monitoring comments
	<b>SRF Team:</b>	Developing content and updates; Creating engagement activities; monitoring comments

### PHASE 1: COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

Understanding the history and current conditions of a community provides a foundation for the planning effort to be built upon. Throughout this task, the SRF team will gather data, review past planning efforts, and establish a community background that identifies existing opportunities and challenges for the next 20 years of growth and development. Tasks include the formation of a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, a City kick-off tour, and a community survey.

#### Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

A Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (CPSC) will be used to guide the overall planning process. This group of residents and stakeholders is charged with providing input, reviewing documentation, and promoting the Comprehensive Plan Update process. The City's Plan Commission will serve as the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

The CPSC will meet at key points in the study process to provide input and guidance. It is anticipated there will be seven meetings of the steering committee throughout the process. The SRF Team will work with the City to ensure that meeting agendas and materials are provided to CPSC members ahead of each meeting, with specific roles/actions identified.

<b>ROLES</b>	<b>City of River Falls:</b>	Meeting attendance and participation; Assistance with coordination as needed; Securing of meeting locations (in-person)
	<b>SRF Team:</b>	Preparing agendas, materials, and summaries; Meeting facilitation

### Staff Kick Off and City Tour

Early in the planning process, the SRF Team met with City staff to kick-off the plan update. This task provided an opportunity to kick off the Comprehensive Plan and companion plan updates for both the consultant team and City staff. This effort included a day of meetings and a City tour to kick-off the project, collect data, and learn from each other. The kick-off process included 30-minute meetings with various department heads and staff groups and dedicated time for a virtual tour of the City with the City's project manager. This provided an opportunity to share the planning process with all staff, understand their expectations, and gather initial input. The agenda for the Staff Kick Off and City Tour included:

1. All Staff Kick Off Meeting
2. Emergency Services
3. Public Works
4. Parks and Recreation
5. Utilities
6. Engineering
7. Administration
8. Economic Development
9. Planning
10. City Tour

## PHASE 2: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Once the understanding of the community's history and current conditions is built, it provides an opportunity to explore future recommendations and a long-range vision. This task will focus on understanding how the City of River Falls can grow and develop within the planning horizon. This will be done by exploring issues and opportunities within the community.

### Community Survey

A community survey is an opportunity to engage residents at an early stage and gather initial feedback about their likes, dislikes, and hopes for the City of River Falls. The survey will build upon the results from the National Community Survey that the City has participated in since 2013, as a basis of

understanding the community perception for livability in broader categories, as well as recent planning efforts and questions will be generated based on discussions with city staff and the CPSC. The survey will be aimed at gathering input from the public regarding growth and development, community character, quality of life, aesthetics, economic issues, services, and other aspects of life that will contribute to the Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, the survey will gather feedback specific to the companion plans.

The survey will be disseminated via an online engagement tool such as Survey Monkey or the online engagement platform. Additionally, physical surveys will be developed and distributed to engage community groups that may need another option for engagement. The project team will work with stakeholder organizations to engage traditionally underserved populations in the survey process.

Opportunities to collaborate with UWRF to engage the public through survey platforms are another beneficial tool for the planning process. Initial conversations with UWRF staff have indicated opportunities to collaborate with a public engagement class where students are tasked with the development, distribution, and analysis of data. This opportunity will be used to inform the planning process, and details will be defined between the planning team and UWRF staff.

<b>ROLES</b>	<b>City of River Falls:</b>	Review of materials; Assistance with promotional activities; Distribution and collection of online materials
	<b>SRF Team:</b>	Development of survey questions and format; Prepare summary and analysis

### Community Outreach Kick-Off Event

In addition to a community survey, the Comprehensive Plan Update process will host a public kick-off event dedicated to informing the public of the planning process and gathering an understanding of current issues and opportunities experienced by community members and stakeholders. The event is planned to be held in-person, providing opportunities for the public to interact with the project team and other community members. However, the format of the meeting will be modified to best respond to the public health conditions, including a shift to a virtual meeting format.

Various facilitation tools will be used during an online open house to ask questions and gather feedback during a live engagement activity. The presentation and activities will also be available after the meeting for those that could not attend via the online engagement platform, providing an opportunity for all to participate.

<b>ROLES</b>	<b>City of River Falls:</b>	Meeting attendance and participation; Assistance with meeting preparation and promotion; Secure meeting location (in-person)
	<b>SRF Team:</b>	Preparing agendas, materials, and summaries; Meeting facilitation

Community Pop-Up Events

To round out the early engagement activities, community pop-up events are proposed to be held in tandem with the kick-off event. These pop-up events provide an opportunity to meet community members where they are, rather than making them come to the event. A table or booth will be set up at high traffic community locations (e.g., grocery store or community event) to increase visibility of the planning process and capture initial feedback. Engagement exercises will be limited to a short time, allowing people to provide input and quickly return to their activities. A minimum of two pop-ups may be identified with the City. Additional events may be explored with assistance from City Staff or UWRF Conservation and Environmental Planning students.

Community input from the survey, kick-off event, and pop-up events will directly influence additional data collection and the inform the development of the Issues and Opportunities Technical Memorandum.

<b>ROLES</b>	<b>City of River Falls:</b>	Review of materials; Identification of events/locations; Attendance as desired
	<b>SRF Team:</b>	Preparing materials and summaries; Facilitating event

Phase 2 Engagement Deliverables

Early Engagement Technical Memorandum – A technical memorandum will be developed to highlight the process and outcomes for the engagement efforts completed during Phase 2. This will include the community survey, kick-off event, and pop-up events.

PHASE 3: PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS ENGAGEMENT

This task includes the completion of various planning and analysis efforts to inform the updates to the Comprehensive Plan. Tasks range from the creation of a planned land use map, assessment of infrastructure needs, review of preservation needs, and economic development planning. As project staff progress through these efforts, the outreach process will ensure timely updates and input opportunities are provided to all community members.

Focus Group Meetings

The second public engagement opportunity of the process will include focus group meetings to gather input on plan elements and future implementation actions. A total of six focus groups will be identified with the City’s project manager to provide an overview of the planning process and facilitate a discussion on a specific topic. The format will include invitations to identified individuals on a specific topic that could include a plan element, a location in River Falls, or a specific demographic group. SRF will prepare a brief presentation for each meeting to set the stage and will facilitate a discussion with focus group members over a 90-minute meeting. The format of the meetings will be fluid to respond to public health considerations, availability of focus group participants, and other needs.

<b>ROLES</b>	<b>City of River Falls:</b>	Identification of Groups and Attendees; Review of materials; Meeting participation as desired
	<b>SRF Team:</b>	Preparing agendas, materials, and summaries; Meeting facilitation

**Online Plan Recommendation Engagement**

To gather community-wide engagement on plan recommendations and findings, an online engagement opportunity will be used to gather input on each plan element and future implementation actions for the planning effort. Using the online engagement platform, information will be shared regarding current planning activities, draft concepts, and opportunities to provide input. Engagement activities will be prepared in a manner that provides a fun and informative interaction for the public, providing them with an opportunity to provide meaningful engagement that is enjoyable. Potential facilitation techniques can include prioritization and spending activities that provide the public with the experience of prioritizing projects and allocating funding for project implementation.

<b>ROLES</b>	<b>City of River Falls:</b>	Review of materials; Assistance updated online engagement platform
	<b>SRF Team:</b>	Preparing materials and engagement activities; Monitoring activity

**Phase 3 Engagement Deliverables**

Plan Element Public Engagement Technical Memorandum – The results of the public information and work session will be highlighted in a technical memorandum. The specific results of each facilitation activity will be included.

**PHASE 4: DRAFT PLAN ENGAGEMENT**

The design and layout of the Comprehensive Plan Update and companion plans is an important component of the planning process. The format should provide easy to find and reference information for not only staff and elected officials, but the public and community stakeholders.

**Draft Plan Public Engagement**

A final open house and online engagement opportunity will provide an overview of the draft plan. These efforts will review the draft plan with the community and allow for comments to be received prior to finalization. This virtual and/or in-person engagement opportunity is intended to connect the public with the draft plan, prior to adoption, allowing for any community comments and concerns to be addressed. This engagement opportunity will highlight and connect past engagement efforts to plan results, allowing the public to see how their input was used to inform the process. Similar to the other engagement efforts, a hybrid approach that provides both in-person and virtual engagement opportunities will be used.

During this phase of engagement, SRF will identify how the issues and opportunities identified from the early outreach process were used to guide the development of the draft plan element. This can help to

build consensus among public and stakeholders by demonstrating that their input was heard and used to inform the process. A public comment period will remain open following the open house to gather additional feedback prior to adoption. These comments will be gathered and summarized to inform final updates to the plan.

<b>ROLES+</b>	<b>City of River Falls:</b>	Meeting attendance and participation; Assistance with meeting preparation and promotion; Secure meeting location (in-person)
	<b>SRF Team:</b>	Preparing agendas, materials, and summaries; Meeting facilitation

**Phase 4 Engagement Deliverables**

Draft Plan Public Open House Technical Memorandum - The results of the public open house will be highlighted in a technical memorandum. Specific comments and resulting updates will be highlighted.

**BIKE AND PEDESTRAIN PLAN ENAGEMENT**

**Bike and Pedestrian Committee**

A Bike and Pedestrian Steering Committee has been established to guide the development of the Bike and Pedestrian Plan. Meetings will be held at key points in the planning process to inform analyses and review deliverables.

<b>ROLES</b>	<b>City of River Falls:</b>	Meeting attendance and participation; Assistance with coordination as needed; Securing of meeting locations (in-person)
	<b>SRF Team:</b>	Preparing agendas, materials, and summaries; Meeting facilitation

**Walking/Biking Tours**

The planning team will lead an in-person group bike ride and walk audit to hear from residents about major gaps and barriers that they face in the community. Alta uses these techniques in communities across the country to audit existing conditions and ideas for improvements. Alta worked with the Minnesota Department of Health to develop an “Inclusive Walk Audit Facilitators Guide”. This document will be referenced before, during, and after the walk audit. Alta will work with the City of River Falls, SRF, and the Bike and Pedestrian Committee to decide details for the in-person tours. Findings will identify common issues voiced by community members as well as preferred routes and ideas to overcome barriers. UWRF students could assist in coordinating and participating in the bike tour and walk audit.

<b>ROLES</b>	<b>City of River Falls:</b>	Assistance with event preparation; Attendance at Tours
	<b>SRF Team:</b>	Preparing tour, materials, and summaries; Facilitating event

## OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN ENAGEMENT

### Park and Recreation Committee

The Park and Recreation Steering Committee will guide the development of the Outdoor Recreation Plan and will be comprised of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Similarly, to the CPSC, this group will be engaged at key points in the development of the Outdoor Recreation Plan. Regular Steering Committee meetings will be prioritized for meeting dates/times, but additional times may be established as warranted.

<b>ROLES</b>	<b>City of River Falls:</b>	Meeting attendance and participation; Assistance with coordination as needed; Securing of meeting locations (in-person)
	<b>SRF Team:</b>	Preparing agendas, materials, and summaries; Meeting facilitation

### Pop-Up Events

To gather additional feedback, we propose pop-up events within existing park and recreational spaces and events to gather input on issues and opportunities for park and recreation within River Falls. These events will include events and activities for the public to engage with and inform the planning process. At minimum two pop-up events will be held.

<b>ROLES</b>	<b>City of River Falls:</b>	Review of materials; Identification of events/locations; Attendance as desired
	<b>SRF Team:</b>	Preparing materials and summaries; Facilitating event

## PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

SRF staff will work with the City to disseminate information about public input opportunities including surveys, public meetings, and the planning process in general. Opportunities to promote input include social media channels, project branding, newspaper ads, e-newsletter, email blasts, video content, utility mailings, and passive engagement at popular community locations.

Additional opportunities to distribute and promote the Phase 2 community survey will be explored with the City, including distribution of the survey to specific community groups. This can include the distribution of the survey to schools and community groups. For example, local schools can be immensely helpful in gaining feedback from students

The project team will also work with local non-profit groups and other partner organizations to identify locations and promotional techniques that have been successful in engaging historically underrepresented populations within the community. For example, surveys and information can be placed at grocery stores.

### Online Resources

Throughout the planning process, the team will ensure that relevant and timely information is available to the public. This includes information about upcoming engagement opportunities, past planning activities, and documents for review and comment. A dedicated Comprehensive Plan page will be maintained throughout the planning process for the dissemination of materials. This page will be embedded into the City's existing website.

### Distribution of Physical Materials

Printed promotional materials may be created throughout the planning process to encourage participation from various population groups. The SRF team will create all materials and will work with City staff for the distribution of these materials throughout the community.

### Social Media

The City's existing social media platforms will be used to share project updates and engagement opportunities with their existing followers. The City's Facebook page has over 6,800 followers, supplemented by other City accounts including Parks and Recreation, Library, and Utilities, adding additional outreach opportunities. The project team will work directly with City staff to post content regarding the Comprehensive Plan and companion plans, including general plan updates and engagement events or opportunities. Additionally, Facebook Ads may be used to promote planning activities beyond the City's existing followers.

There are several community and partner organizations with a social media presence. The project team will look for opportunities to partner with these pages to share key information to increase exposure to the planning process and engagement activities.

## MEETING ACCESSIBILITY

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The project team will provide convenient engagement opportunities to the maximum extent practicable. Any in-person engagement activities will be hosted at locations with ADA accessible facilities. Virtual engagement activities and live virtual meetings will include opportunities to participate for those without broadband access. Meeting materials and presentations can be presented in clear and accessible language. Specific accommodations can be made by contacting City of River Falls project staff in advance of the meeting.

## INFORMATION AVAILABILITY

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Information about the plan development will be available throughout the planning process via the plan webpage on the City of River Falls' website and online engagement platform, as well as via updates on the City's social media platforms. Contact information for City and SRF staff will also be available for additional questions and comments from stakeholders and residents.

# FOCUS RIVER FALLS – ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Phase	Event	Date & Location	Attendees	Number of Interactions	Event Intent
Phase 1: Plan Introduction and Issues and Opportunities	City Staff Kick-Off Event	November 5, 2021 – City Hall	City Departments	28	Learn and share about current issues and opportunities within the city as experienced by staff
	Outdoor Recreation Steering Committee #1	November 2021	Park Board	10+	Kick of the Focus River Falls planning process with the Outdoor Recreation Steering Committee
	Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee #1	December 2021	Plan Commission	10+	Kick off the Focus River Falls planning process with the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee
	Leadership River Falls	January 6, 2022	Community Members	15	Overview of Focus River Falls process to attendees
	River Falls Economic Development Corporation	January 10, 2022	Members	12	Overview of Focus River Falls process to attendees
	River Falls Rotary	January 11, 2022	Community Leaders	25	Overview of Focus River Falls process to attendees

# Engagement Event Summary



Phase	Event	Date & Location	Attendees	Number of Interactions	Event Intent
Phase 1: Plan Introduction and Issues and Opportunities	Historic Preservation Commission Presentation	January 12, 2022	Internal Committees	10	Informal presentation for preparation of engagement and planning efforts
	River Falls Chamber of Commerce	January 24, 2022	Community Partners	15	Informal presentation for preparation of engagement and planning efforts
	Grow to Share Presentation	January 26, 2022	Community Partners	7	Informal presentation for preparation of engagement and planning efforts
	Bike and Pedestrian Steering Committee #1	January 2022	Bike & Ped Steering Committee	10+	Kick off the planning process with the Steering Committee
	Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee #2	February 2, 2022	Plan Commission	10+	Meeting of the Steering Committee to discuss progress and planning activities
	Community Kick-Off Event	February 24, 2022– River Falls Library	Community Members	100+	Learn about the community's experiences and desires for the future of River Falls
	Community Survey	February to March 2022 - Engage RF	Community Members	81	Learn about the community's experiences and desires for the future of River Falls

# Engagement Event Summary



Phase	Event	Date & Location	Attendees	Number of Interactions	Event Intent	
Phase 1: Plan Introduction and Issues and Opportunities	Utility Mailer	March 2022	Community Members	<b>Many</b>	Informational awareness for engagement and process	
	State of the City	March 8, 2022	Community Members	<b>Many</b>	Learn about the community's experiences and desires for the future of River Falls	
	Outdoor Recreation Steering Committee #2	March 16, 2022	Park Board	<b>10+</b>	Meeting of the Steering Committee to discuss progress and planning activities	
	Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee #3	March 24, 2022	Plan Commission	<b>10+</b>	Meeting of the Steering Committee to discuss progress and planning activities	
	Town of River Falls Meeting	March 29, 2022	Community Partners	<b>16</b>	Informational presentation for preparation of engagement and planning efforts	
	Community Pop-Up Events		May 24, 2022 – Turning Point	Community Members	<b>20</b>	Learn about the community's experiences and desires for the future of River Falls
			May – UWRF	Community Members	<b>20+</b>	Learn about the community's experiences and desires for the future of River Falls
			April 15, 2022 – March to Earth Day	Community Members	<b>20+</b>	Learn about the community's experiences and desires for the future of River Falls

# Engagement Event Summary



Phase	Event	Date & Location	Attendees	Number of Interactions	Event Intent
Phase 1: Plan Introduction and Issues and Opportunities	Bike and Pedestrian Steering Committee#2	April 2022	Bike & Ped Steering Committee	10+	Discuss current planning activities and outcomes of the Bike and Pedestrian Plan
	Our Neighbors Place Open House	April and May 2022	Community Members	15	Provided information and answered questions
	Town of Kinnickinnic Meeting	April 12, 2022	Community Partners	10	Presentation for preparation for engagement and planning efforts
	Chamber Coffee	April 1, 2022	Community Businesses	25	Provided information on the upcoming planning process
	River Falls Lion's Group	April 5, 2022	Community Partners	25	Presentation for preparation of engagement and planning efforts
	Town of Clifton	April 6, 2022	Community Partners	15	Informational presentation for preparation of engagement and planning efforts
	UWRF Chancellor's Administrative Cabinet	April 14, 2022	Community Partners	17	Informational presentation for preparation of engagement and planning efforts
	Town of Troy	April 21, 2022	Community Partners	5	Informational presentation for preparation of engagement and planning efforts

# Engagement Event Summary

Phase	Event	Date & Location	Attendees	Number of Interactions	Event Intent
Phase 1: Plan Introduction and Issues and Opportunities	Earth Day Fest	April 25, 2022	Community Members	60	Learn more about the community's experiences and desires for the future of River Falls
	Outdoor Recreation Steering Committee #3	May 18, 2022	Park Board	10+	Meeting of the Steering Committee to discuss progress and planning activities

**23 Events and Activities with over 600 interactions!**

# Engagement Event Summary

Phase	Event	Date & Location	Attendees	Number of Interactions	Event Intent
Phase 2: Plan Element and Companion Plan Engagement	Building River Falls Survey	June to August 2022 - Engage RF	Community Members	<b>180</b>	Gather community input about growth opportunities and desires within the community
	Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee #4	June 7, 2022	Plan Commission	<b>10+</b>	Meeting of the Steering Committee to discuss progress and planning activities
	Outdoor Recreation Steering Committee #4	June 15, 2022	Park Board	<b>10+</b>	Meeting of the Steering Committee to discuss progress and planning activities
	Building River Falls Pop-Up Event	June 22, 2022 – Rush River Brewery	Community Members	<b>24</b>	Gather community input about growth opportunities and desires within the community
	Meet River Falls Pop-Up Event	July 9, 2022	Community Members	<b>50+</b>	Gather community input about growth opportunities and desires within the community
	Council Workshop	July 12, 2022	City Council	<b>10+</b>	Provide and over view of current planning activities and deliverables
	Outdoor Recreation Steering Committee #5	July 20, 2022	Park Board	<b>10+</b>	Meeting of the Steering Committee to discuss progress and planning activities

# Engagement Event Summary



Phase	Event	Date & Location	Attendees	Number of Interactions	Event Intent
Phase 2: Plan Element and Companion Plan Engagement	Stakeholder Conversations - Housing	July 22, 2022 City Hall	Housing Stakeholders	8	Engage housing stakeholders on key themes identified through early input and discuss needs and future actions
	Stakeholder Conversations – Inclusion	July 21, 2022 City Hall	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Stakeholders	12	Engage diversity, equity and inclusion stakeholders on key themes identified through early input and discuss needs and future actions
	Stakeholder Conversations – Large Tract Property Owners	July 21, 2022 City Hall	Large Tract Property Owners within the Extraterritorial Area	50	Engage large tract property owners on the Focus River Falls process and gather input on future land use planning and growth activities and needs
	Stakeholder Conversations – Local Businesses	July 22, 2022 City Hall	Local Business Owners and Operators	8	Engage local businesses on key themes identified through early input and discuss needs and future actions
	Stakeholder Conversations – Natural Resources	July 21, 2022 City Hall	Natural Resources Stakeholders	6	Engage natural resource stakeholders on key themes identified through early input and discuss needs and future actions
	Stakeholder Conversations – Recreation	July 21, 2022 City Hall	Recreation Stakeholders	6	Engage recreation stakeholders on key themes identified through early input and discuss needs and future actions

