



VILLAGE OF LA FARGE, WI

Main Street Plan 2020



Adopted May 11, 2020

vierbicher
planners | engineers | advisors



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Village would like to thank the numerous individuals who contributed time and energy to the creation of this plan. Many business owners, residents, civic leaders and other community stakeholders participated in the public engagement activities and provided input throughout the planning process.

Main Street Plan Steering Committee

Cheryl Purvis, *Village President*
Wayne Haugrud, *Public Works Director & Utilities Manager*
Kimberly Walker, *Village Clerk*
Reggie Nelson, *Village Board Member*
Deb Nelson, *La Farge State Bank*
Maggie Becker, *Organic Valley*

Village Board

Cheryl Purvis, *Village President*
Reggie Nelson
Aaron Nemec
Frank Quinn
Aaron Appleman
Barbara Melvin
Terry Jensen

Village Staff

Kimberly Walker, *Clerk*
Wayne Haugrud, *Public Works Director & Utilities Manager*
Jonathon Brown, *Police Chief*

La Farge Main Street Plan prepared by:

Vierbicher

400 Viking Drive
Reedsburg, WI 53959
(608) 524-6468
www.vierbicher.com

Plan Adopted by La Farge Village Board
on May 11, 2020

© 2020 Vierbicher Associates, Inc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page #

1. Executive Summary	1
2. Overview of Process	2
3. Market Assessment	3
Map 3.1: Location and Access of La Farge	3
Map 3.2: Primary and Secondary Trade Areas	4
Map 3.3: Laborshed	5
Table 3.1: Population and Household Data	6
Table 3.2: Youth and Senior Population	7
Figure 3.1: Age Distribution	7
Table 3.3: Income and Home Value	7
Table 3.4: Housing by Tenure	8
Table 3.5: La Farge Housing Profile	9
Figure 3.2: Housing Values	11
Table 3.6: Age of Homes in Village	12
Table 3.7: Owners versus Renters	12
Table 3.8: Type of Vacancy	12
Table 3.9: Percent of Monthly Housing Costs	13
Table 3.10: Workforce Housing Cost Analysis	14
Table 3.11: Educational Attainment	15
Figure 3.3: La Farge Inflow and Outflow	16
Figure 3.4: Laborshed Inflow and Outflow	16
Figure 3.5: La Farge Distance and Direction	17
Table 3.12: Location Quotient	18
Figure 3.5: Employees Commuting Out of Laborshed	19
Figure 3.6: Supply and Demand	22
Figure 3.7: Supply Gap	22
Table 3.12: Supply and Demand Table Format	24
Table 3.13: Commercial Sectors Business and Employee Counts (SIC)	26
Table 3.14: Commercial Sectors Business and Employee Counts (NAICS)	26
4. Main Street Assessment	30
Public Meeting Participant's Feedback	31
Map 4.1: Flood Hazard Zones	34
Map 4.2: Downtown Land Use Scenarios	35
5. Streetscape Design	36
Figure 5.1: Planning Area and Sub-Areas	36
Figure 5.2: Preliminary Street Furnishing and Finish Selections – Commercial Area	38
Figure 5.3: Proposed Streetscape Section - Commercial Area	39
Figure 5.4: Proposed Streetscape Plan – Commercial Area	40
Figure 5.5: Proposed Streetscape Section – Residential Area	41
Figure 5.6: Proposed Streetscape Plan – Residential Area	42
6. Implementation Plan	43
7. Funding Strategy	72

APPENDICES

80

1. Results of Stakeholder Interviews & Focus Groups
2. Results of Public Engagement Workshop No. 1
3. Main Street Resources from WEDC
4. Sources & Uses for Main Street Reconstruction

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

Located in the Kickapoo Valley, the Village of La Farge is located at the crossroads of Wisconsin State Highways 82 and 131. While this area is rural in nature, the community sees in excess of 2,600 vehicles per day during the summer months, as the region is a destination for outdoor enthusiasts. In 2019, the Village decided to look at the feasibility of reconstructing the Main Street corridor, which was overlapped by both highway corridors. Funding was secured and reconstruction was scheduled to occur in 2021.

This Main Street Plan was developed as a pre-cursor to the reconstruction and provided the opportunity for the Village to develop not only the streetscape plan for the reconstruction project, but also provided an opportunity to consider other elements of the downtown economy. A community-wide market analysis was conducted to better understand existing market conditions and future needs. An Implementation Plan was developed to provide the community with a roadmap for moving forward. The following considerations were discussed throughout the process and were targeted as areas of focus within this Plan:

- Options for higher use of vacant parcels;
- How vacant/underutilized residential properties can better serve residents;
- Businesses on Main Street that might be better located and how the Village may assist;
- Actions to fill vacant retail/commercial properties;
- How vacant flood-prone properties can be an asset of the downtown;
- Underutilized properties that are appropriate for a day care facility;
- Ways to create a “place to be” in the downtown; and
- Ways to capture the interest of travelers.

Main Street Goals

Chapter 6.0 of this document is focused on Implementation. It was the intent of this process to be very focused on Implementation, to allow the Village to move forward quickly with strategically applying many of the ideas presented herein. Chapter 6.0 contains a total of eight goals. Each goal has recommendations to work towards the goal. This section identifies the potential sources of funding, potential cost range, priorities, and potential level of impact for each item in regards to meeting the goal. More detailed strategies for funding are included in Chapter 7.0.

The eight goals developed for the Village through this process include:

- Goal 1. Mitigate the Impact of the Future Flood Events in the Community;*
- Goal 2. Rehabilitate or Redevelop Blighted Structures & Underutilized Sites on Main Street;*
- Goal 3. Enhance the Downtown to Make it a More Desirable Place to Spend Time;*
- Goal 4. Reconstruct Infrastructure in the Downtown;*
- Goal 5. Promote Business Growth in the Community;*
- Goal 6. Provide Amenities that Will Support Tourism;*
- Goal 7. Increase Housing Options and Availability of Housing in the Village; and*
- Goal 8. Create and Promote a Brand Based on the Community's Unique Assets.*

2.0 Overview of Process

The La Farge Main Street Plan is the result of a four month initiative completed January through April of 2020. The Plan was developed through a four-step process. The process incorporated both quantitative and qualitative elements to create a comprehensive picture of La Farge's local economy, position, and reputation within the region. Each stage of the process incorporated public engagement in order to verify findings, test assumptions and uncover additional opportunities or challenges to be addressed in the final Plan.

The Village hired Vierbicher to create the Main Street Plan following a Community Development Block Grant award for the Plan. Vierbicher reviewed a number of previous initiatives which created the foundation for expanded economic development activity. These initiatives include:

- 2012 Economic and Recreation Development Plan;
- 2017 Economic Development Strategy – Vernon County Wisconsin;
- 2016 Economic Impact of Recreational Trout Angling in the Driftless Area; and
- 2019 Driftless Area Restoration Effort.

Oversight of the planning process, and additional marketing and outreach were provided by Village staff and a steering committee.

A Steering Committee was created by the Village to guide the Main Street planning process. A series of four Committee meetings were held between February and April of 2020 to review preliminary results of public engagement, identify issues and opportunities, develop a vision, and discuss proposed strategies.

The process also included a variety of opportunities for the community and other stakeholders to become involved and voice their opinions. At the beginning of the process, a number of targeted stakeholders were invited to participate in one-on-one interviews and focus groups. These information-gathering sessions provided an opportunity to get valuable insight into existing concerns and future opportunities from the varying perspectives of people with an interest in the future of the downtown corridor. Appendix 1 includes the results of these stakeholder interviews and focus groups. These results are organized by category and provide an outline of discussion points within each category.

The community and others interested in the future of Main Street were invited to attend a series of public workshops hosted by the Committee. These workshops were held over an eight-week period at the Emergency Services Building. Each workshop allowed the project team to present the progress that had been made and to gather public input needed to develop a community-based plan. Specific exercises were created for each workshop based on the material being presented and feedback needed on a particular topic. Results from initial public input gathering are included in Appendix 2.

3.0 Market Assessment

The Market Assessment is targeted at updating previous market information to identify current economic conditions and opportunities in La Farge. It is important to develop a plan based on market information in order to understand the dynamics of the region. It also identifies how the community has been impacted by changes due to the recession, changing demographics, and existing business demands. The analysis utilizes information from the Village, US Census and third-party vendors such as ESRI, EMSI and OneSource. The analysis includes identification of trade areas, quantifying local and visitor spending demand, demographic trends, business mix analysis, multifamily housing assessment and projections.

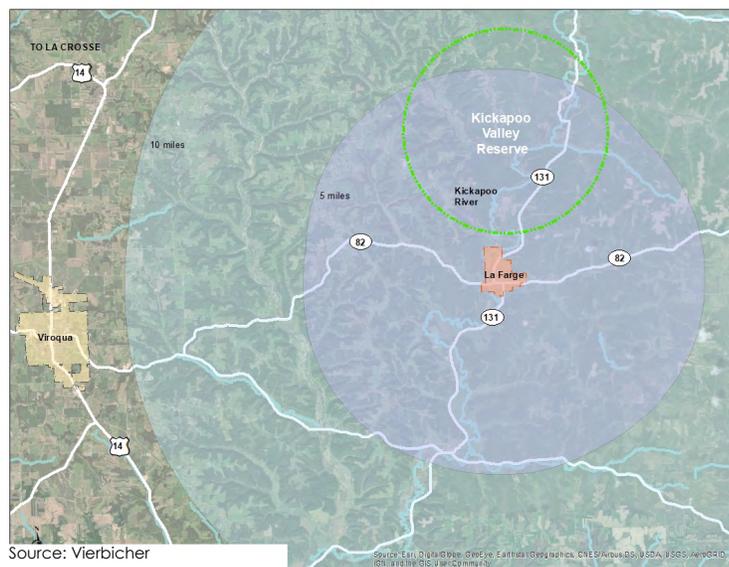
Location, Access, and Geographic Boundaries

The Village of La Farge is located along the Kickapoo River, on the eastern side of Vernon County in Southwest Wisconsin. Vernon County is bordered on the west by the Mississippi River and is part of the Driftless area (a scenic area of the state not covered by glaciers during the last Ice Age). Thus, the area is hilly with wooded hillsides and stream-cut valleys. The Kickapoo Valley Reserve, just north of the village, draws many visitors due to its wealth of outdoor recreation opportunities, as does the Kickapoo River. This geography forms the basis for the area's economy. The area has pasture and specialty crops. The area also has problems with flooding due to the topography.

La Farge is served by two state highways, STH-82 and STH 131. La Crosse Regional Airport, a one-hour drive, and Dane County Regional Airport, a two-hour drive, provide commercial air service. There is currently no rail access to La Farge; the nearest communities served by rail are the cities of Reedsburg and New Lisbon. The nearest Amtrak stations are in Wisconsin Dells and Tomah. Daily traffic counts are high considering the low number of employees in the village.

Map 3.1: Location and Access of La Farge

More than 2,600 vehicles travel along Highway 82, and 1,200 travel along Highway 131 daily. Map 1 shows the location and main access routes through La Farge.



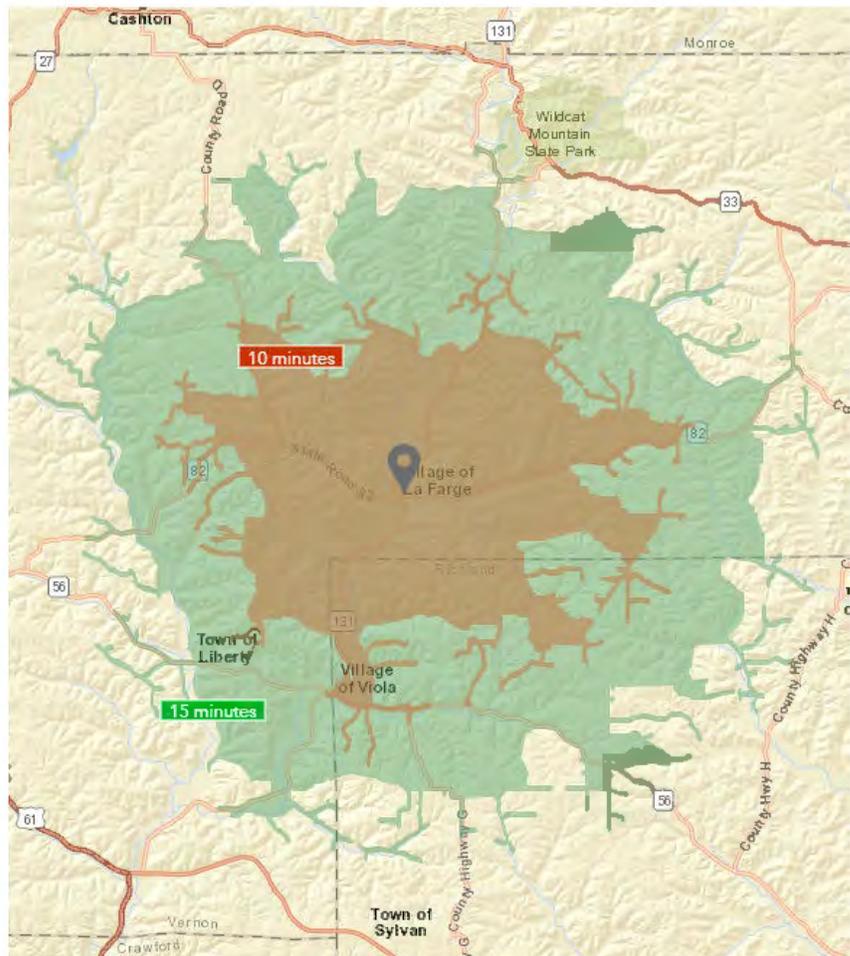
Primary and Secondary Trade Area

The demand for local housing, goods, services, and employment is derived from a larger area than the Village of La Farge; this area is known as its Primary Trade Area. A trade area is defined as the region from which a majority of this demand is generated. The Primary Trade Area represents the area from which the bulk of consumer demand is generated, or from which at least 50 percent of all consumers within the boundary are most likely to travel to La Farge to shop. The Primary Trade Area is only intended to represent the area in which residents will shop in La Farge for their regular retail needs. Specialty items will usually be purchased in larger or more specialized trade centers with trade areas that overlap La Farge for those types of goods or services. The Primary Trade Area is a 10-minute drive time, and the Secondary Trade Area is a 15-minute drive time.

The La Farge Trade Area is heavily influenced and surrounded by the market forces of Viroqua, Reedsburg, Richland Center, Tomah, and La Crosse trade centers. The demand for and supply of retail and service amenities has a significant role in shaping consumer patterns in a community. In contrast to residential and business location decisions, retail and service businesses rely on the availability of customers in the surrounding area, and typically only move into a community once a sufficient level of local demand has been reached. La Farge must

Map 3.2: Primary and Secondary Trade Areas

provide a unique good or service to attract customers to drive further to it versus traveling to more convenient options in larger communities. As described earlier, La Farge's retail and service trade areas encompass the immediately surrounding local area.



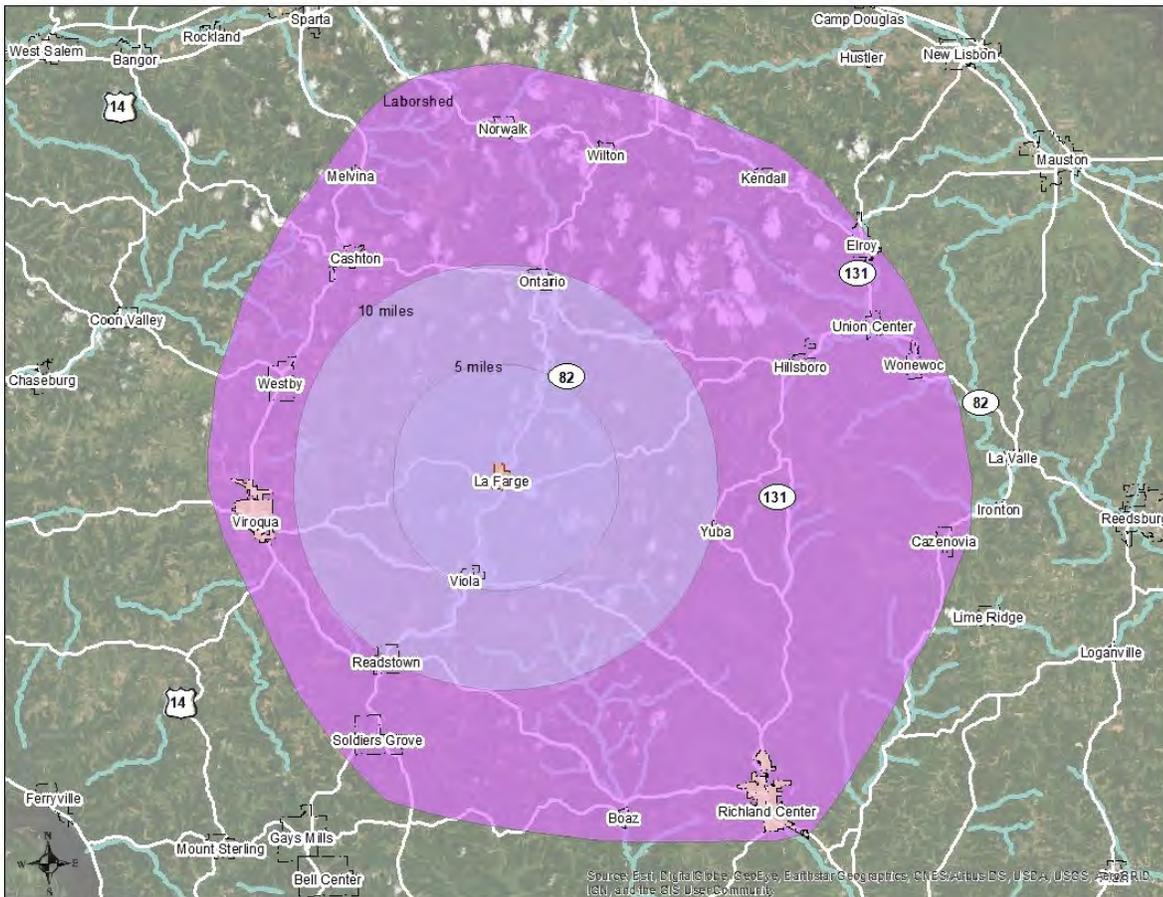
Source: ESRI Business Analyst

Laborshed

A second relevant regional boundary is the distance from which La Farge companies draw employees. Commonly referred to as the laborshed; the size, demographics, education, and occupation of individuals within this area are important factors in company decisions to locate or expand in a region based on the perceived ability to recruit qualified workers at competitive wages. Information from the 2017 Economic Census and 2019 ESRI estimates are used to determine worker characteristics and movements within the region.

Employees working at jobs within the Village come from a comparable, though slightly larger, region than the consumer population of the community. Because of the rural character of the region, competition from neighboring more populous communities, and the number of seasonal residents surrounding La Farge, the area and population of the La Farge laborshed are larger than the trade area. Map 3 below illustrates the geographic reach of this laborshed.

Map 3.3: Laborshed



Source: Vierbicher

Demographic Profile

Population and Households

Residential population growth is the simplest and often primary factor in contributing to economic development. An increase in population, either from migration into a community or natural increase from births creates the need for additional housing and expanded retail trade. New jobs are created to provide these needs for the growing community.

La Farge and the surrounding area's population are expected to grow slightly in the next 5 years (Table 1). La Farge is expected to increase to 767 in 2024, which is a 3% increase from 2010; the primary and secondary retail trade area will increase at least 11% from 2010 to 2024, from 3,515 in 2010 to 3,907 in 2024. The laborshed is expected to grow 3.2% from 2010 to 2024, from 44,329 in 2010 to 45,747 in 2024. Vernon County is expected to increase 6% from 29,773 residents in 2010 to 31,669 residents in 2024.

By 2024, the number of households is expected to increase from 341 to 347 in La Farge and from 879 to 909 in the trade area. However, the average household size of 2.15 is projected to be lower than the State at 2.40. The lower household size can be contributed to the aging population. The number of total household *units* was 375 in 2010 and 385 in 2019. This number is expected to increase to 392 by 2024. Because of the increase in the number of households, the number of housing units could increase by 7-9 units by 2024.

