

CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter outlines actions and strategies for implementing this plan's recommendations. It describes the appropriate roles of the public and private sectors, the public costs estimates for priority projects and lists potential funding sources for those costs.

One of the primary objectives of this plan is to both stabilize and provide opportunities for investment in the community, resulting in an increase in employment and tax base.

The plan's vision and implementation will present the Wisconsin River in a new light. The intent is to enhance the quality of life by building on Merrill's historic celebration of the public open space and surrounding natural resources with the focus on its rivers.

Implementation Roles

A mix of public and private agencies and organizations, business and property owners, and neighborhood residents will implement the recommendations of this plan over a period of many years. Implementation of the Eastside Waterfront Initiative will require coordination and cooperation between the City, County, State, non-profits and the private sector.

Riverfront Implementation Committee

The lead implementer for all tasks is the Steering Committee, which will convert to the Riverfront Implementation Committee when the plan is adopted. The members of the Steering Committee have led the preparation of this plan. The energy and enthusiasm of these diligent workers needs to be recognized and sustained through future implementation activities.

An important aspect of implementation is to communicate and coordinate with all of the public and private activities, connecting the city's efforts with the Chamber, Merrill Marketing, downtown retailers, and other private actors.

City of Merrill and Lincoln County

In order to move forward successfully with the phased implementation of this plan's recommendations, it will be critical for the City of Merrill to adopt the Eastside Waterfront Initiative Riverfront Revitalization Plan into its citywide planning framework. Formal adoption by the City of Merrill of the neighborhood plan will accomplish several important objectives:

- Provide a clear road map to public sector agencies that offers guidance on how public investments should be made within the plan boundaries

- Provide the greatest level of certainty to private sector investors regarding likely future conditions within the plan boundaries
- Strengthen the standing of the plan's recommendations and thereby improve the ability to attract outside financial resources that will be necessary to move quickly into implementation

Achieving the above objectives will be necessary to maximize the long term economic, environmental and social value to the local community.

In addition, the City's and County's roles in implementing recommendations of the riverfront revitalization plan include:

- Constructing improvements within publicly-owned land along the river and in public street right-of-way.
- Regulating the type and quality of development through design guidelines and regulations.
- Coordinating activities of City, County, State and Federal agencies.
- Applying to state and federal agencies for grants and loans to implement projects.
- Providing financial assistance on key redevelopment sites to stimulate private sector investment.

State of Wisconsin and Federal Government

The City of Merrill is the county seat and attracts many employees as well as tourists. As a center of government, it can drastically influence and attract both public and private investment.

The state agencies are far more than controlling regulators. They have the reserves and ability to provide funding for the majority of recommended public improvements. Equally critical is the role

the State can play in providing incentives for private investment.

Continuous public sector coordination among the City, County, and State is critical for plan implementation. The Steering and City Staff Committee will be the primary organization for public sector coordination.

Canadian National and the Office of the Commissioner of Railroads

Improving the safety of existing public rail crossings and consolidating private easements is a critical component of creating the Merrill River Parkway. The Wisconsin Office of the Commissioner of Railroads is the body that will consider and decide which rail crossings can be changed and how, but Canadian National will be an important actor in that deliberation.

To make a change to a rail crossing, the City of Merrill, which has roadway authority, must petition the Office of the Commissioner of Railroads. The Office will conduct an intense executive hearing that includes sworn testimony. The needs of Canadian National will be a key factor, so the City should maintain and deepen the relationship with Canadian National that was nurtured during the waterfront initiative planning process. Once rail crossing changes are approved, the City will need to cover costs of all needed improvements.

Non-Profit Sector Involvement

Non-profit sector involvement includes participation of private donors, which can include individuals, service clubs or foundations. The City or a non-profit group can lead general fundraising programs for specific riverfront projects. For example, in times of declining municipal park budgets, service clubs and other non-profits can lead improvements, similar to many of Merrill's past successful community fundraising efforts. Merrill service clubs and other non-profits can lead projects such as

open space amenities, improvements within river corridor, environmental education and early phases of the proposed river trail.

This is also a great resource to partner with downtown businesses, to program events that link activity to the downtown retail as well as the county fairgrounds.

A volunteer non-profit organization, such as a “Friends of the River,” can focus on public fundraising and volunteer development to help in the coordination and implementation of projects and programs outlined in this plan. A foundation can assist in private fundraising and establishing corporate partnerships.

Private Sector Involvement

The key to full implementation of the plan with respect to redevelopment of privately-owned land is new investment by the private sector. In recent years, the majority of private investment in Merrill has tended to occur outside of the downtown and riverfront areas. The growth of commercial development along suburban highways entering the city competes for dollars and draws investment away from downtown and the riverfront.

One of the major purposes of public sector investment in downtown infrastructure and beautification is to stimulate private sector investment in both new commercial and new residential development. Continued improvements and beautification of the riverfront is expected to yield increased private investment in sites near the river, particularly investments in new housing and possible light manufacturing.

In general, the level of public assistance given to redevelopment is characterized as “gap financing,” which is defined as the

minimum level of financial assistance needed to make a project feasible in the market place. The primary tool used by municipalities to finance redevelopment is Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Potential TIF projects need to yield sufficient tax revenues to the City to finance the public assistance and retire any borrowing done to support the project.

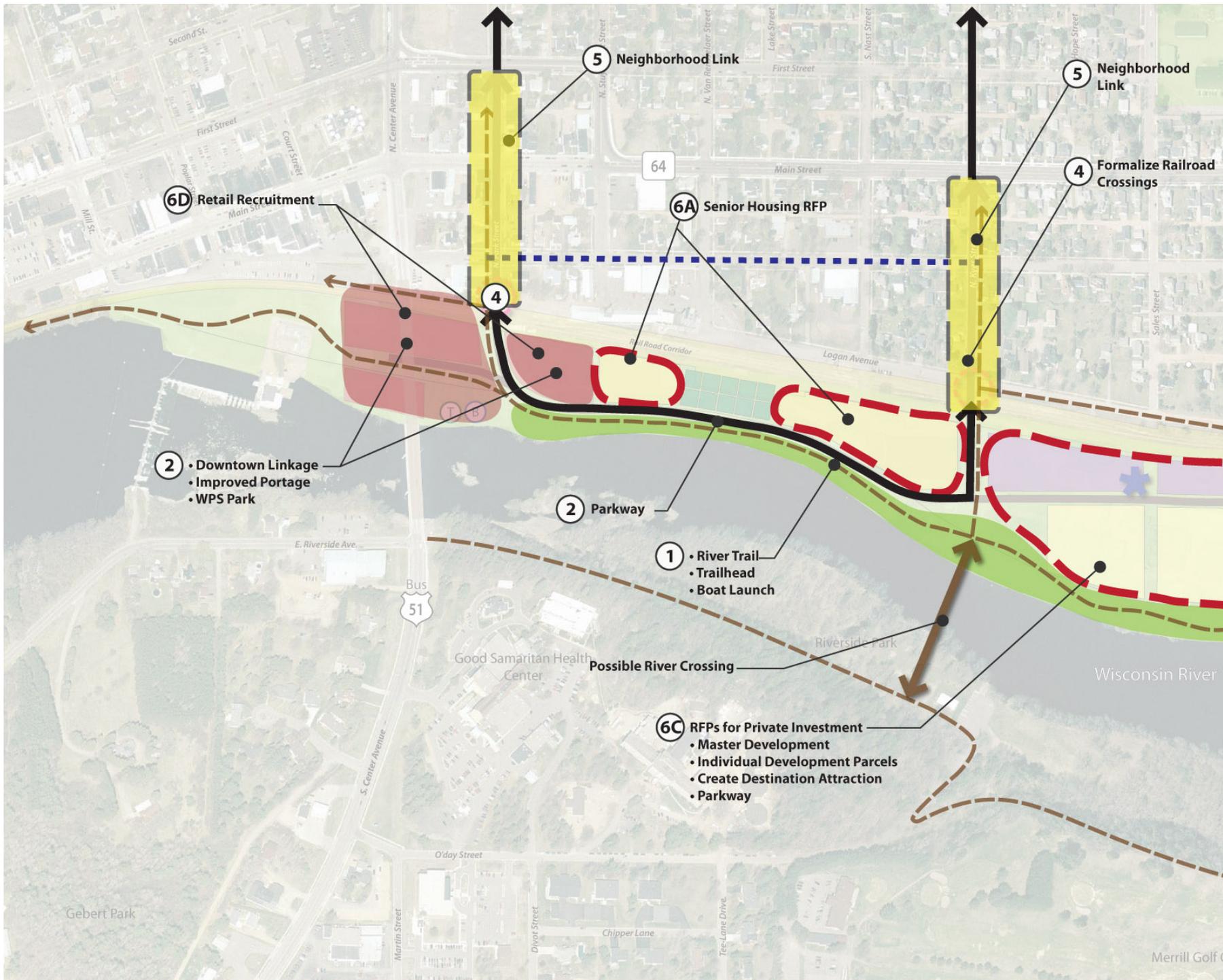
The development assistance programs of the City, County, and State should aim to increase private sector investment on key redevelopment sites. The public sector should continue to ensure that use of development assistance requires private capital investment that results in an expanded tax base to support the assistance.