## Engagement Event Summary

Phase	Event	Date & Location	Attendees	Number of Interactions	Event Intent
Phase 2: Plan Element and Companion Plan Engagement	Stakeholder Conversations - Housing	July 22, 2022 Virtual	Housing Stakeholders	4	Engage housing stakeholders on key themes identified through early input and discuss needs and future actions
	Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee #5	July 21, 2022	Plan Commission	10+	Meeting of the Steering Committee to discuss progress and planning activities
	Online Bike and Pedestrian Mapping	July to September - Engage RF	Community Members	40	Provide community members an opportunity to identify bike and pedestrian system needs and safety concerns.
	Bike Tour	August	Community Members	18	Tour the city by bike and discuss current infrastructure, needs, and plan outcomes.
	Walking Tour	August	Community Members	8	Tour the city by walking and discuss current infrastructure, needs, and plan outcomes.
	Customer Appreciation Day	August 18, 2022	Community Members	50	Gather community input about growth opportunities and desires within the community
	Second Utility Mailer	September 2022	Community Members	Many	Informational awareness for engagement and process
	Recreation Pop-Up Event	September 10, 2022 – Art on the Kinni	Community Members	45	Engage the community on specific outdoor recreation needs and goals

# Engagement Event Summary

Phase	Event	Date & Location	Attendees	Number of Interactions	Event Intent
Phase 2: Plan Element and Companion Plan Engagement	Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee #6	September 14, 2022	Plan Commission	10+	Meeting of the Steering Committee to discuss progress and planning activities
	Recreation Pop-Up Event	September 17, 2022 – Youth Football Game	Community Members	70	Engage the community on specific outdoor recreation needs and goals
	Outdoor Recreation Steering Committee #6	September 21, 2022	Park Board	10+	Meeting of the Steering Committee to discuss progress and planning activities
	Recreation Pop-Up event	September 28, 2-22 – Food Pantry	Community Members	17	Engage the community on specific outdoor recreation needs and goals
	Outdoor Recreation Community Survey	September 2022 – Engage RF	Community Members	390	Engage the community on specific outdoor recreation needs and goals

**25 Events and Activities with over 1,360 interactions!**

# Engagement Event Summary



Phase	Event	Date & Location	Attendees	Number of Interactions	Event Intent
Phase 3: Draft Plan Review	Hope for Creation Presentation	October 13, 2022	Community Members	15	Informational awareness for engagement and process
	Bike and Pedestrian Steering Committee	October 2022	Bike & Ped Steering Committee	10+	Discuss current planning activities and outcomes of the Bike and Pedestrian Plan
	Plan Commission and Council Joint Meeting	November 1, 2022	Plan Commission and City Council	20+	Review process updates and current deliverables
	River Falls Lions	November 1, 2022	Community Members	40	Informal presentation on the status of the Comprehensive Plan and public review opportunities
	Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee #7	November 17, 2022	Plan Commission	10+	Meeting of the Steering Committee to discuss progress and planning activities
	Bike and Pedestrian Steering Committee #4	November 30, 2022	Bike & Ped Steering Committee	10+	Review and action on the Draft Bike and Pedestrian Plan

# Engagement Event Summary

Phase	Event	Date & Location	Attendees	Number of Interactions	Event Intent
Phase 3: Draft Plan Review	Chancellor's Administrative Cabinet	December 1, 2022	Community Partners	19	Informational awareness for engagement and process
	River Falls Rotary	December 6, 2022	Community Members	28	Informational awareness for engagement and process
	Outdoor Recreation Steering Committee #7	December 14, 2022	Park Board	10+	Review and action on the Draft Outdoor Recreation Plan
	Plan Commission Meeting	December 15, 2022	Plan Commission	10+	Review and action on the Draft Bike and Pedestrian Plan
	Plan Commission Workshop	January 3, 2023	Plan Commission	10+	Review and action on the Draft Outdoor Recreation Plan
	Grow to Share Presentation	January 18, 2023	Community Partners	5	Informal presentation on the status of the Comprehensive Plan and public review opportunities
	Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee #8	January 26, 2023	Plan Commission	10+	Meeting of the Steering Committee to discuss progress and planning activities
	Focus River Falls Post Card	February 3, 2023	All addresses served by River Falls Utilities and	Many	Promotion of engagement efforts and the draft plans

# Engagement Event Summary

Phase	Event	Date & Location	Attendees	Number of Interactions	Event Intent
Phase 3: Draft Plan Review			Large Tract landowners		
	Town of Clifton	February 7, 2023	Community Partners	10	Informational awareness for engagement and process
	Town of Kinnickinnic	February 7, 2023	Community Partners	10	Informational awareness for engagement and process
	Chamber Coffee	February 10, 2023	Community Businesses	30	Provide information on the upcoming public plan review
	Town of River Falls	March 6, 2023	Community Partners	10	Informational awareness for engagement and process
	Town of Troy	March 16, 2023	Community Partners	12	Informational awareness for engagement and process
	Community Open House	February 9, 2023 – City Hall and Online	Community Members	40+	Share the draft plans with the community to collect their input and discuss potential changes prior to finalization and adoption.
	Plan Commission Public Hearing	March 7, 2023	Community Members	Many	Plan Commission review and action on the Comprehensive Plan.

**20 Events and Activities with over 300 interactions!**



Top themes that emerged from responses included:

Ranking	Theme	Summary
1	Natural Resources	Identification of the various resources including the Kinnikinic River, Lake George and Green Space, and the benefits and spaces they create
2	Parks	Overall appreciation of the parks and some specific parks (i.e., Glen Park, Hoffman Park)
3	Sustainability	Notation of the focus and investment in renewable and clean energy, native plant communities, and commitment to sustainability
3	Social Environment	Notation of the welcoming and friendly community that collaborates and supports each other
5	Recreation	Identification of the outdoor recreation opportunities, including trails and access to natural areas and facilities
6	Businesses	Identification of quality businesses and downtown and support of local businesses
7	Education	Notation of the great school systems
8	Community Identity	Identification of a strong sense of community and identity
9	Growth	Notation of the desire to grow and connection to the greater region
9	Quality of life	Identification of a safe and quality community open for all
11	Engagement	Notation of an engaged community, working together to respond to needs
12	Appearance and Character	Commitment to maintain a shared community character
12	City Government	The city is managed in a fiscally and socially responsible manner with collaboration with regional partners
13	Facilities	Library
13	Housing	Housing costs



Top themes that emerged from responses included:

Ranking	Theme	Summary
1	Housing	Notation of a need for affordable and safe housing, protection of renter rights, maintenance of properties, a reduction in R-1 zoning or less multifamily housing.
2	Sidewalk and Trail Infrastructure	Desires for improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, including increased safety, a more connected network, additional infrastructure.
3	Nature and Sustainability	Desires to maintain and enhance natural resources, including wildlife habitat, drinking water, open space, Lake George/Lake Louise, and sustainable practices.
4	Business and Economy	Concerns for increasing fees, lack of shopping opportunities, lack of high paying jobs, and maintaining economic diversity. Desires for thoughtful and planned growth.
5	Community Needs and Growth	Concerns for the rate of growth and maintaining the existing sense of place and local amenities. Fears of losing River Falls.
6	Roadways and Transit	Notation of roadway network improvements and desires for increased public transportation.
6	Downtown	Desires to maintain and enhance a vibrant downtown without losing the character.
6	Infrastructure	Concerns about infrastructure maintenance and investments, number of parking lots, and need for a new fire hall.
9	Parks and Recreation	Notation of additional recreation resources desired, including indoor turf, indoor recreation for children, dog parks, and support of youth sports.
9	Diversity, Accessibility, and Inclusion	Notation of an unwelcoming environment for BIPOC and LGBTQ+ groups and desire to improve inclusions and diversity into the future of River Falls.
10	Safety	Desires to maintain community safety.
11	Growth	Desire for thoughtful growth that supports the community at a responsible pace.

# WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR RIVER FALLS? (OPEN HOUSE RESPONSE)

Participants were asked to craft their own vision statements for River Falls by filling in the blanks in some sample statements. A variety of responses were received, and themes emerged across them all.

## Vision Statement 1

The first vision statement asked participants to fill in the blanks: “In 2040, River Falls will be a community that is known for our *adjective noun*.” The nine themes that emerged from response are highlighted below with an example vision statement provided and the full responses are included in Appendix A.

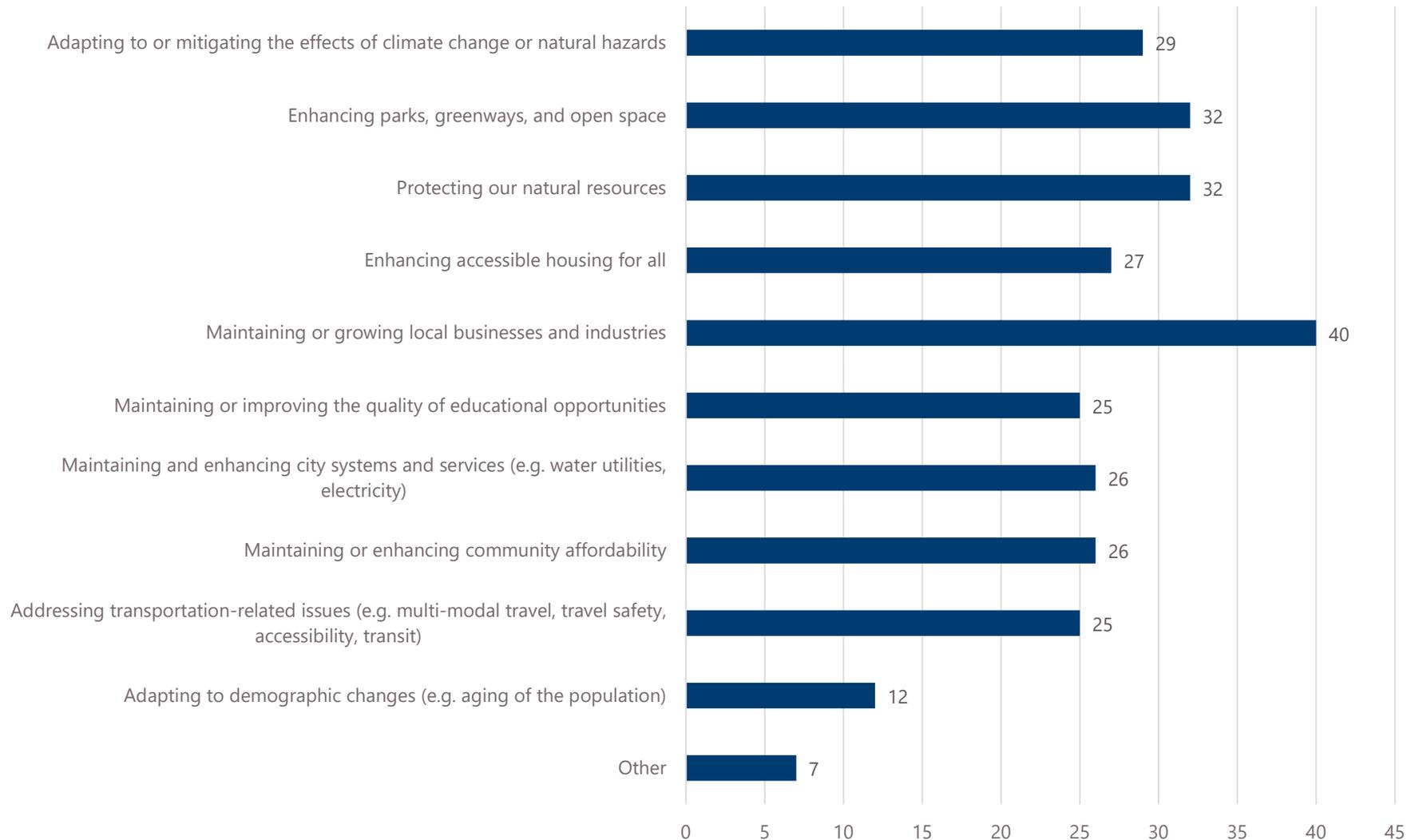
<p><b>Development</b></p>	<p><b>Downtown</b></p>	<p><b>Economic Development</b></p>
<p>In 2040, River Falls will be a community that is known for our <b>Intentional Growth</b>.</p>	<p>In 2040, River Falls will be a community that is known for our <b>Vibrant Downtown</b>.</p>	<p>In 2040, River Falls will be a community that is known for our <b>Diverse Businesses</b>.</p>
<p><b>Neighborhoods</b></p>	<p><b>Recreation</b></p>	<p><b>Resources</b></p>
<p>In 2040, River Falls will be a community that is known for our <b>Inclusive Supportive Housing</b>.</p>	<p>In 2040, River Falls will be a community that is known for our <b>First Class Outdoor Recreation</b>.</p>	<p>In 2040, River Falls will be a community that is known for our <b>Preserved Natural Space</b>.</p>
<p><b>Social</b></p>	<p><b>Sustainable</b></p>	<p><b>Utilities</b></p>
<p>In 2040, River Falls will be a community that is known for our <b>Inclusive Environment</b>.</p>	<p>In 2040, River Falls will be a community that is known for our <b>Sustainable Living</b>.</p>	<p>In 2040, River Falls will be a community that is known for our <b>Clean Drinking Water</b>.</p>

## Vision Statement 2

The first vision statement asked participants to fill in the blanks: “In the future, River Falls will celebrate *noun* by investing in its *noun*.” The nine themes that emerged from response are highlighted below with an example vision statement provided and the full responses are included in Appendix A.

<p><b>Amenities</b></p>	<p><b>Economic Development</b></p>	<p><b>Housing</b></p>
<p>In the future, River Falls will celebrate <b>Community</b> by investing in its <b>Livable Spaces and Economic Opportunities</b>.</p>	<p>In the future, River Falls will celebrate <b>New Opportunities</b> by investing in its <b>New Business</b>.</p>	<p>In the future, River Falls will celebrate <b>Strong Neighborhoods</b> by investing in its <b>Affordable Housing</b>.</p>
<p><b>Identity</b></p>	<p><b>Infrastructure</b></p>	<p><b>People</b></p>
<p>In the future, River Falls will celebrate <b>History</b> by investing in its <b>Main Street</b>.</p>	<p>In the future, River Falls will celebrate <b>Quality of Life</b> by investing in its <b>Infrastructure</b>.</p>	<p>In the future, River Falls will celebrate <b>Success</b> by investing in its <b>Citizens</b>.</p>
<p><b>Recreation</b></p>	<p><b>Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Sustainable</b></p>
<p>In the future, River Falls will celebrate <b>Health</b> by investing in its <b>Bike Trails</b>.</p>	<p>In the future, River Falls will celebrate <b>Our Community Health</b> by investing in its <b>Natural Environment</b>.</p>	<p>In the future, River Falls will celebrate <b>Sustainability</b> by investing in its <b>Green Infrastructure</b>.</p>

## WHAT COMMUNITY ISSUES OR OPPORTUNITIES ARE YOU MOST CONCERNED ABOUT OVER THE NEXT 20 YEARS? (OPEN HOUSE AND SURVEY RESPONSE)



# HOUSING ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

## BUILD AN IDEAL HOME (OPEN HOUSE RESPONSE)

Participants were asked to build an ideal home identifying the housing type, desired amenities, ownership type, and location in the community. The following tables summaries the built homes by location.

CORE NEIGHBORHOOD								
Housing Type								
Single Family - Large Lot	Single Family - Medium Lot	Single Family - Small Lot	Apartment	Townhome/Condo	Senior Housing	Student Housing	Other	
0	6	12	1	2	5	2	2	
Amenities								
Near Schools	Near Parks/Greenways	Near Jobs	New Construction	Sustainable Construction	Accessible Housing	Walkable/Bikeable	Access to Technology	Neighborhood
12	27	9	1	16	14	26	15	19
Ownership								
Rent		Own			Either		Neither	
6		11			0		14	

# DOWNTOWN RIVER FALLS

## Housing Type

Single Family - Large Lot	Single Family - Medium Lot	Single Family - Small Lot	Apartment	Townhome/Condo	Senior Housing	Student Housing	Other
1	0	1	3	3	2	2	0

## Amenities

Near Schools	Near Parks/Greenways	Near Jobs	New Construction	Sustainable Construction	Accessible Housing	Walkable/Bikeable	Access to Technology	Neighborhood
5	11	5	4	6	6	11	7	6

## Ownership

Rent	Own	Either	Neither
1	6	1	4

# NEW GROWTH AREA

## Housing Type

Single Family - Large Lot	Single Family - Medium Lot	Single Family - Small Lot	Apartment	Townhome/Condo	Senior Housing	Student Housing	Other
5	1	3	1	1	4	0	4

## Amenities

Near Schools	Near Parks/Greenways	Near Jobs	New Construction	Sustainable Construction	Accessible Housing	Walkable/Bikeable	Access to Technology	Neighborhood
2	16	4	3	15	7	17	10	11

## Ownership

Rent	Own	Either	Neither
2	9	3	6

# NEW NEIGHBORHOOD

## Housing Type

Single Family - Large Lot	Single Family - Medium Lot	Single Family - Small Lot	Apartment	Townhome/ Condo	Senior Housing	Student Housing	Other
1	3	4	2	5	1	0	1

## Amenities

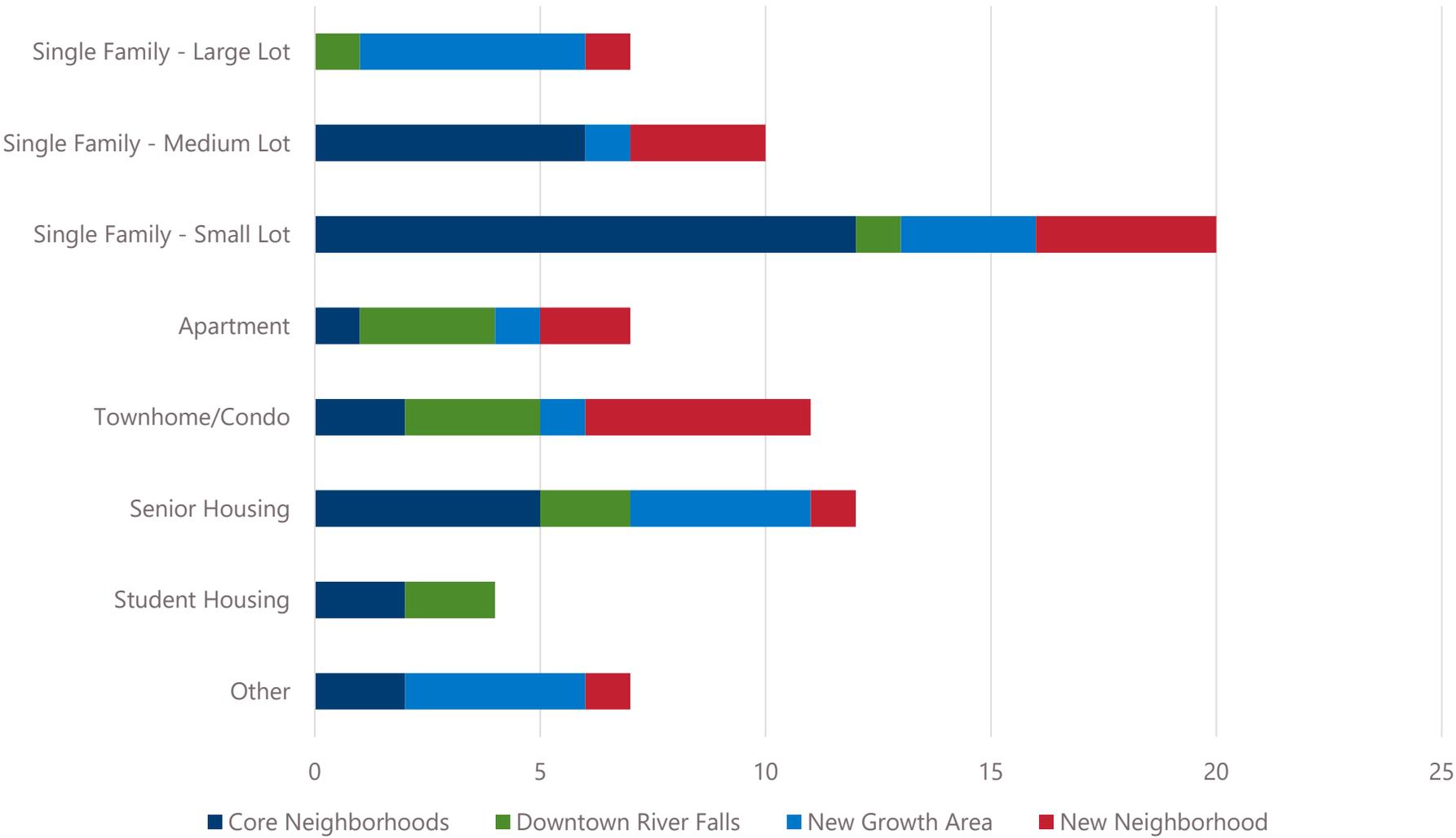
Near Schools	Near Parks/Greenways	Near Jobs	New Construction	Sustainable Construction	Accessible Housing	Walkable/Bikeable	Access to Technology	Neighborhood
10	15	9	7	10	8	14	14	10