Table 3.1: Population and Household Data

	La Farge	Trade Area	Laborshed	Vernon County
Total Population				
2010	746	3,515	44,329	29,773
2019	757	3,788	45,277	30,968
2024	767	3,907	45,747	31,669
Percent Change 2010 to 2024	2.8%	11.2%	3.2%	6.4%
Household Units				
2010	375	2,105	17,321	13,720
2019	385	2,271	17,797	14,468
2024	392	2,356	18,012	14,855
Percent Change 2010 to 2024	4.5%	11.9%	4.0%	8.3%
Household Size				
2010	2.20	2.05	2.52	2.53
2019	2.17	2.03	2.50	2.52
2024	2.15	2.02	2.50	2.51
Percent Change 2010 to 2024	-2.3%	-1.5%	-0.8%	-0.8%

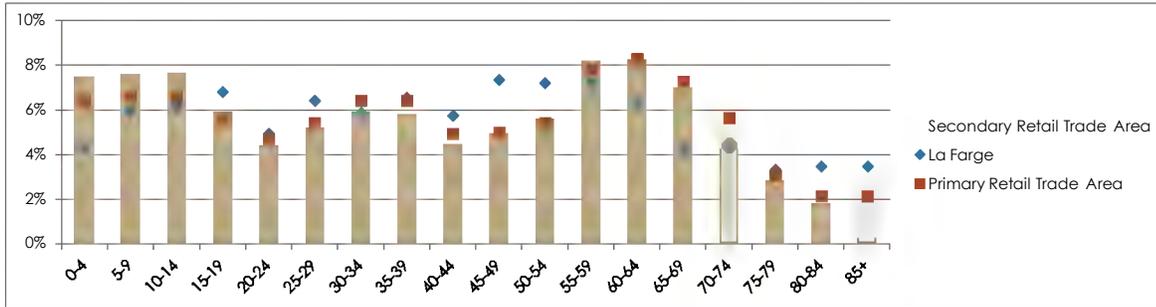
Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2019

One of the biggest demographic and residential trends facing many communities is an aging population. The median age in La Farge is expected to continue increasing. It was 42.6 years in 2010, grew to 45.4 in 2019, and is expected to be 46.2 in 2024. These figures are higher than the trade area, laborshed, Vernon County, and the State of Wisconsin in 2019. Table 3.2 shows that La Farge has a lower percentage of population under 18 than the comparison geographies. Figure 3.1 shows the break down by age categories. La Farge has a higher percentage of residents aged 45-59 than the trade area.

Table 3.2: Youth and Senior Population

	La Farge	Trade Area	Laborshed	Vernon County	State of Wisconsin
Population Under 18	23.0%	27.4%	27.5%	26.3%	24.5%
Population 65+	19.0%	19.2%	18.4%	20.4%	17.0%
Median Age	45.40	40.90	41.40	42.90	39.60

Figure 3.1: Age Distribution



Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2019

Median Household Income

La Farge's median household income (\$40,023) is lower than all of the other comparison geographies. Trade area median household income is projected to be \$53,851 in 2024, compared to \$45,654 for the Village, and \$67,243 for the State of Wisconsin. The 2019 per capita income was \$22,142 for the Village, \$23,706 in the trade area, and \$32,047 in the State of Wisconsin. The trade area per capita income is projected to be \$27,606 in 2024, compared to the State's average of \$36,642. The median value of a Single-Family home is lower in La Farge than the comparison geographies. Table 3.3 shows these income and home value figures below.

Table 3.3: Income and Home Value

	La Farge		Trade Area		Laborshed		Vernon County		State of Wisconsin	
	2019	2024	2019	2024	2019	2024	2019	2024	2019	2024
Median Household Income	40,023	45,654	47,368	53,851	50,042	55,595	51,807	56,875	59,087	67,243
Per Capita Income	22,142	25,308	23,706	27,606	25,357	29,104	26,394	30,273	32,047	36,642
Median Single Family Home	87,624	91,495	169,915	191,949	151,642	166,707	164,756	178,713	193,857	217,826

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2019

Housing Units

According to the 2018 American Community Survey, 60.3% of the 385 housing units in La Farge are owner-occupied, 28.3% are renter-occupied, and 11.4% are vacant. The Housing section dives more into the vacancy percentage and type. 61% of the 2,271 housing units in the trade area are owner-occupied; 14.3% are renter-occupied; and 24.8% are vacant. This compares with 57.3% of the housing units in the state being owner-occupied, 29.2% renter occupied, and 13.5% vacant. The number of housing units has increased from 2,105 in 2010 to 2,271 in 2019 and is expected to grow to 2,356 by 2024. Table 3.4 shows these numbers below.

Table 3.4: Housing by Tenure

	La Farge	Trade Area	Laborshed	Vernon County	State of Wisconsin
Number of Units	385	2,271	1,797	13,720	-
Owner Occupied	60.3%	61.0%	62.3%	65.3%	57.3%
Renter Occupied	28.3%	14.3%	21.4%	18.8%	29.2%
Vacant	11.4%	24.8%	16.3%	15.9%	13.5%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2019

Socioeconomic Market Segmentation

Demographics firm ESRI's Tapestry Segmentation system divides geographic areas into 67 distinctive segments based on their socioeconomic and demographic composition, describing the diversity of the American population and providing an accurate, detailed description of America's communities and neighborhoods. By grouping and segmenting populations based on these characteristics, these segments can guide marketing, planning, and economic development by summarizing markets that share similar traits. The three profiles below comprise the La Farge segments.

Prairie Living (56.9%)

- Dominant household type is married couples with no children.
- Most are single-family homes built before 1980; a higher portion were built before 1940.
- Higher percentage of vacant housing.
- Most households own 2 or 3 vehicles; this is the highest ranked market for owning 4 or more vehicles.
- At 65%, labor force participation rate slightly higher.
- Faith and religion are important to these residents.
- Tend to buy things when they need them, rather than when they want them or to be trendy.
- Somewhat resistant to new technology.
- Creatures of habit when purchasing food items.

Heartland Communities (35.1%)

- Distribution of household types is comparable to the nation as a whole; married couples, more with no children, and a slightly higher proportion of singles that reflects the aging of the population.
- They own one or two vehicles; commutes are short.
- The rural economy of this market provides employment in the manufacturing, construction, utilities, healthcare, and agriculture industries.
- Motorcycling, hunting, and fishing are popular; walking is the main form of exercise.

Rooted Rural (7.5%)

- This market is dominated by married couples, few with children at home.
- 80% of homes are owner occupied: primarily single family (73%) or mobile homes (24%).
- Nearly one in five housing units is vacant, with a high proportion for seasonal use.
- Home values are very low—almost half of owned homes are valued under \$100,000.
- Pets are popular—dogs, cats, and birds.
- Leisure activities include hunting and fishing.

Housing Analysis

Demographics Summary

A housing market analysis provides an overview of local demographics, income and social factors that contribute to the demand for housing in the Village of La Farge. The analysis examines the impact of household size, income, age, and ownership status of La Farge's population. By studying the relationship and changes in these factors over time, we can identify current and future gaps in supply based on household needs. Categories that are projected to have potential needs are divided based upon the type of housing that is most commonly demanded by these groups. Table 3.5 presents a profile of the housing market in La Farge.

Table 3.5: La Farge Housing Profile

	2010 Census	2019 Estimate	2024 Estimate
Population	746	757	767
Households	375	385	392
Median Age	42.6	45.4	46.2
Average Household Size	2.2	2.17	2.15

Source: 1 ESRI Business Analyst, 2019

For instance, the need for rental housing and affordable housing, as well as active senior and retirement communities are frequently areas of future need in our aging society. As with the retail trade area, housing demand comes from a broader geographic area than

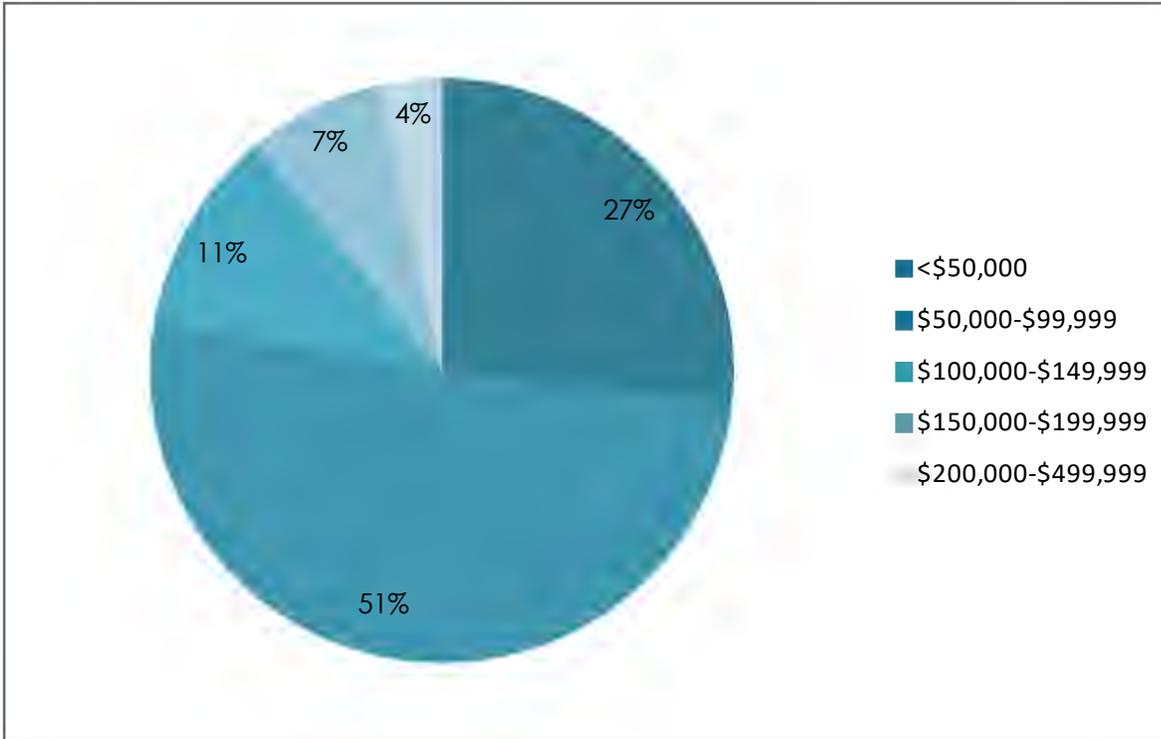
just the Village. This larger pool includes employees who currently work in or near the Village but would prefer to live closer to their place of employment, and newly forming households as a result of children exiting their parents' household.

Age and family status are the most influential factors for households considering renting versus owning. More than three-quarters of the households headed by individuals under 30 opt to rent, and nearly half of households headed by individuals 30-44 now rent. Adults aged 75 and older have seen steady increases in the percentage of households renting. In contrast to homeowners, renters have greater choice in housing types. Within the renter pool, there are differences in the type of units preferred. A majority of younger renters (under 30) live in larger apartment buildings of five or more units, while middle-aged renters prefer single-family homes or buildings with less than four units. Older renters are split between smaller buildings and larger senior housing apartment buildings. Larger properties typically offer a combination of amenities, limited upkeep and social opportunities which are attractive to both younger and older age groups. However, there is significant potential for La Farge to attract additional older households moving to apartments and senior housing facilities. These are typically located in hub communities where adequate medical care and amenities are available, drawing from the surrounding region for their resident base.

These households are most likely to rent and to make changes in living arrangements based on life changes (i.e., death of a spouse, injury, physical ability). However, La Farge must ensure there is a suitable supply of dwelling units for these households, as larger nearby communities will likely outcompete La Farge in terms of the number of units offered. The current trend in senior housing is to create continuum of care projects located near existing commercial environments to provide access to amenities. Desirable nearby amenities include a pharmacy, medical clinic, restaurant, and park space. In La Farge, the downtown location of both a medical clinic and pharmacy provides heightened opportunities for additional development of elderly housing. These elements are frequently present in downtown areas, making senior housing a redevelopment strategy in downtown or the surrounding established neighborhoods and developed areas. Facilities providing a continuum of care, including independent living arrangements, also provide a larger consumer base for downtown businesses, including both the residents and their visitors.

Figure 2.2 shows the percentage of the population that owns a home within the five house price ranges. Twenty-seven percent of the population has a home valued below \$50,000. More than 50% has a home that is valued between \$50,000 and \$99,000.

Figure 3.2: Housing Values



Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2019

Table 3.6 shows the age of homes in the Village. More than 75% of the housing stock was built before 1970, with a substantial number of homes built before 1939. Table 3.7 shows the number of homes occupied by owners and renters, and the number of vacant homes. Another notable data point to review is the type of vacancy in the community. As can be seen in Table 3.8, there are several homes that are vacant due to seasonal/occasional use. This number is only a snapshot in time and may not represent current vacancy rate. Considering the high percentage of vacancy, we spoke to a local realtor for their comments. The realtor noted that vacancy is less than 5% of the housing stock. There are only two homes sitting vacant that would be considered “other”. They are not aware of other vacant homes in La Farge. Additionally, there are only three homes for sale in La Farge. Two of the homes have been on the market for less than a year. The third has been on the market for less than a month. When viewing Table 3.8, looking at the percent in each category is more relevant and most likely represents the same percentage today. Common reasons a housing unit is labeled “Other Vacant”:

1. No one lives in the unit, and the owner does not want to sell.
2. No one lives in the unit, and the owner is using the unit for storage.
3. The owner is elderly and living in a nursing home or with family members.

Table 3.6: Age of Homes in Village

Age of Homes	La Farge
Built 2014 or later	3
Built 2010 to 2013	2
Built 2000 to 2009	35
Built 1990 to 1999	27
Built 1980 to 1989	22
Built 1970 to 1979	61
Built 1960 to 1969	35
Built 1950 to 1959	42
Built 1940 to 1949	19
Built 1939 or earlier	125

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2019

Table 3.7: Owners versus Renters

Owner Vs Renter	Owner	Renter	Vacant
2010	225	107	43
2019	232	109	44
2024	238	109	45

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2019

Table 3.8: Type of Vacancy

Type of Vacancy	Numbers	Percentage
For Rent	13	30%
Rented-Not Occupied	1	2%
For Sale Only	9	21%
Sold-Not Occupied	0	0%
Seasonal/Recreational/Occas	8	19%
For Migrant Workers	8	19%
Other Vacant	12	28%
Total	43	100%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2019

Affordable Housing

Household income is a critical factor impacting housing demand. The ability of local households to afford existing housing stock influences the decision to purchase or rent, and indicates the price point at which future units will be absorbed. Table 3.9 shows the monthly housing costs for owner- and renter-occupied housing units in La Farge, broken down by household income. As a general rule of thumb, housing costs should cost no more than 30% of a household's income. For example, 12.5% of the La Farge population makes \$35,000 to \$49,000. Only 3.1% of households making \$35,000 to \$49,000 spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs.

The chart shows that while the vast majority of households in the upper 20% of incomes in La Farge (those making \$75,000 or more) pay less than 30% of their income on housing costs, for lower-income households, many are burdened by their housing costs. Nearly three-quarters of households making less than \$20,000, nearly a third making between \$20,000 and \$35,000, and more than a quarter making between \$35,000 and \$50,000 must pay more than 30% of their income for housing. These proportions are even larger among renters than the community as a whole.

Table 3.9: Percent of Monthly Housing Costs

Household Income	Occupied Housing	Owner-Occupied	Renter-Occupied
Less than \$20,000	21.90%	17.20%	32.10%
Less than 20%	2.6%	2.90%	1.80%
20 to 29%	2.6%	0.80%	6.30%
30% or more	16.8%	13.40%	24.10%
\$20,000 to \$34,999	23.6%	18.40%	34.80%
Less than 20%	8.5%	9.60%	6.30%
20 to 29%	6.3%	0.40%	18.80%
30% or more	8.8%	8.40%	9.80%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	12.5%	15.50%	6.30%
Less than 20%	5.1%	6.70%	1.80%
20 to 29%	4.3%	5.40%	1.80%
30% or more	3.1%	3.30%	2.70%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	24.8%	26.40%	21.40%
Less than 20%	19.9%	23.00%	13.40%
20 to 29%	4.8%	3.30%	8.00%
30% or more	0.0%	0.00%	0.00%
\$75,000 or more	16.0%	22.60%	1.80%
Less than 20%	15.1%	21.30%	1.80%
20 to 29%	90.0%	1.30%	0.00%
30% or more	0.0%	0.00%	0.00%
No Income	60.0%	0.00%	1.80%
No Cash Rent	60.0%	0.00%	1.80%

Source: American Community Survey ACS, 2018

Affordable housing is normally defined as one that a household can obtain for 30 percent or less of its gross income, which varies from community to community. Households earning less than 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) are considered low-to moderate-income households. These precise thresholds are a bit arbitrary. One problem is that many families try to reduce their housing costs by moving further away from job centers, but this increases their transportation costs.

However, financial institutions suggest that an affordable home should not cost more than 2.5 times the annual household income. Table 3.10 uses 2019 data. In 2019, the median sales price for a single family home in the village was \$87,624, more than two times the median household income (\$36,985). Table 3.10 uses the median sales price for 2019. The calculations do not consider down payment. A single family home priced at \$87,624 is affordable to households with a gross income of over \$36,000. When comparing affordability of rental housing units, a majority of the households can afford the rent without paying more than 30% of their household income. For example, households making 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI) can afford the \$5,700 rent in the Village. The \$475 rent is based on the information available from the ESRI Business Analyst. The 30% is used for rental properties because a rental is not financed like a home.

Table 3.10: Workforce Housing Cost Analysis

Percentage of AMI		60% AMI	80% AMI	100%AMI	120% AMI
La Farge Household Median Income	\$36,985	\$22,191	\$29,588	\$36,985	\$44,382
Median Sales Price - Single Family Home	\$87,624	\$87,624	\$87,624	\$87,624	\$87,624
Affordable Mortgage (2.5 times incomes)		\$55,478	\$73,970	\$92,463	\$110,955
Affordability Gap - Owner Occupied		-\$32,146.50	-\$13,654.00	\$4,838.50	\$23,331.00
Median Annual Rent \$475x12=	\$5,700	\$5,700	\$5,700	\$5,700	\$5,700
Affordable Rent (30% of income)		\$6,657	\$8,876	\$11,096	\$13,315
Affordability Gap - Renter Occupied		\$957	\$3,176	\$5,396	\$7,615

Source: ESRI Business Analyst 2019 and Vierbicher

Workforce Housing

Workforce housing is in essence affordable housing for households with earned income that is insufficient to secure quality housing in reasonable proximity to the workplace. The Urban Land Institute defines workforce housing as “housing that is affordable to households earning 60% to 120% of the area median income.” The housing affordability crisis, which began because of the housing bubble burst in 2008, keeps many residents as renters instead of home owners. The National Association of Home Builders has recognized the affordable housing issue, in particular. “Housing affordability” has spread to those not traditionally perceived as seeking affordable housing. More importantly, these households receive little or no public assistance. A new term has been coined to address these emerging households: workforce housing. This group includes: teachers, police officers and fire fighters as well as health care workers, retail clerks, administrative personnel and other moderate income workers, all essential to the economic vitality of an area and its success.

Workforce

The size and composition of the area's laborshed significantly influence the type of employers that may be attracted to La Farge based on a need for skilled labor. However, these daily commuters also represent a significant pool of potential customers for local retailers.

In many communities, the local workforce plays a significant role in supporting local businesses through daytime or business spending. Because of the limited ability for workers to travel during lunch, this primary workforce market is generally limited to employees working outside the home within 2 miles. Commuters also represent a potential source of revenue pre- and post-work. Studies have found that, on average, rural professional workers spend about \$145 per week including almost \$45 on commuting (gas and maintenance) and about \$100 on lunch, personal errands (pharmacy, shopping), and convenience purchases (grocery, coffee). Manufacturing and retail/hospitality workers spend 10-15 percent less as a result of non-traditional work hours and more limited workplace flexibility. Calculated conservatively, these combined markets represent approximately \$3,500,000 in consumer demand per year. While this market is beneficial to local businesses, especially gas stations, the added customer volume is not sufficient to offset the limited market potential indicated because many of the categories of worker demand do not correspond either to existing businesses in La Farge, or to retail opportunities from the existing residents.

Affordable Housing

Table 3.11 below shows the educational attainment of the population living in the Village, Vernon County, and the laborshed as a whole as of 2019. Generally, the educational figures for all three geographic areas are roughly comparable, with slightly higher percentages for a Bachelor's Degree in the laborshed and County (12.5% and 15.1% respectively) versus the Village (10.1%). While the laborshed has the highest percentage of its population with a graduate or professional degree of the three geographic areas at 9.1%, it also has the highest percentage of its population without a high school diploma of the three at 11.3%.