Project Phasing

Redevelopment of the eastside riverfront is a long-term process. Some elements will start in the next year, while some recommended improvements are not likely for more than a decade. The size of Merrill’s real estate market means that redevelopment will be a slow but steady process.

This section prioritizes recommended projects, giving guidance to the City and its implementing partners as to which projects should be the focus of initial efforts.

However, this phasing list should not be strictly followed. In challenging economic times and competitive granting environments, project phasing is directed by the availability of funding and implementation partners. At worst, a strict interpretation of the phasing priorities means that implementing groups will miss opportunistic funding sources for projects that are listed as “long term”.





Merrill's project phasing should follow the existing pattern. The City and the ad hoc Riverfront Implementation Committee should promote the riverfront redevelopment vision, create close working relationships with granting agencies and potential partners, and then watch closely. As opportunities arise for any portion of any priority project, the opportunity should be pursued.

Recommended projects are listed in a likely implementation order.

1. River Trail/Environmental Corridor: An important first step is to get Merrill residents down to the riverfront edge that they've never seen. Exposing them to the riverfront and its opportunities will generate excitement and support for later phase projects. Initially, the City should acquire a 60'-100' access easement along the river's edge to provide the riverfront trail. With willing landowners, purchasing the parcel is not necessary, as long as the parcel owner allows public access across the easement. Some fencing will likely be necessary while industrial activities continue.

When access is provided through easements or parcel purchase, boat launches and trailheads can be installed.

2. The City or its development partners can construct the Merrill River Parkway in segments. The likely first segment is Big Eddy Road to Memorial Drive, with Park Street to Kyes Street a second segment. The central segment can be constructed with parcel redevelopment. Early outreach to the Office of the Railroad Commission and Canadian National is necessary.

With the offices and equipment of WPS relocated, the City can redevelop the space under the Center Avenue bridge, creating open spaces and redevelopment sites.

3. The acquisition of the gravel pond should be preceded by a full feasibility and environmental analysis. Redevelopment of the pond into a recreational and stormwater amenity will prepare for the redevelopment of the adjacent lodge sites.
4. Public rail crossings that have not yet been improved should be reconstructed to improve the safety of both vehicles and pedestrians, but also trains.
5. A series of safe rail crossings will enable the reconstruction and/or improvements of Park Street, Kyes Street and Memorial Drive. These key connection points should connect the eastside neighborhoods to the riverfront, particularly for those that are walking and biking.
6. With public access to the riverfront and public amenities established, private redevelopment can proceed. There are multiple avenues for redevelopment, including public purchase and developer Request for Proposals, or redevelopment by current or future landowners.

Cost Budgets for Public Facilities

To assist in implementing and phasing the plan's recommendations, JJR has developed opinions of probable construction costs for the recommended public investments based on the consensus plan. These cost provide general, level-of-magnitude projections for recommended public investments. The cost opinions will be refined during the conceptual/schematic design phase for each element based on topographic surveys, geotechnical reports and the specific design refinements. These costs do not include property acquisition.

This opinion does not reflect all probable construction costs. Specifically excluded are projects that will be driven by the private sector and projects that require more study to satisfactorily address, such as environmental remediation and structural rehabilitation. While we understand that adequate utility service exists to the project area, we do predict some additional utility infrastructure will be required (relating to storm sewer, culverts, sanitary sewer, water, gas, electric, or other utilities). A further review of the existing utilities will be needed to develop these costs. Throughout the opinion, we have included our assumptions.

All costs are given in 2009 dollars and can be anticipated to increase at approximately 3 to 5 percent annually. All costs include a 30 percent contingency, common at conceptual level cost budgets. The contingency includes 15 percent for cost variability and 15 percent for soft costs (survey, permitting, design).

These costs assume that construction is completed through the public bid process. Using appropriate volunteer labor or other partnering opportunities may reduce project costs and may be considered by funding agencies as in-kind match for grant money. Invasive species removal, for example, is one task often performed with volunteer labor.

<i>Recommend Public Improvement</i>	<i>Opinion of Probable City Cost Budget</i>	<i>Included Components (Assumptions)</i>
Merrill Parkway - Big Eddy to Memorial Drive	\$1,480,000	clearing & grubbing (100' wide by 1550' long swath), tree protection (fencing around desirable trees), erosion control (silt fence @ 4000 lf), mass grading (average of 3' of excavation over 75' width for 1550 lf.), standard curb and gutter (2 sides @ 1550 lf each), median curb and gutter (200' x 20' median at entrance), asphalt road (32' pavement width by 1550 lf (4" thick asphalt)), road base course (12" thick by 40' wide by 1550 lf), sidewalk (concrete, 8' wide, both sides), sidewalk base course (6" thick by 10' wide by 1550 lf, both sides), entry sign (4' sign, masonry w/ stone veneer), topsoil (6" thick in terrace (10') and 10' beyond sidewalk each side plus median), native seeding (entry planting), street trees (assumes 1/ 30 lf), railroad crossing (assumes pad, gate arms & signal), lighting (assumes 1/100 lf)
Merrill Parkway - Memorial Drive to Kyes Street	\$4,835,000	clearing & grubbing (100' wide by 3057 lf), tree protection (fencing around desirable trees), erosion control (6500 lf silt fence), mass grading (average of 2' of excavation over 75' width for 3057 lf.), standard curb and gutter (includes 2 sides @ 3057 lf each), asphalt road (32' pavement width by 3057 lf (4" thick asphalt)), bridge (54' wide by 350' long, 3-span, prestressed concrete girder, basic dot-type bridge with minor lighting), road base course (12" thick by 40' wide by 3057 lf), sidewalk (8' wide concrete, both sides by 3057 lf), sidewalk base course (6" thick by 10' wide by 3057 lf, both sides), fill for plantings (2' thick in terrace (6.5') by 3057 lf), native seeding (terrace planting), street trees (assumes 1/ 50 oc each side), lighting (assumes 1/50 oc each side)
Merrill Parkway - Kyes Street to Park Street	\$1,217,000	clearing & grubbing (100' wide by 2145 lf), tree protection (fencing around desirable trees), erosion control (4750 lf silt fence), mass grading (average of 2' of excavation over 75' width for 2145 lf.), standard curb and gutter (includes 2 sides @ 2145 lf each), asphalt road (32' pavement width by 2145 lf (4" thick asphalt)), road base course (12" thick by 40' wide by 2145 lf), sidewalk (8' wide concrete, one side by 2145 lf), sidewalk base course (6" thick by 10' wide by 2145 lf, both sides), fill for plantings (2-ft thick in terrace (6.5') by 2145 lf one side, 15' wide other side), native seeding (terrace planting), street trees (assumes 1/ 50 lf each side), lighting (assumes 1/100 lf each side)