## Ownership

Rent	Own	Either	Neither
2	5	0	11

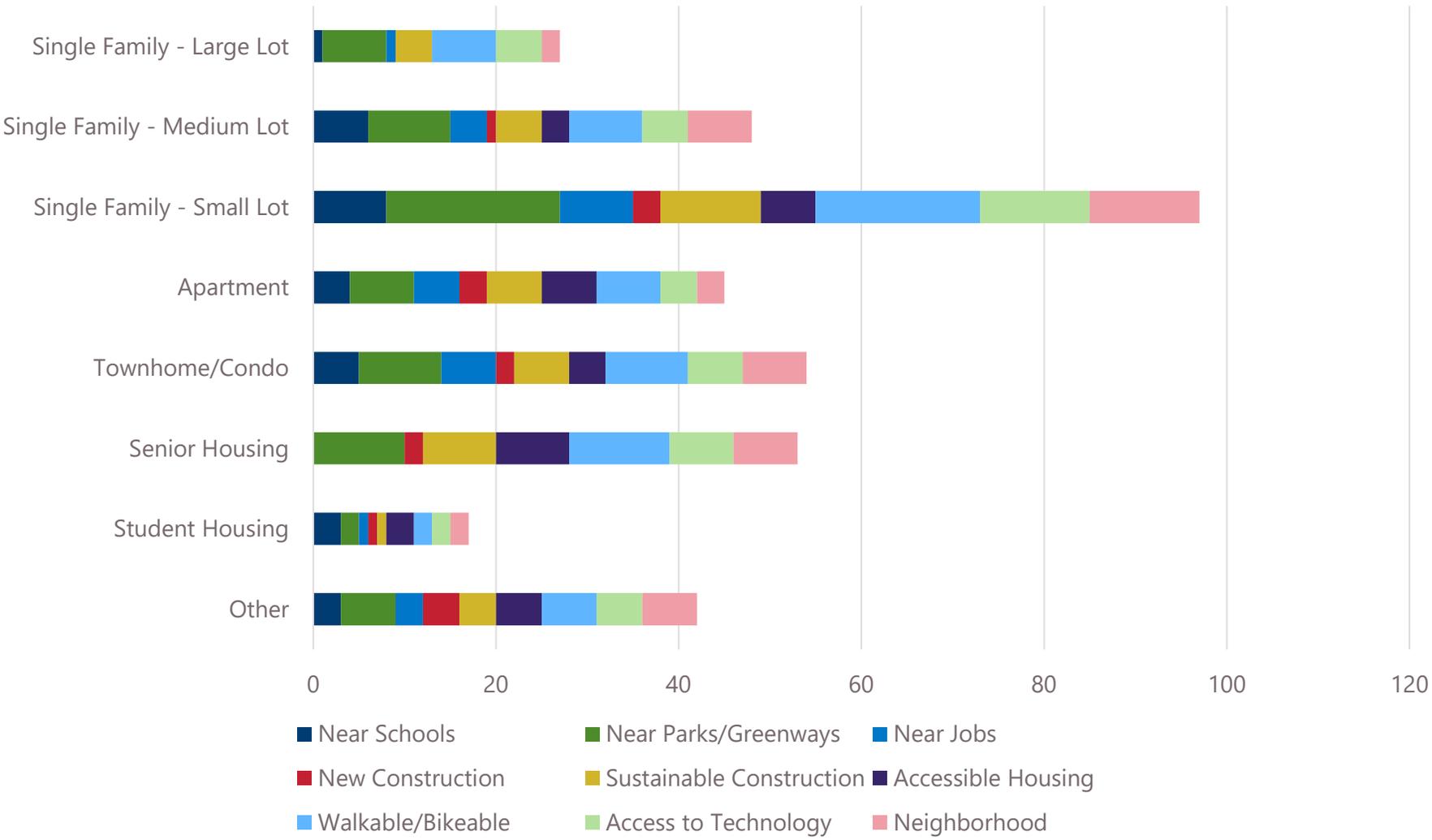
## HOUSING TYPE AND DESIRED LOCATION (OPEN HOUSE RESPONSE)

The following table identifies the desired location identified by housing type.

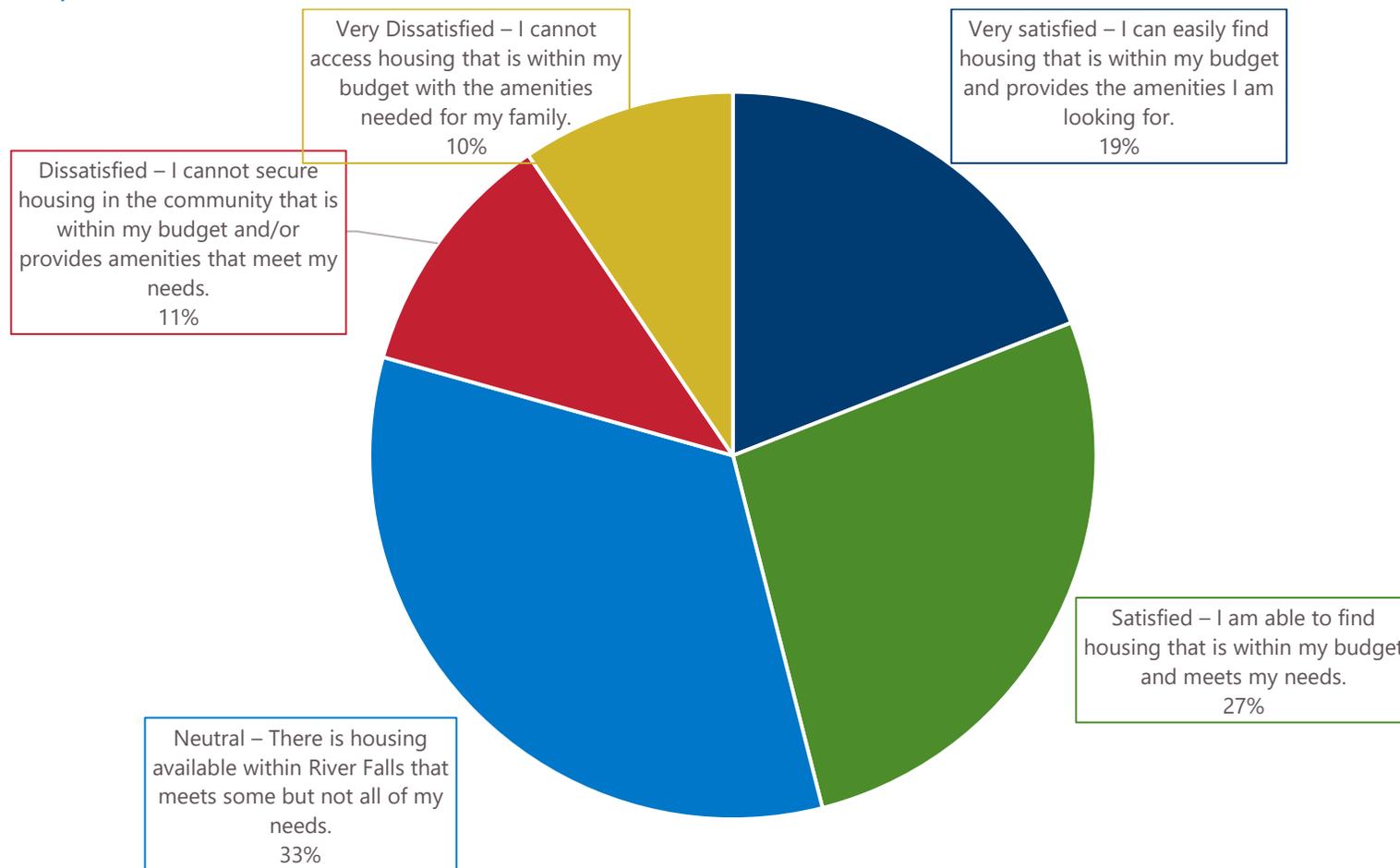


# HOUSING TYPE AND DESIRED AMENITIES (OPEN HOUSE RESPONSE)

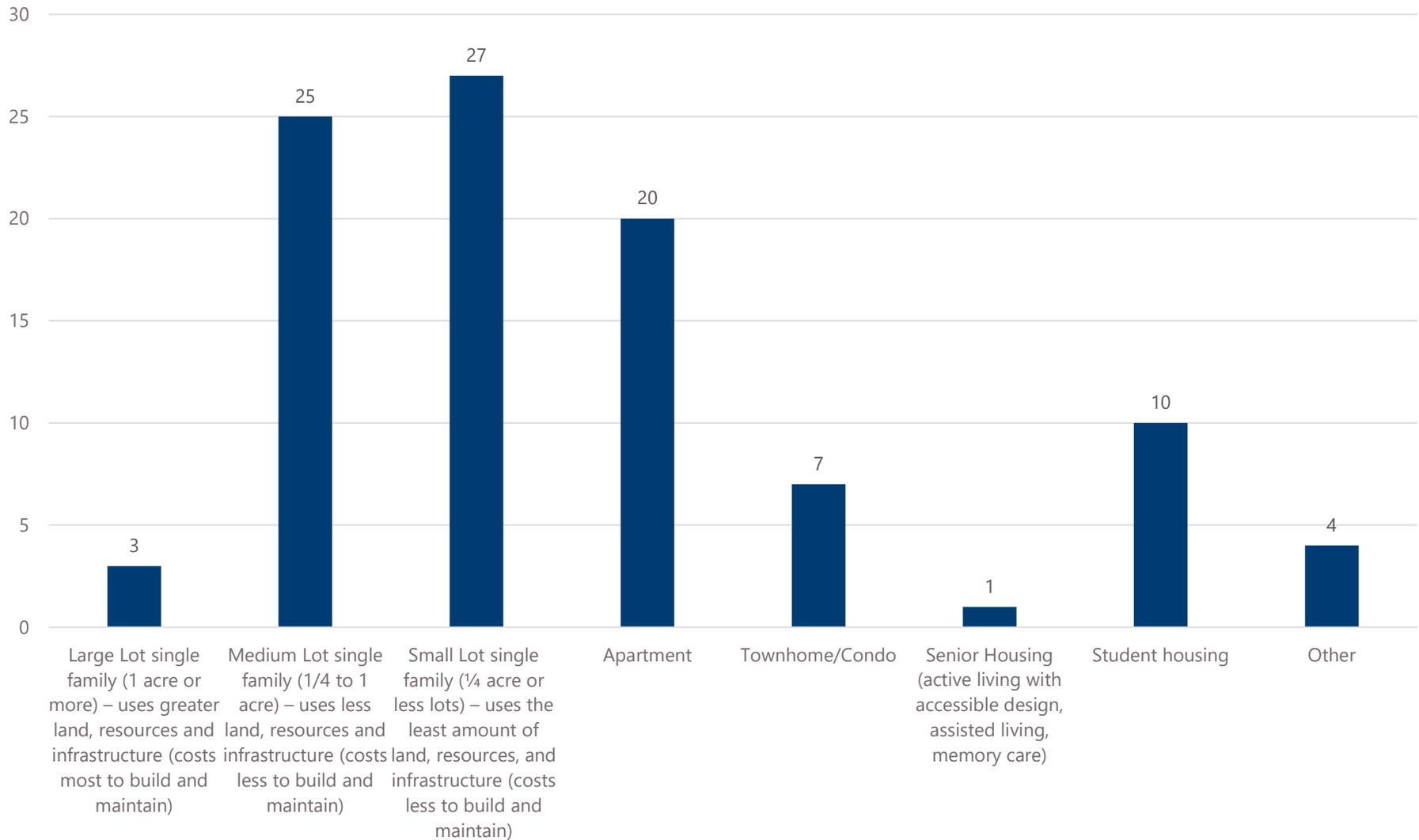
The following chart outlines the desired amenities identified by housing type.



## HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE HOUSING AVAILABLE WITHIN RIVER FALLS? (SURVEY RESPONSE)

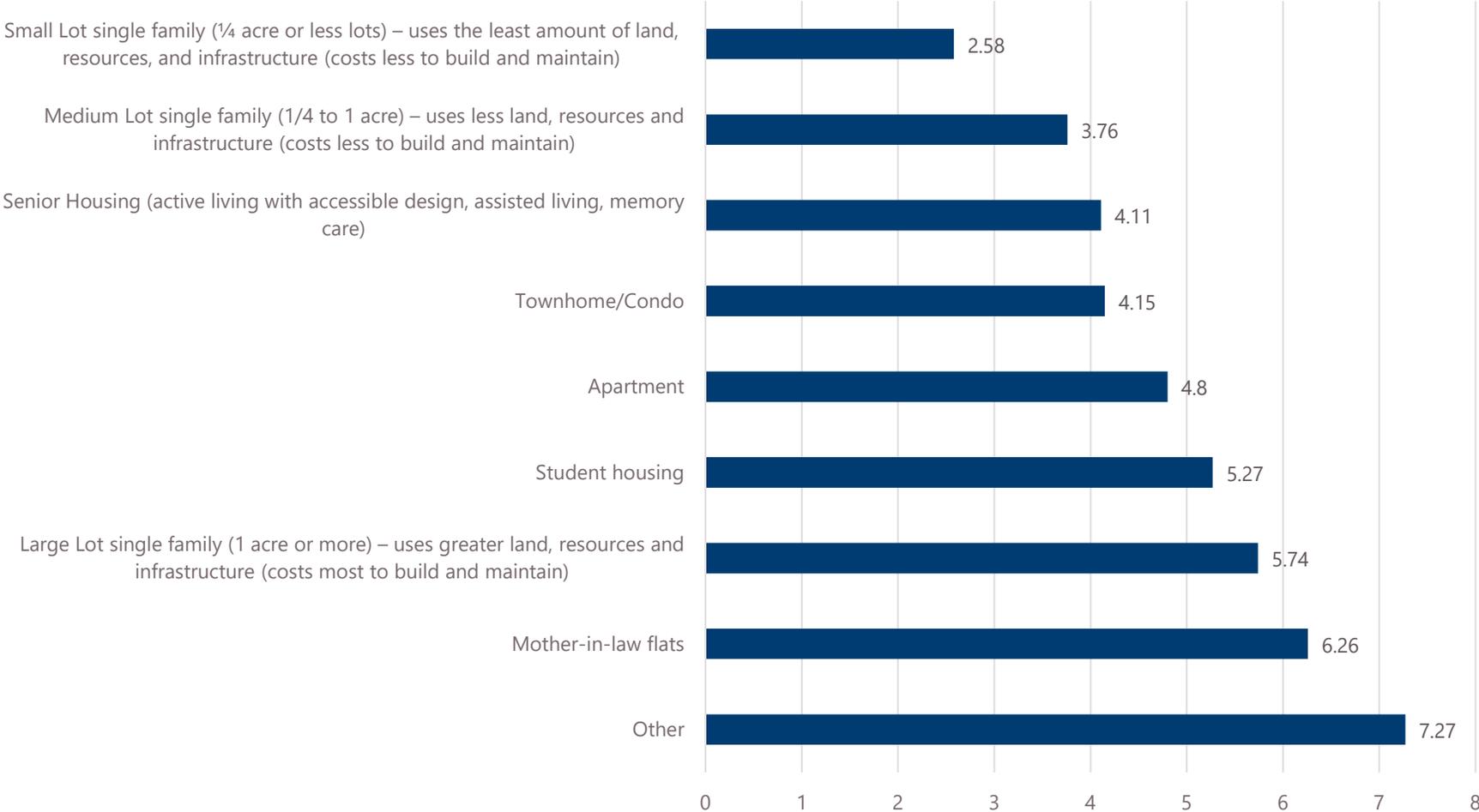


## WHAT STYLE OF HOUSING HAVE YOU OCCUPIED IN RIVER FALLS (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)? (SURVEY RESPONSE)

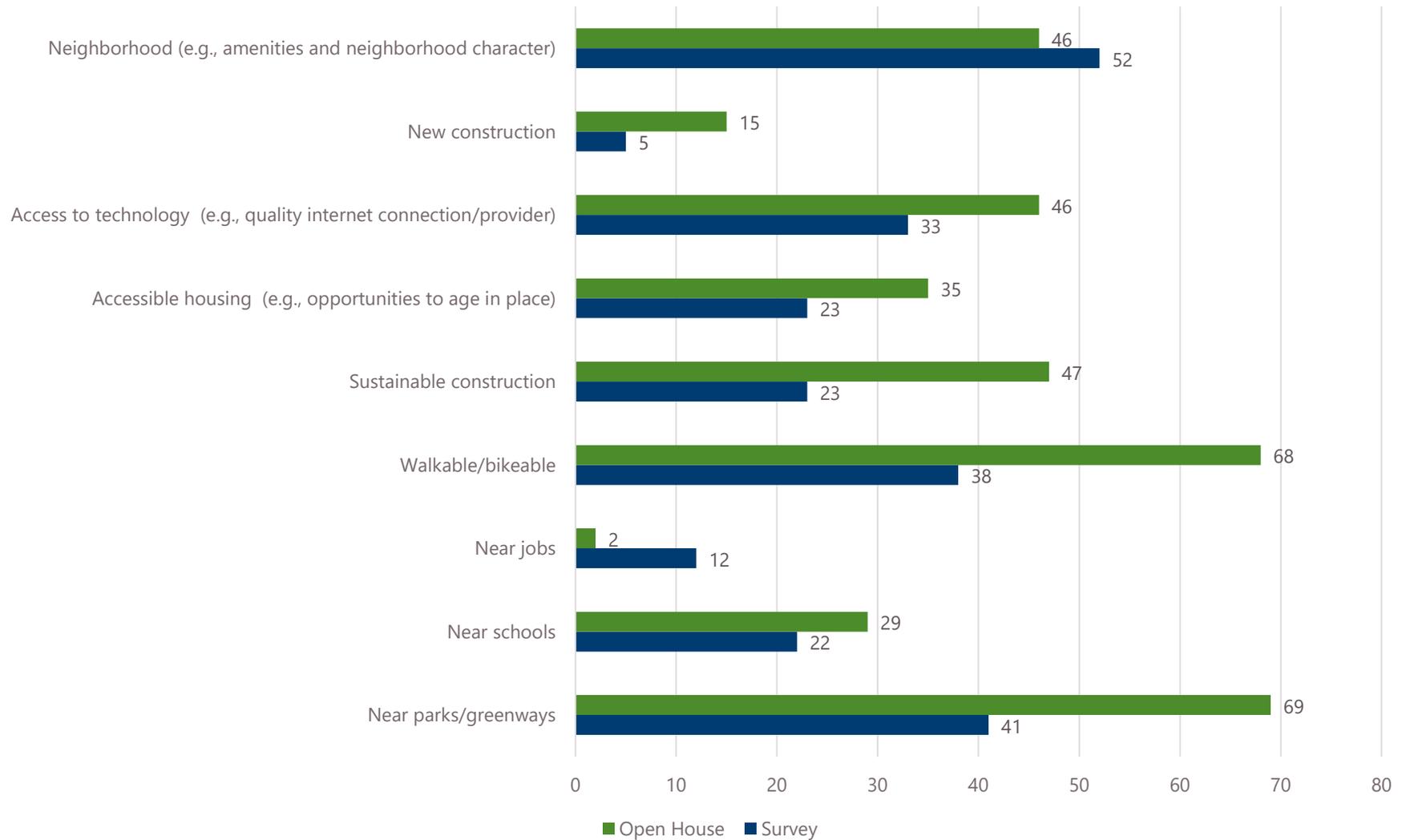


## RANK THE NEED OF THE FOLLOWING HOUSING STYLES IN THE CITY OF RIVER FALLS (1-MOST NEEDED TO 9-LEAST NEEDED) (SURVEY RESPONSE)

Each housing type was given an average ranking score based on the survey responses. The types with a smaller ranking represent those housing types that were identified as most needed within the community.