Table 3.11: Educational Attainment

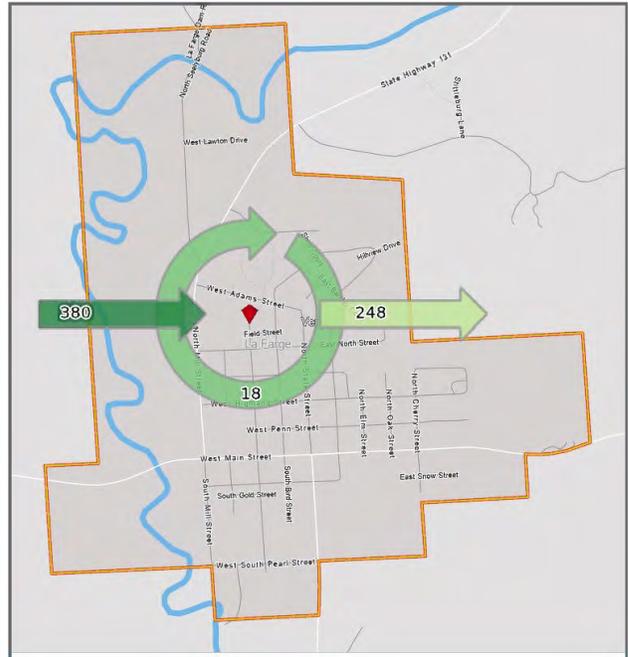
Educational Attainment	Village	Laborshed	County
Less than High School	10.30%	11.30%	9.90%
High School or Equivalent	45.63%	38.60%	36.90%
Some College, No Degree	19.00%	16.60%	17.40%
Associate Degree	9.20%	11.90%	12.10%
Bachelor's Degree	10.10%	12.50%	15.10%
Graduate/Professional Degree	5.70%	9.10%	8.50%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2019

Figure 3.3: La Farge Inflow and Outflow

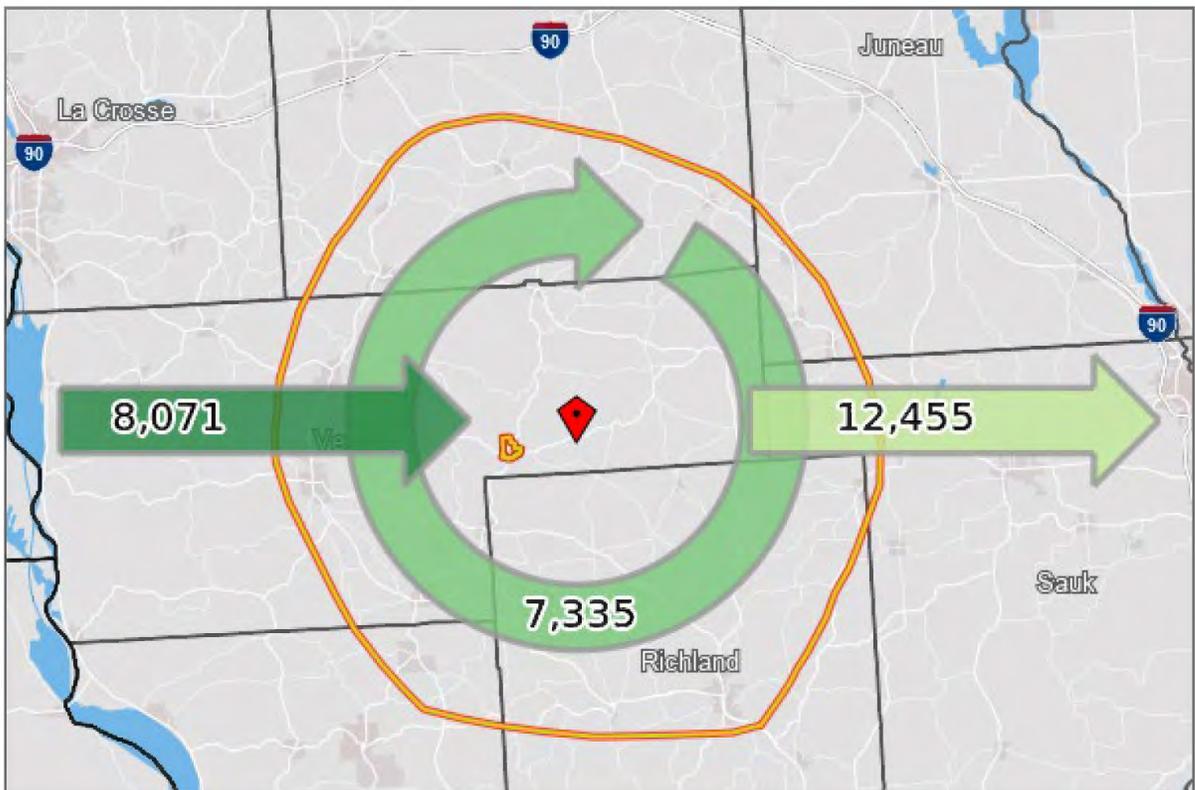
Figure 3.3 shows that 380 people commute into La Farge, approximately 75 residents work in the community, and 248 residents commute out of the village. Major employers include Organic Valley and the La Farge Medical Clinic.

Figure 3.4 shows the inflow and outflow of workers and residents for the laborshed. The graphic shows that 8,071 people commute into the laborshed, 7,335 residents remain in the laborshed to work, and 12,455 residents commute out of the laborshed to work elsewhere.



Source: Onthemap.ces.census.gov

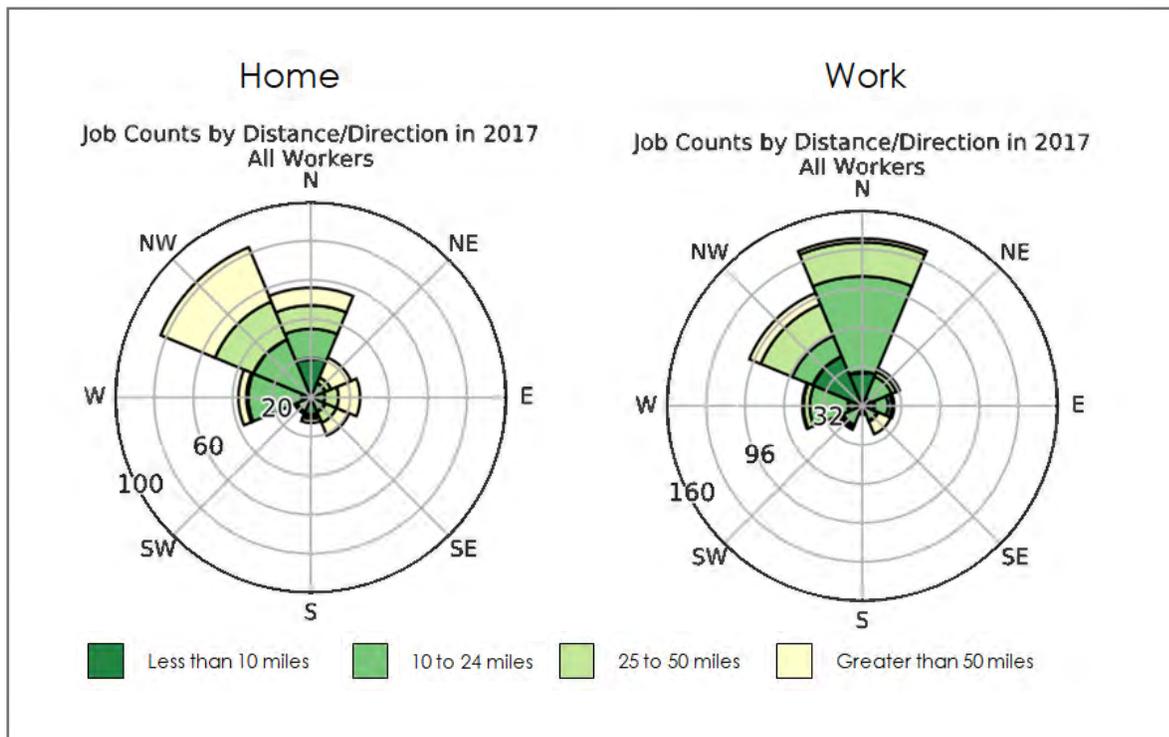
Figure 3.4: Laborshed Inflow and Outflow



Source: Onthemap.ces.census.gov

Figure 3.5 shows the geographic commuting patterns for people commuting into and out of La Farge for work. The first graph shows the directions and distances for which workers in La Farge commute to the Village for work. Origin communities of La Farge workers include Viroqua, Ontario, Tomah, and La Crosse. The second graph shows the directions and distances those residents of La Farge, who work outside the village travel for work. Residents travel to Viroqua, La Crosse, Cashton, Ontario, Westby, Richland Center, and other communities.

Figure 3.5: La Farge Distance and Direction



Source: Source: Onthemap.ces.census.gov

Business Mix Analysis

There is a significant labor pool available in many sectors that could benefit from La Farge's location and employee base. There are several sectors in which employment in La Farge is more concentrated than in the State. Location quotient (LQ) is a way of discovering the industries or occupations that are truly unique and specialized in your regional economy.

La Farge is over-represented when compared to the State of Wisconsin in the sectors of management of companies, agriculture, real estate, transportation, and wholesale trade. The Organic Valley headquarters in La Farge accounts for the high LQ for management of companies and enterprises. In all of these sectors, La Farge hosts at least 50% more jobs than would be expected according to the average distribution of jobs across these sectors for the State as a whole. La Farge is underrepresented by at least 25% in the sectors of manufacturing, construction; retail trade; arts; and accommodation and food services.

Table 3.12 shows the location quotient, the factor of comparison between location-specific business activity and that of a larger region, showing La Farge's commercial strengths. Some industries are not likely to locate in the community because of a need for proximity to other businesses or customer populations. However, other clusters or specific industries within those clusters represented by the local workforce may represent recruitment targets. In all cases, suitable real estate would need to be available locally to accommodate these industries, and recruitment of other target sectors may require additional amenities or infrastructure (i.e. high-speed internet, shared workspace to accommodate satellite offices, etc).

Table 3.12: Location Quotient

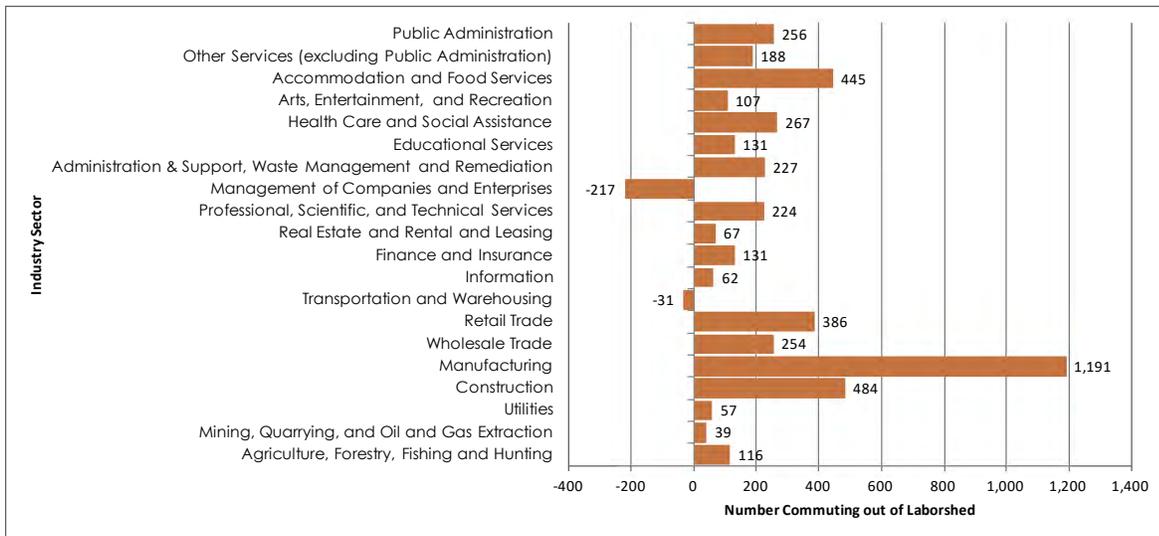
Sector	La Farge	Wisconsin	LQ
Management of Companies and Enterprises	12.0%	2.6%	4.59
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2.6%	0.9%	2.78
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1.5%	1.0%	1.58
Transportation and Warehousing	5.3%	3.4%	1.54
Wholesale Trade	5.6%	4.5%	1.25
Finance and Insurance	4.5%	4.4%	1.02
Manufacturing	16.2%	16.5%	0.98
Construction	4.1%	4.3%	0.97
Retail Trade	9.8%	10.7%	0.92
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1.1%	1.6%	0.70
Accommodation and Food Services	4.1%	8.2%	0.51
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1.9%	4.0%	0.46
Information	0.8%	1.8%	0.41

The La Farge laborshed's regional draw is evident in the size and nature of the local workforce. The draw demonstrates the ability of local companies to recruit employees from a 20-mile radius. Additionally, there are multiple occupational categories with skilled workers in the laborshed where no corresponding jobs are available (such as manufacturing), requiring these individuals to travel to larger metropolitan areas for employment. While some of the industries represented by these occupational categories require proximity to suppliers, vendors or customers not available in La Farge laborshed, there is a significant labor pool available in many sectors that could benefit from La Farge's laborshed location and qualified employee base.

Many communities strive to match local commercial opportunities to the skills of the available workforce. Residents benefit from more convenient employment opportunities and as a result, spend more time and money in the community. Simultaneously, employers benefit from locating in proximity to an existing trained workforce. Employers in La Farge will need to be competitive with the other communities for wages, although the time and cost savings from reduced commuting may entice some workers even at a slight reduction in pay. For example, the cost of commuting daily to La Crosse from La Farge equates to \$2,340 annually for the average commuter at today's gas prices, with the time savings from reduced commuting this provides a roughly equivalent additional benefit.

Almost 58 businesses employing nearly 492 total workers are located in La Farge. Of the almost 492 jobs available in the Village, approximately 75 workers reside in the Village. This difference is fulfilled by workers commuting into La Farge. While unemployment within La Farge (1.3%) is lower than the 3.5% rate in Vernon County and the 3.3% rate in Wisconsin, there is a significant degree of mismatch between available workers and available jobs. Figure 3.5 below shows the industry sectors of residents who commute out of the laborshed for work.

Figure 3.5: Employees Commuting Out of Laborshed



Of these sectors, some represent more likely recruitment targets than others. For instance, Public Administration employment opportunities are limited by the size of local government.

Similarly, wholesale trade-related businesses are most likely to locate adjacent to major transportation corridors, which, with no US Highways or rail service, are limited in the La Farge area. However, other sectors represent viable short or long term targets for relocation or satellite office locations in the community. Some specific occupations within these sectors are less driven by a need for proximity to a specific customer or client base and are recommended as short term targets. These target recruitment sectors include information, insurance or other back-office uses, and health care. Several of these sectors would be appropriate tenants for downtown. Recruitment success requires the presence of suitably sized spaces with modern build out. Facilitating upgrades to older and vacant spaces can help create an affordable and efficient environment to cater to potential new businesses.

An additional long-term opportunity for La Farge is the ability to increase its market share of younger workers. The median age of La Farge's population is 45.4 years, older than the laborshed (40.9) and older than Vernon County (42.9), indicating there are proportionally older employees in La Farge than other areas of the State. Additionally, because older workers may be over-represented in certain sectors, problems of retirements, closings, and business succession planning need to be considered. Facilitating the transition of ownership in these businesses to the next generation of entrepreneurs will help retain these local services and create additional employment opportunities that appeal to entrepreneurial-minded individuals. Traditionally, this transition is difficult to make, and financing options for the purchase of businesses, are limited. The ability to work with businesses to facilitate this transition and retain these locally-owned and operated establishments is vital to fostering a local culture of entrepreneurialism and creating opportunities for local partnerships.

Retail Market Analysis

Retail Overview

La Farge is ringed by a loop of larger communities at a distance of about 25-40 miles. The proximity and size of the neighboring trade centers restrict La Farge's ability to expand the geographic boundaries of the area in which it provides daily or regular shopping and services. Trade centers like Viroqua, Reedsburg, La Crosse, and Richland Center have much larger retail trade areas that absorb many of the regular shopping and service needs of La Farge. Viroqua has several major retailers: Wal-Mart, Walgreens, and Tractor Supply. There are also many restaurant options and the Vernon Square Cinema. Likewise, larger-ticket purchases such as electronics or appliances will often be undertaken in even larger trade areas like La Crosse or Madison.

No business will be able to capture 100 percent of the dollars being spent on a particular category of goods within any population group. Primary convenience retailers with little competition (i.e., local grocer) may be able to retain as much as 75 percent of local spending, although smaller retailers, especially those in more competitive market sectors, should base projections on capturing 20 percent or less of local demand. Customers within each of these areas have numerous choices when it comes to retail offerings, and they make decisions based on proximity, price, quality of goods, customer experience, and convenience. Retailers downtown, with a limited immediate residential trade area, must especially rely on their ability to provide a unique product, service or experience which will allow them to recruit some customers from a broader trade area, as well as daytime employee populations. Finding ways to assist local retailers in identifying and collectively marketing to these broader groups who are already traveling to the Village for other purposes will help boost spending throughout the community.

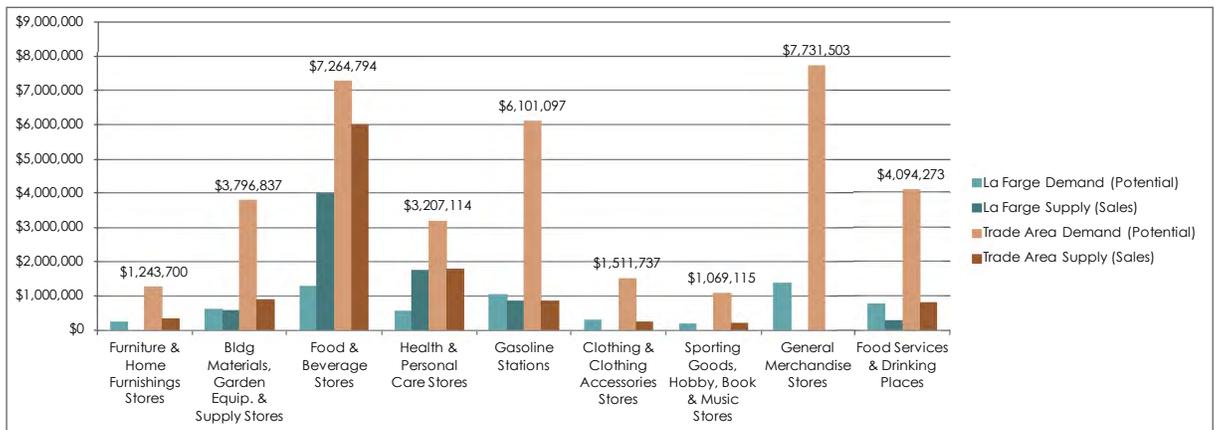
Growth in consumer spending has not been evenly distributed among retail sectors, and several retail types demonstrate sufficient surplus demand to support additional businesses. Significant retail gaps exist in almost every analyzed industry group, except for lawn and garden equipment and supply stores, grocery stores, specialty food stores, health and personal care stores, florists, and bars and pubs. In addition to their ability to capitalize on existing trade area demand, these sectors represent areas of growth given regional demographics and consumer trends. There is potential for growth in many sectors if growth is well-planned and managed.

La Farge and Trade Area Retail Leakage

Figure 3.6 highlights the sectors in which the Village and trade area have demand (potential sales) and supply (actual sales). This shows either substantial unmet retail demand or a high percentage of local demand being met elsewhere, indicating an ability to support retail establishments based on local demand alone. The presence of a supply gap is a potential indicator that additional retailers could be supported in the area.

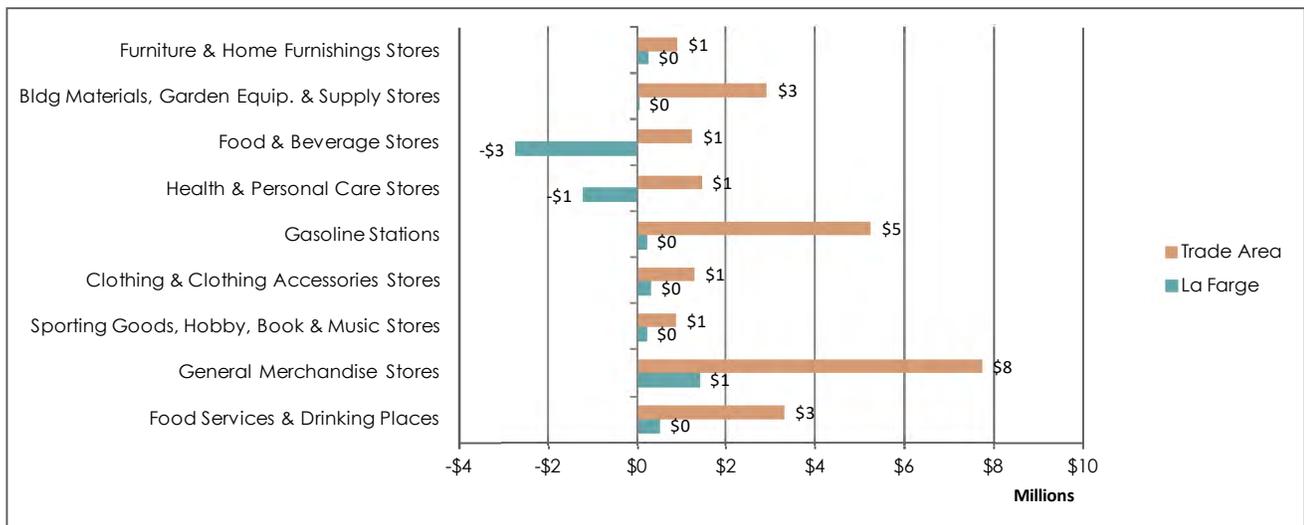
Figure 3.7 shows the supply gap from Figure 3.6, and compares the retail demand (potential sales) in La Farge and La Farge's trade area with the retail supply (current sales). For example, the Food Services & Drinking Places have an unmet demand (gap) of \$3 million in the trade area. In La Farge, the village proper, it is a \$495,000 gap, which will not appear on the graph because the numbers are shown in millions. Table 3.12 on Page 24 lists the figures in table format. The figures highlight the Village's ability to support retail establishments based on local demand alone. The presence of a supply gap is a potential indicator that additional retailers could be supported in the area.