<i>Recommend Public Improvement</i>	<i>Opinion of Probable City Cost Budget</i>	<i>Included Components (Assumptions)</i>
Riverfront Trail	\$1,998,000	clearing & grubbing (20' wide swath entire length of trail - 8250 lf), erosion control (silt fence), invasive removals, mass grading, (assumes 6" over length of asphalt trail 15' wide by 5000 lf), asphalt trail (12' wide at 5000 lf), base course (6" depth), boardwalk (8' wide @ 3250 lf), pile supports (10' oc, both sides), native seeding (restore disturbed areas), overlooks (20 x 10 wooden deck w/ rail & benches), stone fishing outcroppings (6-7 large boulders), benches (4-6' wooden benches)
Neighborhood Connector - Memorial Drive	\$1,133,000	remove concrete & haul, erosion control (silt fence), mass grading, standard curb and gutter (includes 2 sides @ 1250 lf each), concrete road (30' wide road @ 1250 lf), road base course (6" depth), sidewalk (5' wide, both sides), sidewalk base course (6" depth), fill for plantings (2 ft depth in terrace of new road section 300 lf x 6' wide, both sides), grass seeding, entry planting, street trees (assumes 50' oc), lighting (assumes 50' oc), railroad crossing (assumes pad, gate arms & signal)
Neighborhood Connector - Kyes Street	\$443,000	remove concrete & haul, erosion control (silt fence), mass grading, standard curb and gutter (includes 2 sides @ 1130 lf each), concrete road (20' wide road @ 1130 lf), road base course (6" depth), sidewalk (5' wide, both sides), sidewalk base course (6" depth), fill for plantings (2 ft depth in terrace of new road section 300 lf x 6' wide, both sides), grass seeding, entry planting, street trees (assumes 50' oc), lighting (assumes 50' oc), improve railroad crossing (assumes new pad & striping)
Neighborhood Connector - Park Street	\$700,000	remove concrete & haul, erosion control (silt fence), mass grading, standard curb and gutter (includes 2 sides @ 850 lf each), concrete road (44' wide road @ 850 lf), road base course (6" depth), sidewalk (5' wide, both sides), sidewalk base course (6" depth), fill for plantings (2 ft depth in terrace of new road section 400 lf x 6' wide, both sides), grass seeding, entry planting, street trees (assumes 50' oc), lighting (assumes 50' oc), improve railroad crossing (assumes new pad & striping)
Trailhead - East/Big Eddy	\$376,000	clearing & grubbing, erosion control (silt fence), mass grading, park shelter (open shelter w/ restrooms), asphalt parking lot (20 parking stalls (300 sf/ stall)), curb and gutter (150' x 60' perimeter), base course (12" depth), parking lot islands (includes 54 lf of curb & gutter, 6 cy soil, and 162 sf of native seeding (assumes 9' x 18' ea)), parking lot lighting (18' pole), pedestrian lighting, concrete walk & entry (8' wide @ 100' + 20' x 20' entry), base course (6" depth), entry signage (4' x 8' sign), wayfinding/ educational signage, entry plantings (mix of shrubs, perennials & ground covers), native seeding, tree plantings

<i>Recommend Public Improvement</i>	<i>Opinion of Probable City Cost Budget</i>	<i>Included Components (Assumptions)</i>
Trailhead - West/ Downtown	\$622,000	clearing & grubbing, erosion control (silt fence), mass grading, park shelter (25'x40' building w/ restrooms), asphalt parking lot (50 parking stalls (300 sf/ stall)), curb and gutter (275' x 60' perimeter), base course (12" depth), parking lot islands (54 lf of curb & gutter, 6 cy soil, and 162 sf of native seeding (9' x 18' ea)), parking lot lighting (18' pole), pedestrian lighting, concrete walk & entry (8' wide @ 100' + 20' x 20' entry), base course (6" depth), entry signage, wayfinding/ educational signage, entry plantings (mix of shrubs, perennials & ground covers), native seeding, tree planting
Boat Launch - East/Big Eddy	\$151,000	clearing & grubbing, stone boulder canoe launch (8-10 stones), washed stone landing area (50' long, 15' wide, 8" deep), boardwalk (8' wide, 320 lf), pile supports (10' oc, both sides)
Boat Launch - Central/ Lodge	\$15,000	clearing & grubbing, tree protection (plastic fence), erosion control (silt fence), mass grading, stone boulder canoe launch (8-10 stones), washed stone landing area (50' long, 15' wide, 8" deep, asphalt trail (8' wide at 150 lf), base course (6" depth)
Boat Launch - West/ Downtown	\$28,000	clearing & grubbing, tree protection (plastic fence), erosion control (silt fence), mass grading, asphalt trail (8' wide at 60 lf), base course (6" depth), wood canoe launch (20' x 10' platform w/ railing, assumes helical piles)
Water Treatment Plant	\$207,000	clearing & grubbing, erosion control (silt fence), mass grading, screening berm (3.5' ht @ 900' long with 3-ft crest and 4:1 sides), landscape screening treatment (enhanced planting beds in key areas), native seeding, asphalt drive (30' wide, assume 200' length), base course (30' wide, assume 50' length, 12" depth), shade trees (~2" caliper), security fencing (perimeter chain link fence with gate), signage
Open Space - Community Gardens	\$241,000	garden improvements (includes grading, entry feature, decorative fencing, raised planters, stone paths; 60 plots @ 8'x4', remainder are 10' x 20'), environmental assessment & remediation (remove 18" soil & install non-permeable cap, does not include disposal of contaminated material)
Open Space - Under Center Ave Bridge	\$228,000	remove gravel (3.6 acres, remove 8" depth), erosion control (silt fence), topsoil fill (3.6 acres, add 6" depth), mass grading, parks seed turf, shade trees, landscape treatment (enhanced planting beds in key areas)

<i>Recommend Public Improvement</i>	<i>Opinion of Probable City Cost Budget</i>	<i>Included Components (Assumptions)</i>
Open Space - Parkway/ Kyes Intersection	\$160,000	clearing & grubbing, erosion control (silt fence), mass grading (parks seed turf), shade trees, landscape treatment (enhanced planting beds in key areas), pedestrian lighting, concrete walk & entry (8' wide @ 50' + 20' x 20' entry), base course (6" depth), entry signage, wayfinding/ educational signage, benches (6), tot lot/playground (play structure, 4 swings, 2 independent play items & fall zone)
Open Space - Ponds	\$3,500,000	clearing & grubbing, rough grading (assumed material would all remain on site, 10' deep excavations for new ponds), stormwater treatment (structures, forebays, bio-infiltration), habitat development, walls (avg. 6' height, basic concrete wall w/ guardrail), water features, plantings, boardwalk (8' wide @ 750 lf), pile supports (10' oc, both sides), trails (8' wide asphalt trail, 6" base; main trail through this area is estimated under the trail section), shoreline protection (combination of vegetative and structural shore protection), erosion control
Open Space - Big Eddy Entrance	\$25,000	native seeding, enhanced plantings, shade trees
Rehabilitation - Page Milk	\$32,000	structural assessment (site investigation, research, analysis, report - no design)
Rehabilitation - SemCo Warehouse	\$32,000	structural assessment (site investigation, research, analysis, report - no design)
Rehabilitation - Water Tower	\$26,000	structural assessment (based on one site visit with adequate fall protection, research, structural analysis, and report)
Pedestrian River Crossing - Kyes to Riverside Park	\$1,061,000	pedestrian bridge (based on 400' long, 12' wide, DOT type structure)
Pedestrian River Crossing - Memorial to Golf Course	\$1,997,000	pedestrian bridge (based on 800' long, 12' wide, DOT type structure assuming the structure continues over the island)
Total	\$20,507,000	

Assumptions: 30% contingency (15% estimating, 15% soft costs (design, survey, permitting)); 2009 dollars

Putting the Opinion of Probable Construction Costs in Perspective

The cost budget of most public improvements of over \$20 million can seem overwhelming. While the improvement to Merrill’s eastside riverfront will require a public investment, the full cost of public improvements will not come from the City’s general fund. The next section lists potential funding sources, including grants, loans, public/private partnerships, and municipal financing mechanisms like tax increment financing.