## WHAT AMENITIES DO YOU LOOK FOR WHEN FINDING HOUSING? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY) (OPEN HOUSE AND SURVEY RESPONSE)



# TRANSPORTATION ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

## HOW DO YOU MOVE IN RIVER FALLS? (OPEN HOUSE AND SURVEY RESPONSE)

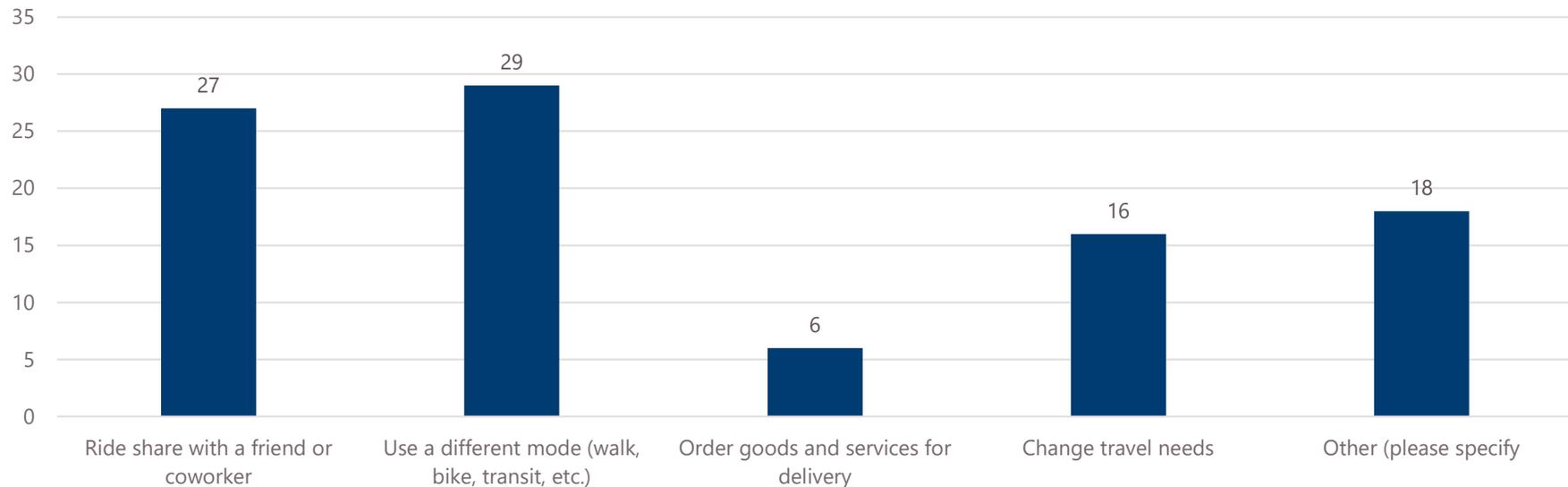
Participants were asked to identify how they currently move and how they desire to move in the community. The following graphic identifies the majority responses provided.

How do you currently move?		What is your desired way to move?	
1	 Personal Vehicle – Travel Alone	1	 Walk
2	 Walk	2	 Bike
3	 Bike	3	 Personal Vehicle – Travel Alone
4	 Personal Vehicle Carpool	4	 Public Transportation (Taxi)
5	 Public Transportation (Taxi)	5	 Personal Vehicle – Carpool
6	 Other	6	 Ride Share Service
0	 Ride Share Service	7	 Other

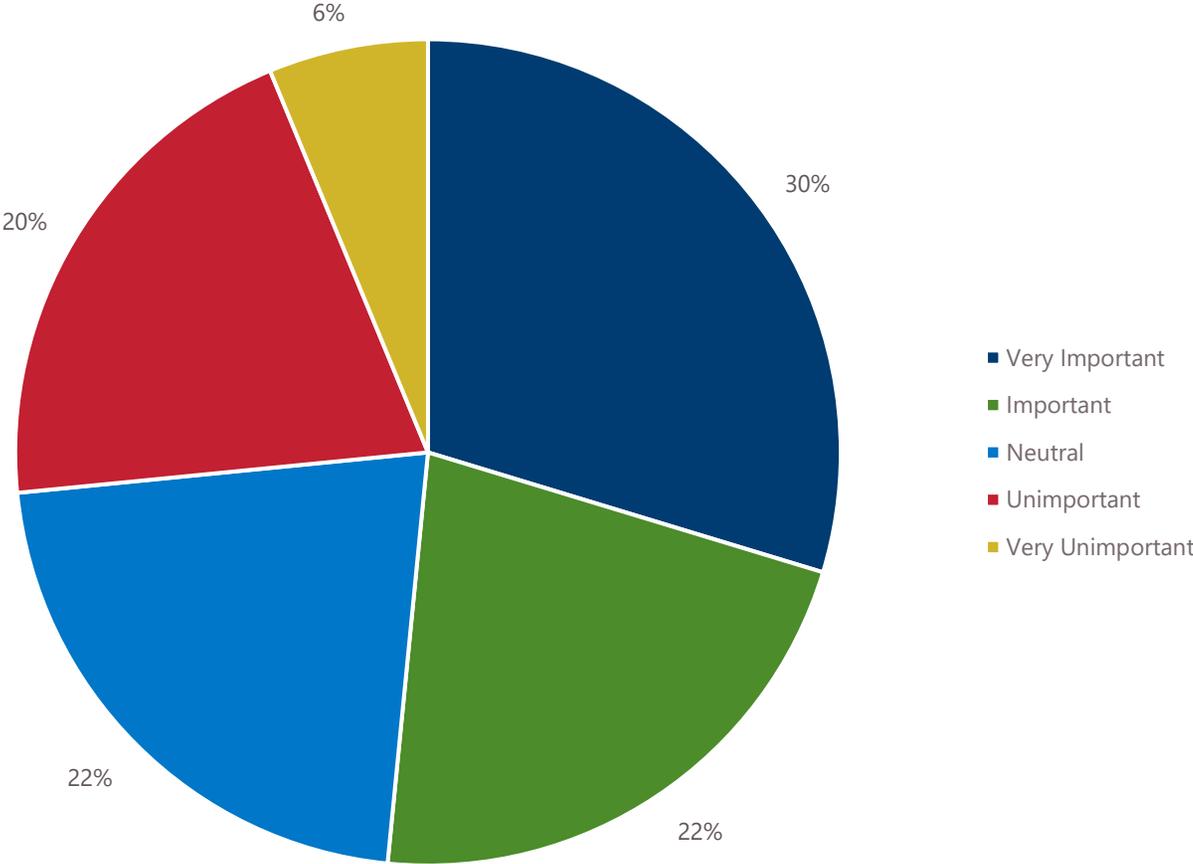
## If your current mode is different than your desired mode, what is keeping you from using that mode?

- ..... Winter weather (walking)
- ..... None to little availability of ride share options
- ..... We need bike trails for recreation and transit
- ..... Autonomous vehicles, electric vehicles
- ..... Needs to be more complete bike/ walk infrastructure to be safe
- ..... Kids, items to haul
- ..... Unsafe trails for kids and me
- ..... More affordable public transport options

## IF YOUR PRIMARY MODE OF TRANSPORTATION IS A CAR, AND YOUR CAR IS IN THE SHOP OR OUT OF REPAIR FOR A WEEK, HOW DO YOU GET TO WORK, SCHOOL, RUN ERRANDS, ETC.? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY) (SURVEY RESPONSE)



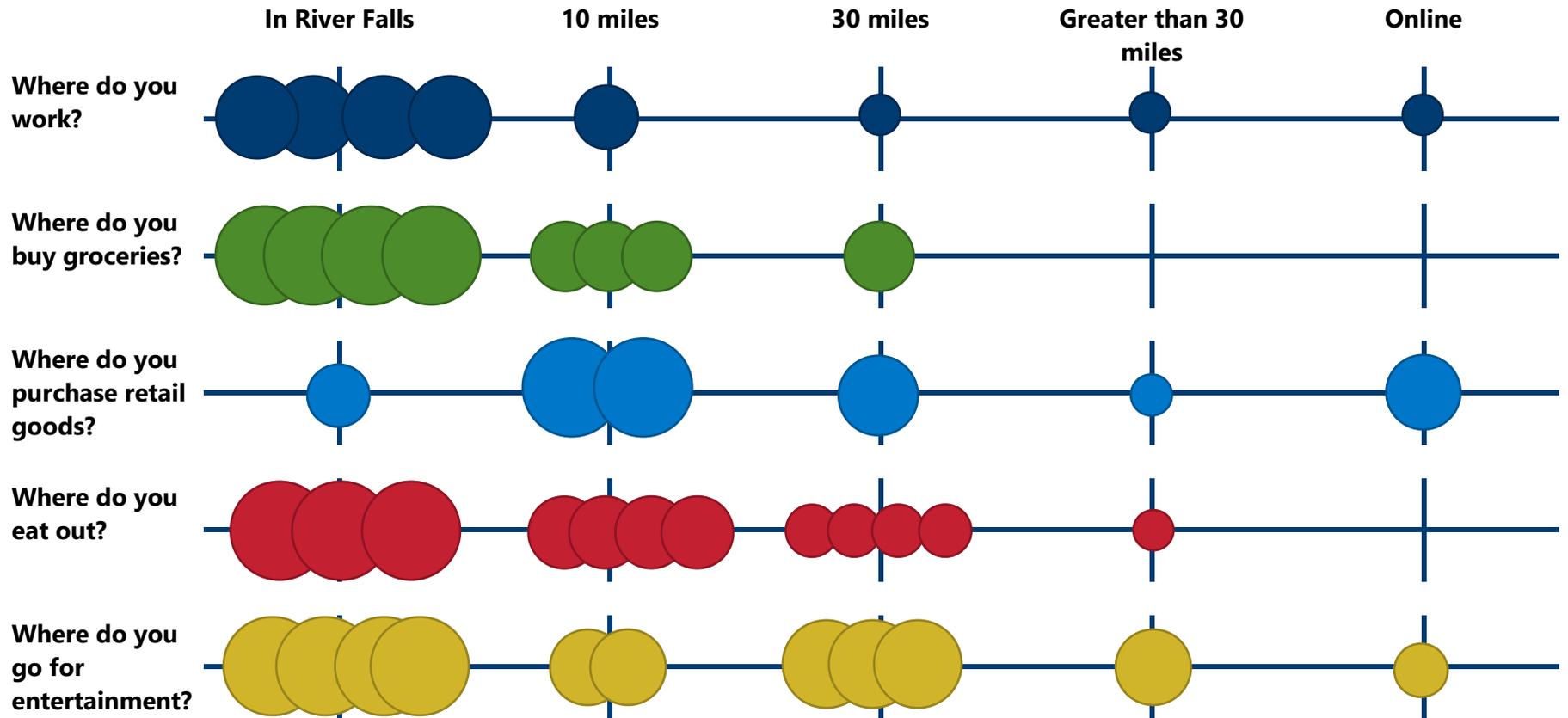
# HOW IMPORTANT ARE CONSIDERATIONS FOR EMERGING TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGIES (E.G., ELECTRIC VEHICLES, SMART INFRASTRUCTURE) FOR THE FUTURE OF RIVER FALLS? (SURVEY RESPONSE)



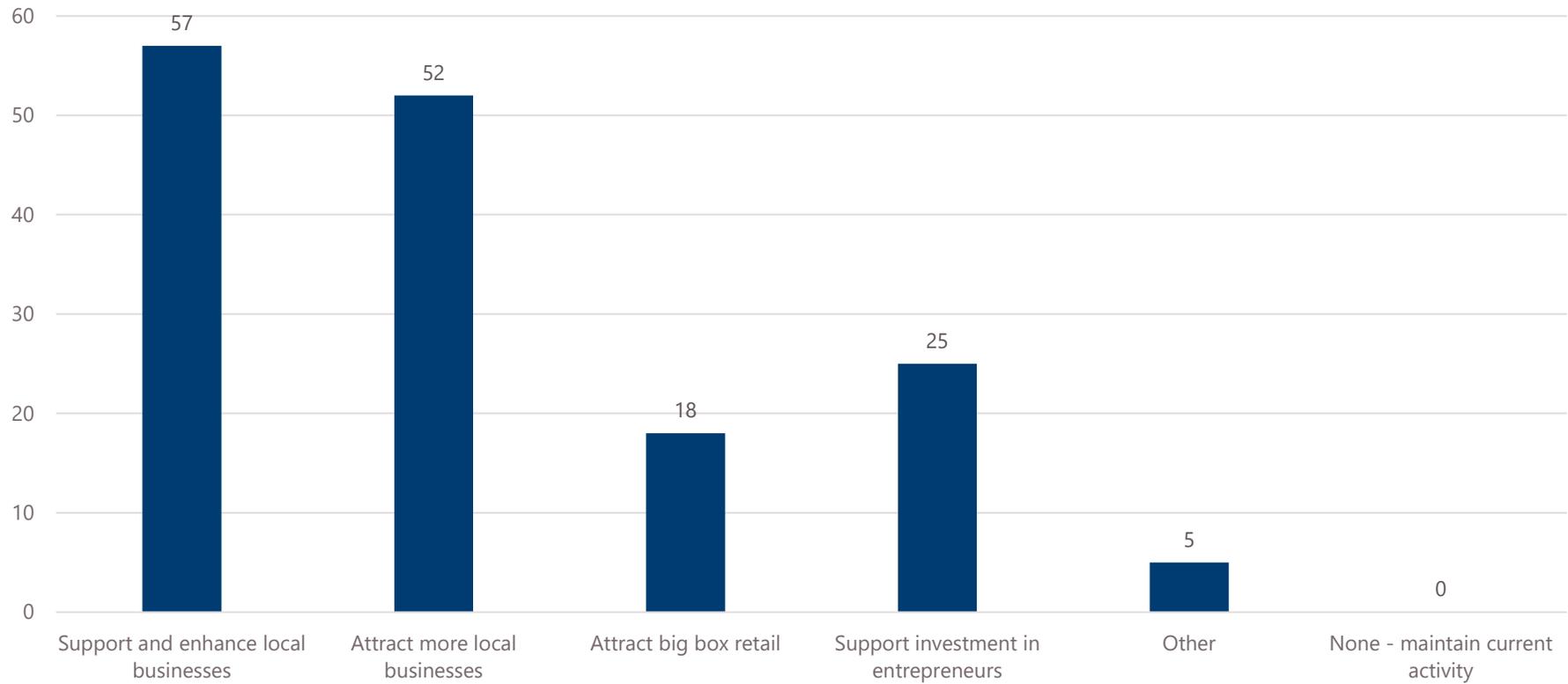
# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

## HOW DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN THE RIVER FALLS ECONOMY? (OPEN HOUSE RESPONSE)

Participants were asked to identify to participate in the River Falls economy and how far they travel for goods and services.



## WHAT SHOULD RIVER FALLS' ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS BE? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY) (SURVEY RESPONSE)



IF SOMEONE WAS A VISITOR IN RIVER FALLS FOR A DAY, WHAT WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THEY DO? (SURVEY RESPONSE)

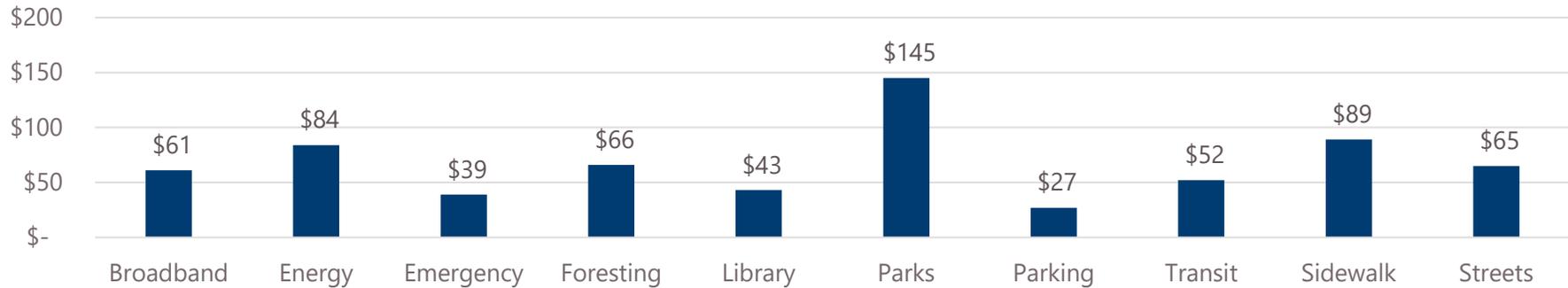


WHAT IS ONE BUSINESS, ACTIVITY OR EVENT YOU HAVE ENJOYED IN ANOTHER COMMUNITY THAT YOU WISHED WAS IN RIVER FALLS? (SURVEY RESPONSE)

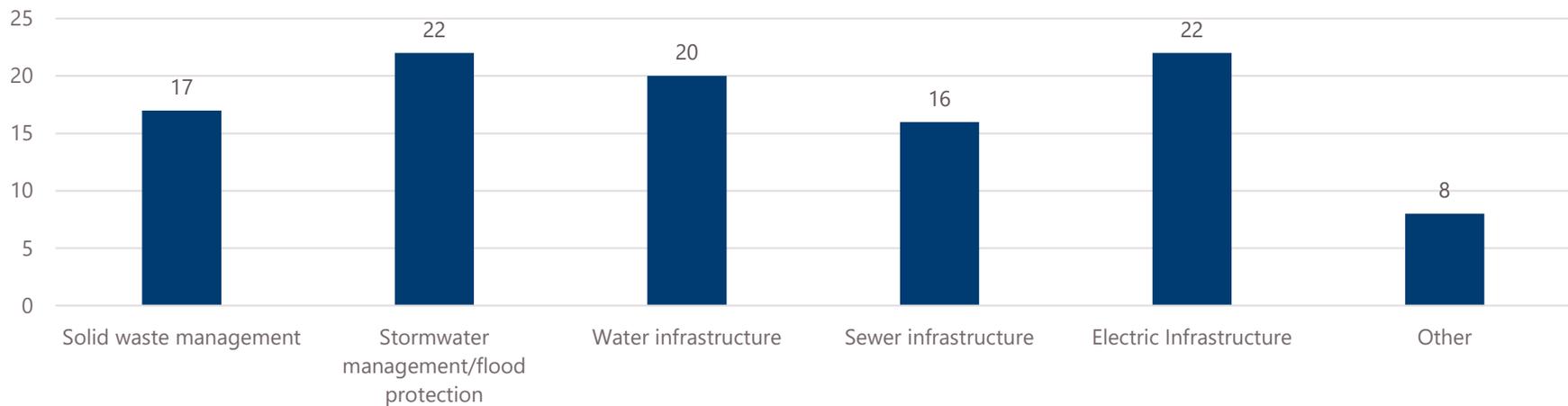
Department Stores	Community Center	Activities for all ages
Retail Stores	Restaurants	Coffee Shops
Community Events	Entertainment and Activity Designations	Clothing Stores

## UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

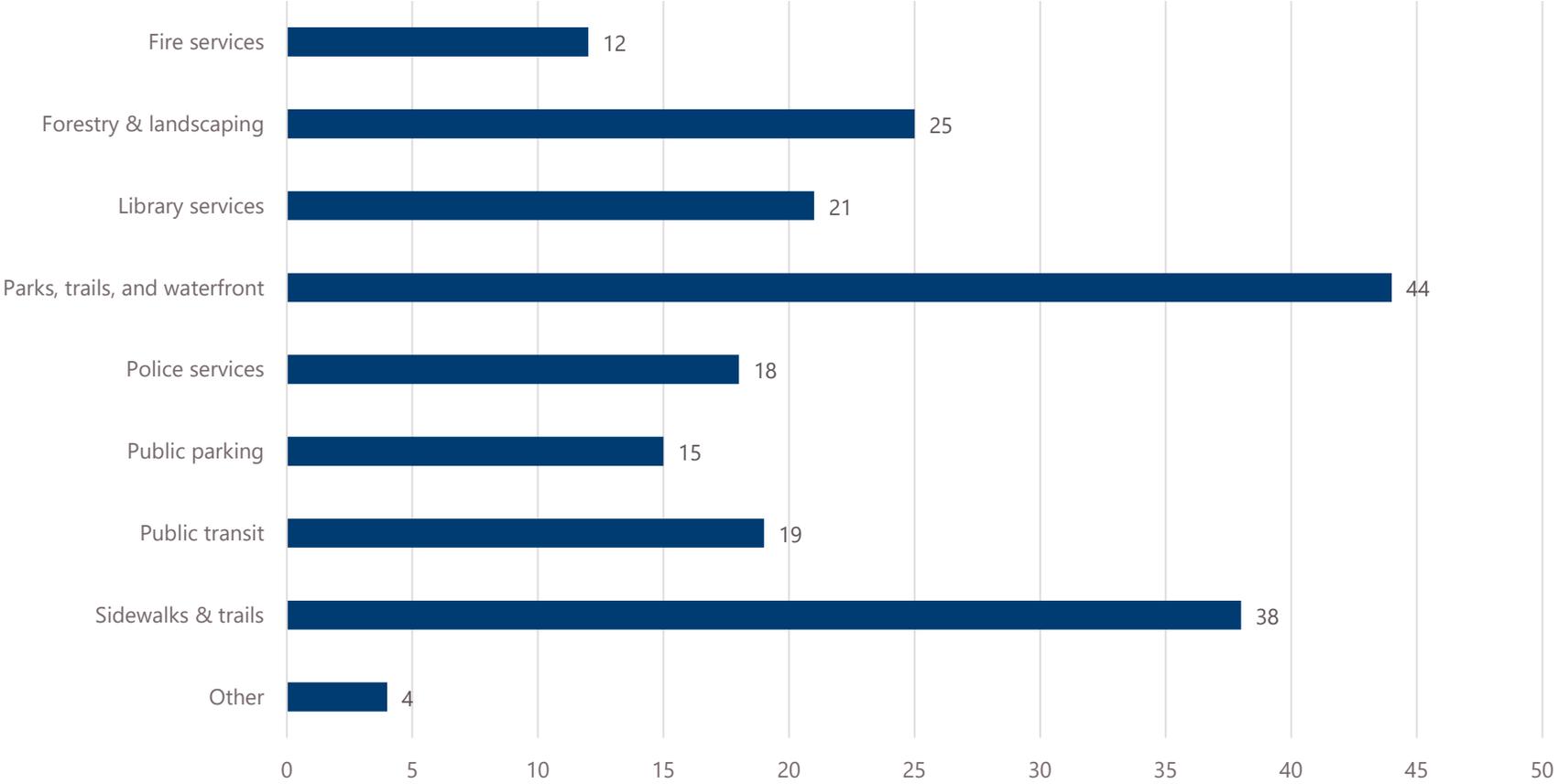
HOW SHOULD WE PRIORITIZE UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES? (*OPEN HOUSE RESPONSE*)



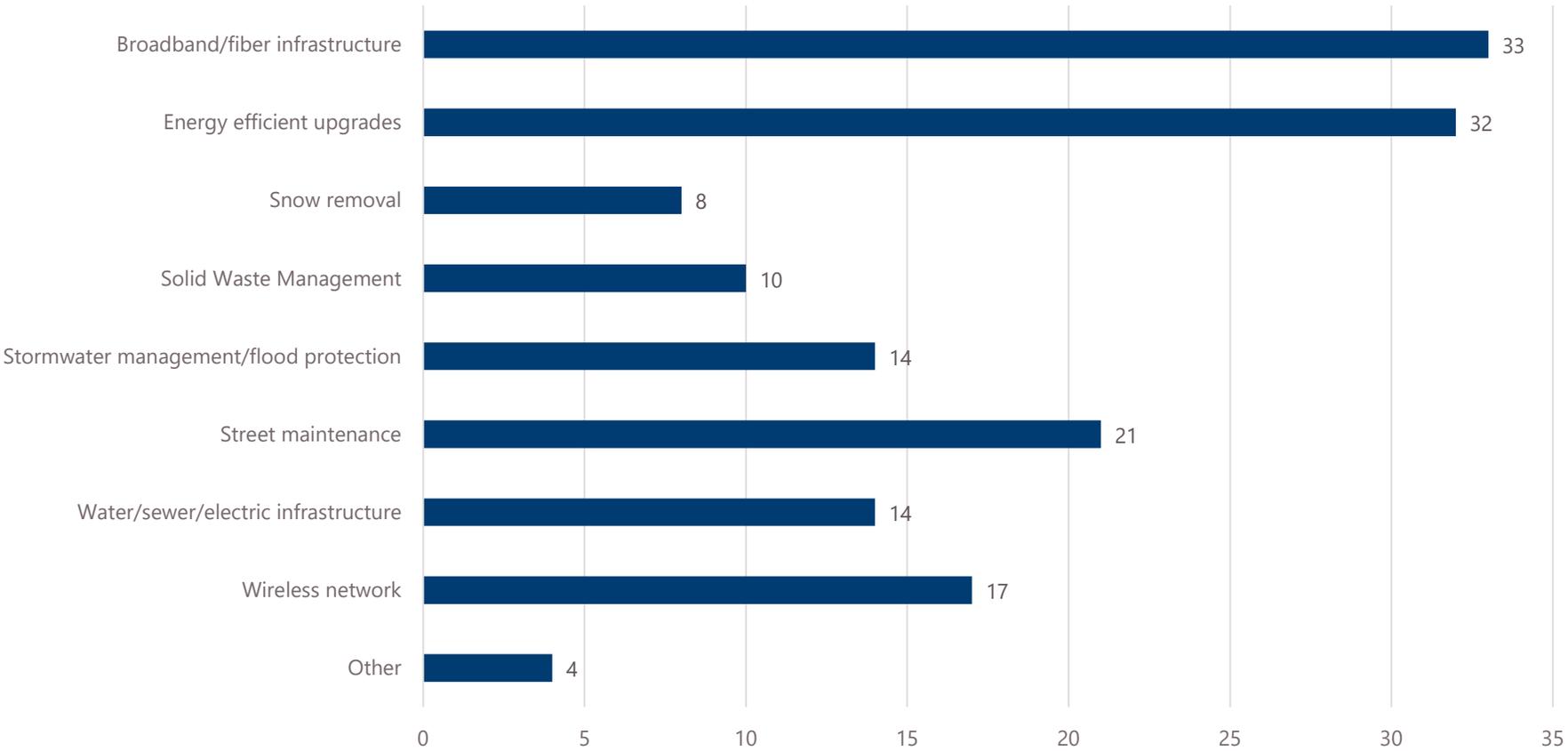
WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE INCREASED INVESTMENT TO IMPROVE OR ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF GENERAL UTILITIES IN THE CITY OF RIVER FALLS? (*SURVEY RESPONSE*)



# WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE INCREASED INVESTMENT TO IMPROVE OR ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES IN THE CITY OF RIVER FALLS? (SURVEY RESPONSE)

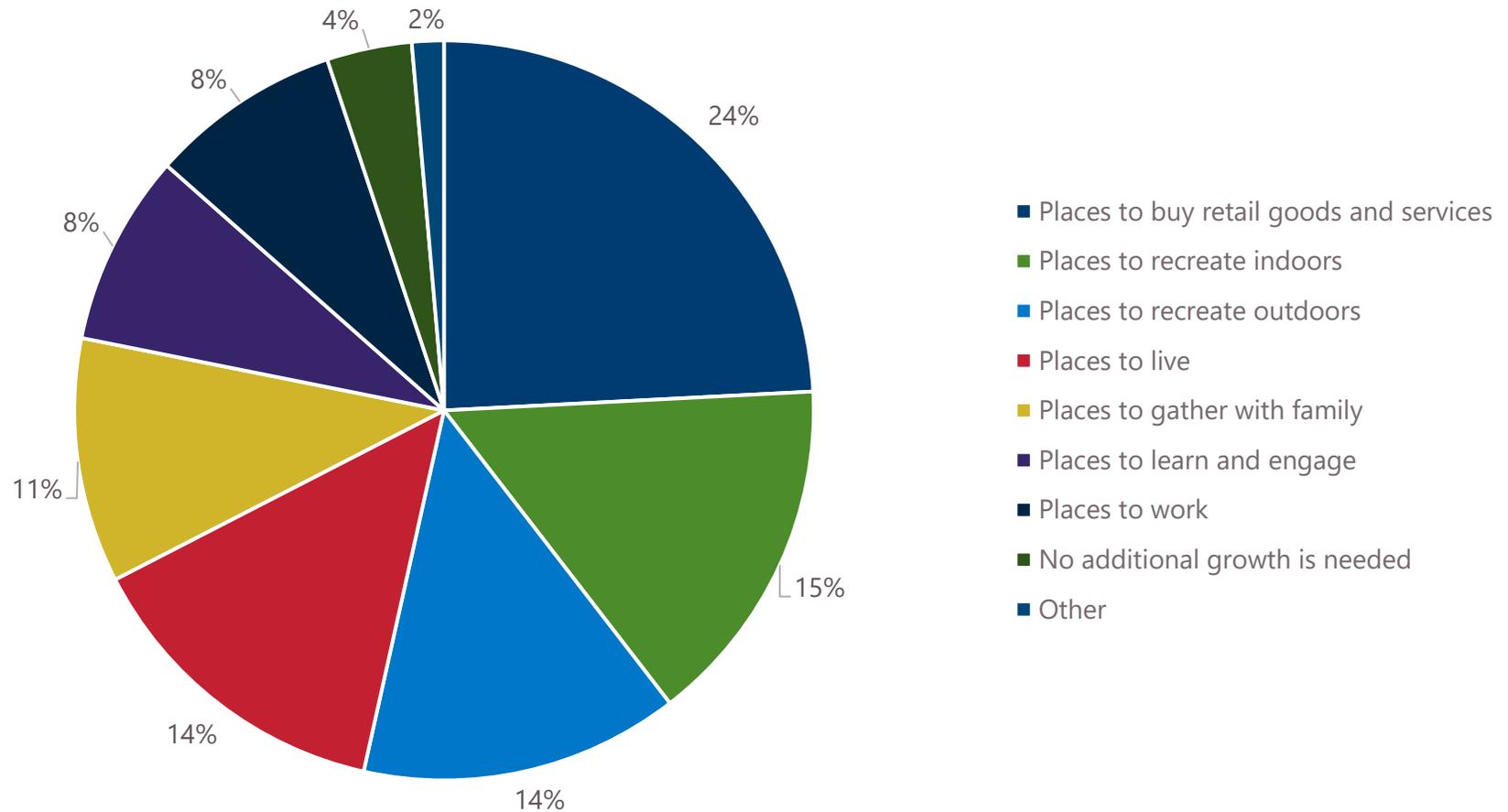


WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE INCREASED INVESTMENT TO IMPROVE OR ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES GENERAL UTILITIES IN THE CITY OF RIVER FALLS? (SURVEY RESPONSE)



## LAND USE ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

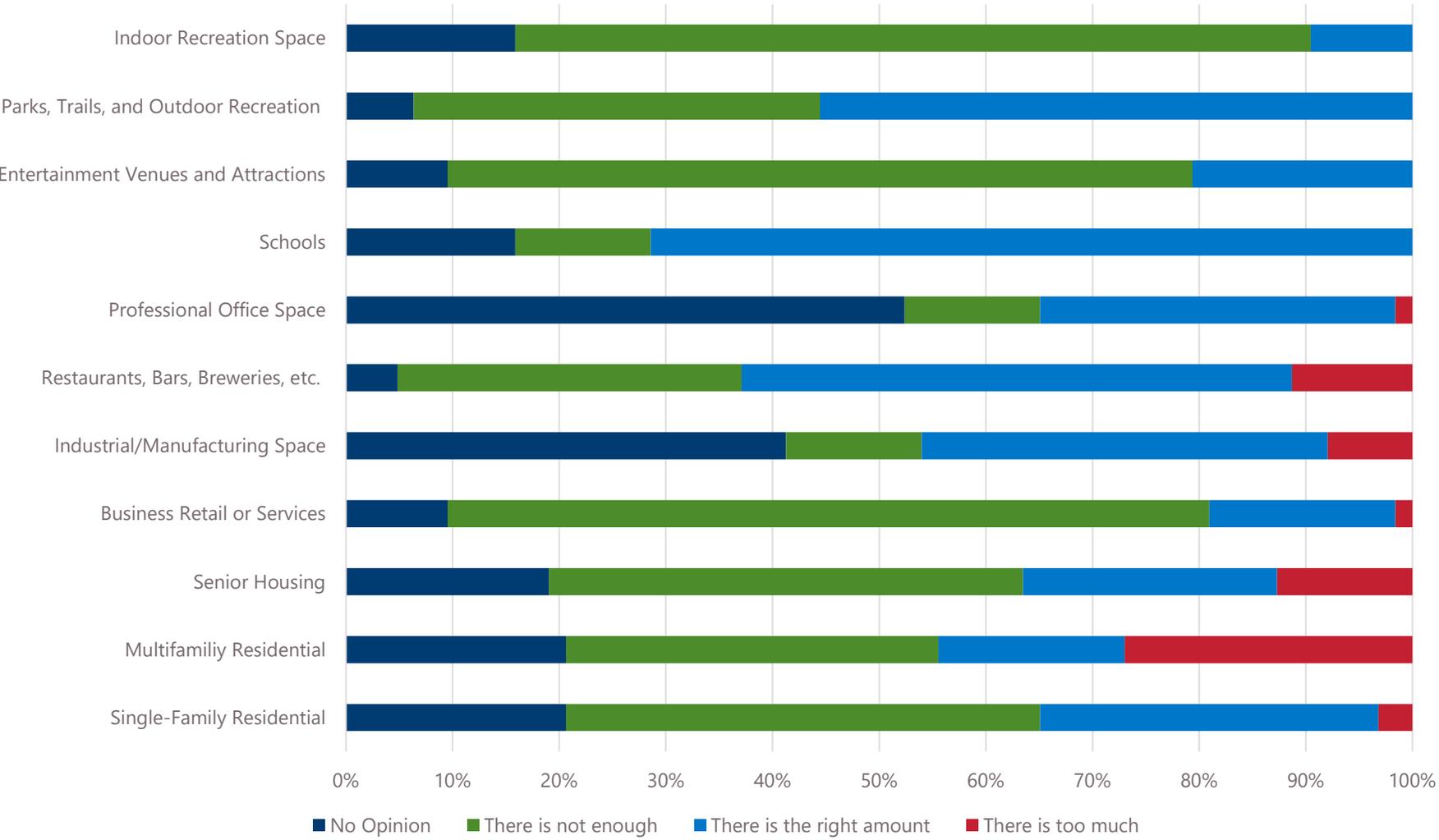
WHAT TYPES OF GROWTH ARE NEEDED IN RIVER FALLS? (*OPEN HOUSE RESPONSE*)



Participants provided additional comments about the type of growth they'd like to see in the community. Themes emerged for each of the types of growth, summarized below.

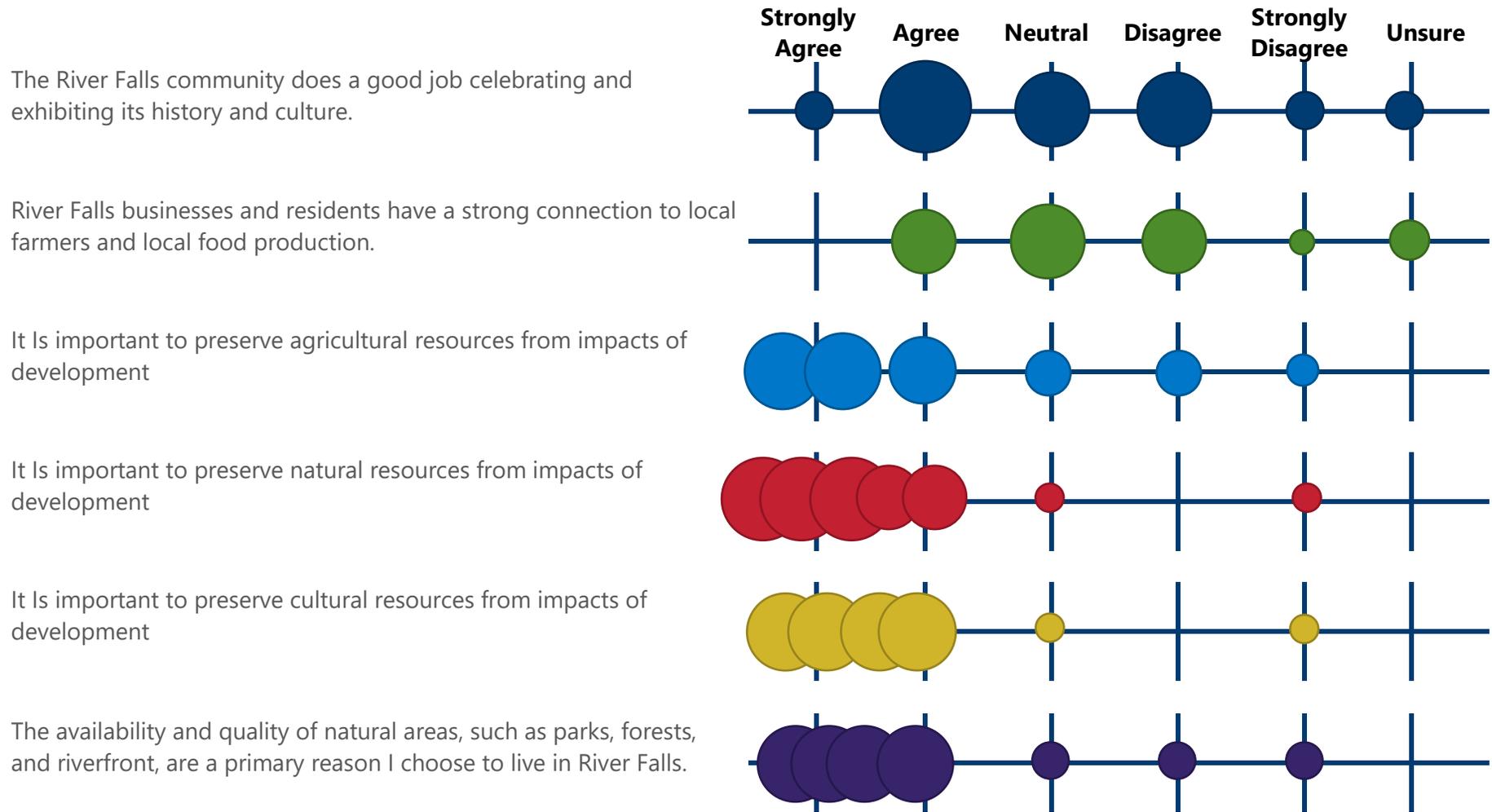
Types of Growth	Common Themes
Places to Recreate Indoors	Specific indoor facilities (e.g., pool, sports facilities, gym space, performing arts), Places to recreate indoors, places for all ages
Place to Gather with Family/Friends	Additional Restaurants and places to gather outside
Places to Recreate Outdoors	Natural areas, trails, and educational opportunities
Places to Buy Retail Goods and Services	Additional general retail (Menards, Home Depot, Target), Diverse and Healthy Food Options
Places to Live	Affordable and Accessible Housing, Tiny Homes and ADUs
Places to Work	Collaborate with schools
Places to Learn and Engage	Tech support
No Additional Growth Needed	Maintain character
Other Comments	Need for improved transportation (roads, sidewalks, public transportation)

# HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE SUPPLY OF THE FOLLOWING SPACES OR USES IN RIVER FALLS? (SURVEY RESPONSE)