Figure 3.6: Supply and Demand



Source: ESRI Business Analyst

Figure 3.7: Supply Gap



Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2019

Based on current spending patterns, significant retail gaps exist in almost every analyzed industry group in the figures shown. These retail categories include:

- Lawn and garden equipment and supply stores;
- Grocery stores;
- Florists;
- Bars and pubs;
- Restaurants; and
- General Merchandise Stores.

Opportunities may exist for other sectors if these establishments can target a specific underserved niche market or strategic location. This is especially important in a niche-rich economic environment like downtown La Farge, which can capitalize on the local Amish community and visitors who come for motorcycling, hiking, bicycling, and canoeing.

During public engagement sessions, several other business ideas were mentioned to help with downtown activity, those include:

- Laundromat (for campers);
- Coffee Shop;
- Antique Store;
- Commercial Kitchen for community use; and
- Daycare.

Other smaller surplus categories present opportunities for existing retailers to expand their product line to accommodate specific needs. For instance, a building supply retailer may be able to add gardening products to capture currently unmet demand in the home and garden sector. Other sectors are less likely to be competitive locally – for instance, electronics purchases will primarily still be made in big box stores in larger communities where greater opportunities for comparison shopping are available. In the Village proper, surplus includes motor vehicles & parts dealers, health & personal care stores, miscellaneous store retailers, and drinking places. The only category with a surplus in the trade area is Specialty Food Stores, which is likely attributed to the Organic Valley retail store.

Location on key commuting routes and clear visibility of the businesses create top of mind awareness. The critical mass of other businesses will make a stop more convenient. For this reason, any new commercial development should be limited to downtown areas. Because competition from communities in or near La Farge's trade area is considerable, finding ways to pool resources and share the cost of marketing among multiple retailers may make La Farge businesses more competitive. Additionally, a building may contain several businesses. The Laundromat could also be a coffee shop or an antiques store and a coffee shop.

An opportunity in La Farge is the Internet Fiber available in the community. This allows a retail business to be present on Main Street, but also have a thriving online retail business.

Providing complementary support infrastructure can also reinforce these clusters as they emerge. For instance, specific to La Farge's situation, services available to motorcyclists, ATV/UTV users, bicyclists, or canoe trippers in the warmer months would support additional businesses downtown. Likewise, more hitching posts and better infrastructure could improve La Farge's standing as a commercial center for the local Amish community, both for providing goods and services to the Amish and providing possible economic opportunities for them. Table 3.12 shows the supply and demand by industry group for La Farge and the trade area.

Table 3.12: Supply and Demand Table Format

Industry Group	La Farge					Trade Area				
	Demand (Potential)	Supply (Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/ Surplus	Number of Businesses	Demand (Potential)	Supply (Sales)	Retail Gap	Leakage/ Surplus	Number of Businesses
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	\$1,947,658	\$5,858,801	-\$3,911,143	-50.1	1	\$11,646,681	\$6,890,317	\$4,756,364	25.7	3
Automobile Dealers	\$1,546,327	\$5,858,801	-\$4,312,474	-58.2	1	\$9,243,644	\$6,178,371	\$3,065,273	19.9	2
Other Motor Vehicle Dealers	\$258,228	\$0	\$258,228	100.0	0	\$1,592,479	\$604,751	\$987,728	45.0	1
Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores	\$143,103	\$0	\$143,103	100.0	0	\$810,558	\$0	\$810,558	100.0	0
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	\$234,488	\$0	\$234,488	100.0	0	\$1,243,700	\$336,933	\$906,767	57.4	1
Furniture Stores	\$140,589	\$0	\$140,589	100.0	0	\$729,872	\$0	\$729,872	100.0	0
Home Furnishings Stores	\$93,899	\$0	\$93,899	100.0	0	\$513,828	\$244,681	\$269,147	35.5	1
Electronics & Appliance Stores	\$243,996	\$496,123	-\$252,127	-34.1	1	\$1,311,732	\$496,123	\$815,609	45.1	1
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	\$624,508	\$598,491	\$26,017	2.1	2	\$3,796,837	\$884,833	\$2,912,004	62.2	4
Bldg Material & Supplies Dealers	\$554,526	\$598,491	-\$43,965	-3.8	2	\$3,365,025	\$873,367	\$2,491,658	58.8	3
Lawn & Garden Equip & Supply Stores	\$69,982	\$0	\$69,982	100.0	0	\$431,812	\$0	\$431,812	100.0	0
Food & Beverage Stores	\$1,283,717	\$3,996,934	-\$2,713,217	-51.4	2	\$7,264,794	\$6,026,286	\$1,238,508	9.3	5
Grocery Stores	\$1,125,849	\$936,600	\$189,249	9.2	1	\$6,389,269	\$2,462,943	\$3,926,326	44.4	3
Specialty Food Stores	\$92,509	\$3,060,334	-\$2,967,825	-94.1	1	\$523,529	\$3,563,342	-\$3,039,813	-74.4	2
Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores	\$65,359	\$0	\$65,359	100.0	0	\$351,997	\$0	\$351,997	100.0	0
Health & Personal Care Stores	\$552,948	\$1,751,657	-\$1,198,709	-52.0	1	\$3,207,114	\$1,765,309	\$1,441,805	29.0	1
Gasoline Stations	\$1,053,931	\$857,131	\$196,800	10.3	1	\$6,101,097	\$857,131	\$5,243,966	75.4	1
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	\$291,919	\$0	\$291,919	100.0	0	\$1,511,737	\$231,306	\$1,280,431	73.5	2
Clothing Stores	\$194,576	\$0	\$194,576	100.0	0	\$1,012,649	\$153,779	\$858,870	73.6	1
Shoe Stores	\$43,766	\$0	\$43,766	100.0	0	\$230,274	\$0	\$230,274	100.0	0
Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores	\$53,577	\$0	\$53,577	100.0	0	\$268,814	\$77,527	\$191,287	55.2	1
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	\$193,523	\$0	\$193,523	100.0	0	\$1,069,115	\$203,462	\$865,653	68.0	1
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instr Stores	\$164,183	\$0	\$164,183	100.0	0	\$917,974	\$203,462	\$714,512	63.7	1
Book, Periodical & Music Stores	\$29,340	\$0	\$29,340	100.0	0	\$151,141	\$0	\$151,141	100.0	0
General Merchandise Stores	\$1,390,629	\$0	\$1,390,629	100.0	0	\$7,731,503	\$0	\$7,731,503	100.0	0
Department Stores Excluding Leased Depts.	\$1,038,438	\$0	\$1,038,438	100.0	0	\$5,721,817	\$0	\$5,721,817	100.0	0
Other General Merchandise Stores	\$352,191	\$0	\$352,191	100.0	0	\$2,009,686	\$0	\$2,009,686	100.0	0
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$337,097	\$410,590	-\$73,493	-9.8	1	\$1,993,211	\$1,048,549	\$944,662	31.1	4
Florists	\$15,339	\$0	\$15,339	100.0	0	\$86,464	\$38,561	\$47,903	38.3	1
Office Supplies, Stationery & Gift Stores	\$68,299	\$0	\$68,299	100.0	0	\$373,357	\$0	\$373,357	100.0	0
Used Merchandise Stores	\$63,004	\$0	\$63,004	100.0	0	\$331,535	\$148,072	\$183,463	38.3	1
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$190,455	\$410,590	-\$220,135	-36.6	1	\$1,201,856	\$821,180	\$380,676	18.8	2
Nonstore Retailers	\$246,150	\$0	\$246,150	100.0	0	\$1,428,138	\$0	\$1,428,138	100.0	0
Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses	\$187,204	\$0	\$187,204	100.0	0	\$1,073,614	\$0	\$1,073,614	100.0	0
Vending Machine Operators	\$17,097	\$0	\$17,097	100.0	0	\$95,747	\$0	\$95,747	100.0	0
Direct Selling Establishments	\$41,849	\$0	\$41,849	100.0	0	\$258,776	\$0	\$258,776	100.0	0
Food Services & Drinking Places	\$769,516	\$274,466	\$495,050	47.4	2	\$4,094,273	\$790,896	\$3,303,377	67.6	6
Special Food Services	\$21,092	\$0	\$21,092	100.0	0	\$117,777	\$0	\$117,777	100.0	0
Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages	\$50,251	\$91,648	-\$41,397	-29.2	1	\$248,345	\$388,875	-\$140,530	-22.1	3
Restaurants/Other Eating Places	\$698,173	\$182,818	\$515,355	58.5	1	\$3,728,151	\$402,021	\$3,326,130	80.5	2

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2019

Real Estate Analysis

The availability of suitable land and real estate has a significant impact on the ability of businesses to grow and expand in a community. There is currently an excess supply of developable land and vacant buildings in the downtown. However, La Farge is in a unique location near the Kickapoo River, and thus a significant portion of the western edge of the downtown is in the floodway or floodplain. Buildings in areas of the downtown that can be redeveloped yet are in the floodplain should be flood-proof. Much of the vacant land in the village is undeveloped due to the floodplain and impact of flood waters.

Many businesses opt for a location in smaller communities due to the increased affordability of space. The rent in La Farge is favorable to small businesses. However, this rent benefit does not offset the limited local customer pool and travel time to supplier or customer destinations for many businesses, especially outside of the summer tourist season. Thus, business owners will need to be creative by combining multiple businesses into one space. Additionally, there is opportunity for business offices in the downtown. The business offices downtown will create more daytime employees, which in turn could help support a restaurant in the downtown.

Along Main Street between Mill Street and Maple Street, there are several opportunities for infill development, and for better use of various parcels. La Farge may benefit from efforts to assist tenants or property owners to upgrade existing office or retail spaces. The Village should explore opportunities to support development of for-lease small retail, office, or specialty shop spaces to retain and attract businesses in this size range that wish to remain and grow in the market.

Additionally, as consumer needs have shifted from a downtown-centered model to a more regional trade area, downtown storefront use has shifted; professional service tenants have found that first-floor storefront spaces provide greater visibility, marketing and customer convenience.

Commercial and Professional Office Assessment

The availability of suitable land and real estate has a significant impact on the ability of businesses to grow and expand in a community. Data is provided using two separate industry classification systems to best capture the total commercial office space needs, as the ways businesses are counted and reported vary from system to system. However, using both classification systems allows us to determine with some certainty that between 38 and 50 businesses are employing about 438 employees in La Farge that require commercial office space. Numbers for the trade area (combined prime and secondary trade area), and the County are included to compare the available businesses.

Tables 3.13 and 3.14 indicate there is a shortage of hotels & lodging. As noted during the public workshop and during the focus groups, there is a demand for lodging for visitors to the Kickapoo Valley Reserve and other recreational destinations in the Driftless region.

Table 3.13: Commercial Sectors Business and Employee Counts (SIC)

Sector SIC	La Farge		Trade Area		County	
	Businesses	Employees	Businesses	Employees	Businesses	Employees
Retail Trade Summary	11	91	21	79	232	2,033
Home Improvement	2	5	2	4	22	139
General Merchandise Stores	0	0	0	0	10	216
Food Stores	2	36	4	27	30	373
Apparel & Accessory Stores	0	0	2	2	5	16
Furniture & Home Furnishings	1	3	0	1	16	67
Eating & Drinking Places	2	10	5	21	69	723
Miscellaneous Retail	2	12	6	13	50	187
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate Summary	9	25	5	14	123	658
Banks, Savings & Lending Institutions	1	8	2	6	22	284
Securities Brokers	0	0	0	0	10	22
Insurance Carriers & Agents	1	2	0	0	25	78
Real Estate, Holding, Other Investment	7	15	3	8	66	274
Services Summary	18	322	35	176	489	4,783
Hotels & Lodging	1	1	6	9	32	245
Automotive Services	2	3	1	2	48	131
Motion Pictures & Amusements	0	0	2	19	40	205
Health Services	4	42	1	8	57	1,266
Legal Services	1	4	0	1	11	26
Education Institutions & Libraries	2	49	2	42	37	1,187
Other Services	8	223	23	95	264	1,723
Totals	38	438	61	269	844	7,474

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2019

Table 3.14: Commercial Sectors Business and Employee Counts (NAICS)

Sector NAICS	La Farge		Trade Area		County	
	Businesses	Employees	Businesses	Employees	Businesses	Employees
Retail Trade	9	81	16	57	159	1289
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	0	0	0	1	10	33
Bldg Material & Garden Equipment & Supplies Dealers	2	5	2	4	21	136
Food & Beverage Stores	2	36	4	26	23	351
Health & Personal Care Stores	1	7	1	2	10	65
Gasoline Stations	1	6	0	1	8	89
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	0	0	2	3	8	19
Sport Goods, Hobby, Book, & Music Stores	0	0	0	0	11	21
General Merchandise Stores	0	0	0	0	10	216
Information	1	4	3	7	33	335
Finance & Insurance	2	10	2	6	57	384
Securities, Commodity Contracts & Other Financial Investments & Other Related Activities	0	0	0	0	10	22
Insurance Carriers & Related Activities; Funds, Trusts & Other Financial Vehicles	1	2	0	0	25	78
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	3	7	1	2	59	204
Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	4	210	7	52	71	409
Management of Companies & Enterprises	0	0	0	1	5	14
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0	2	18	30	150
Accommodation & Food Services	3	11	11	32	101	968
Accommodation	1	1	6	9	32	245
Food Services & Drinking Places	2	10	5	21	69	723
Other Services (except Public Administration)	10	23	16	32	226	677
Automotive Repair & Maintenance	1	2	1	1	39	109
Public Administration	7	23	12	43	110	681
Totals	50	438	91	318	1,127	7,218

Source: Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2019

Tourism and Visitor Recruitment

Vernon County

Vernon County ranked 50th out of 72 counties in the state for tourism expenditures, according to the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, with \$40.1 million of expenditures. The county experienced an increase in direct visitor spending from \$36.5 million in 2017 to \$40.1 million in 2018, a 10.04% percent change. Vernon County experienced \$62.8 million in total business sales. There was a 4.95% increase in employment related to tourism from 2017 to 2018. Tourism expenditures are directly responsible for 531 jobs in the County.

According to the Economic Development Strategy for Vernon County (2017), tourism is one of the three primary industry clusters found within Vernon County and the region. Vernon County has farm stands, bed and breakfast inns, and state or local parks that offer recreational activities such as biking, canoeing, hiking, kayaking, and more. There are also over 220 miles of trout streams in the county.

Leader in Organic Local Food Industry

Due to the efforts of communities, companies, and individuals in Vernon County, Vernon County is a leader in the organic local food industry in the Midwest. The headquarters of Organic Valley, an organic food brand and independent cooperative of organic farmers, is located in La Farge, and thus creates a substantial addition to the organic local food industry. The farm of Go Macro, which purports to produce the world's best organic protein bars, is located within 10 minutes of La Farge. There are over 200 certified organic farms in Vernon County.

Many people visit the Driftless Café in Viroqua for its "affordable farm-to-table" atmosphere. Visitors come from Madison, Milwaukee, Chicago, and Minneapolis. The café is known for its creative cuisine and for using locally sourced ingredients. According to the La Crosse Tribune in 2015, the café spent nearly \$100,000 on locally sourced products. To expand on the local food movement, La Farge could establish a commercial kitchen for locals to create new products from locally sourced products. People could make food in small batches and sell locally. Micro-producers need a space larger than their home, and a commercial kitchen can fit their needs. It's common for kitchens to charge a combination of flexible, per-hour pricing, a monthly lease and a security deposit. In addition to serving business needs, many community kitchens provide an educational aspect too, creating a space where restaurants and caterers could train employees, or individuals could offer cooking classes.

Because community kitchens serve many different purposes and respond to a need felt by local food businesses, opening one is both a business opportunity and a way to become involved with the local community and economy.

Kickapoo Valley Reserve

The Kickapoo Valley Reserve (KVR), an 8,600 acre tract of public land, is located just north of La Farge. Its history, resources, administration, and recreational diversity make it unique -

a place like no other. More than 20,000 people visited the KVR in 2019 to hike, bike, snowmobile, canoe/kayak, camp, and complete other outdoor activities. There is a canoe landing on the Kickapoo River just off State Route 82/W Main Street. There are even Winter Trails for Winter Activities. There are campsites that offer trail and canoe opportunities. The KVR hosts many events and programs. Additionally, the visitor center can be reserved for meetings and weddings.

The majority of visitors visit between May and October. The KVR still experiences substantial visitors during the winter months; KVR hosted 1,117 visitors in January 2018. KVR is dedicated to creating outdoor winter experiences. Many communities in northern climates have realized they must take winter as an opportunity. A community can offer winter opportunities to mitigate negative effects of the winter season while reinforcing positive aspects to create a vibrant, sustainable, and livable environment. Wintercities.com is a great resource for winter communities.

Lodging

Visitor lodging opportunities are currently very limited in La Farge. If the Village is to more fully take advantage of tourism opportunities, additional lodging options would be needed. There are four lodging sites in the Village. One of the sites, The Old Church Inn, is an old church that has been converted to an inn that hosts six guests. The owner of The Old Church is booked every weekend during the summer. The Wisconsin Department of Tourism estimates that approximately \$40.1 million was spent by tourists in Vernon County in 2018. Statewide tourist expenditure ratios show that tourists made 20% of their expenditures on shopping, 26% on food, 14% on recreation, 27% on lodging (up from 13% in 2009), and 13% on transportation. If the 27% lodging statistic holds true for Vernon County, approximately \$10.8 million was spent on lodging in the County in 2018. The lion's share of that is captured by Viroqua, which, as the largest city in the County, has the largest number of hotel rooms available. Given the amount of existing expenditures in the County, a La Farge entrepreneur would only need to capture a small fraction of those expenditures to open up a bed and breakfast. Consider the following establishment for La Farge:

- 6-room bed and breakfast.
- Open 365 days a year (2,190 room-nights).
- State average hotel occupancy rate of about 54.4% (statista.com).
- State average room rate of about \$93 (cvent.com).

Such an establishment would bring in about \$110,000 per year, which is just 1.02% of total estimated lodging expenditures in Vernon County. Given expenditures necessary for a bed and breakfast business, a two person household would likely need a second income, or would need to combine the lodging with an associated business, in order to make a living off of such a small lodging establishment.

Kickapoo River and Trout Fishing

An Economic Impact of Recreational Trout Angling in the Driftless Area report was completed in November 2016. The report found that it had a direct economic impact of almost \$414 million and an indirect impact of almost \$290 million in the Driftless Area of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa. While the impact is spread over an area the size of West Virginia, it is nonetheless substantial, and something that more rural villages, such as La Farge, can take advantage of just as easily as more populated centers. Awareness of the Driftless Area as a trout fishing destination is growing due to well-publicized stream restoration efforts. The Kickapoo River and its tributaries are known for some of the best trout fishing in an area already renowned for good trout fishing.

The Report noted that the typical angler who lived outside the Driftless Area travelled over 138 miles one-way to fish in the region, and has been fishing in the region for almost 18 years. The most popular lodging was camping, followed by hotel or motel. The average length of a trip was 2.44 days.

A large majority (88.5%) of people who responded to the survey were aware of stream restoration efforts, and 80% were more likely to visit the area because of the efforts. It is not only restoration efforts that make the area popular – the Kickapoo and its tributaries also have abundant public access points which further facilitate fishing. By and large, recreational trout anglers have a median household income that is higher than the state and national averages, which allows them to spend substantial amounts on the activity. The average angler who lives within the Driftless Area spends \$47.91 per trip, and \$6,055 annually on trout fishing in the Driftless Area, while trout-fishing visitors spend \$474.91 per trip and \$2,773 annually. Average expenditures per outing are well-spread across a variety of industries, such as fishing supplies, guiding services, restaurants/bars, amusements/entertainment, equipment rental, lodging, groceries, and souvenirs.