Additionally, this riverfront revitalization plan is a long-term plan, and not all public costs must occur early or simultaneously. The public improvements will be spread out to accommodate the financial and institutional capacity of the city and outside support and funding sources.

First phase projects should get Merrill residents down to the river and could include the riverfront trail, trailheads, and one or more boat launches. One scenario for these first phase projects is below. The listed applicable grants could be used offset the city’s costs. Competition for grant funds is significant, and funding is not guaranteed (see next section for more details).

<i>Potential Early Public Improvements</i>	<i>Cost Budget</i>	<i>Some Applicable Grants</i>	<i>TIF-Eligible</i>
Riverfront Trail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early discussions suggest that current riverfront parcel owners will grant access easements while current operations remain. 	\$1,998,000	Bikes Belong Grant (up to \$10,000), Knowles-Nelson Stewardship (50% match), Local Transportation Enhancements (20% match), Small Cities CDBG (up to \$750,000), Wisconsin State Infrastructure Bank (low-interest loans)	yes
Trailhead - East/Big Eddy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land is city-owned 	\$376,000	EPA Environmental Education Grant (up to \$25,000), Five-Star Restoration Matching Grant (50% match), Knowles-Nelson Stewardship (50% match), Kodak American Greenways (up to \$2500)	yes
Trailhead - West/Downtown <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WPS is potential partner 	\$662,000	EPA Environmental Education Grant (up to \$25,000), Five-Star Restoration Matching Grant (50% match), Knowles-Nelson Stewardship (50% match), Kodak American Greenways (up to \$2500); Wisconsin Arts Board Grant (50% match)	yes
Boat Launch and Boardwalk - Big Eddy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land is city-owned Boat Launch - Downtown	\$151,000 \$28,000	C.D. Besadny Conservation Grant (up to \$1,500), Recreation Boating Facilities Program (50% match)	yes

Potential Funding Sources

The following pages list funding sources that may potentially benefit riverfront projects, including everything from land acquisition and trail construction to habitat restoration and invasive species control.

Criteria for applicable projects, the grant matching requirement and the application cycle are identified for each funding source. As competition for funding is high, communication with the sponsoring agency or organization prior to grant submission is essential to ensure a successful application. The Steering Committee, City and County should continue working relationships with local, state and federal funding agencies prior to application submission.

This funding source list is only the beginning. As old funding sources run their course, new ones are created, and the Steering Committee, City and County should continue to track potential funding sources and expand this list. The available funding limits will also vary from year to year.

Seek out creative financial collaborations. For example, the Steering Committee should work with and support efforts by the local school district as well as private recreational organizations and community service groups to implement projects recommended in this plan. Partner with all service providers that are active along the riverfront.

Grant Funding Sources

The tables on the following pages list funding sources that may potentially benefit riverfront projects, including land acquisition, bicycle trail construction, habitat restoration, community education, public art installations, and more.

Funding sources can generally be classified into the following categories:

- State of Wisconsin agency grants or loans
- Federal agency grants or loans
- Private corporation or non-profit organization grants or loans

Criteria for applicable projects, the grant matching requirement, and the application cycle are identified for each funding source. As competition for funding is high, communication with the sponsoring agency or organization prior to grant submission is essential to ensure a successful application. Several of the programs listed only accept applications from nonprofit organizations, and some only from local municipalities. Implementation of the neighborhood plan recommendations should engage many different stakeholders and groups with diverse backgrounds to take full advantage of the funding opportunities on offer.

A few of the grant sources listed in the funding matrix are described in more detail below.

Riverfront Improvements

Land and Water Conservation Fund: These are federal funds administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The grants are used by local governments to acquire land for recreation areas, trails, urban green space, river and stream corridors, flowages and lakeshores, and develop and improve visitor amenities at parks and recreation areas.

The City should consider applying to this fund for property acquisition and/or easements and amenities for the riverfront trail system. Applicants must have a DNR-approved comprehensive outdoor recreation plan or a master plan approved by resolution by the local governing unit. The riverfront revitalization plan will likely satisfy this requirement. Applications are due on May 1, 2010 and awards may cover up to 50% of eligible project costs. Past projects have received between \$5,000 and \$600,000 in funding. For more information: www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/cfa/Grants/LWCF/

River Protection Grants: The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides funds through this program for the purchase of land or conservation easements, development of local regulations or ordinances to protect or improve water quality, installation of practices to control nonpoint source pollution, restoration projects including instream or shoreland habitat and protection. The funds may also support DNR-approved activities needed to implement planning recommendations, education, planning, and design activities necessary for the implementation of a management project.

The City should consider applying to this fund for land easements or any restoration or environmental projects along the riverfront. Applications are due on May 1, 2010 and awards may cover up to 75% of eligible project costs, not to exceed \$50,000. For more

information: www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/cfa/Grants/Rivers/riverprotection.html

Stewardship Grants: The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources offers Stewardship Grants to preserve valuable natural areas and wildlife habitat, protect water quality and fisheries, and expand opportunities for outdoor recreation.

The City should consider applying to this fund for any restoration or recreation projects along the riverfront. Applicants must have a DNR-approved comprehensive outdoor recreation plan or a master plan approved by resolution by the local governing unit. The riverfront revitalization plan will likely satisfy this requirement. Applications are due on May 1, 2010 and awards may cover up to 50% of eligible project costs. Past projects have received between \$20,000 and \$1,000,000 in funding. For more information: dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/LR/Stewardship/stewardship.html#grants

Brownfields

The United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources offer numerous programs for the assessment and clean-up for contaminated sites. Some programs also exist to support the economic development and workforce training programs associated with brownfields redevelopment. Because the City does not currently know if contamination exists on the riverfront sites, the City should initially focus on assessment funds. Clean-up and redevelopment funding opportunities could be available should contamination exist on the subject properties.

US EPA Assessment Grants: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency offers assessment grants to inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct planning and community involvement

related to brownfields sites. Local governments may apply for community-wide or site-specific funds.

The City should consider applying for assessment grants to assess properties with possible contamination along the riverfront should the property owners be willing to participate in the assessment. Community-wide funds are limited to \$400,000 and site-specific funds are limited to \$350,000. Applications are due on October 16, 2009. For more information: epa.gov/brownfields/applicat.htm#pg

DNR Brownfield Site Assessment Grants: The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides funding to reimburse eligible local governmental for the costs associated with assessing environmental contamination at brownfields sites. The applicant must be a local government unit and cannot have caused the environmental contamination at the site. The party responsible for the contamination must be unknown, unable to be located or financially unable to pay for grant activities.

While no funding cycle is currently open, the City should consider this grant program in the future to assess the environmental contamination on some of the riverfront properties. Funding in the past has been limited to 80% of project costs up to \$100,000. For more information: www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/rr/financial/sag/index.htm

Clean-up, remediation, and economic development of brownfields sites: Should the City or property owners determine that contamination exists within the planning area, numerous funding opportunities exist with the U.S. EPA, Wisconsin DNR, and Wisconsin Department of Commerce.

Infrastructure

The riverfront revitalization plan recommends the construction of a new roadway through the study area in addition to the riverfront pedestrian path. Public works improvements, such as sewer and water, may also be required to support the new development. The following state-administered programs are available to support these costs.

Local Transportation Enhancements Program and Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Program: The Wisconsin Department of Transportation funds projects that increase multi-modal transportation alternatives and enhance communities and the environment. A bike and pedestrian path along the riverfront would likely qualify for the use of these funds as would any enhancements (walkway, streetscaping elements) along the proposed roadway through the riverfront development area.

The City should consider applying to this program for these project elements. Applications cycles are open in even numbered years typically in January with applications due in April. Construction projects with costs greater than \$200,000 have been eligible for up to 80% funding in past funding cycles. For more information: www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/te.htm

Community Development Block Grant for Public Facilities: The Wisconsin Department of Commerce offers this financing tool for municipalities in need of funds to undertake needed infrastructure and public building projects (excluding buildings for the conduct of government). This program is designed to enhance the vitality of a community by undertaking public investment that contributes to its overall community and economic development.