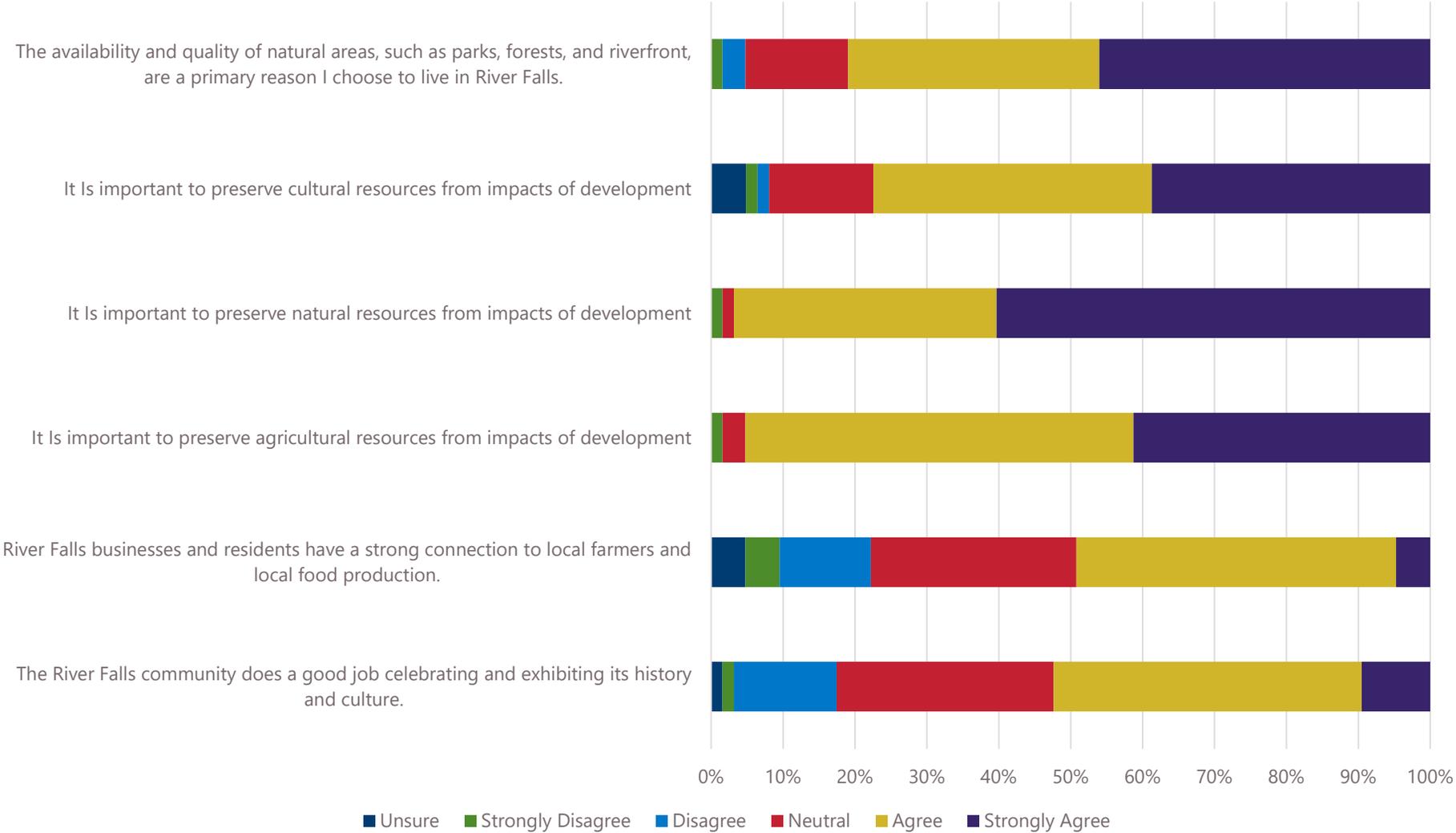


# NATURAL, CULTURAL, AND AGRICULTURAL ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

## HOW IS RIVER FALLS MANAGING ITS RESOURCES? (OPEN HOUSE RESPONSE)



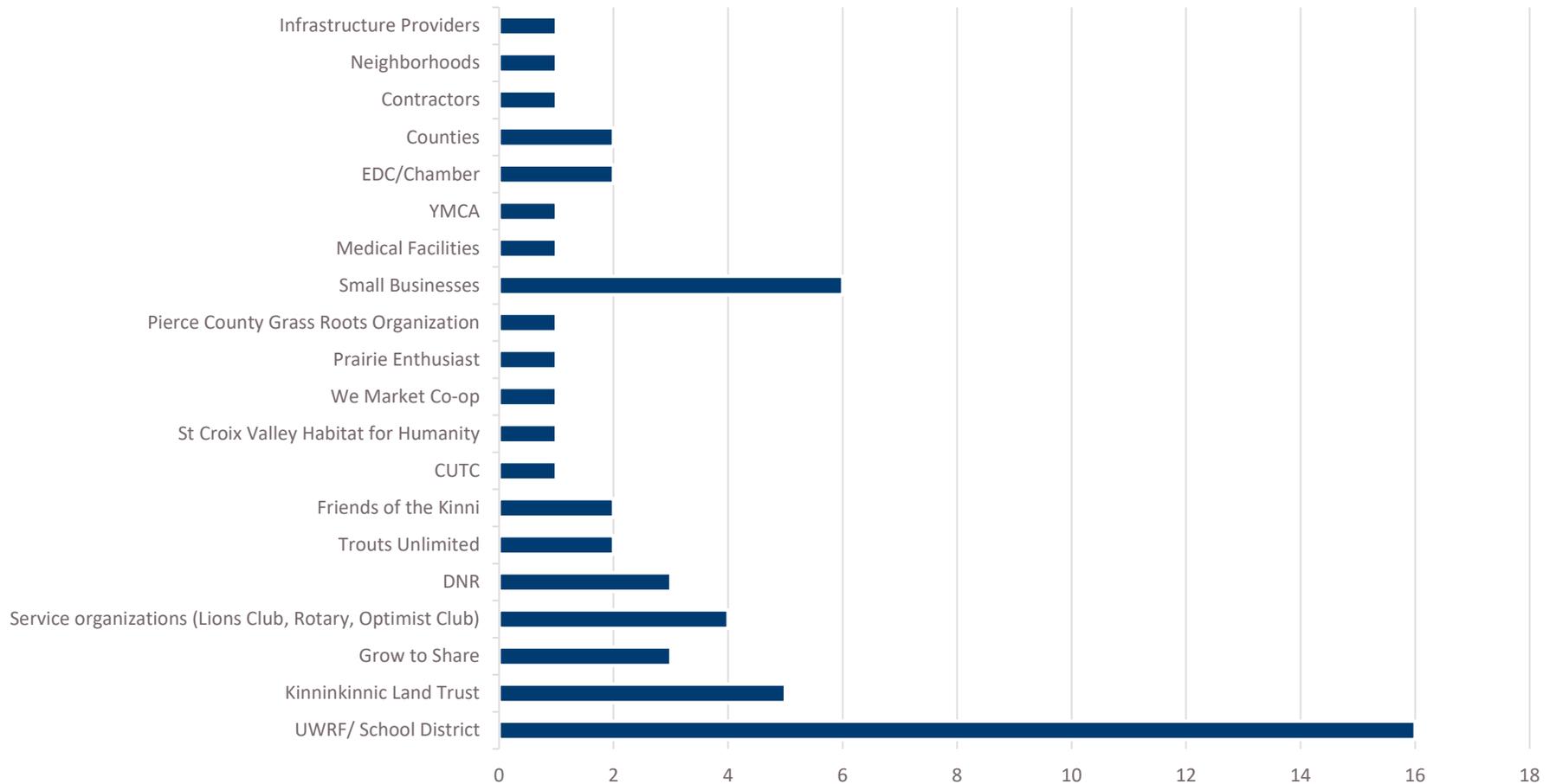
# HOW IS RIVER FALLS MANAGING ITS RESOURCES? (SURVEY RESPONSE)



# INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

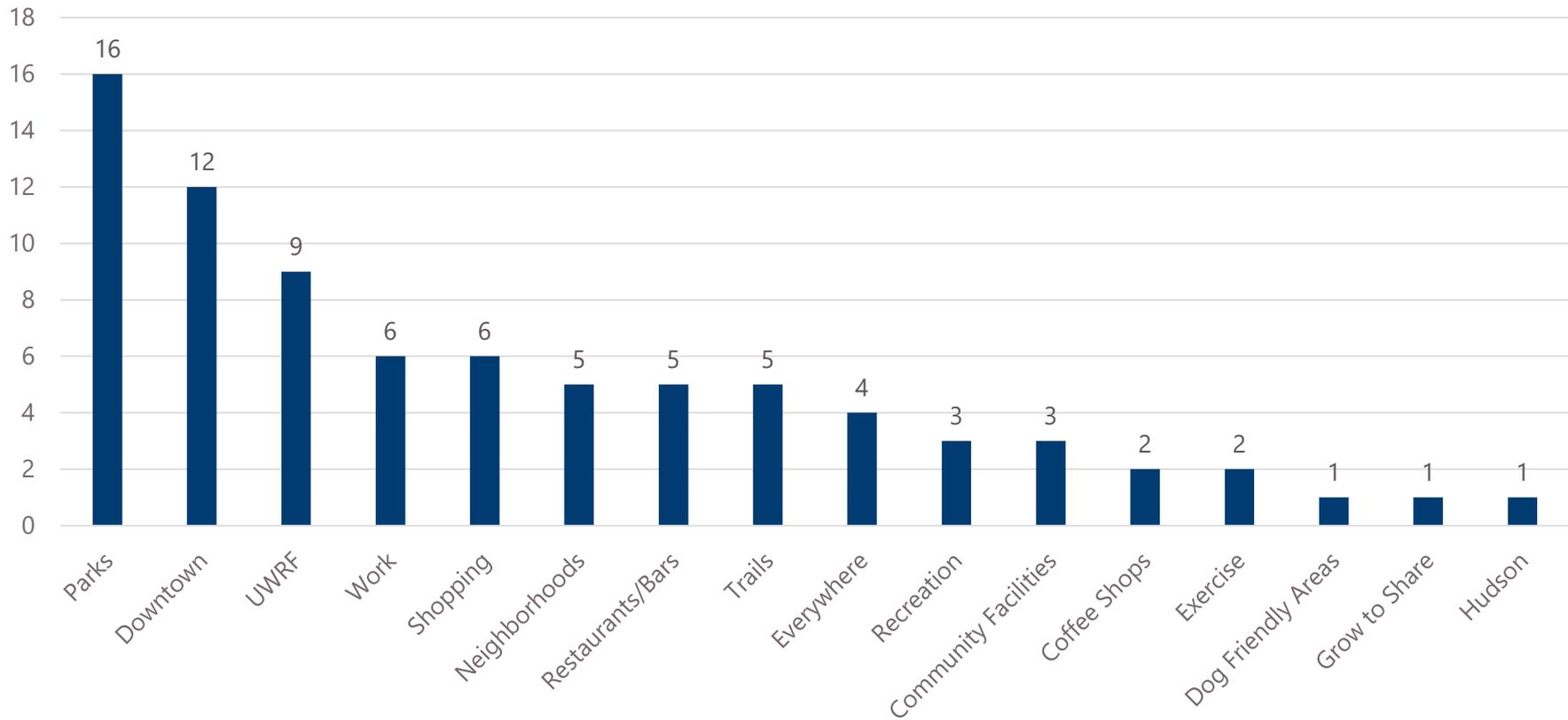
WHAT COMMUNITY PARTNERS SHOULD THE CITY MAINTAIN OR IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH TO ACHIEVE ITS LONG RANGE GOALS? (OPEN HOUSE AND SURVEY RESPONSE)

Community Partner Relationships



# BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

WHAT DESTINATIONS DO YOU CURRENTLY WALK OR BIKE TO? (OPEN HOUSE AND SURVEY RESPONSE)



## I WOULD WALK OR BIKE MORE FOR TRANSPORTATION (RUNNING ERRANDS, GOING TO WORK, GOING TO SCHOOL, VISITING FRIENDS, ETC.) IF..." (OPEN HOUSE AND SURVEY RESPONSE)

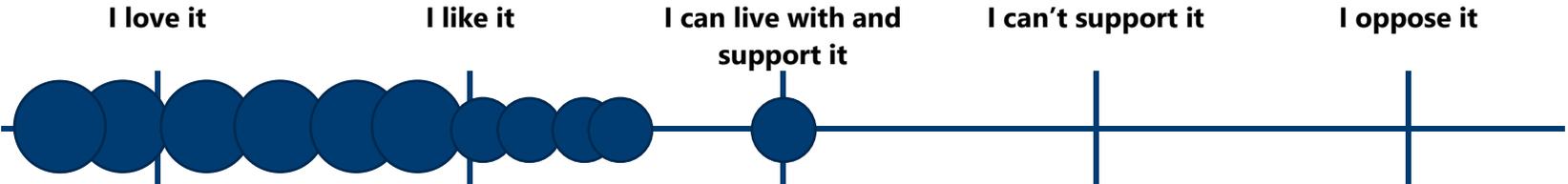
Ranking	Theme	Number of Appearances	Summary
1	Additional Infrastructure	25	General comments about the need for additional bike and pedestrian infrastructure including sidewalks, trails, lighting, etc.
2	Improved Safety	20	Overall safety improvements with bike and pedestrian infrastructure (signage, crossings, etc.)
3	Connectivity	10	Desires to improve connectivity of the network between areas within the community
4	Improved Crossings	7	Focus on improved pedestrian and bicycle crossings in general or in specific locations
4	More Destinations	7	More destinations needed that can be walked or biked to
4	Off Road Infrastructure	7	Identification of a need for increased off road infrastructure
4	Reduce Vehicle Conflicts	7	Improved safety, particularly focusing on reducing conflicts with vehicles
4	Year Round Infrastructure	7	Desires for infrastructure that is designed and maintained for year round use
9	Additional Routes	5	Desires for specific routes to be established and connections to be made
9	Dedicated Bike Lanes	5	Desires for dedicated bike lanes or facilities to improve access
11	Winter Maintenance	4	Concerns for current winter maintenance activities and desires for improvements
12	Access to bikes	3	Implement community bike access for all
12	Trail Extensions	3	Notation of trail extensions or gap closers to improve the connectivity of the network or connection to destinations

Ranking	Theme	Number of Appearances	Summary
12	Connection to Natural Resources	2	Desire for infrastructure that is connected to natural resources
12	Increased Accessibility	2	Improve accessibility for all
16	Physical Location	1	Notation of limited access or desire due to physical location
16	Traffic Calming	1	Desire for improvements to calm traffic

# WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR WALKING AND BIKING IN RIVER FALLS? (OPEN HOUSE AND SURVEY RESPONSE)

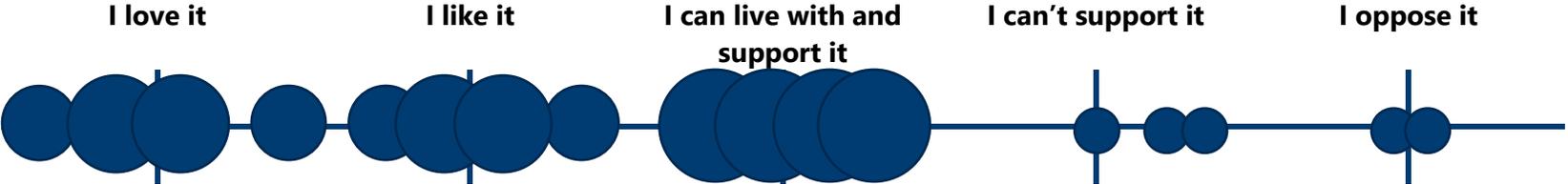
## Vision Statement

Walking and biking are comfortable modes of transportation that connect people of all ages and abilities to one another and to everyday destinations via safe, accessible infrastructure.



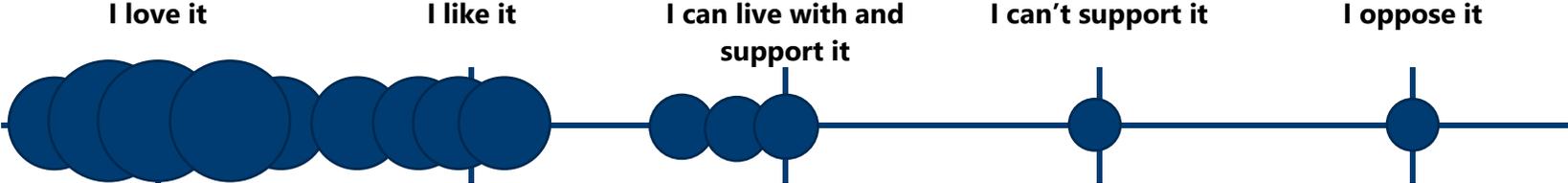
## Accessibility

Policy and infrastructure support the needs of people with barriers to accessing essential destinations using the existing car-oriented transportation system, such that people of all social and demographic backgrounds are equally able to meet their needs and participate in the community.



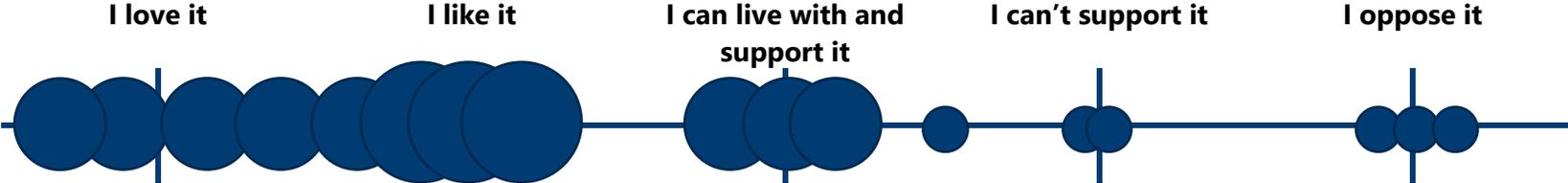
### Connectivity

People can quickly access everyday destinations via walking and bicycling on accessible, pleasant, pollution-free facilities.



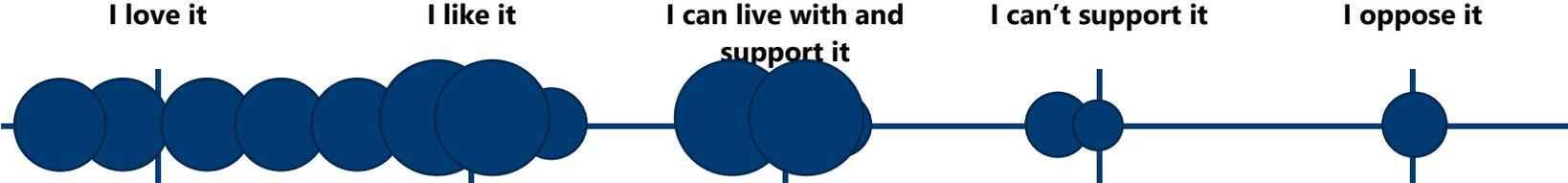
### Health and Safety

Transportation systems proactively promote the comprehensive health and wellbeing of all community members through active transportation facilities that equitably connect users to key destinations.



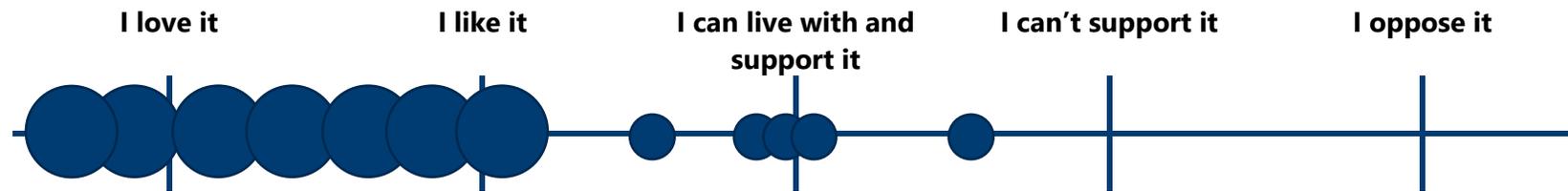
### Sustainability

Transportation systems are designed for the long-run, taking into full account the environmental and financial benefits and costs of continuing to do business-as-usual vs. implementing different policies and infrastructure investments.



## Economic Vitality

Active transportation and trail systems foster tourism and economic development.



# OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

## WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES? (OPEN HOUSE AND SURVEY RESPONSE)

Respondents identified a variety of outdoor recreation activities they currently enjoy. The following themes emerged from responses.