For La Farge to benefit from the Kickapoo River Valley's trout fishing tourism, it will need to upgrade its lodging and dining options to ensure it is seen as more than just a place to stop and refuel on the way to somewhere else. Visiting anglers will either look for a campground with plenty of amenities close to the river, or look for a bed-and-breakfast; having both options available is preferable. The Village could go a step further, and attempt to attract some sort of sportsman's lodge that could offer a place to stay at night and guide services during the day to show visitors good trout fishing locations. Also, in order to have a chance of competing with nearby larger municipalities, the Village needs one or more casual, sit-down dining options. Another method for attracting more anglers to La Farge is to have events in and around the Village that celebrate the open and/or close of the trout fishing season. The trout season opens the first Saturday in May and concludes on September 30th each year. Celebrating the area's rich outdoor heritage as prominently as its agricultural heritage would boost overall tourism interest in La Farge.

4.0 Main Street Assessment

What Makes a Main Street Thrive?

A good Main Street is comprised of many aspects. However, walkability is key. Walkability is a measure of how friendly an area is for pedestrians. Factors influencing walkability include the presence or absence and quality of footpaths, sidewalks or other pedestrian rights-of-way, traffic and road conditions, land use patterns, building accessibility, distance and safety. The friendlier a place, the more people will walk or bike. Increased pedestrian activity has been shown to increase retail sales. Having more people use non-motorized transportation contributes to public health, economic development, and a sustainable environment. To generate more pedestrian activity, a community must identify the factors that influence people's decision to bike, walk, take transit, and/or drive.

Active streets are beneficial to new small stores or restaurants. Small stores or restaurants usually cannot compete with chains on advertising, but they can do better with a location on an already busy street. Additionally, pedestrians and cyclists out-consume drivers over the course of a month. Pedestrians and cyclists may purchase fewer items in one trip, but tend to make more frequent trips than drivers. It is easier to make an impulse stop while walking or biking than it is driving. Providing street improvements for pedestrians and cyclists may increase sales by 30 percent.

One effort or change will not create an active Main Street. A thriving Main Street corridor will be the result of a variety of on-going efforts. The Project for Public Spaces identifies the Power of 10+ as a concept developed to facilitate Placemaking and which outlines a recipe, of sorts, for creating a space where people want to be. Places thrive when users have a range of reasons to be there. These might include a place to sit, playgrounds to enjoy, art to touch, music to hear, food to eat, history to experience, and people to meet. These activities should be unique to that particular place, reflecting the culture and history of the surrounding community.

The assessment process was developed around the understanding of an active Main Street respecting the local culture. The questions and activities presented to the public and steering committee aimed to discover what an ideal Main Street corridor would be like for La Farge.

Downtown & Community Assessment

Through public engagement meetings and site visits, an assessment was conducted of the Main Street corridor. This assessment included identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. Challenges are defined as conditions that could inhibit the community's ability to realize its stated goals. Opportunities are defined as conditions that could enhance the community's quality of life or allow it to better achieve its stated goals. The following provides an overview of what was identified within each of those categories specific to La Farge and its downtown core. The assessment was organized by a series of topics that emerged based on the individual comments and observations. A full copy of the results of this assessment are included in Appendix 1.

Challenges

Village-Wide

- Lack of daycare on the eastern side of Vernon County is a huge obstacle.
- Difficulty recruiting employees to this rural area. Younger demographics want to live in more urban areas, like La Crosse.
- Families do not want to live here. Retirees move back to live here.
- Flooding.
- For housing construction: developer needs \$200/month profit per unit on a duplex to be financially feasible. For new construction, a unit would have to charge rents of \$1,100 per unit, which isn't financially viable in this location. For a 4- or 8-plex unit, the monthly rent is reduced to \$950/month, which is more marketable, but still difficult.
- New subdivision is close to built out. No more areas within Village for housing development, except a few infill parcels.
- Cannot develop south of Main Street.
- Shortage of housing.

Local Business Climate

- La Farge is more of a destination community, particularly during the summer months.
- Only one restaurant in the village.
- Not enough population to support small business, especially restaurants.
- Too many service based businesses.
- Need more retail.
- Pottery studio is a perfect artisans business, but it is never open.
- Hardware store is major amenity, but worry about succession planning. Who will take over? How do we keep it from closing?
- Need specialty shops for summer time tourists. Examples include: an ice cream shop, coffee shop.

Local Events & Tourism

- Lack of recreation opportunities for kids. Nothing for kids to do during the summer.
- Not enough lodging to attract visitors to stay.
- Relying on seasonal tourism for businesses to be viable. Need to be creative with business models that have alternative sources of income (online sales, combination business, etc.).

Land Use and Built Environment

- Buildings on Main Street are not appealing. Not a good selection for potential buyers to pick from.
- There is a disconnect between Organic Valley employees and Main Street – how do we get them there?

- Existing canoe landing is in a cow pasture. Therefore, most people get out at Rockton.
- Current building owners are trying to maintain their buildings for the lowest cost; cheapens what we do have with no design aesthetic.
- Cost of flood insurance was too much for some businesses to move forward.
- The truck center is the first thing people see when they come into town. It is not very inviting.
- The downtown needs to be more handicap accessible.
- Intersection of West Main St. & N. Silver St. is problematic; there's always water in the intersection, which turns into ice in the winter. The drainage ditch on the vacant lot is always wet and runs under the sidewalk, creating problems with water.
- Village needs to get utility infrastructure out of the flood area. Had to shut down power for 48 hours during flood, which impacted the entire community. Plans have been constructed to relocate the infrastructure, but is cost prohibitive.
- Alley ditch needs to be dug out south of clinic & baseball field. When this ditch is cleaned out, it keeps water off of Main Street in that area.
- The downtown is run-down and unsightly.
- The main entrance to the downtown from the west has safety issues for pedestrians.

Opportunities

Village-Wide

- This is a less expensive place to live than other communities in the area, particularly Viroqua.

Local Business Climate

- Gas station has seen 13% growth per year for nine consecutive years. Many visitors stop at the gas station after canoeing. This growth shows opportunity for another business to take advantage of the outdoor recreation possibilities.
- A Flower Shop is opening in the downtown. The Flower Shop will also have a Wine Lounge attached.
- Adding businesses that support Organic Valley (catering, meeting coordination, lodging, etc.).
- Be hub for recreation businesses to supply hunters, campers, hikers canoe/kayakers
- Highlight the artistic talents in the village. Have a store on Main Street that sells various artisans crafts.
- Allow food carts.
- Organic Valley cafeteria is now available to the public during certain hours.

Local Events & Tourism

- Tourism related to Amish destination lasts from Memorial Day through the end of the year.

- Huge hunting & fishing tourism base. Lots of disposable income with types of people that are attracted to the area.
- Need to have a full weekend of activities for visitors. One or two things are not enough.

Land Use and Built Environment

- Tell the story about the La Farge Flooding History.
- Way-finding signage.
- WiFi in park for campers.
- Create Design Guidelines for downtown.
- Connect downtown to Kickapoo Valley Reserve.
- Nuzum's Building used for canoe/kayak/bike rental business.
- Create nicer canoe landing.
- Enhance existing building facades.
- Former railroad bed could be a great opportunity to create a trail connection.
- Annex land to the east for residential growth.
- Develop housing for retirees.
- Add electric vehicle charging stations.
- Fiber Optic Technology.

Land Use and Built Environment

The maps on the following pages illustrate the assessment of existing conditions in La Farge. These maps utilized the public engagement results from the first public workshop and created a visual assessment for participants to respond to in subsequent workshops, ensuring that the proper messaging was received from the input. Map 4.1 on the following page identifies an assessment of existing conditions for the Main Street corridor, while Map 4.2 identifies a map of existing conditions on a Village-wide scale.

Flood Hazard Zones

La Farge, WI

Flood Hazard Zones

Zone Type

-  1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
-  Regulatory Floodway
-  Special Floodway
-  Area of Undetermined Flood Hazard
-  0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
-  Future Conditions 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
-  Area with Reduced Risk Due to Levee

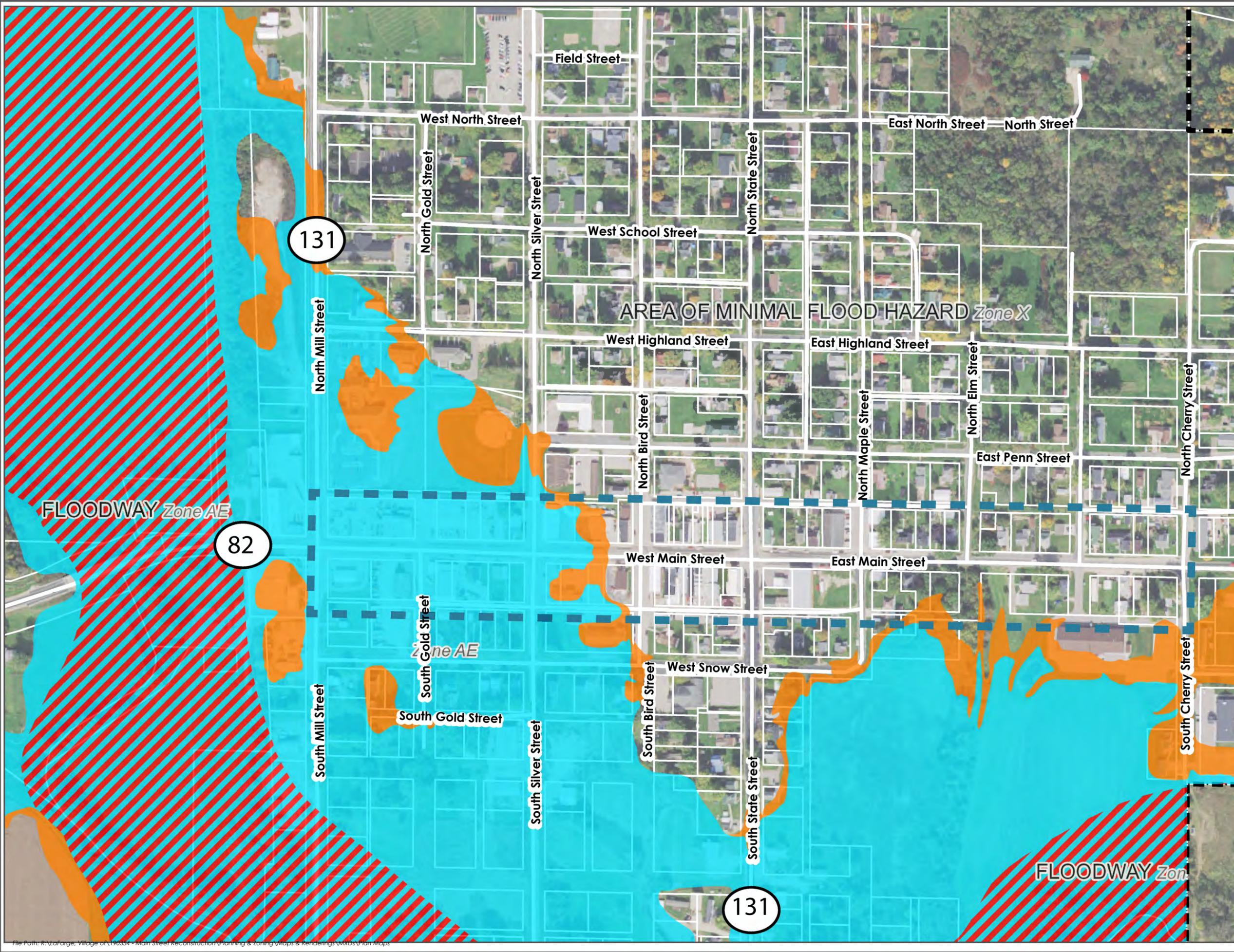
 Planning Boundary



vierbicher
planners | engineers | advisors

REEDSBURG - MADISON - PRAIRIE DU CHIEN - MILWAUKEE METRO
400 Viking Drive, Reedsburg, WI 53959
Phone: (608) 524-6468 Fax: (608) 524-1218

Data sources: FEMA, Vernon County, vierbicher



Downtown Land Use Scenarios

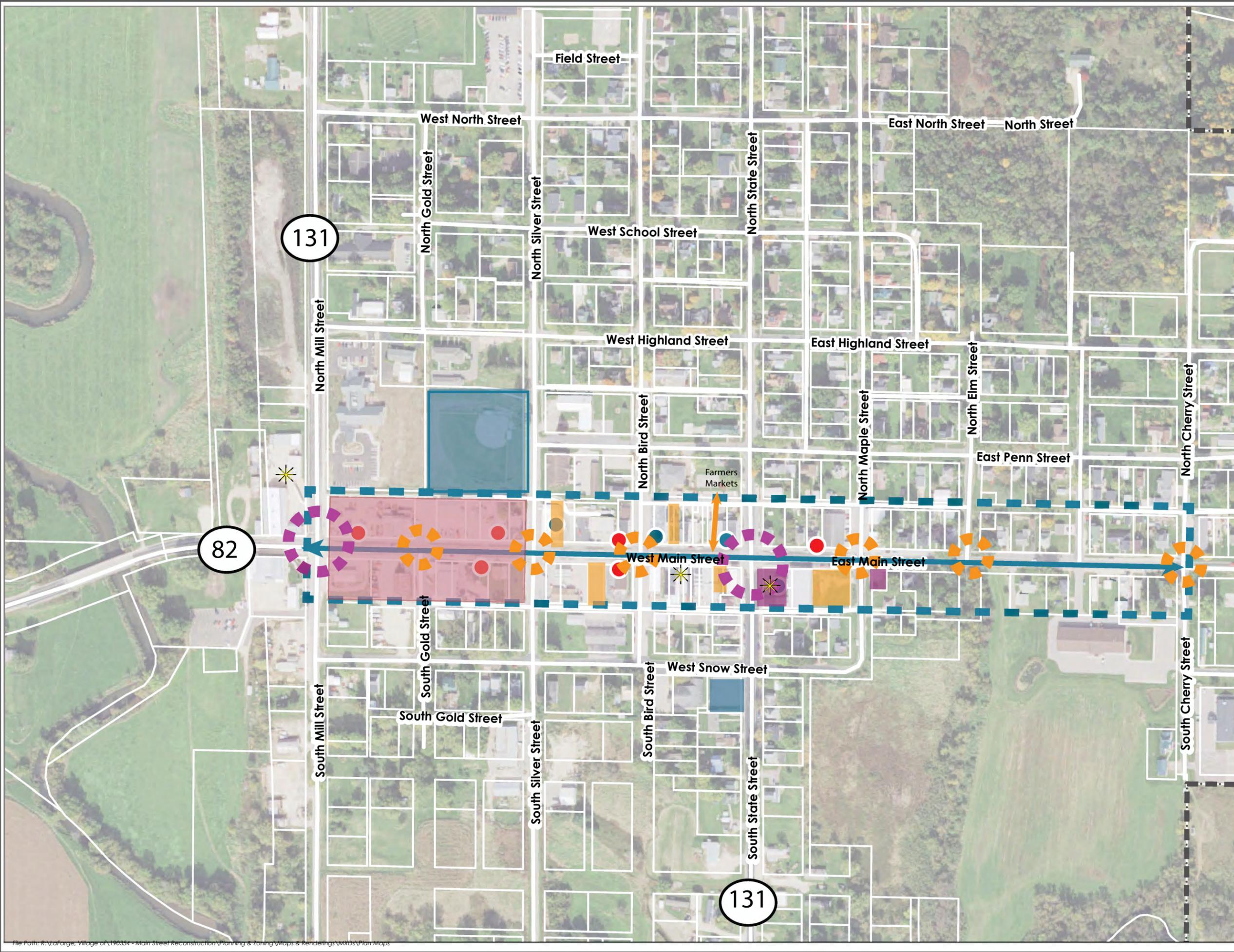
La Farge, WI

-  Gateway
-  Intersection Improvements
-  Bike Racks/Street Furniture
-  Potential location for Murals
-  Streetscape
-  Improve Alley connection
-  Potential Land Use Change
-  Infill/Development Opp
-  Rehab
-  Redevelop with Flood-Proofed Buildings
-  Under-utilized parcels
-  Planning Boundary



vierbicher
 planners | engineers | advisors

REEDSBURG - MADISON - PRAIRIE DU CHIEN - MILWAUKEE METRO
 400 Viking Drive, Reedsburg, WI 53959
 Phone: (608) 524-6468 Fax: (608) 524-3218



File Path: R:\LaFarge, Village of 190354 - Main Street Reconstruction Planning & Zoning Maps & Renderings\WDBs\Plan Maps

Data Sources: FEMA, Vernon County, vierbicher

5.0 STREETScape DESIGN

With the planned reconstruction of the Main Street corridor, and in an effort to contribute to the overall economic recovery of the downtown area after recent flood events, streetscape design will be an important element for enhancing the experience and aesthetic appeal of this corridor. Downtown La Farge sees a substantial amount of visitor traffic during the summer months from the Kickapoo Valley Reserve, visitors to the area's Amish farms, motorcycle groups, and others, with traffic volumes in excess of 2,600 vehicles per day along Highways 131 and 82. The goal of the streetscape redesign is to improve wayfinding, walkability and safety for all travelers and to encourage travelers to stay and explore a while.

The study area for the streetscape design is an eight-block stretch of Main Street between Mill Street and Cherry Street. The west end of the street, from Mill Street to Maple Street, includes primarily commercial uses. East of Maple Street to Cherry Street is a primarily residential area. The entire length of the study area has a consistent right-of-way that is 66' wide. Because of the different land uses and characters, Maple Street will be used as a dividing line to split the design into two sub-areas. The character of each of these areas is different, and so it is appropriate to design them differently, based on their use and characteristics.

One important consideration within the commercial corridor is the enhancement of locations where pedestrians can safely cross the street. In particular, the intersections with Mill Street, the eastern side of the street at Bird Street, and State Street are key locations for enhanced pedestrian crossings. It is the Village's preference to not use bump-outs, due to the turning radiuses required for large truck traffic that utilizes Highways 82 and 131. Instead, visual crossings should be created through alternative paving treatments across the asphalt to indicate to vehicles that it is a pedestrian area.

Figure 5.1: Planning Area and Sub-Areas



Commercial Area- Mill Street to Maple Street

In the past, this portion of Main Street had angled parking along both sides of the street. The street has since been re-striped to have two wide travel lanes and parallel parking on both sides. Parallel parking is more typical of a downtown area and safer for motorists and pedestrians.

To begin the streetscape design process, a series of alternative street designs were studied, including making the street narrower for more pedestrian access, maintaining a wide pavement width but adding dedicated bike lanes, or a middle option that kept the street a bit wider for shared car/bike lanes (sharrows) but added a bit of terrace area to accommodate street trees. With Highways 131 and 82 traveling along the corridor, any potential scenario requires approval of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

The feedback received from the steering committee and the attendees of the second public workshop was to prioritize safe bike travel. Many tourists visit from the Kickapoo Valley Reserve by bike, and employees of Organic Valley often travel by bicycle, as do some local residents. Currently, there are no dedicated bicycle lanes on any of the streets within the Village. This option adds approximately two feet to the sidewalk area as well, providing a little extra space for street lighting, planters, benches, etc. It is the Village's preference to not include street trees within the commercial corridor area, but instead rely on planters and hanging baskets for greenery.

The proposed street design for the commercial area includes two 12' wide travel lanes, two 5' wide bike lanes, two 8' wide parallel parking lanes, and 8' of curb, terrace and sidewalk area. Many buildings also have additional sidewalk area outside of the right-of-way. All existing driveways will remain until such time as a parcel is redeveloped. At that time, appropriate driveway sizes and locations will be considered.

Figures 5.3 and 5.4 show the proposed cross-section and plan for this portion of the corridor. These figures are located at the end of this Chapter.

Street furnishings and finishes were also discussed, and the preferred styles are identified below. The general theme of the commercial area is fairly traditional, with the option to mix in artistic elements through the bench style, planters, or individual business displays. Generally, it was determined that more natural finishes were preferred, when the option was available. There are current design elements that have been introduced in high-quality buildings within the community already that lend to an overall design aesthetic. Buildings such as the Organic Valley headquarters and the La Farge Medical Clinic have utilized a rural theme that sets a positive tone for design, and should be looked upon as inspiration for other design characteristics.

During discussions with the Steering Committee regarding design elements, there was consensus that elements that tie to a river theme might also be appropriate. Therefore, design details as shown on the middle bench below, or the "river rock" style pavement shown may be appropriate for streetscape design elements. The Village does not desire design elements that are too traditional, but also not too eccentric or modern. It is important to tie into the elements found in the natural setting of their location and utilize those characteristics to create a cohesive vision for the downtown.

Figure 5.2: Preliminary Street Furnishing and Finish Selections - Commercial Area



Residential Area: Maple Street to Cherry Street

This portion of Main Street has a much narrower pavement width of approximately 22', but wide shoulders have been added over time to create on-street parking for the adjacent residences. There is currently a sidewalk along the north side of the street but not the south, and very few street trees.