The City should consider applying to this competitive fund for infrastructure costs associated with the riverfront development (roads, sewer, water). The application cycle is on-going for this program. The grant materials indicate a \$750,000 maximum but projects are typically awarded less than \$500,000. Local funds are expected to account for at least 50% project costs. For more information: www.commerce.state.wi.us/CD/CD-bcf-cdbg-pf.html

Transportation Economic Assistance: The Wisconsin Department of Transportation offers this program to attract and retain business firms in Wisconsin and thus create or retain jobs. Grants are available for transportation improvements that are essential for an economic development project. It must begin within three years, have the local government’s endorsement, and benefit the public. The businesses cannot be speculative and local communities must assure that the number of jobs anticipated from the proposed project will materialize within three years from the date of the project agreement and remain after another four years.

Should proposed development within the riverfront area project the significant creation of jobs, the City should consider this funding source to assist with the roadway construction through the development. The application cycle is on-going and up to \$1 million of funding may be awarded. A 50% local match is required and can come from any combination of local, federal, or private funds or in-kind services. For more information: www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/tea.htm

Tourism

While the riverfront area may serve as an amenity to Merrill residents, it could also draw in tourists from throughout the region. With this new attraction, a refreshed tourism campaign may be in order. The Wisconsin Department of Tourism offers programs and assistance for local campaigns and a funding opportunity as identified below.

Joint Effort Marketing Group: The Wisconsin Department of Tourism administers this grant program to fund tourism campaigns led by non-profit organizations. The funds may be used for email marketing, print and broadcast ads, direct mail, publicity and billboards. The grant may fund up to 75% of a project’s first year promotional costs. For some grant categories support is available during subsequent years - up to 50% for the second year and 25% for the third year. The Chamber of Commerce or another local non-profit organization should consider applying for this funding. For more information: industry.travelwisconsin.com/Grants/JEM.aspx

Table: Grant Funding Sources and Details

Program Name	Administered By	Applies To	Matching Requirements	Application Cycle	Contact
American Sportfishing Association's FishAmerica Foundation	FishAmerica Foundation (partly funded by NOAA)	On-the-ground habitat restoration and community participation related to fishing and fisheries resources	1:1 Local Match Encouraged Awards \$30,000 - \$1 M	Annually (Next Application June 2010)	FishAmerica Foundation http://www.fishamerica.org
Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration and Protection Projects	U.S. Army Corp of Engineers	Aquatic ecosystem restoration and protection projects that will improve the quality of the environment, are in the public interest, and are cost-effective	\$5 million per project with a 35% non-federal match requirement	Continuous	Chief, Planning Services Section U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 69 Darlington Avenue Wilmington, North Carolina 28403 (910) 251-4926 www.saw.usace.army.mil/Floodplain/Section%2020206.htm
Area Development Managers	Wisconsin Department of Commerce	Area Development Managers assist local development practitioners in long-term marketing, planning, business expansions and the promotion of business retention	Technical Assistance		Bureau of Business Development, Wisconsin Department of Commerce Region 2: Deb Clements (715) 344-1381 Deb.Clements@wisconsin.gov
Ben & Jerry's Foundation Grants	Ben & Jerry's Foundation	Funds local organizations doing work in their community for social justice and the environment and which support movement building and collective action and empower constituents	No Local Match Required (Grants of \$1,000 to \$15,000)	Rolling Application Process, Reviewed and Awarded Quarterly	Ben & Jerry's Foundation http://www.benjerry.com/company/foundation/
Blight Elimination and Brownfield Redevelopment Grants'	Wisconsin Department of Commerce	Redevelopment of properties with contaminated soil and/or groundwater	Grant with \$1,250,000 maximum	Continuous	Bureau of Local Development, Wisconsin Department of Commerce P.O. Box 7970 Madison, WI 53707 commerce.wi.gov/CD/CD-bfi-grants.html
Bikes Belong Grant Program	Bikes Belong Coalition	Construction of bicycle facilities (i.e. trails) which will serve to increase ridership and advocacy for bicycling	Quarterly Maximum grant of \$10,000	Rolling Application Process, Reviewed and Awarded Quarterly	Bikes Belong Coalition P.O. Box 2359 Boulder, CO 80306 http://www.bikesbelong.org
Brownfield Site Assessment Grant	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments and site investigations; demolition of structures, buildings, or improvements, including necessary asbestos abatement; removal of underground petroleum product storage tank systems and hazardous substance storage tank systems, and removal of abandoned containers	For the 2007-09 biennium, funding is divided between small and large grants with 60% of funds – \$1.02 million – allocated to small grants (between \$2,000 and \$30,000) and 40% – \$680,000 – allocated for large grants (between \$30,001 and \$100,000)	Applications are typically available in July/August with a deadline for submitting applications in the fall	Department of Natural Resources P.O. Box 7921 Madison, WI 53707-7921 (608) 266-5798

Program Name	Administered By	Applies To	Matching Requirements	Application Cycle	Contact
Brownfields Green Space and Public Facilities Grant	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Environmental remediation of brownfield sites that will be used as green space, as recreational areas, or by a local government. Parcel must remain in public ownership or control.	20%-50% Match (\$200,000 maximum grant)	Continuous	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (608) 266-5798 dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr/brownfields/greenspace_grant.htm
C.D. Besadny Conservation Grant	Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin	Local conservation projects including kiosks and interpretive signs, invasive species removal, BioBlitz sponsorship, boardwalk construction, prairie restoration, and other projects that benefit the public	50% Local Match Grants of \$100 to \$1,500	Annually (Next Application: January 15, 2010)	Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin PO Box 2317 Madison, WI 53701-2317 (866) 264-4096 www.wisconservation.org/
Clean Water Fund Program	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Wastewater treatment and urban storm water projects	Loans at or below market interest rates	Continuous	Bob Ramharter Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (608) 266-3915 robert.ramharter@wisconsin.gov dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/EL/Section/clean.html
Community Based Economic Development Program	Wisconsin Department of Commerce	Development of a project plan to diversify the local economy, attract new business and jobs, and promote economic development	Grant with 25% match requirement	Annual	Bureau of Local Development, Wisconsin Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 7970 Madison, WI 53707 (608) 266-7942; commerce.wi.gov/CD/CD-bcf-cbed.html
Community-Based Restoration Program	National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration	Habitat restoration projects	Up to \$1 million with minimum 1:1 non-federal match encouraged	Various grant programs and deadlines	National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration U.S. Department of Commerce (301) 713-0174 www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration/funding_opportunities/funding_ner.html
Environmental Remediation - Enterprise Development Zones	Wisconsin Department of Commerce	Businesses may earn tax credits through the redevelopment of contaminated properties in conjunction with the creation of new full-time jobs	Businesses may receive tax credits equal to up to 50% of their eligible environmental remediation expenses (\$3,000,000 maximum)	Continuous	Bureau of Business Finance, Wisconsin Department of Commerce P.O. Box 7970 Madison, WI 53707 (608) 266-3074 commerce.wi.gov/BD/BD-EDZ.html
EPA Environmental Education Grant Program	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Education enhancing the public's awareness, knowledge and skills concerning environmental quality	100% Grant Grants of \$15,000 to \$25,000	Annually (Next Application December 2009)	Environmental Education Grant Program Office of Environmental Education 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20460 (202) 564-0451 http://www.epa.gov/enviroed/grants.html
Five-Star Restoration Matching Grants Program	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	Community-based wetland and riparian habitat restoration projects that foster stewardship through education, outreach and training activities	50% Local Match	Annually (Next Application February 2010)	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation 1120 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 900 Washington, DC 20036 http://www.nfwf.org/