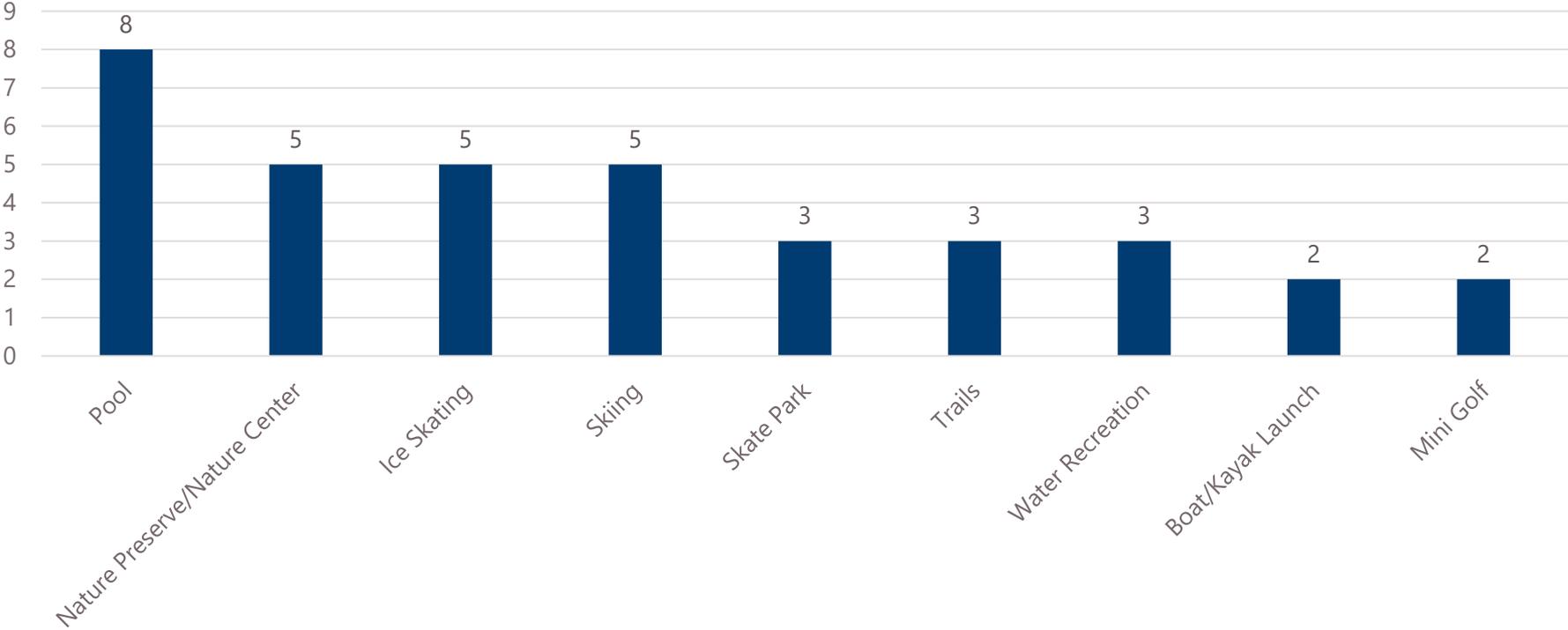
Ranking	Activity	Number of Responses	Other Activities Identified	
1	Walking	17	Birdwatching	Splash Pad
2	Biking	13	Community Service	Sports
2	Hiking	13	Concerts	Tennis
4	Kayaking	8	Disc Golf	Watching Sports
5	Swimming	4	Dog Park	
5	Cross Country Skiing	4	Football	
6	Baseball	3	Horseback Riding	
6	Gardening	3	Ice Rink	
8	Snowshoeing	2	Photography	
8	Running	2	Rock Climbing	
8	Fishing	2	Softball	

Additionally, respondents identified locations where they enjoy participating in their favorite activities. These locations include:



Beaches	Glen Park	Pathways
City trails	Glen Park Waterpark	Public Schools
Country Roads	Hoffman Park	River Trails (2)
Dirt Trails by the River and in the woods	Hoffman Park Triangles Playground	Rocky Branch Area
Dog Park	Kelly Creek	Trails (2)
FNB RF Field	Kinni Paths	White Tail Ridge (2)

## WHAT OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES DO YOU WISH WERE AVAILABLE IN RIVER FALLS THAT ARE NOT CURRENTLY AVAILABLE? (OPEN HOUSE AND SURVEY RESPONSE)



**Other Activities Identified:**

Access for all, Badminton, Disc Golf, Event Center, Fields and Turf, Guided Trail Activities, Indoor Activities, Infrastructure Repair, Outdoor Events, Regional Trails

## WHAT IMPROVEMENTS OR INVESTMENTS ARE NEEDED TO IMPROVE OR DIVERSIFY OUTDOOR RECREATION? (OPEN HOUSE AND SURVEY RESPONSE)

Number of Responses	Theme	Detail
10	Sidewalks/Trails	Increased system connectivity, safety, and maintenance
9	Natural Resources	Maintenance and enhancement of natural resources, improving opportunities to connect and interact with resources
5	Improved Pool	Improvements to the existing pool or construction of an indoor pool
3	Accessibility	Providing facilities and infrastructure that are accessible to all
3	Bike Routes	Creating and maintaining dedicated bike routes
3	Regional Connection	Connecting River Falls to other communities for recreation
3	Ice Rink	Desires improvements to indoor and outdoor rinks
2	Facilities and Event Space	Additional indoor facilities and event spaces
2	Park Amenities	Desire for additional park amenities
1	River Access	Connection to the river and kayak access
1	Sports Fields	Increased sports fields throughout the community
1	Support Youth	Continue to support youth recreation, including options and accessibility
1	Sustainability	Focus on sustainability
1	Cross Country Skiing	Improved trail facilities

# APPENDIX A: VISION STATEMENTS

## VISION STATEMENT 1

The first vision statement asked participants to fill in the blanks: "In 2040, River Falls will be a community that is known for our adjective noun."

Theme	Statement	
Development	In 2040, River Falls will be a community that is known for our	sustainable view on development smart growth intentional growth
Downtown	In 2040, River Falls will be a community that is known for our	historic and well preserved downtown vibrant downtown
Economic Development	In 2040, River Falls will be a community that is known for our	specialty businesses diverse, businesses
Neighborhoods	In 2040, River Falls will be a community that is known for our	quiet neighborhoods affordable housing inclusive supportive housing
Recreation	In 2040, River Falls will be a community that is known for our	first-class outdoor recreation small town walking in parks beautiful hiking trails helpful Hoffman Park awesome river walk green parks
Resources	In 2040, River Falls will be a community that is known for our	beautiful, healthy wilderness clean environ well planned sustainable beautiful parks and tree lined streets beautiful river beautiful community and river

Theme	Statement	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>healthy river</li> <li>accepting natural areas</li> <li>healthy environment</li> <li>sustainable natural areas</li> <li>preserved natural space</li> <li>environmental amenities</li> </ul>
Social	In 2040, River Falls will be a community that is known for our	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>innovative inclusion of its citizens</li> <li>welcoming spirit</li> <li>adventurous attitude</li> <li>welcoming community</li> <li>welcoming, well-kept parks and streets</li> <li>small town feel</li> <li>healthy and diverse community</li> <li>welcome-ness, healthy living</li> <li>relaxing and worry-free livability</li> <li>inclusive multicultural community</li> <li>welcoming community</li> <li>diverse community</li> <li>welcoming gestures, awesome parks, and activities</li> <li>diverse community</li> <li>inclusive environment</li> <li>trust in each other</li> </ul>
Sustainable	In 2040, River Falls will be a community that is known for our	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>joyful sustainable community</li> <li>sustainable community</li> <li>sustainable mindset</li> <li>sustainable living</li> <li>sustainable, healthy community</li> </ul>

Theme	Statement
	to create an environment that walks lightly on the planet sustainable resources sustainable commute conservation, recycling sustainable community renewable energy
Utilities	In 2040, River Falls will be a community that is known for our clean drinking water

## VISION STATEMENT 2

The first vision statement asked participants to fill in the blanks: "In the future, River Falls will celebrate noun by investing in its noun." The following responses are grouped into overall themes.

Theme	Statement
Amenities	our thriving downtown, lovely scenic riverside, bike paths, walkable business and entertainment center In the future River Falls will celebrate Community Its diversity Community By investing in its Livable spaces and economic opportunities Environment and housing Outdoor events

Theme	Statement			
		Colleges, universities, and students		Town and government relationships
		Strong employment opportunities		Small businesses
		Vitality		Downtown
Economic Development	In the future River Falls will celebrate	New opportunities	By investing in its	New businesses
		Community		Downtown
		Smallness		Downtown businesses
		hospitality		
Housing	In the future River Falls will celebrate	Sustainability		Housing
		Its affordable housing	By investing in its	Energy efficiency
		Strong neighborhoods		Affordable housing
		Inclusivity		Housing
Identity	In the future River Falls will celebrate	History	By investing in its	Main Street
Infrastructure	In the future River Falls will celebrate	Clean drinking water	By investing in its	Infrastructure
		Quality of life		Infrastructure

Theme	Statement		
		Humanity	Renewable economy and infrastructure
		The future	Kids
		Diversity	People
		It's children	Swimming pool
		Our people	Schools
People	In the future River Falls will celebrate	Community fellowship	People
		Growth	Diversity outreach
		The future	Children
		Diversity	Minority communities
		Success	Citizens
		Healthy living	Walkability
		Recreation	Parks and trails
		Recreation	In the future River Falls will celebrate
Hoffman Park	Skate Park		
Parks and recreation	History and future, children		

Theme	Statement			
		Health	Bike trails	
		Bike path	Bike path	
Resources	In the future River Falls will celebrate	Our community health	Natural environment	
		Its river	River walk	
		Diversity	Access to nature	
		Health, waking paths	Lakes	
		Nature	Environmental assets	
		River	Riverfront amenities	
		Its habitat and space	By investing in its	Space and environment
		Wellness		Natural Resources
		Our environment		Natural resources
		Parks and River		Protecting our natural spaces
		The river	Surroundings	
		Our environment	Outdoor resources	
		Prosperity	River	
Sustainability		Our super affordable utilities	By investing in its	Green energy practices

Theme	Statement	Long-term preparedness	Infrastructure
		The environment	Sustainable practices
	In the future River Falls will celebrate	Sustainability	Green infrastructure
		Sustainable	Utilities
		The environment	Green Energy
		Lake	Renewable energy.



# HOUSING STAKEHOLDER CONVERSATION SUMMARY

<b>Topic:</b>	Housing
<b>Location:</b>	River Falls City Hall, Council Chambers
<b>Date:</b>	July 22, 2022
<b>Subject:</b>	Comprehensive Plan Update Stakeholder Meetings
<b>Attendees:</b>	Peggy Chukel (River Falls Housing Authority), Peter Kilde (West CAP), Jessica Riles (UWRF), Dan Lytle (Chippewa Valley Technical College), Shelly Smith (Our Neighbor’s Place) Planning Team: Stephanie Falkers (SRF Consulting), Greta Kurtz (SRF Consulting), Kendra Ellner (City of River Falls), Emily Shively (City of River Falls)

## INTRODUCTION

Stakeholder conversations were held midway through the planning process to engage community stakeholders on specific plan elements to both confirm the initial input heard and explore new ideas. Each stakeholder conversation was a 90 minute session that included an overview of the Focus River Falls process, a review of engagement and planning activities to date, and a series of questions. This format was used to provide attendees an understanding of why each topic was being discussed and summarize the planning process.

## WHY HOUSING?

During the early engagement phase, a strong desire for affordable and accessible housing was heard from a variety of sources. While this was a common theme, accessible and affordable can mean many things, and a stakeholder conversation provided an opportunity to dig deeper into the topic and learn more about the current housing market, trends, and needs.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each stakeholder conversation used a common agenda to introduce the topic and review the Focus River Falls Progress, but each meeting had questions targeted to the specific topic. While the questions were tailored to the topic at hand, the conversation informed three key elements:

**Existing Conditions:** Confirming or refining existing housing information within the community.

**Perceived role of the City of River Falls:** Perception of what the City’s role is or should be within housing.

**Strategies to be Considered:** What analyzes or strategies should be explored within the planning process?

Existing Conditions	Perceived role of the City of River Falls	Strategies to be Considered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• River Falls does not have enough housing, especially affordable housing</li> <li>• Landlords are not very accepting of financial aid program (such as Section 8 vouchers)</li> <li>• River Falls needs a wider range of housing types (e.x., mixed use with day care, sustainability elements, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TID/TIF Continuation</li> <li>• Emergency rent assistance</li> <li>• Be proactive vs. reactive</li> <li>• Get more companies to support workforce housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will the City handle increasing electric vehicle infrastructure needs?</li> <li>• Addressing the high cost of building</li> <li>• Homeowner assistance and maintenance programs/services</li> <li>• Zoning Code amendments for more diverse housing (e.g. ADU’s)</li> </ul>

### CONVERSATION TOPICS

The following questions were used to guide the conversation.

1. Why discuss Housing as part of the Focus River Falls process?
2. What is the current perspective of Housing (affordability, accessibility, etc.) within River Falls? Does that perspective change between community members and visitors/neighbors/etc.?
3. What is the biggest challenge that River Falls will face regarding Housing in the next 10 years? What is the biggest opportunity?
4. What is the biggest barrier to acquiring housing for current or future residents? Do the barriers change for rental housing versus home ownership?
5. What housing types are most needed in the community? What housing types are over supplied?
6. What is your perspective of the city's role with Housing? Who are the local and regional partners?
7. What actions should the city take in the next 20 years to overcome challenges or capitalize on opportunities?

### CONVERSATION SUMMARY

- How is the city going to handle electric vehicle charging stations as more and more hydro/ electric vehicles come by?
- Affordable housing and family housing is limited and challenging to pay for and even find.
- The cost of building is high
- The federal poverty "standard" is way out of date, ~40% of the country cannot afford housing
- Companies need to support workforce housing
- Employees are looking for a great community, not just a job/ employer
- Section 8 voucher program - within River Falls, landlords don't want to accept vouchers
  - There are limitations on rent for the voucher program
  - Everything in the region is unaffordable anyways
  - Once people get the voucher they still have a lot of trouble finding a landlord/ building that will take their voucher. There's no incentive for them to take the vouchers.
  - Working class people can't live in this area because of this. They end up looking for housing elsewhere.
- "Home Sweet Menomonie" provide forgivable 10k down payment (\$500K revolving loan)
  - Requires private investment (program is funded by employers)
- Reactive vs. proactive

## Stakeholder Conversation Summary

- Housing is not affordable and there's not enough of it
- People commute from far (ex. Eau Claire) because they can't find affordable housing
- Nationwide resource 2-1-1 (but only specific by phone area code)
  
- St Croix workforce resources / housing services
- Private landlords aren't always flexible and accessible
- Emergency rent assistance
- Affordable daycare, broadband, and transportation are necessities in maintaining quality employment options
- Public transportation options
- Cut down on other expenses
- Community solar projects
- City could change their building and zoning requirements to allow smaller "tiny homes"
- City can help identify redevelopment opportunities
- Potential citywide mixed use category (i.e. near university or near 35)
- WestCAP's success with the 1300 S Main property
- There's only funding for a certain number of projects
- The city's role in this: TID/ TIF continuation
- Consider bond issue for housing
- Help people control other expenses (bike/ped/transit infrastructure; affordable daycare) to free up money for housing
- Offer many points of entry to housing – shelter, room for rent, communal facilities, private apartment, attached housing, detached housing
- Ensure all neighborhoods feel pride of place
- Housing types / infrastructure/ amenities we would like to see: mixed use with daycare, steady broadband, public transit, sustainability elements
- Housing for larger families is needed (very few 4-bedroom units)



# NATURAL RESOURCES & RESILIENCE STAKEHOLDER CONVERSATION SUMMARY

<b>Topic:</b>	Natural Resources & Resilience
<b>Location:</b>	River Falls City Hall, Council Chambers
<b>Date:</b>	July 21, 2022
<b>Subject:</b>	Comprehensive Plan Update Stakeholder Meetings
<b>Attendees:</b>	Stephanie Falkers (SRF Consulting), Greta Kurtz (SRF Consulting), Amy Peterson (Community Development Director), Mike Noreen, (River Falls Municipal Utilities), Tovah Flygare (Grow to Share), Tonya Schmitt (Grow to Share), Julie Smith (Kinni River Land Trust), Kay Montgomery (Hope for Creation, RF Library Foundation), Gary Horvath (Trout Unlimited), Patricia La Rue, David Gregg (KRLT Board Member), Benjamin Fochs (resident),

## INTRODUCTION

Stakeholder conversations were held midway through the planning process to engage community stakeholders on specific plan elements to both confirm the initial input heard and explore new ideas. Each stakeholder conversation was a 90 minute session that included an overview of the Focus River Falls process, a review of engagement and planning activities to date, and a series of questions. This format was used to provide attendees an understanding of why each topic was being discussed and summarize the planning process.

## WHY DISCUSS NATURAL RESOURCES?

Throughout the early engagement process, the community’s natural resources were solidified as part of the identity of River Falls. The stakeholder conversation provided an opportunity to learn more about existing preservation and enhancement efforts.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each stakeholder conversation used a common agenda to introduce the topic and review the Focus River Falls Progress, but each meeting had questions targeted to the specific topic. While the questions were tailored to the topic at hand, the conversation informed three key elements:

**Existing Conditions:** Confirming or refining existing natural resources information within the community.

**Perceived role of the City of River Falls:** Perception of what the City's role is or should be with natural resources.

**Strategies to be Considered:** What analyzes or strategies should be explored within the planning process?

Existing Conditions	Perceived role of the City of River Falls	Strategies to be Considered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Losing biodiversity</li><li>• Historic stormwater issues</li><li>• River conditions depleting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhance partners who specialize in conservation and sustainability</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Walkable, accessible community gathering</li><li>• Balance of growth, resilience</li><li>• Energy conservation in new developments</li></ul>

### CONVERSATION TOPICS

The following questions were used to guide the conversation.

1. What is the current perspective of Natural Resources within River Falls? Does that perspective change between community members and visitors/neighbors/etc.?
2. What is the current perspective of Resilience within River Falls? Does that perspective change between community members and visitors/neighbors/etc.?
3. What is the biggest challenge that River Falls will face regarding Natural Resources & Resilience in the next 10 years? What is the biggest opportunity?
4. What is your perspective of the city's role with Natural Resources? What is your perspective of the city's role with Resilience? Who are the local and regional partners?
5. Natural Resources can be managed, maintained, preserved, enhanced, etc., when considering the various resources types in the city, what are the long-term needs?
6. What actions should the city take in the next 20 years to overcome challenges or capitalize on opportunities?
7. What did we miss?

### CONVERSATION SUMMARY

- Uses of the river are big challenges
- Renewable energy from the dams
- Lake George offers biodiversity
- Loss of biodiversity (turtles) after draining Lake Louise.
- We want greenspace, healthy, living greenspace
- In Wisconsin, in the next 50 years, it is projected that all brown trout will be gone
- Perspective of natural resources changes with visitors
- Worries about converting land to corporate parks
- Grow to share next to baseball stadium sends a good message. The current location has a lot of value
  - "Bar culture"- people need other things to come in for aside from bars

## Stakeholder Conversation Summary

- Community gardens are a resilient enhancement. We want a place for people to feel safe to gather.
- A lot of arguments for a walkable, accessible location for community gathering
- Biggest concerns/ opportunity
  - The opportunity of the dams and stormwater = resilience to be able to correct some historic stormwater issues
  - Growing = good, but overgrowth. Instead focus efforts on solar panels, and green roofs, etc.
  - Put in the code to require a minimum amount of trees per property, etc.
  - Update building codes, more strict for energy
  - Would like to see some kind of municipal compost site which in turn would help regenerate soil, help the river, etc.
- Hope for Creation has done zero waste events
- Who are the local and regional partners? Education, Community Gardens
- Ramp up the energy conservations with new development

## Q&A:

1. Q: How will the Kinni Corridor Plan influence this process?

A: The policy recommendations were involved in our data collection processes



# LOCAL BUSINESSES STAKEHOLDER CONVERSATION SUMMARY

<b>Topic:</b>	Local Businesses
<b>Location:</b>	River Falls City Hall, Council Chambers
<b>Date:</b>	July 22, 2022
<b>Subject:</b>	Comprehensive Plan Update Stakeholder Meetings
<b>Attendees:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stephanie Falkers (Planner, SRF Consulting)</li> <li>Greta Kurtz (Planner, SRF Consulting)</li> <li>Kendra Ellner (Planner, City of River Falls)</li> <li>Emily Shively (City Planner, City of River Falls)</li> <li>Robin Boles (Whole Earth Market Co-op)</li> <li>Terry McKay (ReMax)</li> <li>Brent Huppert (MN Rubber and Plastics)</li> <li>Brandi Poellinger (Allina Health)</li> </ul>

## INTRODUCTION

Stakeholder conversations were held midway through the planning process to engage community stakeholders on specific plan elements to both confirm the initial input heard and explore new ideas. Each stakeholder conversation was a 90 minute session that included an overview of the Focus River Falls process, a review of engagement and planning activities to date, and a series of questions. This format was used to provide attendees an understanding of why each topic was being discussed and summarize the planning process.