The proposed streetscape design for this sub-area includes slightly wider travel lanes to be consistent with the commercial area, formal on-street parking lanes on both sides of the street, and wider terraces to allow for additional street tree planting and street lighting. There does not seem to be demand for sidewalk along the south side of the street, so the sidewalk will remain only on the northern side. All existing driveway locations will remain. Figure 5.5 shows the proposed streetscape cross-section for this area, and Figure 5.6 shows the streetscape plan for a typical block. These figures are located at the end of this Chapter.



Right: Classic downlight fixture to complement commercial area

Figure 5.3: Proposed Streetscape Section – Commercial Area



Figure 5.4: Proposed Streetscape Plan – Commercial Area

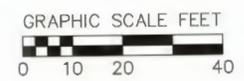
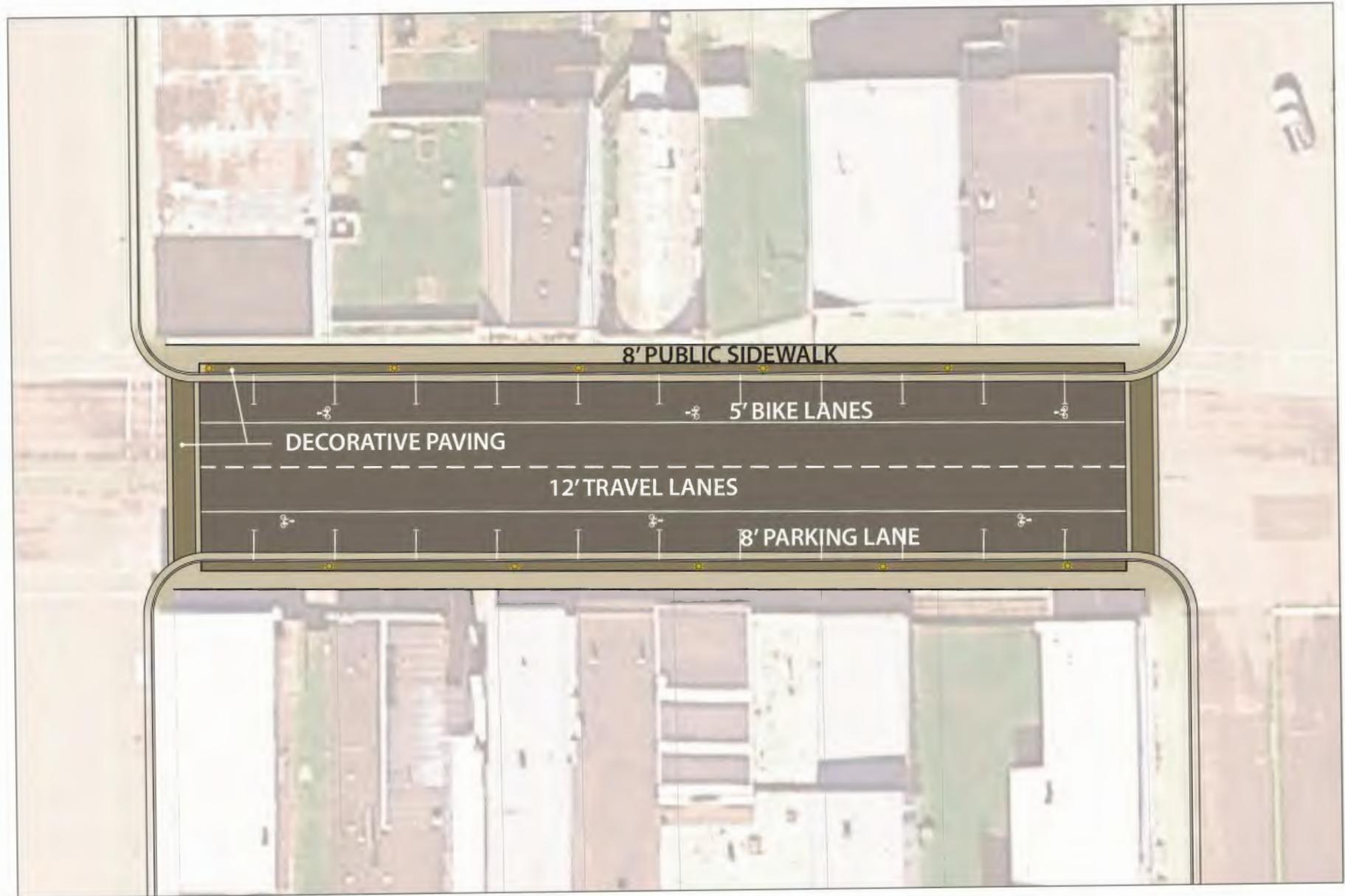


Figure 5.5: Proposed Streetscape Section – Residential Area

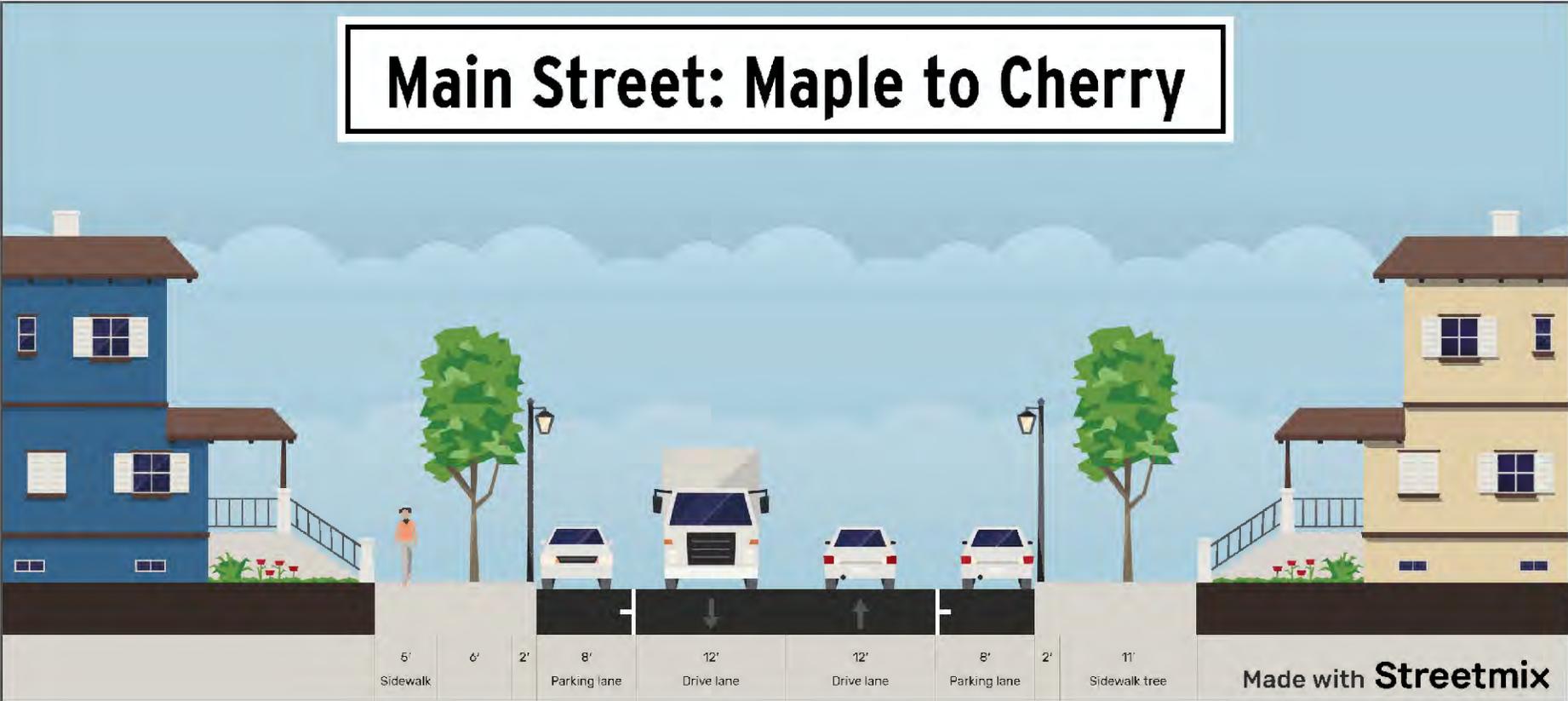
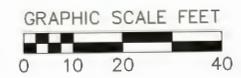
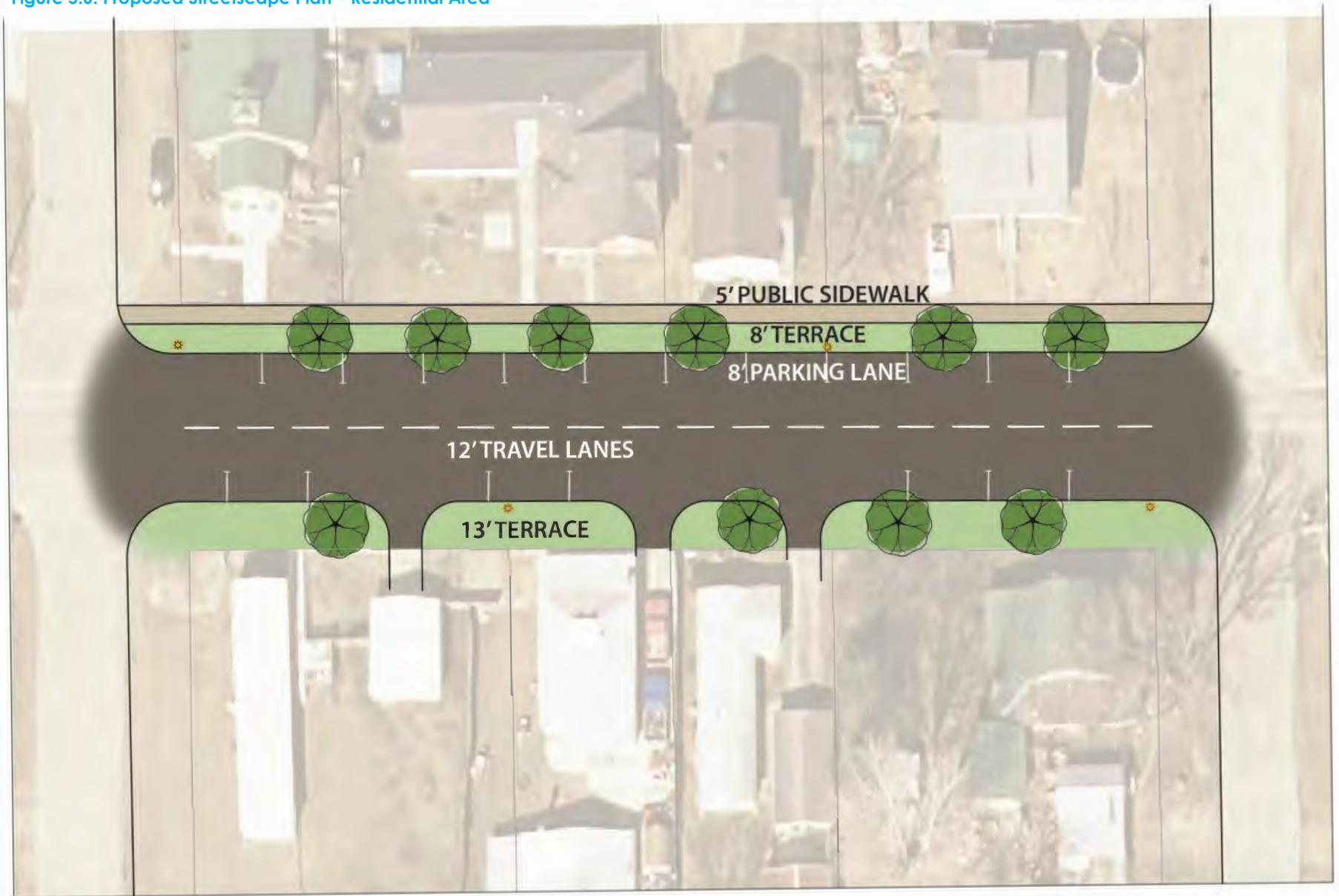


Figure 5.6: Proposed Streetscape Plan – Residential Area



6.0 IMPLEMENTATION

Any planning process is only as good as the results it produces. A substantial amount of data and public input was developed throughout this particular planning process, which results in a number of ideas and initiatives to move forward with. This Implementation Plan organizes those initiatives by categorizing them, and then identifies the varying influences of each element, such as priority, potential of overall impact, timing, and possible funding sources. By organizing all of these elements into the Implementation Matrix included in this Plan, the Village has a roadmap to success that will allow them to focus on a few items at a time and provide direction for each subsequent step. Each of the items included on the Implementation Matrix is explained in further detail through narrative in this section and provides context and ideas for the intent of each item. The following pages include a work plan for downtown improvement strategies, tactics to implement the strategies, priority levels, timing, cost scale, and potential funding sources.

While the Village navigates the implementation process, it is vital to reach out to Village partners for assistance with the various tasks. On several strategies, suggested partners were noted. However, implementation is not limited to the organizations and partners listed in this Plan. Many Village residents are a great resource for the small wins also. When it comes to public art or murals, your local artists will be of great assistance. Additionally, other partners to consider when taking on new strategies include Vernon County Economic Development and the Kickapoo Valley Reserve.

The recommendations are not limited to the downtown. We provide community-wide recommendations that reflect the feedback from public workshop participants. However, the community-wide recommendations will also support downtown revitalization efforts.

Goal 1: Mitigate the Impact of Future Flood Events on the Community

Communities within the Kickapoo Valley are no stranger to dangerous flood events. The Kickapoo River has flooded for decades, causing substantial damage to buildings, property and infrastructure. In 2018, the Village experienced their worst flooding to date when the flood waters quickly rose over the 13-foot flood stage, then passed the record of 23-feet, hitting an all-time high of 25-feet, flooding nearly a third of the Village. The previous flood event of 2008 had already required removal of a number of homes from areas south of Main Street, creating that portion of the Village largely unusable for development or improvements. In 2018, the Village's utilities, which are located in this previously cleared area, became non-operational for more than 48 hours, leaving the entire Village without power.

The impacts of the most recent flood event caused substantial hardship on many Downtown businesses, some of which chose not to re-open. Others invested large dollars into cleaning up and rehabilitating their facilities, often using materials better prepared to withstand more flooding.

While this Plan proposes a number of improvements for the Downtown corridor, it is necessary to recognize that mitigating potential future flood impacts is one of the highest

priorities to revitalizing the Downtown. Potential future investors may be hesitant to identify Downtown La Farge as home to their potential business or development plan if their investment is at risk of being destroyed by flood waters. The Village must address this issue in order to implement many of the ideas outlined in this Plan.

Recommendations

1.1 Implement the FEMA Buyout Program required by Floodplain Zoning

The National Flood Insurance Program requires substantially damaged structures located in the floodplain to be acquired and razed. After the 2018 flood, the Village applied for funding from FEMA for the acquisition and demolition of eight substantially damaged structures. The Village also applied for a grant from the Wisconsin WDNR Municipal Flood Control Program for funding to cover the 12.5% local share of the buyouts. The Village should implement the buyout of these substantially damaged structures. In the event there are future flood events resulting in additional substantially damaged structures, the Village should implement future buyouts to stay in compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program requirements.

1.2 Complete a comprehensive flood mitigation study to develop a long-term flood mitigation plan in order to protect the Downtown from future flood events and create a sustainable local economy.

The intent of a comprehensive flood mitigation study would be to identify alternatives to mitigate future flooding, such as a flood protection levee, acquisition and relocation, or flood proofing measures. The process would include developing community consensus and recommendations for preferred flood mitigation alternatives. It would also provide an opportunity to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy that would identify goals and objectives for creating a local sustainable economy. Finally, an Emergency Communication Plan that would clearly identify the procedures and platforms for effectively communicating with residents and businesses in future emergency situations. The Economic Development Administration Planning Grant awarded to the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission and Village of La Farge will pay for the comprehensive flood mitigation study.

1.3 Work with existing property owners to assist with flood mitigation efforts on individual buildings that have not yet been addressed.

There may be opportunities to work with individual property owners on flood mitigation efforts for specific properties that are impacted by flooding, but are not substantially damaged. Alternative mitigation efforts may include buyouts using non-FEMA funding, such as the WDNR Municipal Flood Control grant Program, or floodproofing structures in compliance with the Village's Floodplain Ordinance. Floodproofing measures may include elevating the structures to the flood protection elevation, or using other approved flood proofing techniques to protect the structures.

1.4 Relocate municipal utilities out of the floodplain.

In February of 2020, the Village of La Farge was awarded a Federal grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration to assist with flood recovery planning efforts. As part of these efforts, the Village will be conducting a feasibility study to relocate the municipal utilities out of the floodplain. As stated earlier, the utilities were heavily impacted by the 2018 flood, causing the entire community to be without power for more than 48 hours, even those properties not directly impacted by the flooding. The feasibility study, which will begin in 2020, will identify alternative sites and costs associated with relocation of the utilities. Once these costs are better understood, and the process for relocation is outlined, alternative funding will be necessary to assist with implementation of the relocation.

Goal 2: Rehabilitate or Redevelop Blighted Structures & Underutilized Sites on Main Street

The fabric of the Main Street is made up of an amalgam of commercial and residential buildings that vary greatly in site placement, character, design quality and condition. Taking an inventory of individual sites and buildings, a handful has been identified as appropriate for rehabilitation or redevelopment. However, there are also a variety of smaller techniques and programs that can be used to help improve the overall character of the downtown. Some of these are discussed in the recommendations below.

Recommendations

2.1 Implement a Façade Improvement Program for buildings to be preserved.

The purpose of a Façade Improvement Program is to assist a new or existing business with the upgrade and renewal of the exterior facades, signs, and architectural features of existing commercial buildings. The improvements typically focus on the front, side or rear of the building, but are sufficient in scope to produce visible and improved changes to the building facades. These funds are sometimes provided in the form of a grant, but may also be established as a low-interest loan.

In order to start a program, a municipality often establishes a Revolving Loan Fund, which is then administered by the Plan Commission, a specific Committee, or an established Community Development Authority. This entity is responsible for establishing all of the policies and guidelines, approval process, and administering the awards. Applicants to the program must meet all established criteria and all improvements must abide by local zoning ordinances and applicable building codes.

2.2 Recognize buildings with outstanding design properties and develop Downtown Design Guidelines that incorporates key elements of these designs.

Communities sometimes choose to develop and establish overall design guidelines or themes that provide a cohesive appearance to downtown structures. These design guidelines vary widely in level of detail and implementation. While many communities do not desire to require certain design aesthetics, they recognize that a unique or high

quality design contributes to the overall appeal of a downtown area. La Farge already has a precedent for high-quality, unique design with the development of the Organic Valley headquarters and the La Farge Medical Clinic facility. Both of these buildings were designed with an elevated level of aesthetic character, which should be continued into new construction within the downtown corridor. The Village should develop design guidelines that build off of these existing structures and encourage future developments to utilize a similar level of taste, which will contribute to the overall appeal and brand of the community as a unique place to visit, live and do business.

2.3 Promote redevelopment of blighted or underutilized properties in the downtown to create new building sites.

The Land Use Scenario Map identifies a number of parcels that have been identified as blighted or underutilized. These parcels should be targeted as opportunities to relocate existing uses in favor of redevelopment for uses that are more appropriate for a downtown environment. While all existing businesses contribute to the overall economy of the community, some may not be appropriate for their current location. In addition, vacant parcels in the downtown should be targeted for investment in order to enhance the corridor with businesses that can enliven the Main Street and provide necessary services for residents and visitors.

2.4 Relocate the Truck Center to create opportunities for alternative uses along the Downtown corridor.

As a multi-generational family-owned business that has served the community for many decades, the La Farge Truck Center is an incredibly valuable local business that strongly contributes to the community. The facility attracts business from throughout the region and employs many people. And while it is widely recognized that the Truck Center is vital to the community, its location on the western end of Main Street consumes a large area that may be better suited for alternate uses that are more indicative of a downtown environment. Discussion with the owners of the Truck Center throughout this process indicates that potential relocation is an option, but these discussions are still in preliminary stages. If funding is available to assist with this process, it would be beneficial for the Village to work with the business owners to determine the feasibility of this option and in turn create an opportunity for more appropriate uses in their existing location.



2.5 Work with the owner of the Nuzum's site to ensure the property contributes to the future of the Downtown.

Nuzum Building Supply is a regional business with locations in Viroqua, La Farge and Boscobel. The company opened its doors in 1894 and has served the Village and surrounding area with residential and commercial building materials and services. However, with their facility located adjacent to the Kickapoo River on the west end of the Downtown, the business experienced substantial impacts from flood events. In the midst of this planning process, Nuzum's closed their doors after more than 100 years of operating within the Village.