Program Name	Administered By	Applies To	Matching Requirements	Application Cycle	Contact
Freight Railroad Infrastructure Improvement Program	Wisconsin Department of Transportation	Rail improvement projects that will enhance transportation efficiency, safety, and intermodal freight movement	Loans	Annually (April 1)	Frank Huntington, Bureau of Railroads and Harbors (608) 267-3710 frank.huntington@dot.state.wi.us www.dot.wisconsin.gov/business/econdev/friip.htm
Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program - Land Acquisition (Habitat Areas and Fisheries)	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Acquiring land and easements for conservation and recreation purposes, developing and improving recreational facilities, and restoring wildlife habitat (nonprofit conservation groups are eligible)	50% State 50% Local	Annually (Next Application May 2010)	Amy Bradley WI Department of Natural Resources Amy.Bradley@Wisconsin.gov http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/LR/Stewardship/subprogram.html
Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program - Local Assistance (Urban Rivers, Urban Green Spaces)	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Acquiring land and easements for economic revitalization, improved public access, and preservation of urban rivers and green spaces (local governments and nonprofit conservation groups eligible)	50% State 50% Local	Annually (Next Application May 2010)	Amy Bradley WI Department of Natural Resources (608) 267-0497 Amy.Bradley@Wisconsin.gov http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/LR/Stewardship/subprogram.html
Kodak American Greenways Program	Eastman Kodak, The Conservation Fund, The National Geographic Society	Ecological assessments, surveying, design activities, developing brochures and interpretative displays, constructing public access, and performing restoration activities	Matching funds increase chance of award, Maximum grant of \$2500	Annually (Next Application June 2010)	American Greenways Program Coordinator 1655 N. Fort Myer Drive, Suite 1300 Arlington, VA 22209-2156 (703) 525-6300 kodakawards@conservationfund.org http://www.conservationfund.org/kodak_awards
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Federal appropriation program that applies to the planning, acquiring, and developing of State and local recreation areas	50% State 50% Local	Annually (Next Application May 2010)	Amy Bradley WI Department of Natural Resources (608) 267-0497 Amy.Bradley@Wisconsin.gov http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/LR/Stewardship/subprogram.html
Land Recycling Loan Program	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Remediating environmental contamination (brownfields) at landfills, sites or facilities where contamination has affected or threatens to affect groundwater or surface water			Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Maureen Hubeler, Financial Assistance Specialist (608) 266-0849 Maureen.Hubeler@Wisconsin.gov dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/EL/Section/brownfield.html
Local Transportation Enhancements (TE) Program	Wisconsin Department of Transportation	Providing facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, streetscaping and landscaping, preserving historic transportation structures	80% State 20% Local	Biennially (Next Application April 2010)	Wisconsin Department of Transportation Central Office John Duffe (608) 264-8723
Municipal Flood Control	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Land acquisition and development assistance to local governments and sewerage districts for municipal flood control management	30% Local Match	Annually (Next Application May 2010)	Jeffrey Soellner WI Department of Natural Resources (608) 267-7152 jeffrey.soellner@wisconsin.gov www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/cfa/Efflood/grants.html

Program Name	Administered By	Applies To	Matching Requirements	Application Cycle	Contact
Nonpoint Targeted Runoff Management (TRM) Grant Program	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Design, land acquisition, and construction of BMPs, including cropland protection, detention ponds, livestock waste management practices, stream bank protection projects and wetland construction	30% Local Match	Annually (Next Application April 2010)	Kathy Thompson WI Department of Natural Resources (608) 267-7568 kathleen.thompson@dnr.state.wi.us http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/EF/NPS/nonpoint.html
North American Wetlands Conservation Fund	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	Wetland and upland habitat restoration projects that benefit migratory wetland bird species	50% Local Match	Annually (Next Application December 2009)	Barbara Pardo Joint Venture Coordinator U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service One Federal Drive Fort Snelling, MN 55111-4056 barbara_pardo@fws.gov
Ready for Reuse Loan & Grant Program	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Eligible activities include environmental cleanup, including monitoring to determine the effectiveness of cleanup activities; and removal of underground tanks and abandoned containers. Not for Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments or site investigations.	At least 60% of funds are available for zero-interest loans and up to 40% of funds are available for grants	Continuous	Department of Natural Resources P.O. Box 7921 Madison, WI 53707-7921 (608) 267-6743 dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr/riff/
Recreation Boating Facilities Program	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Examples: ramps, service docks, bulkheads, breakwaters, dredging, support facilities (parking lots, sanitary facilities and security lighting), feasibility studies for safe boating facilities	50% Local Match	Quarterly	Jane Malischke, Environmental Grant Specialist Rhineland Service Center 107 Sutliff Ave Rhineland, WI 54501 (715) 635-4062 Jane.Malischke@Wisconsin.gov
Recreational Trails Grant Program	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Funded by Federal gas excise taxes to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities	50% Local Match	Annually (Next Application May 2010)	Tom Blotz WI Department of Natural Resources Milwaukee, WI (414) 263-8610 http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/LR/SECTION/recreails.html
River Protection Management Grant Program	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Land conservation and easements, nonpoint source pollution BMPs, habitat restoration, education, planning and design efforts for protection and restoration of river ecosystems	25% Local Match (\$50,000 maximum grant)	Annually (Next Application May 1, 2010)	Sandy Manthei WI Department of Natural Resources Milwaukee, WI (414) 263-8569 http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/Grants/Rivers/riverplanning.html
River Protection Planning Grant Program	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Management plans, public education, data collection, organization of local support groups for river protection (nonprofit conservation organizations eligible)	25% Local Match (\$10,000 maximum grant)	Annually (Next Application May 1, 2010)	Sandy Manthei WI Department of Natural Resources Milwaukee, WI (414) 263-8569 http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/Grants/Rivers/riverplanning.html

Program Name	Administered By	Applies To	Matching Requirements	Application Cycle	Contact
Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program	Wisconsin Department of Commerce	Planning, community infrastructure, public facilities, economic development and slum and blight removal	Grant (\$10,000 - \$750,000 maximum grant)	Continuous	Bureau of Local Development, Wisconsin Department of Commerce P.O. Box 7970 Madison, WI 53707 (608) 266-2742, commerce.wi.gov/CD/
Surface Transportation Program - Urban (STP-U)	Wisconsin Department of Transportation	Transportation improvements on eligible road and street in urban areas		Biennially (Next Application Early 2011)	Wisconsin Department of Transportation Steve Coons (608) 267-4459
Transportation Economic Assistance	Wisconsin Department of Transportation	Road and rail projects that help attract employers to Wisconsin, or encourage business and industry to remain and expand in the state	50% State Grant up to \$1 million	Continuous	Dennis Leong Division of Transportation Investment Management 4802 Sheboygan Avenue Room 901 P.O. Box 7913 Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7913 (608) 266-9910
Urban Forestry Assistance Grants	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Urban forestry plans, inventories, public awareness programs or materials, and tree planting, maintenance or removal	50% Local Match	Annually (Next Application October 1, 2009)	Candice Sovinski WI Department of Natural Resources (608) 267-3775 http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/Grants/urbanforestry.html
Urban Nonpoint Source and Storm Water Grant Program	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Urban stormwater and water quality management planning; construction projects such as detention ponds, filtration and infiltration practices, streambank stabilization, and shoreline stabilization	30 - 50% Local Match	Annually (Next Application April 2010)	Tom Blake, Rhinelander Service Center 107 Sutliff Avenue Rhinelander, WI 54501 (715) 365-8940 Thomas.Blake@Wisconsin.gov dnr.wi.gov/runoff/grants/unps.htm
Wisconsin Arts Board Grant Programs	Wisconsin Arts Board	Supports local artists working with a nonprofit community organization on a community-based art project which involves community members	50% Match	Annually (Next Application October 15, 2009)	Wisconsin Arts Board artsboard@wisconsin.gov
Wisconsin State Infrastructure Bank	Wisconsin Department of Transportation	Transportation infrastructure improvements in order to encourage economic development or to improve transportation efficiency and mobility, i.e. new roads, bridges, pedestrian walkways, bike facilities	Low interest loans	Continuous	Dennis Leong, Bureau of Planning & Economic Development (608) 266-9910 www.dot.wisconsin.gov/business/econdev/sib.htm

Foundations and Programs

These foundations, non-profits, and programs do not have specific grant opportunities, but they provide funding to community and riverfront redevelopment efforts.