# Stakeholder Conversation Summary

## WHY GATHER LOCAL BUSINESSES?

Throughout the early engagement process, the public emphasized the importance of local businesses within the community’s fabric and the importance of preserving these uses. Additionally, there was varied input regarding the types of commercial shopping opportunities available within the community.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each stakeholder conversation used a common agenda to introduce the topic and review the Focus River Falls Progress, but each meeting had questions targeted to the specific topic. While the questions were tailored to the topic at hand, the conversation informed three key elements:

**Existing Conditions:** Confirming or refining existing economic development information within the community.

**Perceived role of the City of River Falls:** Perception of what the City’s role is or should be with local businesses.

**Strategies to be Considered:** What analyzes or strategies should be explored within the planning process?

Existing Conditions	Perceived role of the City of River Falls	Strategies to be Considered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many competing issues impede economic growth</li> <li>• Commuter city, people leave to work elsewhere</li> <li>• People come here for education</li> <li>• Employee retention is low</li> <li>• Wage competition</li> <li>• Large generational range of employees.</li> <li>• More employees want work life balance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance community partnerships</li> <li>• How to encourage trade schools/ work</li> <li>• Downtown aesthetics and parking</li> <li>• Need to do more to support small businesses (&lt;50 employees)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong business retention and expansion (BRE) program</li> <li>• Enhance UWRF strengths</li> <li>• Broaden workforce</li> <li>• Company and employee retention and recruitment</li> <li>• Raise minimum wage</li> </ul>

### CONVERSATION TOPICS

The following questions were used to guide the conversation.

1. What is the current perspective of Local Businesses within River Falls? Does that perspective change between community members and visitors/neighbors/etc.?
2. What is the biggest challenge that River Falls will face regarding Local Businesses in the next 10 years? What is the biggest opportunity?
3. What attracts a business to locate in River Falls? What keeps a business in River Falls and makes it a success?
4. What industries/sectors are needed in River Falls?
5. What is your perspective of the city's role with Local Businesses? Who are the local and regional partners?
6. What actions should the city take in the next 20 years to overcome challenges or capitalize on opportunities?
7. What did we miss?

### CONVERSATION SUMMARY

- "If you're not growing you're dying"- critical on the industrial side, when growing the business. Competition with big industries, employee retention.
- Most of the employees in River Falls don't live in River Falls. River Falls is a commuter city.
  - About 50% of River Falls employees come from out of River Falls and about 50% of River Falls residents leave River Falls for work.
- People are coming to River Falls for education
- Wage competition is difficult for businesses
- Biggest employers in River Falls: UWRF, school districts, Allina
- Request for City to have/raise minimum wage
- High staff turnover (e.g.hospital staff, average nurse age is 52)
- Overall industry competition, people will work here and get experience for a few years then leave
- Engaging younger generation on working in industry vs. "traditional" 4-year college track
  - A lot of people go to UWRF, leave for a decade or so, then come back. - how do we keep them here?

## Stakeholder Conversation Summary

- Allina nurses average age is 52 years old, how can we retain younger staff? Younger nurses come for a few years just for experience but leave to diversify
- Building on community partnerships
- Adapting to younger generations' needs
- The city needs to grow and businesses need to grow
- The city needs to do more to support local businesses
- The challenge of keeping a small town feel but offering resources like shopping
- River Falls is a much easier place to do business than it used to be. The community is supportive of local businesses. The City is supportive and makes the process easy, from licensing to planning. Staff has excellent customer service.
- Challenge: Managing growth that maintains the 'small town' character of the community. Do people still feel drawn to events and downtown, or do people living on the outskirts never venture into town? Continuing to embrace the university population.  
Opportunity: Growth and expansion of new and small businesses. People who continue to choose River Falls seeing success. And the resulting influence they have.
- What attracts businesses: Accelerated development timelines without much red tape. Proximity to broader workforce. Small community values of neighborliness.
- We need more sectors that are related to key UW-River Falls strengths, like ag tech and bioscience.
- City should focus on the following in the future: Strong Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program to learn from people who are here and make sure they have what they need. New Resident Welcome Information from Chamber/Downtown. Support young leaders in BID and Chamber to create stronger downtown that also takes advantage of natural resources. Market your destination tourism (Kinni, restaurants/downtown/breweries) and support with events led by partners.
- Downtown parking issues with the University, could we have a garage downtown
- Value community partnerships
- Trade school and trade employment opportunities need to be encouraged more
- City needs to do more to support small businesses (less than 50 employees)

Comments sent in from local business owner unable to attend:

## Stakeholder Conversation Summary

- River Falls is a commuter town. The draw is the downtown “cool” and recreation opportunities. How are we promoting this to locals and surrounding communities? The new Experience River Falls will hopefully help but I have not seen the Experience River Falls advertised much so people know about it. I think it has a lot of potential!
- Trade schools and other types of jobs need to be encouraged not just college degree positions. With CVTC being in town, do we have the opportunity to team up with them to promote the importance of these jobs and options for training via CVTC ?
- Downtown parking around the University can be a hassle. I have been saying for a long time that as soon as the fire department relocates, it would be great to see that space turned into a parking ramp. That would help both school and local traffic. Additionally, I would love to see DT parking limited to angled inside lane/next to the boulevard parking only (if we had additional space with a ramp) so that businesses were visible as people drove down Main Street. Our signage is limited and the cars parked in front further limit visibility.
- Many people say, “River Falls is a great place to come back to”. How do we keep people here? Keep downtown alive with a variety of businesses, have somewhere to shop for everyday items now that we lost ShopKo, and find ways to get people to explore more of the area when they come to town for events.
- Many downtown businesses do not own their building. Many need repairs and the landlords don’t live in the City. I have great landlords now but I do see this as a problem. I’m not sure what the answer is. If there are ordinances being violated then the city inspector can follow up but I’m not sure most of us know what ordinances to look at in assisting with that.



# LARGE TRACT PROPERTY OWNERS STAKEHOLDER CONVERSATION SUMMARY

<b>Topic:</b>	Large Tract Property Owners
<b>Location:</b>	River Falls City Hall, Council Chambers
<b>Date:</b>	July 21, 2022
<b>Subject:</b>	Comprehensive Plan Update Stakeholder Meetings
<b>Attendees:</b>	Stephanie Falkers (SRF Consulting) Greta Kurtz (SRF Consulting) Kendra Ellner (City of River Falls) Amy Peterson (City of River Falls) DeWayne and Gerda Benedict Daniel Feinstein Paul and LeAnn Hanson Mary Johnson (Marlene Wells Trust) Bill and LeAnn Karras Maureen Ash, Rich Pudy Debbie Delander Jerry and Carol Williams Al Hanson Stan Pesken Mary Beni Rich Cernohous Bobby Moody

## Stakeholder Conversation Summary

Stan Cina  
Thomas Fetzner  
Roy Lund  
Mary Passe  
Elaine Baumann  
Vernon Pesker  
Randal  
Peter D Morrow  
Joseph Block  
Jeff and Kathy Dusek  
Sam and Heather Johnson  
Tom Johnson  
Alex Williams  
Greg and Siri Smith  
Jim Wiese  
Wayne and Kathy Svoboda  
Amanda Berndt  
Rich Coben  
Tyler Sass  
Jean Pociengel  
Brenda LaValley  
Martin Kretzmann  
George Preuchnotoki  
Julie Kelly  
Terry McKay

## INTRODUCTION

Stakeholder conversations were held midway through the planning process to engage community stakeholders on specific plan elements to both confirm the initial input heard and explore new ideas. Each stakeholder conversation was a 90 minute session that included an overview

## Stakeholder Conversation Summary

of the Focus River Falls process, a review of engagement and planning activities to date, and a series of questions. This format was used to provide attendees an understanding of why each topic was being discussed and summarize the planning process.

## WHY GATHER LARGE TRACT PROPERTY OWNERS?

As a community plans for the next 20 years, it has the authority to execute planning tools outside of its municipal boundaries. The City of River Falls has executed this planning right through many forms in past years. This stakeholder conversation provided an opportunity to gather all property owners within the existing Urban Reserve Area and all property owners with more than a 30 acre parcel within the Extraterritorial Subdivision Authority to discuss how the Comprehensive Plan is used and to learn insights from the current owners.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each stakeholder conversation used a common agenda to introduce the topic and review the Focus River Falls Progress, but each meeting had questions targeted to the specific topic. While the questions were tailored to the topic at hand, the conversation informed three key elements:

**Existing Conditions:** Understanding current conditions within the area surrounding city limits.

**Perceived role of the City of River Falls:** Perception of what the City's role.

**Strategies to be Considered:** What analyzes or strategies should be explored within the planning process?

Existing Conditions	Perceived role of the City of River Falls	Strategies to be Considered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It feels like the city is pushing into surrounding rural areas</li> <li>• Conflicts between City and townships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want the city to stop "pushing into the rural" / "pressure to sell and develop"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What will come of underutilized park space?</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Preserving agricultural land</li> </ul>

### CONVERSATION TOPICS

The following questions were used to guide the conversation.

1. How does the Comprehensive Plan manage and inform growth?
2. What are the current growth management boundaries?
3. How is the Future Land Use Plan developed? Can it change?
4. What is my role as a property owner?
5. Questions from the Public?

### CONVERSATION SUMMARY

- Concern for preserving existing agricultural land
- Asked if there's anything the city might take regarding underutilized park space
- Suggests that when you're considering these plans that there are benefits to these open spaces and that there is money going towards them
- Transportation is an important part of the plan
- Intergovernmental co-operations, townships want to remain rural but city "wants to push into the rural"
- Many residents were curious about future land use and what their parcel was zoned.
- Contradicting perceptions of seeing City growth as positive but negative for development.



# SENSE OF PLACE & INCLUSION STAKEHOLDER CONVERSATION SUMMARY

<b>Topic:</b>	Sense of Place and Inclusion
<b>Location:</b>	River Falls City Hall, Council Chambers
<b>Date:</b>	July 21, 2022
<b>Subject:</b>	Comprehensive Plan Update Stakeholder Meetings
<b>Attendees:</b>	Annie Ladnier (Pastor at Hope Lutheran Church), Jennifer Sell (Chippewa Valley Technical College), Beth Schommer (UWRF Chief of Staff), Mike Noreen (Hope for Creation), Adam Christian (First Covenant Church), Tom Anderson (Journey House Board Member), Monica Bylander (Lutheran Memorial Church), AZ Snyder (Pierce County Public Health), Don Leake (UWRF), Kim Serene Planning Team: Stephanie Falkers (SRF Consulting), Greta Kurtz (SRF Consulting), Kendra Ellner (City of River Falls), Emily Shively (City of River Falls)

## INTRODUCTION

Stakeholder conversations were held midway through the planning process to engage community stakeholders on specific plan elements to both confirm the initial input heard and explore new ideas. Each stakeholder conversation was a 90 minute session that included an overview of the Focus River Falls process, a review of engagement and planning activities to date, and a series of questions. This format was used to provide attendees an understanding of why each topic was being discussed and summarize the planning process.

# Stakeholder Conversation Summary

## WHY SENSE OF PLACE & INCLUSION?

During the early engagement phase, a strong sense of community, a vibrant atmosphere, and a welcoming social environment were highlighted. Input also recognized that these are items that should be maintained within the community. This stakeholder conversation looked to further explore that sense of place for River Falls with a focus to include a space for all.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each stakeholder conversation used a common agenda to introduce the topic and review the Focus River Falls Progress, but each meeting had questions targeted to the specific topic. While the questions were tailored to the topic at hand, the conversation informed three key elements:

**Existing Conditions:** Confirming or refining existing sense of place information within the community.

**Perceived role of the City of River Falls:** Perception of what the City’s role is or should be with sense of place and inclusion.

**Strategies to be Considered:** What analyzes or strategies should be explored within the planning process?

Existing Conditions	Perceived role of the City of River Falls	Strategies to be Considered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing homelessness rates</li> <li>Students of color at UWRF don't feel "at home"</li> <li>Lack of transportation for aging population</li> <li>People tend to leave and come back to River Falls, not stay long term.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make bridges between communities within RF (faith, politics, identity, etc.) vs. separate</li> <li>Incorporate more heritage events and support DE&amp;I initiatives</li> <li>Balance City communication to the community.</li> <li>Diversify recreational activities and spaces (loud and quiet or passive and active) for all types of people and abilities. Include social issues into the Comp Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do we get people to stay in River Falls?</li> <li>How can we diversify the community to help everyone feel welcome?</li> <li>What can we do to create transportation to make River Falls accessible as the community ages?</li> </ul>

### CONVERSATION TOPICS

The following questions were used to guide the conversation.

1. Why discuss Inclusion & Sense of Place as part of the Focus River Falls process?
2. What is the current perspective of the sense of place of River Falls? Does that perspective change between community members and visitors/neighbors/etc.?
3. What is the current perspective of inclusion in River Falls? Does that perspective change between community members and visitors/ neighbors/ etc.?
4. What is the biggest challenge that River Falls will face regarding Inclusion and/or Sense of Place in the next 10 years? What is the biggest opportunity?
5. What are the biggest contributors to the sense of place in River Falls? Which of the contributors should be maintained and which have opportunities to be enhanced?
6. What is your perspective of the city's role in Inclusion and Sense of Place? Who are the local and regional partners?
7. What actions should the city take in the next 20 years to overcome challenges or capitalize on opportunities?
8. What did we miss?

### CONVERSATION SUMMARY

- River Falls is safe, but it's changing. Seeing more homelessness.
- Lately it's become more of a destination place for people from Minnesota
- Transitions, mainly of generations, and perceived sense of place (yay new people vs. we don't want new people here)
- River Falls has youth and youth activities add energy and optimism and the opportunity to look in to the future.
- What we can do to keep youth here, and not keep youth away.
- What are we doing to engage youth aside from outdoor recreation?
- Question about diversity and gaining those perspectives.
- Students of color don't necessarily feel a sense of pride or a sense of place at River Falls.
  - A lot of students go home to the Twin Cities on the weekends because they don't feel welcome.
  - Struggle providing efficient public health
  - Lack of transportation for folks without cars.
  - Students of color have expressed feeling "othered" when walking into a space.

## Stakeholder Conversation Summary

- How can we diversify the community to help these people feel welcome?
- UWRF- what is the draw? How do we get students to come here?
  - It seems the chamber of commerce has invested a lot of resources in drinking tourism but we need to do just as much for other recreation.
    - Alcohol has had a big influence on public health and safety. Worried about the perception of River Falls
  - Need to diversify the options we have for our students
- Strengthen LGBTQIA presence
  - Would like the city to get involved in Pride, BLM, etc.
- People move here for educational opportunities, so how does the city build education into our sense of place while leveraging that with the diversity strengthening
  - We are missing the opportunity on facilitating that dialogue
  - These grassroots groups need the city's support
- RF is a very fertile ground for environmentalism (Earth Day celebration was a big success)
- Journey House is fully committed to inclusion
- Make bridges between communities within RF (faith, politics, identity, etc.) and not separating based on intersectionality
- People who can't drive don't feel safe in RF, there's not even a continuous sidewalk on both sides of Main Street
  - Accessibility and transportation
  - People do not stop at pedestrian crossings on Main Street
    - Biking on Main Street is dangerous especially for children
- Aging communities, what can we do to create transportation to make river falls accessible as the community ages?
- How urban do we want to grow?
- Growth of industrial parks create more jobs
- Need more entertainment
- High permit costs for food trucks
- How much of the comprehensive plan involves the townships in the city?
  - City vs. townships
- Incorporate social issues into the plan
  - Trouble with website survey? / map
- River Falls has a rural/suburban identity crisis
  - What else can we offer?
  - How can we balance the binge drinking identity with recreational identity
  - Need better marketing for affirmative City identity
- Bridging opposites (genders, activities, values, etc..) into intersectionality



# SENSE OF PLACE & INCLUSION STAKEHOLDER CONVERSATION SUMMARY

<b>Topic:</b>	Recreation
<b>Location:</b>	River Falls City Hall, Council Chambers
<b>Date:</b>	July 21, 2022
<b>Subject:</b>	Comprehensive Plan Update Stakeholder Meetings
<b>Attendees:</b>	<p>Stephanie Falkers (Planner, SRF Consulting)</p> <p>Greta Kurtz (Planner, SRF Consulting)</p> <p>Kendra Ellner (Planner, City of River Falls)</p> <p>Lori Johnson, River Falls Youth Boy’s Basketball</p> <p>Chad Flanagan, River Falls Youth Baseball</p> <p>Patricia LaRue</p> <p>Gary Horvath, Trout Unlimited</p> <p>Sonja Maki, UWRF, Grow to Share</p> <p>Tovah Flygare, Grow to Share</p> <p>Amy Peterson, (Community Development Director, City of River Falls)</p>

## INTRODUCTION

Stakeholder conversations were held midway through the planning process to engage community stakeholders on specific plan elements to both confirm the initial input heard and explore new ideas. Each stakeholder conversation was a 90 minute session that included an overview

# Stakeholder Conversation Summary

of the Focus River Falls process, a review of engagement and planning activities to date, and a series of questions. This format was used to provide attendees an understanding of why each topic was being discussed and summarize the planning process.

## WHY DISCUSS RECREATION?

During the early engagement phase, the public emphasized the importance of recreation in the community’s identity. From social gathering to active recreation opportunities, the community thrives on opportunities to recreate.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each stakeholder conversation used a common agenda to introduce the topic and review the Focus River Falls Progress, but each meeting had questions targeted to the specific topic. While the questions were tailored to the topic at hand, the conversation informed three key elements:

**Existing Conditions:** Confirming or refining existing recreation information within the community.

**Perceived role of the City of River Falls:** Perception of what the City’s role is or should be with recreation.

**Strategies to be Considered:** What analyzes or strategies should be explored within the planning process?

Existing Conditions	Perceived role of the City of River Falls	Strategies to be Considered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community recreation feel is great</li> <li>Youth areas sports and spaces are important</li> <li>Not enough youth sports facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain and strengthen current parks</li> <li>Strengthen youth amenities</li> <li>Have more mix of organic and organized spaces.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase multi-use areas or community rec center</li> <li>Work with land trust for community building of some kind</li> <li>Outdoor education opportunities</li> </ul>

### CONVERSATION TOPICS

The following questions were used to guide the conversation.

1. What is the current perspective of Recreation within River Falls? Does that perspective change between community members and visitors/neighbors/etc.?
2. What is the biggest challenge that River Falls will face regarding Recreation in the next 10 years? What is the biggest opportunity?
3. What is your perspective of the city's role in Recreation? Who are the local and regional partners?
4. From your perspective, what are the outdoor recreation facility needs for the next five years? What are the needs for the next 20 years?
5. What actions should the city take in the next 20 years to overcome challenges or capitalize on opportunities?
6. What did we miss?

### CONVERSATION SUMMARY

- Grow to Share "pushing back on gardens being 'passive' recreation and would like to offer educational programs for younger kids, and meditative space. Grow to Share hits a lot of these recreation topics (physical/ mental health, community/ family spaces)."
- The perspective of outdoor activities is much more incorporated with the way of life here vs. other areas. Youth areas are really important.
- Interested on strengthening the parks that we already have vs. adding new parks. Youth and recreation exists because of the associations and all the work that the parents and members are putting in. There is a lot of burnout in taking care of facilities from associations, it is hard to keep people on those boards and keep people pushing forward. We bring in so many people for baseball and hockey, which is a really positive experience because of all the work that we are putting in, but it's just a lot of work
- Really like the community building happening between different organizations. Ex. People come in from other communities to come to Grow to Share, the baseball concession stands are sometimes run by them, etc.
- Angler/ kayak issues / management issues that haven't been addressed. What can be done to mitigate this and accommodate for these growing issues? Tensions are there and will only get worse
- Baseball using a lot of fields and spaces already and we are at max so that is a large concern. Same thing for hockey.

## Stakeholder Conversation Summary

- Youth basketball, all use are in school gyms. The problem they run into is not having enough space because everyone is trying to use the limited spaces. Would love to see some type of rec center at some point. It's always the same people volunteering but they need more.
- Community really wants a community recreational center.
- It makes sense to have a partnership between the parks and schools to build something that everyone can use.
- Having multi-use areas like Hoffman Park increase the social capital, fiscal capital, and the neighborhood engagement and general satisfaction
- It would be nice to have a place close to the river for outdoor education (funding: foundations, etc.)
- Walkability and bike-ability and accessibility would be great for inclusivity.
- If there's a place for expanding a Garden past just being plots of land to have the ability to put a structure or greenhouse.
  - We could work with the land trust for these structures.
- Community wants more of a mix of organic/informal recreation and organized sports
- There are gaps in interest areas for youth need more spaces for exploration activities.
- Indoor recreation is a challenge for River Falls.

## Q&A

1. Q: "How is the city defining 'parks'? Thinking of publicly available passive land, wondering if those will be considered. Ex. What's happening with the old dam and Lake Louise, the question is what will it look like with 'no new parks'? People are going to recreate in spaces regardless."
  - a. A: So far we have only classified parks, but there are several classifications of park types, such as neighborhood, pocket, linear, etc.
  - A: As part of this process we are hoping to come forward with some "Green Corridors". From a zoning standpoint we have "park" and "conservancy".
  - A: At this point we are focusing on the active forms of parks, but we do have to include the conservancy areas as well.