Located on the northwestern corner of the intersection of West Main Street and North Mill Street, the facility is located at a key point within the Downtown. As part of the western gateway into the community, the building also sits to the north of the Organic Valley retail store.

It is important that the Village continue to communicate with the owner of this property to coordinate short- and long-term plans for the site. Given how visible this site is within the community, it is important that it not fall into disrepair and become a source of blight for the downtown.

An ideal reuse of this building would be for a canoe and kayak rental facility, promoting additional use of the Lower Kickapoo as a desirable outdoor recreation destination. This use, coupled with an enhanced canoe landing and park facilities, would help to make La Farge a more prominent partner in Kickapoo Valley's existing river-based activities.

2.6 Review and revise ordinances to encourage environmentally sustainable and eco-friendly development features.

Revising local ordinances to encourage environmentally-friendly Best Management Practices is a relatively simple action item that the Village can accomplish on their own with somewhat little cost. At the individual site level, this could include such features as green building practices, solar panels, electric charging stations, native prairie plantings, and green roofs. On a larger scale, development standards based on Smart Growth principals could reduce not only the overall cost of development, but the overall environmental impact of growth. Such elements might include green infrastructure techniques, reducing the overall requirement of new street widths, stormwater management techniques, reducing parking requirements in order to reduce impervious surface area, and encouraging green infrastructure techniques, such as pervious paving or protective buffers.

2.7 Encourage private property owners to improve blighted conditions (i.e. remove abandoned vehicles, organize clean-up days, community-wide recycling opportunities, etc.).

Part of the appeal of any community, and particularly of a downtown environment, is the quality and aesthetic appeal of the environment. A portion of what contributes to this is the level of cleanliness and respect that property owners have for not only their own sites, but the overall character of the area. Blighted and run-down properties detract from this appeal, but the cleanliness of an area shows visitors how much a community does or does not respect the people who use the downtown or travel through the area. There are opportunities, in both the spring and the fall, for communities to come together to host clean-up days. Volunteers can accomplish a lot by organizing events focused on beautifying the community and generally cleaning up after the winter and summer seasons. In addition, cleaning up unnecessary and unsightly sites that may house inappropriate or unnecessary collections in close proximity to the downtown can have a dramatic impact on the overall appeal of the area. Examples may include abandoned vehicles or scrap metal.



Goal 3: Enhance the Downtown to Make It a More Desirable Place to Spend Time

As mentioned in the Main Street Assessment, walkability is a key component of a downtown experience. Factors influencing walkability include the presence or absence and quality of footpaths, sidewalks or other pedestrian rights-of-way, traffic and road conditions, land use patterns, building accessibility, distance and safety. The friendlier a place, the more people will walk or bike. Increased pedestrian activity has been shown to increase retail sales. Active streets are beneficial to new small stores or restaurants. Additionally, pedestrians and cyclists out-consume drivers over the course of a month. It is easier to make an impulse stop while walking or biking than it is driving. Providing street improvements for pedestrians and cyclists may increase sales to local businesses by 30 percent. Places thrive when users have a range of reasons to be there. These might include a place to sit, playgrounds to enjoy, art to touch, music to hear, food to eat, history to experience, and people to meet. These activities should be unique to that particular place, reflecting the culture and history of the surrounding community.

Recommendations

3.1 Create a “History Walk” connecting key community assets and telling the Village’s history, including flood events. (i.e. “Hear, Here” is an opportunity for storytelling).

Part of the idea of ‘Place Branding’ is utilizing the authentic history of a place to tell its story. Part of what makes La Farge unique is not only its location adjacent to the

Kickapoo River, but the interface and dynamic of the interactions between the community and the river. The Village has always dealt with flooding, and the stories of resiliency of the community and its people in the face of the floods is a unique story that others want to hear. The Village should tell these stories and allow others to learn about the challenges that it has faced, and how it has overcome those challenges. Programs such as “Hear, Here” help to do that by providing stopping points throughout the Village where visitors can hear stories being told by those who actually experienced them. This history should be woven into the community, which then provides visitors and residents with a reason to meander, explore, and spend time in the downtown.

3.2 Develop a local arts fund that can assist private property owners with incorporating public art into their buildings and sites.

Public art is an important part of a downtown environment. While public art can be interpreted in many different ways, it should reflect the values of the individual community. La Farge has already shown an interest in incorporating public art, as demonstrated via the existing mural in the downtown. In addition, public art is a good opportunity to better utilize open spaces left behind by flooding. In addition, art provides a good opportunity to creatively work with local organizations. A local art fund can help to provide some resources that would encourage additional public art and develop a downtown environment that shows the creativity and values of the people in the region.



3.3 Work with the School District to create opportunities to enhance the Downtown through public art, volunteering, and other school-age appropriate opportunities.

La Farge is unique in that it still maintains an independent school district, considering the size of the community. The School District is continuously looking for ways to partner with local companies and organizations to further the opportunities for their students. The Village, and LAPA, should work cooperatively with the School District to brainstorm ways that these organizations can work together to further the efforts of creating an enticing downtown. Public art might provide an opportunity for students to get creative and contribute to the local environment, while organizing volunteer activities would contribute to civic pride.

3.4 Create a pocket park or other central Downtown space to enhance the pedestrian experience.

Pocket parks are frequently created on a single vacant building lot or on small, irregular pieces of land. Although a pocket park might be too small for physical activities, pocket parks provide greenery, a place to sit outdoors, and sometimes a children's playground. They may be created around a monument, historic marker or art project.

3.5 Encourage businesses to creatively activate the street. Examples might include providing outdoor places for people to sit, utilizing colorful window displays, or outdoor dining.

Visual activity on the street is a cue to pedestrians and passers-by that there are things happening, and reasons to stop. If they are able to see other people engaged in activity, there is a natural curiosity that will draw others in. It is important that existing businesses are encouraged to interact with the sidewalk in order to create this visual activity. Things like public seating, outdoor dining spaces, planters or other small welcome signs, or vibrant window displays that cause people to stop and peruse should all be encouraged.

3.6 Install wayfinding signage throughout the Downtown.

Wayfinding improves the visitor experience by familiarized people in a physical space and provides directional assistance to get from point A to point B. Wayfinding minimizes a visitor's natural confusion when navigating a new and unfamiliar facility. Wayfinding also makes people stop that might just be travelling through La Farge. The key locations for Wayfinding in the community include signage near the canoe landing directing people to the downtown, and at entrance points into the downtown area. Other places could include:

- At key intersections within the Downtown corridor;
- Organic Valley Store;
- Canoe Landing;
- The Floodplain Event Space;
- Kickapoo Valley Reserve;
- Emergency Services Building;
- Camping Sites;
- Farmer's Market Site;
- La Farge Medical Clinic; and
- Library.

3.7 Improve pedestrian safety throughout the Downtown.

Pedestrian safety is paramount for an active downtown. People must feel safe moving about the area and precautions must be taken by the community to ensure their safety. Particular locations that have been identified through the planning process for enhanced safety precautions include:

- At the bridge west of Mill Street. Vehicle traffic moves rather quickly coming into town from the west, and a well-design entry-way feature at this location could provide a visual signal to drivers that they are entering a pedestrian area.
- At the intersection of West Main Street and Silver Street. Silver Street provides a direct connection between Downtown and the school, so this intersection experiences an abundance of school-aged children crossing Main Street to access the Zip Stop.
- At the intersection of West Main Street and Bird Street. Both the Bank and the Post Office are located on the south side of this intersection, so it experiences a heavy number of pedestrians throughout the day.



Traffic-calming measures that have been identified and incorporated into the preliminary streetscape designs include the use of alternative paving patterns and crosswalks, as well as visual indications at transition areas, such as signage and public art, to communicate with vehicles that they are entering a pedestrian-focused environment.

3.8 *Work with Downtown property owners to organize seasonal clean-up/beautification days.*

Activities for these days could include hanging or removing street banners, changing the planters for each season, and garbage clean-up days, amongst others. To coincide with 2.7 discussed above, community clean-up days or weekends could incorporate efforts to beautify the downtown. The La Farge Area Partners Association already takes the lead on some of these efforts, but a more organized event could provide opportunities for others to get involved and coordinate a larger impact.

3.9 *Provide electric vehicle charging stations within the Downtown corridor.*

Electric vehicles are becoming an increasingly popular choice for drivers, providing an option for a reduced impact on the environment. But with this increase in popularity, there is a need for more infrastructure to serve these drivers. These charging stations are typically located in public parking lots near a downtown where people can spend time while they are waiting for their vehicles to charge, and should be encouraged where feasible in La Farge.

- 3.10 *Provide streetscape amenities that enhance the pedestrian experience in the Downtown, including benches, trash receptacles, planters, water fountains, and street lighting.*

In coordination with the Main Street reconstruction project discussed in the next goal, streetscaping enhancements should include amenities for pedestrians that enhance the overall experience of the downtown area. These amenities contribute to the overall enjoyment of the pedestrian space and encourage people to interact, thereby creating activity within the Main Street corridor.

Goal 4: Reconstruct Infrastructure in the Downtown

Carrying traffic along both the Highway 82 and Highway 131 corridors, Main Street experiences a high volume of traffic. This traffic exceeds 2,600 vehicles per day during the summer months. In addition, there are infrastructure challenges that pose on-going concerns for the Village, patrons, vehicles and individual property owners. It is important that these infrastructure issues are adequately addressed in order to maintain the Downtown as a safe corridor for users.

- 4.1 *Reconstruct the Main Street infrastructure including sewer, water, street, sidewalks, street lights, and streetscape from Mill Street to Cherry Street.*

The Village will be submitting an application for a CDBG Public Facilities grant during the 2020 application cycle to assist with the reconstruction of Main Street during 2021. The preliminary streetscape design and cost estimates are included in this document and will be further developed through the preliminary design process. In addition to street reconstruction and streetscaping, all water and sewer infrastructure will also be upgraded and replaced.

Goal 5: Promote Business Growth in the Community

When walking along Main Street in La Farge, there are a variety of existing businesses that serve residents and visitors. As of the drafting of this plan, a new business was opening along Main Street, having located from Viola, where the continued flooding was having a negative impact. In the larger community, Organic Valley serves as the largest employer in the community, and is followed by the La Farge Medical Clinic (both vital businesses within the local economy). However, there is an opportunity to attract more businesses along Main Street that would contribute to developing a sense of place and creating a critical mass of businesses to attract patrons. Business development and attraction is an important element of growing the local economy and creating a downtown environment where people spend time and money.

Recommendations

- 5.1 *Support the La Farge Area Partners Association (LAPA) to continue to enhance the local economy.*

LAPA was established by a group of local volunteers as an entity focused on improving the downtown through small enhancement efforts. To date, the organization has been responsible for placing an information kiosk on Main Street, starting the weekly seasonal farmer's market, doing beautification projects like hanging banners and planting flower pots, and organizing events. LAPA is still maintained and operated by a small group of volunteers who are passionate about enhancing La Farge, but it relies on the time and energy of those few individuals. Volunteer organizations are always dependent on the resources they manage to find, which makes it difficult for them to grow and expand their sphere of influence.

The Village should explore opportunities to support this group by providing assistance with resources that can make them more viable as a funded organization. Through on-going funding, this organization could have more of an impact, and potentially have resources to support hiring and employee or contracting for services. This could potentially be achieved through funding via tax incremental financing.



5.2 Target business opportunities to take advantage of the local Broadband capabilities.

Communities that can offer enhanced technology capabilities have a competitive advantage over those that don't in terms of business recruitment and residential growth. Some businesses, particularly in the current market, require faster connections in order to operate. The Village should utilize this amenity when targeting and recruiting businesses that rely on these technologies to operate.

5.3 Develop a 'Pop-Up' or Incubator Program to provide entrepreneurs with space and visibility on Main Street.

Entrepreneurs and artisans are a critical component of any local economy and it is important that communities support this activity in order to create new businesses, new jobs, and new investment. These people are often invested in their communities and are a welcome addition to the downtown fabric. In addition to recruiting new talent to a community, it is important to develop programs that can support the entrepreneurs and artisans who are already there that may not be visible. If given the right resources, these individuals can become an important part of the Downtown.

5.4 Work with Economic Development partners to promote programs associated with business ownership transition and succession planning.

As business owners choose to retire from their business, or decide to sell for other reasons, it is important to the local economy that those businesses are purchased and maintained. Several important businesses in downtown La Farge have been attempting to sell, including Berghum's Food Mart and La Farge Hardware. As independently owned retailers that have been a staple within the community for an extended period of time, the potential impact of their closing would be detrimental in the community. The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation provides materials and training to business owners to assist with planning and preparing for transition and success planning. Some of these materials are included in the Appendix. It is recommended that the community work with WEDC and local business entities to adequately plan for and transition to potential future owners in order to maintain their existence within the downtown.

5.5 Promote businesses that continue to establish Vernon County as a leader in organic food production and recreational tourism.

Vernon County has emerged as a leader in a number of niche markets, particularly related to organic food production and recreational tourism. With an abundance of high-quality natural resources, it is important to recognize them as an opportunity, but also to protect them. La Farge, Vernon County and the local business community are major contributors to the strong organic ecosystem in Wisconsin. This has made Wisconsin a leader in the nation for organic farms. Vernon County and La Farge should utilize this and promote the area as a strong contributor to the organic ecosystem. When the opportunity presents itself, it is important that La Farge work to continue to establish Vernon County as a leader in these markets, while also protecting the resources that they utilize to operate.



5.6 Work with the Vernon County Economic Development Department to assist with local business district vitality, business recruitment, and regional tourism.

Part of the role of the County's Economic Development Department is to work with businesses and organizations throughout Vernon County on strategies for economic growth. As Vernon County's economic development arm, this department has a wide variety of resources available to assist communities and to support business development. They should be considered a partner, and the Village should make an effort to be in constant communication with them to further develop and support the ideas discussed throughout this plan.

5.7 Work with Economic Development partners to support businesses through on-going workshops and provide resources and support for marketing, business management, etc.

There are a number of public agencies available to support the Village with on-going business development efforts. As a participant in the Connect Communities program through WEDC, the Village already has access to some of these resources that can help with local efforts. WEDC has provided several documents, which are included in the Appendix to this Plan, that discuss the support of entrepreneurship. It also identifies sample tourism itineraries – a strategy that can be developed and customized to any region. WEDC is an entity that has a never-ending supply of resources that can be further leveraged to assist with economic development efforts.

5.8 Participate in the Viroqua Chamber Main Street's Economic Development Program Partnership, when/if it becomes available.

In the spring of 2020, the Viroqua Chamber Main Street program announced a pilot program partnership with the City of Hillsboro. As part of this program, the City has joined the Chamber's Main Street program as a municipal member, and will have access to all of the Chamber's resources and programs. This pilot program is an effort to better support businesses and entrepreneurs in rural communities. The Village of La Farge should monitor the progress of this program and become a municipal member when/if it becomes available through Viroqua's Chamber programming. This would provide a substantial number of resources to the businesses within the community that are currently not available, such as marketing resources, educational sessions, access to vision and dental plans, retirement plans, and one-on-one support.

5.9 Work with regional partners to identify an opportunity to place a daycare facility within the community.

Daycare services were cited a variety of times throughout the planning process as a missing service within the area. Employers cited this as a barrier to finding employees, the school district cited this as a barrier to attracting families, and stakeholders cited this as a barrier to living in the Village. This is not a new issue within the community, as it has been discussed in other planning processes undertaken within the Village and the County. While there is no simple solution to attracting an economically-viable daycare facility that adequately serves the needs of the community, it is important to keep this on the priority list of things that need to be addressed, to be a viable option for new business and residential growth. As opportunities arise, the Village should continue to work with economic development partners and potential new businesses to address this service gap.

Goal 6: Provide Amenities that Will Support Tourism

Balancing local needs and tourism is an important consideration for any community. While serving the current residents and businesses, preserving the resources and assets that exist is always the most important element of growth. Tourism is an essential part of La Farge's local economy. With the proximity of the Kickapoo Valley Reserve and other resources within and around Vernon County, La Farge has an opportunity to grow the economic impact of this industry within the community. Taking advantage and maximizing existing resources will be the key to success. Providing amenities that support these visitors will enhance the opportunity for people to interact with the downtown corridor, thereby creating greater business opportunities along this corridor.

Recommendations

6.1 Create a trail connection from the Kickapoo Valley Reserve to the Downtown corridor.

As originally outlined in the Village's 2012 Economic Development Strategy, it is important to create a pedestrian and bicycle connection between the Main Street corridor and the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. With thousands of people utilizing the KVR each summer, providing a trail connection will create a bridge between those people and the amenities and services found in downtown.

A vacated railroad bed is located to the east of the Kickapoo River, which travels from the downtown north to the southern extent of the KVR. KVR officials have been advocating for more connecting bicycle trails, and encourage this connection to be made. One of the difficulties of this route is its proximity to the Kickapoo River, which means that it will be flooded and therefore limits the materials that can be used in construction. However, there is an opportunity to create this trail connection that would be heavily utilized during the majority of the summer months.

6.2 Ensure all campsites at Village Park have electric and water hook-ups.

Village Park, located immediately to the south of Organic Valley, has a number of improved trailer sites for camping. While the KVR only has primitive sites, the Park provides a beautiful site and close proximity to the amenities in the region. Some of these twenty sites have electrical hook-up, but not all of the sites are currently served by water. This means that large-scale campers that utilize the park that are equipped for water connection are not able to access it. The Park has newer bathroom and shower facilities, so water is extended to the site. It would be beneficial to fully service these sites in order to provide fully improved trailer camping within the Village.



6.3 *Investigate the feasibility of adding more improved campsites within the Village.* The Kickapoo Valley Reserve hosts a number of primitive camping sites; however, there are very few improved camping sites in the area. KVR staff has indicated that they will not be constructing any improved sites in the future and there seem to be relatively few improved camping sites in the area. While horse trailers are not an appropriate use within the Village limits, improved sites to accommodate campers may be appropriate and needed. The Village should investigate the feasibility of adding more improved sites within the community in order to better serve this market.

6.4 *Encourage additional overnight lodging opportunities.*

Overnight accommodations are available in a variety of formats within the Village, including camping, a small hotel, and via AirBnB rentals. Additionally, there are a number of more rural cottage-style rentals. However, both the market analysis and stakeholder input indicated that the number of overnight rooms available is inadequate for the potential demand during the summer months. The result is that people looking for overnight accommodations often find themselves in Viroqua instead of La Farge. The Village should work with property owners, developers and others to encourage additional overnight lodging opportunities within the Village. Additional development of this use should be in line with the small-scale character of the community.

6.5 *Relocate and improve the existing canoe landing and associated amenities (parking, water fountain, picnic tables, etc) to promote more recreational use along the lower branch of the Kickapoo River.*

Canoe and kayak enthusiasts who venture down the lower branch of the Kickapoo River often find themselves exiting the river in La Farge, immediately behind the previous Nuzum's building. However, this 'landing' has historically been a soiled slope in a cow pasture with no formal improvements or amenities. If La Farge is to become more highly incorporated as part of the regional canoe and kayaking destination, it is important that the launch be relocated and improved. An alternative site that has been identified is in Sandmire Park to the south of the Organic Valley retail store. As part of public property, this park provides the opportunity for not only an improved landing, but associated parking and amenities, such as a water bottle filling station. It is also in close proximity to the downtown, so a strong pedestrian connection should be made between this site and the amenities of the Main Street corridor.

6.6 *Create a strong pedestrian and bicycle connection from the west end of Downtown along Main Street.*

The Kickapoo River is located to the west of the Main Street corridor, adjacent to the Organic Valley retail store and former Nuzum's site. With the amount of canoe and kayak activity that occurs along the river elsewhere in the region, there is a desire to make the lower branch of the Kickapoo a more widely traversed portion of the river. By establishing an improved landing as outlined in Goal 6.5 above, in association with attracting a potential canoe and kayak rental facility, there is the opportunity to make

this end of the downtown corridor an active area with recreational users. However, in order for this activity to benefit the remainder of downtown there needs to be a strong pedestrian and bicycle connection from the west end all the way down Main Street to the east. As part of the streetscaping associated with the Main Street reconstruction, there should be a strong visual connection that extends all of the way to the river and Sandmire Park. These elements should be considered part of the downtown core, and should tie in to all of the improvements that are being made for pedestrians along Main Street. If they are not, they will visually appear separate and will not feel like part of the downtown environment.

6.7 Provide access to water fountains and water bottle filling stations in areas of high traffic and visibility.

As an area with a high participation rate with recreational users, it is important to provide amenities and services that this group of people is looking for. Water bottle filling stations and water fountains should be incorporated where feasible, including in areas near the park, but also in natural stopping and gathering spaces throughout the downtown.