Ducks Unlimited

Ducks Unlimited conserves, restores and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl, and is the world's leader in wetlands and waterfowl conservation. The Upper Mississippi River area is one of the priority areas of Ducks Unlimited. Contact: Great Lakes/Atlantic Regional Office, 1220 Eisenhower Place, Ann Arbor, MI 48108, (734) 623-2000.

Evjue Foundation

The Evjue Foundation, Inc. is the charitable arm of The Capital Times. The Evjue Foundation provides funds derived from the profits of The Capital Times to many educational, cultural, and charitable causes that add so much to the quality of life in Madison and Dane County. William T. Evjue, a 1898 Merrill High School graduate, purchased 598 acres from Lincoln County and donated it to the Merrill Area Public School, with subsequent foundation donations in 1989 and 1991.

Merrill Area Community Foundation

The Merrill Area Community Foundation was established in 2002 to develop and distribute charitable funds that support education, the arts, social services, economic development, youth and historical & cultural resources. The local board of directors awards grants only to vital projects within the Merrill area. The Merrill Area Community Foundation makes financial grants that help preserve and enrich the way of life we all cherish. Contact: Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin, 500 3rd Street Suite 310, Wausau, WI 54403

Merrill Community Leaders

Anson Family and Gilkey Family

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation non-profit that preserves and restores our nation's native wildlife species and habitats. Created by Congress in 1984, NFWF directs public conservation dollars to the most pressing environmental needs and matches those investments with private funds. The foundation sponsors a number of grant opportunities, focusing on the goals of bird conservation, fish conservation, marine and coastal conservation, and wildlife and habitat conservation. Contact: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Central Regional Office, 1 Federal Drive, Ft. Snelling, MN 55111.

River Alliance of Wisconsin

The River Alliance advocates for the protection, enhancement and restoration of Wisconsin's rivers and watersheds, including the Wisconsin River Initiative. Contact: 306 East Wilson Street, Suite #2W, Madison, WI 53703, (608)257-2424.

Take Me Fishing

The Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to increase participation in recreational angling and boating and thereby increase public awareness and appreciation of the need for protecting, conserving and restoring this nation's aquatic resources. The foundation is funded primarily through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Take Me Fishing campaign is about capturing the excitement and the memories associated with boating and fishing. Contact: 601 N. Fairfax Street, Suite 440, Alexandria, VA 22314-2081, (703) 519-0013.

Tree City USA

The Tree City USA program, sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters, provides direction, technical assistance, public attention, and national recognition for urban and community forestry programs in thousands of towns and cities. Merrill has been a member for 23 years. Trout Unlimited: Trout Unlimited is a national organization with more than 150,000 volunteers organized into about 400 chapters. Their mission is to conserve, protect and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. The Wisconsin River Valley chapter of Wisconsin Trout Unlimited preserves and protects trout as a game fish, and conserves, protects and restores the trout fisheries in the counties of Lincoln, Marathon, Price and Taylor counties. Contact: John Meachen, President, 1111 Marquardt Rd, Wausau, WI 54403.

Wisconsin Public Service Foundation

Wisconsin Public Service Foundation is a private, charitable foundation that supports charities and organizations in need of financial assistance. Through direct grants, scholarships and employee Matching Gifts and Dollars for Doers programs, Wisconsin Public Service Foundation actively supports the quality of life in the communities we serve. The foundation provides nearly \$1.2 million annually in contributions to programs in arts & culture; community & neighborhood development; education; human services & health; and environment.

Local Government Funding Tools

Tax Incremental Financing

Tax Incremental Finance is a financing tool that allows municipalities to invest in infrastructure and other improvements, and pay for these investments by capturing property tax revenue from the newly developed property. An area is identified (the tax incremental district, or TID) as appropriate for a certain type of development, and projects are identified to encourage and facilitate the desired development. Then as property values rise, the property tax paid on that private development is used by the municipality to pay for the projects. The tax paid to the schools, county and technical college district (the overlying taxing jurisdictions) is also sent to the municipality to pay for the improvements. After the costs of the projects are paid off, the TID is closed and the value of all the new development gets shared by the municipality, schools, county and technical college as it does for other property. (Section 66.46 of the Wisconsin Statutes regulates Tax Incremental Financing.)

The City currently has six Tax Increment Districts and is considering creating a seventh. The Eastside Waterfront Initiative study area is completely included in TID #2 and TID #3. According to the City Finance Director, only TID #3 is currently generating sufficient increment. Due to their recent creation, several TIDs are being supported with general fund advances.

TID #2 is an Industrial TID and includes just the DC Motors (Page Milk) building. No development or improvement has taken place at this location since the TID's creation in 2004. The planned use for this building, as recommended in this plan, is not consistent with the planned uses of the Industrial TID Project Plan. Due to these reasons, the City is considering decertifying this district in early 2010. As this property is in the Waterfront Initiative study

area, the City should consider amending TID #3 to include this building prior to significant investment in the building. The City should consider splitting off part of TID #3 into new “Blight” TID, along with DC Motors parcel, which would give it longer time frame and could be recipient of TIF funding from potential other TIDs.

TID #3 was created in 2005 and includes the Waterfront Initiative study area and part of the historic downtown. This is a Mixed-use TID and the TID Project Plan is consistent with this plan’s land use recommendations. Many of the public improvements necessary to support the recommendations of the riverfront revitalization plan can be funded with tax incremental financing. As the other TIDs within the City are not generating surplus increment, the expenditures for public improvements within the TID #3 will need to be supported by the increment generated within the study area.

Business Improvement Districts

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are a tool that allow business properties within a geographic area to voluntarily contribute (through increased property taxes) to programs aimed at promotion, management, maintenance and development of that district. BID assessments are restricted to commercial and industrial properties subject to real estate tax. Tax-exempt properties (i.e., religious, public utility, or government properties) or those used exclusively as residences cannot be included in the assessment district. (Section 66.608 of the Wisconsin Statutes regulates Business Improvement Districts.)

The City currently does not have any Business Improvement Districts. The City should consider creating a BID, within the Waterfront Initiative study area and potentially the adjacent downtown area in the future, to maintain the public

improvements associated with redevelopment and revitalization.

Impact Fees

Wisconsin municipalities have the ability to charge developers Impact Fees to offset the capital costs for public facilities needed as a result of new development, including roads and other transportation facilities; water, sewage, and stormwater infrastructure; parks and recreational facilities; solid waste and recycling facilities; fire protection, emergency medical, and law enforcement facilities; and libraries. (Section 66.55 of the Wisconsin Statutes regulates Impact Fees.)

The City currently only charges impact fees to new residential development for park land dedication requirements. While charging impact fees for infrastructure improvements in the riverfront area may offset some public cost, it may also deter development in the initial stages of plan implementation. Development costs in riverfront area will likely be more expensive on a per square foot or per unit basis compared to similar developments in the surrounding towns due to increased land and infrastructure costs (and potentially environmental clean-up). The City should want to pursue the other funding opportunities outlined in this memorandum to fund infrastructure costs prior to charging impact fees to riverfront developers.

Municipal Financing

Build America Bonds

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 created the new Build America Bond program, which authorizes state and local governments to issue Build America Bonds as taxable bonds in 2009 and 2010 to finance any capital expenditures for which they otherwise could issue tax-exempt governmental bonds. State and local governments receive a direct federal subsidy payment for a portion of their borrowing costs on Build America Bonds equal to 35 percent of the total coupon interest paid to investors. This new program is intended to assist state and local governments in financing capital projects at lower borrowing costs and to stimulate the economy and create jobs.

Build America Bonds may offer the opportunity for Merrill to access capital for any sort of municipal capital expenditure. The City should contact a local bond issuing authority for more details. The bonds are available until December 31, 2010. For more information: www.irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/n-09-26.pdf

Recovery Zone Bonds

Created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Recovery Zone Bonds are targeted to areas particularly affected by job loss and will help local governments obtain financing for much needed economic development projects, such as public infrastructure development. Recovery Zone Economic Development Bonds are one type of taxable Build America Bond that allow state and local governments to obtain lower borrowing costs through a new direct federal payment subsidy, for 45 percent of the interest, to finance a broad range of qualified economic development projects, such as job training and educational programs. Recovery Zone Facility Bonds are a type of traditional tax-exempt private activity bond that may

be used by private businesses in designated recovery zones to finance a broad range of depreciable capital projects.

Merrill and Lincoln County are likely eligible for declaration as Recovery Zone due to high levels of unemployment. Therefore, Recovery Zone Bonds may offer the opportunity for Merrill to access capital for economic development projects. The City should contact a local bond issuing authority for more details. The bonds are available until December 31, 2010. For more information: www.irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/n-09-26.pdf

Developer and Business Financing and Incentives

Developers and businesses may benefit from several tax credit and grant programs available for investment within the Waterfront Initiative study area.

Low Income Housing Tax Credits

Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits (“Section 42”) are awarded by state housing finance agencies to developers of qualified affordable housing projects. Developers then sell these credits to investors to raise capital (or equity) for their projects, which reduces the debt that the developer would otherwise have to borrow. Because the debt is lower, a tax credit property can in turn offer lower, more affordable rents. Provided the property maintains compliance with the program requirements, investors receive a dollar-for-dollar credit against their federal tax liability each year over a period of 10 years. The amount of the annual credit is based on the amount invested in the affordable housing.

The riverfront revitalization plan does not specifically recommend affordable housing in the study area due to market saturation of affordable family housing (see Baker Tilly Virchow Krause’s Market Assessment). Should the City and a project developer decide to pursue affordable housing, there are several funding opportunities to support development.

Affordable housing in the riverfront area could potentially be supported with the use of Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) although the site is not located in a LIHTC “qualified census tract”. Projects in qualified census tracts receive 30% more tax credits than projects in other areas. While the tax credits may be used on the riverfront, developers would need to identify additional sources of equity. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act created the Tax Credit Assistance Program

which provides additional funding for affordable housing projects. Additionally, funding is available for affordable housing through HOME funds (administered by the State), the Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program, and other local and private sources. For more information: www.huduser.org/datasets/lihtc.html

New Markets Tax Credits

The New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) Program is a federal tax credit intended to spur investments into underserved areas. Privately managed investment institutions, or Community Development Entities (CDEs), apply for and receive the federal allocation of tax credits and then make loans and capital investments in businesses in underserved areas. By making an investment in a CDE, an individual or corporate investor can receive a tax credit worth 39 percent (30 percent net present value) of the initial investment, distributed over 7 years, along with any anticipated return on their investment in the CDE.

The riverfront area is not a NMTC “qualified census tract” which will nearly always exclude projects in the area from utilizing the credit. In limited cases, for very compelling projects in terms of job creation and community impact, businesses that serve “Targeted Populations” may utilize the tax credit if they are not located in a qualified census tract. Serving targeted populations would require a commitment to the low income population such as hiring low income persons or transferring project ownership to low income persons. It is important to note that projects that qualify for the tax credit in this manner are generally not as desirable to tax credit investors and are the exception to the rule. For more information: www.cdfifund.gov/what_we_do/programs_id.asp?programID=5

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits

Federal law provides a federal income tax credit equal to 20% of the cost of rehabilitating a historic building for commercial use. To qualify for the credit, the property must be a certified historic structure (on the National Register of Historic Places or contributing to a registered historic district). Additionally, non-historic buildings built before 1936 qualify for a 10% tax credit.

According to the Wisconsin Historical Society, there are no buildings within the Waterfront Initiative study area that are certified historic structures. Any building built prior to 1936 (potentially the Page Milk building and others) could qualify for the 10% credit. For more information: www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/

Business Grants and Programs

Depending on the type and ownership of the business, there are numerous federal, state, local, and private funds available for technical assistance and start-up/expansion. Because the list of funding sources is varied depending on the type of business, the programs are not described here. Business owners should contact the organizations below for more information on potential programs.

- Small Business Administration (www.sba.gov)
- Wisconsin Department of Commerce (www.commerce.state.wi.us)
- Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (www.wheda.com)
- Wisconsin Entrepreneurs' Network (www.wenportal.org)
- Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (www.wwbic.com)
- Lincoln County Economic Development Corporation (www.lincolncountyedc.org)

Private Corporation Gifts

Private grants and gifts vary widely in both the types of projects that are funded as well as in the application processes and award types. Local businesses and corporations may be interested in investing in their community either by direct cash donation or by the sponsorship of special events or riverfront amenities. Corporate sponsorships often carry with them the expectation of recognition or advertising posted at the site. Interpretive signage offers the opportunity for such recognition.

Private Sector

Improvements in community amenities such as the Merrill riverfront are the result of a combination of public and private contributions. The City and the Implementation Committee should encourage and facilitate future private sector contributions to the continued riverfront redevelopment. Private sector contributions could include:

- Park dedication requirements/fees - through the subdivision plat process, in particular for riverfront residential redevelopment projects.
- Voluntary donations - equipment, easements, land.
- Contributions - cash, securities.
- In-kind matches - labor, knowledge, time, political support.
- Fundraisers - benefits, sales, etc.

APPENDIX

Community Input

Riverfront Stakeholder Interviews, June 16, 2009

JJR and Baker Tilly Virchow Krause met with a wide range of community stakeholders. Through direct and open conversations with these stakeholders, JJR and Baker Tilly Virchow Krause gained a more thorough understanding of the riverfront development issues, redevelopment market and infrastructure from many perspectives.

Community Meeting, June 16, 2009

JJR and Baker Tilly Virchow Krause led a community meeting to begin the public process of the Merrill Waterfront Initiative. Jon Hoffman, Ed Freer and Kate Crowley presented background information about the nature of the project, what has been learned so far and elements of successful waterfront revitalization.

Approximately 60 community residents participated in the meeting. The participants broke into nine tables to discuss in small groups the opportunities and challenges of the study area and what they would like to see in the area. The groups then reported back to each other at the close of the meeting.

The participants were asked three questions.

- What are the primary opportunities for the riverfront?
- What are the primary challenges for the riverfront?
- What is your vision for the future of the Wisconsin Riverfront?

Riverfront Stakeholder Interviews, June 20, 2009

JJR and Baker Tilly Virchow Krause met with a wide range of community stakeholders and presented the draft concept plan for the riverfront. Feedback and criticism guided changes to better address the community's wants and needs.

Steering Committee, October 20, 2009

JJR and the Steering Committee reviewed the draft plan document, with particular attention to the implementation section.

Joint City Board Meeting, October 20, 2009

In the Council Chamber, JJR led a public meeting of a joint meeting of the Common Council, Planning Commission, Redevelopment Authority, and Parks and Recreation Commission members. Members of the community were invited to attend. JJR presented the concept and implementation through a PowerPoint presentation. Participants then asked questions and commented on the plan in a single large group.

All public meeting attendance sign-in sheets and meeting summaries are public record and available upon request.

Eastside Waterfront Initiative Market Analysis

Prepared by Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, August 2009

Under separate cover

Acknowledgements

The Eastside Waterfront Initiative Riverfront Revitalization Plan is the culmination of the efforts of many citizens, individuals and groups who devoted their time and energy to the future of the Merrill riverfront. We wish to extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who made this plan possible through their enthusiasm, commitment, creative input and financial support. A very special thanks is owed to the following individuals for their leadership throughout the planning process:

Steering Committee

Doug Williams
Chris Malm
Mark Zulliger
Ken Maule
Kathy Unertl
Dan Wendorf
Tony Chladek

Plan prepared by:

JJR, LLC • 625 Williamson Street • Madison, Wisconsin 53703 • (608) 251-1177 • www.jjr-us.com
Baker Tilly Virchow Krause • Ten Terrace Court, PO Box 7398 • Madison, Wisconsin 53707 • (608) 240-2391 • www.bakertilly.com

All photography by JJR unless otherwise noted.