6.8 Make Downtown friendly to bicycle users by providing bicycle parking and dedicated bicycle lanes.

In an effort to bring recreational users within the region into the downtown area, it is important that the Village provide safe bicycle traveling lanes and parking to accommodate these riders. With a trail connecting the downtown to the KVR, more bicycle traffic could be expected. However, because Main Street overlaps with Highways 82 and 131, dedicated bike lanes are necessary to separate them from overlapping truck and vehicle traffic. As part of the reconstruction of Main Street, anticipated in 2021, dedicated bike lanes should be constructed as part of the right-of-way cross section. These lanes are depicted on the preliminary plans shown in Chapter 5.0 of this document. In addition, dedicated bicycle parking areas near store fronts will be needed in order to create opportunities for these users to stop and visit downtown businesses.

6.9 Encourage local businesses to promote organic and artisan products and services.

As discussed further under Goal No. 8 below, La Farge and Vernon County are part of the epicenter of organic production not only in the state, but in the country. As such, this is one of the reasons that people are drawn to this region. And those people expect to be able to access not only organic food products, but other similar products that are produced in small batches with the utmost quality. People looking at this area might expect to be able to easily source locally-made artisan goods and wares. It is important that businesses owners understand this expectation and use it as an opportunity to differentiate themselves from other businesses in the region that are not supporting this niche market. Economic development agencies like WEDC and the

Connect Communities program has people and resources that can further help educate local business owners and entrepreneurs about this market.

6.10 *Utilize open spaces within the floodplain area south of Downtown for events.*

The Village has a substantial amount of open space as a result of flood events over the past 15 years. The 2008 floods led to the removal of a number of homes and businesses, which had to be removed from the floodplain in the areas south of Main Street to the east of the Kickapoo River. One of the goals of this planning process was to identify opportunities to utilize those open spaces in a way that would not require improvements, but would provide a benefit to the community. This space currently hosts a disc golf course, and a portion of the area adjacent to the river is being planned for an improved children's fishing area in Sandmire Park. This Park is also being targeted as the site for a new canoe landing, which could be used as an exit point on the lower branch of the Kickapoo River.

Other opportunities to utilize this space would focus primarily on events. While this space is not always accessible due to flooding, and it is difficult to coordinate events to be held in a space that may or may not be available, it can be identified as the primary location with a back-up location identified in case of flooding. Ideas for events that could be hosted in this area include:

- A regional Amish market. Many farmers markets in the area feature Amish-grown produce, or potentially products, but there is not an Amish-specific market that one can visit to find all variety of Amish-made goods. As one of the centers of Amish goods in the state, La Farge could be the host of such an event, which has the potential to draw visitors from throughout the Midwest.
- Monthly classic car & tractor shows. The annual car show hosted by the Free Methodist Church has become a large draw for classic car enthusiasts. It would be beneficial to expand this event to a monthly event during the summer months and attract a larger number of participants. This could become even more popular if the KVR is willing to open their closed road for this event on a monthly basis. While classic tractors draw a different kind of crowd, this is still a demographic that has a large expendable income and could spend money at local businesses.
- Flea markets are a very popular attraction, particularly in rural areas. Utilizing this open space for a flea market may provide an opportunity to draw more antique collectors and the like to the area.
- Live music and music festivals require large amounts of open space. The area is already home to LarryFest, which has grown and is a highly-sought after ticket, demonstrating there is a market for this type of event. Music events ranging from weekly "Fiddles in the Floodplain" to a large annual event focusing on a particular type of music could be a way to take advantage of vast amounts of open space for events that require those types of spaces to exist.
- Similarly to music events, the Village could be the host to weekly movie events in this open space. While these events would require some technology to

produce, there may be an opportunity to use it as a gathering space for larger groups of people to enjoy warmer weather.

Goal 7: Increase Housing Options and Availability of Housing in the Village

Based on the results of the market analysis, there is a lack of overall housing supply within the Village, as well as a lack of housing options. This was compiled from individual stakeholder interviews and the public engagement process. Housing is necessary to attract new residential growth and business growth, as businesses find it difficult to fill jobs if there is no housing available to support employees. While this is only one piece of the overall equation necessary to attract people to the area, it is important that the Village identify opportunities to increase housing options and availability.

Recommendations

7.1 Identify future growth areas outside of the floodplain for single-family and multi-family housing. Work with private property owners to identify feasible sites.

Flood events that have occurred over the past 15 years have resulted in the loss of a number of housing units. While some new homes have developed on available parcels in the northeastern portion of the Village, relatively few vacant parcels exist within the Village's corporate boundary. Furthermore, very little developable land is available for growth, with most of the open area consumed by floodplain where houses have previously been removed. The Village will need to identify future growth areas adjacent to the existing corporate boundary where land can be annexed and new single- and multi-family housing can be developed.

7.2 Increase housing opportunities for senior citizens within close proximity to the Downtown.

Senior housing is successful when located in close proximity to a downtown, because it provides an opportunity for seniors to walk to necessary facilities, such as a grocery store, bank or post office. In addition, the Village has the La Farge Medical Clinic adjacent to the Main Street corridor, thereby providing another major resource for the senior population. Providing residential units in close proximity to downtown also provides a core population to utilize downtown businesses.

7.3 Utilize available funding sources to establish a locally-funded housing stock improvement program.

Similar to a façade improvement program for commercial properties, there are opportunities to create programs for residential homes to assist with improvements. La Farge's housing stock is relatively aged, based on the market analysis that was conducted as part of this planning process. With a slightly depressed median income when compared to other communities in the region, it is not unexpected that the

housing stock may be in need of improvements. Local improvement programs can be established to focus on these improvements with residential units.

7.2 Review and revise local ordinances to create opportunities for affordable housing.

Workforce housing is critical to providing places to live for employees that work at local businesses and within the community. In 2020, many communities are trying to better understand how to attract workforce housing development and make housing development more affordable in a market where costs have driven up development prices. Fortunately, local ordinance requirements can have a positive influence on the affordability of new development. Incorporating opportunities to reduce these costs will help to attract more affordable housing development to the Village. Some of these strategic tools include:

- Reducing the width of the public right-of-way, thereby reducing the costs of materials for pavement;
- Requiring a sidewalk on only one side of the street to reduce the costs of materials;
- Incorporating zero-lot line provisions for housing development to provide a lower purchase cost for home owners;
- Smaller front yard widths for more homes to fit in one area; and
- Minimizing lot sizes while incorporating public space into neighborhood design.

Goal 8: Create and Promote a Place Brand Based on the Community's Unique Assets

A place brand is about understanding the authentic attributes of a place that make it unique. When considering place branding from a 30,000-foot scale, a brand is ownership of an identity. Within the state, Wisconsin Dells owns the water park industry. Spring Green is home of Frank Lloyd Wright. A place brand is created through people's experience and perceptions of a place. As home of the Organic Valley headquarters, and with the presence of the Kickapoo Valley Reserve and world-class trout fishing provided by the Kickapoo River, there is unlimited opportunity for establishing the area as a unique place to live and visit.

Recommendations

8.1 Develop and implement a community place brand that establishes a common theme and highlights the community's unique assets.

The Village, and area partners, would benefit from working with an agency to develop a community-wide place brand. Place branding includes a cohesive process to establish a community-wide vision. Establish consensus about what makes Lafarge unique and develop guidelines for how that brand is incorporated throughout the community with policies, communications, and how the Village presents itself to the rest of the world.

A start would be to utilize WEDC's Think-Make-Happen and InWisconsin Brand that is available to all communities. Then continue to build the community's brand off of this marketing. There is potential to tie into this Statewide branding. For example, Fox Cities utilized Made Better Here, to tie into the Think-Make-Happen In Wisconsin: Fox Cities In Wisconsin: Made Better Here.

8.2 Continue to establish Vernon County as a leader in organic food production in the Midwest.

As home of Organic Valley, La Farge is an important contributor to the larger organic agriculture scene that has been established throughout Vernon County. This makes the entire region unique not only in Wisconsin, but within the Midwest. It is important that the Village, residents, and business owners continue to move this forward and further establish themselves as leaders of this movement.

Explore utilizing opportunities from WEDC and the Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) programs to promote this production. WEDC's Made In Wisconsin Program could be utilized as Grown In Wisconsin. You can also tap into other promotional programs for products grown, made or produced in Wisconsin. Discover ways to maximize opportunities to promote these programs.

8.3 Develop La Farge's identity as the home of Organic Valley.

The Village of La Farge and the surrounding area has incredible resources that differentiate it from most other places. As the original home of Organic Valley, the Village can differentiate itself on an international level. Many communities that are home to headquarters of major brands choose to celebrate them. For example, Sauk City's welcome signage identifies it as home to the original Culver's. Likewise, Kohler was an original company town and is now known world-wide as home of an international bath and kitchen company. La Farge holds the same potential to promote itself as the original birthplace of the world's largest organic cooperative, and should take pride in developing a place brand based on the principles that exist in the region.



8.4 Install entryway signage into the community that utilizes the Village's brand.

While a place brand is about much more than an appealing logo and graphics, it is important that once developed, the brand is utilized within the Village to distinguish itself as a place to residents and visitors. This will help to establish the Village's identity and establish it as a place that has a vision and is a place to be.

8.5 Develop Promotional Material or Guide to the area promoting the strengths.

Example: Calumet County is home to the many supper clubs. They created a map for fish fry's and on the other side a map for Supper Clubs. This map was also a useable map for the county. They also created a booklet called Breaking Bread In the Holy Land, a historic guide for the area supper clubs **and** fish frys.

Goal 1: Mitigate the Impact of Future Flood Events on the Community		Priority / Level of Impact			Time Frame				Level of Difficulty			Cost			Partners	Potential Funding Sources
		Low	Medium	High	1-2 Yrs	3-5 Yrs	5+ Yrs	Ongoing	Easy	Medium	Hard	Low (<\$10,000)	Medium (\$5,000 - \$50,000)	High (>\$50,000)	Public, Private, Community, County, State, Etc.	Grants, Loans, Public, Private, Etc.
Recommendations																
1.1	Implement FEMA Buyout Program required by Floodplain Zoning.			•	•				•			•		Village, Consultant	FEMA; Wisconsin Emergency Management; DNR Municipal Flood Control Program	
1.2	Complete a comprehensive flood mitigation study to develop a long-term flood mitigation plan in order to protect the downtown from future flood events and create a sustainable local economy.			•	•					•		•		Village, Consultant	2020 EDA funding available to assist with project.	
1.3	Work with existing property owners to assist with flood mitigation efforts on individual buildings that have not yet been addressed.		•				•			•	•			Village Staff, Elected Officials, and Village Residents	DNR Municipal Flood Control Grant; TID No. 1; Federal Disaster Recovery Programs	
1.4	Relocate municipal utilities out of the floodplain.			•	•					•			•	Village Staff + Consultant	2020 EDA funding available to assist with relocation study and planning; TID No. 1 can fund a portion of the project; FEMA; DNR Municipal Flood Control Program; Wisconsin Emergency Management	

Goal 2: Rehabilitate or Redevelop Blighted Structures & Underutilized Sites on Main Street		Priority / Level of Impact			Time Frame				Level of Difficulty			Cost			Partners	Potential Funding Sources
		Low	Medium	High	1-2 Yrs	3-5 Yrs	5+ Yrs	Ongoing	Easy	Medium	Hard	Low (<\$10,000)	Medium (\$5,000 - \$50,000)	High (>\$50,000)		
Recommendations																
2.1	Implement a façade improvement program for buildings to be preserved.			•	•				•		•			Village staff + Consultant	Create a Revolving Loan Fund from TIF; Loans from local banks and creditors.	
2.2	Recognize buildings with outstanding design features and develop Downtown design guidelines that incorporate key elements of these designs.		•						•		•			Village Staff, local businesses, & elected officials	Tax Incremental Financing; Village funding; Perhaps funding from the formation of a business improvement district.	
2.3	Promote redevelopment of blighted or underutilized properties in the downtown to create new building sites.			•						•		•		Village staff, elected officials, businesses, developer	WEDC CDI; TIF; CDBG Programs	
2.4	Relocate the Truck Center to create opportunities for alternative uses along the Downtown corridor.			•	•							•		Village Staff, property owners on edge of Village, elected officials.	Tax Incremental Financing; Village funding; funds from sale of land where existing truck center is located.	
2.5	Work with the owner of the Nuzum's site to ensure the property contributes to the Downtown core.		•		•							•		Village Staff, Village property owners, local civic groups, elected officials	Loans from local banks and creditors; Village funding; WEDC CDI Grant	
2.6	Review and revise ordinances to encourage environmentally sustainable and eco-friendly development features.			•	•				•		•			Village staff, elected officials, outside consultant	Village funding	
2.7	Encourage private property owners to improve blighted conditions (i.e. remove abandoned vehicles, organize clean-up days, recycling		•						•		•			Village code enforcement staff	Village funding (code enforcement)	

Goal 3: Enhance the Downtown to Make It A More Desirable Place to Spend Time		Priority / Level of Impact			Time Frame				Level of Difficulty			Cost			Partners	Potential Funding Sources
		Low	Medium	High	1-2 Yrs	3-5 Yrs	5+ Yrs	Ongoing	Easy	Medium	Hard	Low (<\$10,000)	Medium (\$5,000 - \$50,000)	High (>\$50,000)	Public, Private, Community, County, State, Etc.	Grants, Loans, Public, Private, Etc.
Recommendations																
3.1	Create a "History Walk" connecting key community assets and telling the Village's history, including flood events. (i.e. Hear, Here is an opportunity for storytelling)	•				•			•			•			Village Staff, local historical society, affected property owners	Wisconsin Historical Society grant funding; Village funding; TIF
3.2	Develop a local arts fund that can assist private property owners with incorporating public art into their buildings and sites.		•			•			•			•		Village Staff, elected officials, local civic groups		
3.3	Work with the School District to create opportunities to enhance the Downtown through public art, volunteering, etc.	•				•			•			•		Village; LAPA; School District; Property Owners; Business Owners	None Required	
3.4	Create a pocket park or other central Downtown space to enhance the pedestrian & visitor experience.		•			•			•			•		Village;LAPA	TIF	
3.5	Encourage businesses to creatively activate the street. Examples might include providing outdoor places for people to sit, utilizing colorful window displays, or outdoor dining.		•						•	•		•		Local Businesses; LAPA		
3.6	Install wayfinding signage throughout the Downtown.		•		•							•		Village	TIF; CDBG Public Facilities Grant	
3.7	Improve pedestrian safety throughout the Downtown.			•									•	Village; Property Owners	TIF; CDBG Public Facilities Grant	
3.8	Work with downtown property owners to organize seasonal clean-up/beautification days.			•					•	•		•		LAPA; Downtown Property Owners; Village	None required	
3.9	Provide electric vehicle charging stations within the Downtown.	•				•						•		Local Businesses; Village	TIF	
3.10	Provide streetscape amenities that enhance the pedestrian experience in the Downtown, including benches, trash receptacles, planters, water fountains, and street lighting.			•	•				•				•	Downtown property owners, Village staff, Village citizens	TIF; CDBG Public Facilities Grant	

Goal 4: Reconstruct Infrastructure in the Downtown		Priority / Level of Impact			Time Frame				Level of Difficulty			Cost			Partners	Potential Funding Sources
		Low	Medium	High	1-2 Yrs	3-5 Yrs	5+ Yrs	Ongoing	Easy	Medium	Hard	Low (<\$10,000)	Medium (\$5,000 - \$50,000)	High (>\$50,000)	Public, Private, Community, County, State, Etc.	Grants, Loans, Public, Private, Etc.
Recommendations																
4.1	Reconstruct the Main Street infrastructure including sewer, water, street, sidewalks, street lights, and streetscape from Mill Street to Cherry Street.			•	•					•			•	Village, Consultant	CDBG Public Facilities; TIF; USDA Rural Development	

Goal 5: Promote Business Growth in the Community		Priority / Level of Impact			Time Frame				Level of Difficulty			Cost			Partners	Potential Funding Sources
		Low	Medium	High	1-2 Yrs	3-5 Yrs	5+ Yrs	Ongoing	Easy	Medium	Hard	Low (<\$10,000)	Medium (\$5,000 - \$50,000)	High (>\$50,000)	Public, Private, Community, County, State, Etc.	Grants, Loans, Public, Private, Etc.
Recommendations																
5.1	Support the La Farge Area Partners Association to continue to enhance the local economy.		•				•	•				•		LAPA; Village; Business Owners	Village Funding; TIF	
5.2	Target business opportunities to take advantage of the local Broadband capabilities.	•					•		•		•		•	Village; Vernon County Economic Development Department		
5.3	Develop a 'Pop-Up' or Incubator Program to provide entrepreneurs with space and visibility on Main Street.		•		•				•				•	Village; Vernon County Economic Development Department		
5.4	Work with Economic Development partners to promote programs associated with business ownership transition and succession planning.			•			•		•				•	Village; Vernon County Economic Development Department; WEDC		
5.5	Promote businesses that continue to establish Vernon County as a leader in organic food production and eco-tourism.		•						•	•			•	Village; LAPA; Vernon County Economic Development Department		
5.6	Work with Vernon County Economic Development to assist with local business district vitality, business recruitment, and regional tourism.		•						•	•			•	Village; LAPA; Vernon County Economic Development Department; Viroqua Chamber		
5.7	Work with Economic Development partners to support businesses through on-going workshops and provide resources and support for marketing, business management, etc.		•						•	•			•	Village; LAPA; Vernon County Economic Development Department; WEDA; Viroqua Chamber		
5.8	Participate in the Viroqua Chamber Main Street's Economic Development Program Partnership, if/when it becomes available.		•						•	•			•	Village; Business Owners; Viroqua Chamber		
5.9	Work with regional partners to identify an opportunity to place a daycare facility within the community.			•					•	•			•	Village; Vernon County Economic Development Department; Business Owners		

Goal 6: Provide Amenities That Will Support Tourism		Priority / Level of Impact			Time Frame				Level of Difficulty			Cost			Partners	Potential Funding Sources
		Low	Medium	High	1-2 Yrs	3-5 Yrs	5+ Yrs	Ongoing	Easy	Medium	Hard	Low (<\$10,000)	Medium (\$5,000 - \$50,000)	High (>\$50,000)	Public, Private, Community, County, State, Etc.	Grants, Loans, Public, Private, Etc.
Recommendations																
6.1	Create a trail connection from the Kickapoo Valley Reserve to the Downtown.			•			•			•			•	Village; Vernon County; Private property Owners	TIF; DNR Recreation Trail Grant	
6.2	Ensure all campsites at Village Park have electric and water hook-ups.		•		•				•				•	Village	TIF	
6.3	Investigate the feasibility of adding more improved campsites within the Village.		•				•		•			•		Village	TIF	
6.4	Encourage additional overnight lodging opportunities.		•				•	•			•			Village; Property Owners	TIF; WEDC CDI Grant	
6.5	Relocate and improve the existing canoe landing and associated amenities (parking, water fountain, picnic tables, etc) to promote more recreational use along the lower branch of the Kickapoo River.			•	•				•			•		Village	DNR Recreation Boating Grant	
6.6	Create a strong pedestrian and bicycle connection from the west end of Downtown through Main Street.			•	•				•			•		Village	CDBG Public Facilities Grant; TIF	
6.7	Provide access to water fountains and water bottle filling stations in areas of high visibility.	•				•			•			•		Village	CDBG Public Facilities Grant; TIF	
6.8	Make Downtown friendly to bicycle users by providing bicycle parking and dedicate bicycle lanes.		•		•				•			•		Village	CDBG Public Facilities Grant; TIF	
6.9	Encourage local businesses to promote organic and artisan products and services.	•					•	•			•			Village; LAPA; Local Business Owners		
6.10	Utilize open spaces within the floodplain area south of Downtown for events.		•				•		•			•		Village; LAPA; Local Organizations	Village Funding Sources	

Goal 7: Increase Housing Options and Availability of Housing in the Village		Priority / Level of Impact			Time Frame				Level of Difficulty			Cost			Partners	Potential Funding Sources
		Low	Medium	High	1-2 Yrs	3-5 Yrs	5+ Yrs	Ongoing	Easy	Medium	Hard	Low (<\$10,000)	Medium (\$5,000 - \$50,000)	High (>\$50,000)	Public, Private, Community, County, State, Etc.	Grants, Loans, Public, Private, Etc.
Recommendations																
7.1	Identify future growth areas outside of the floodplain for single-family and multi-family housing. Work with private property owners to identify feasible sites.			•				•	•				•		Village; Property Owners; Community	EDA; USDA Rural Development
7.2	Increase housing for seniors within close proximity to the Downtown.			•		•			•				•		Village; Property Owners	TID No. 1; TID Affordable Housing Extension; Village Funding Sources
7.3	Utilize available funding sources to establish a locally-funded housing stock improvement program.		•				•		•				•		Village; Lenders	Village Funding Sources; Lenders; Vernon County RLF; Coulee CAP Programs
7.4	Review and revise local ordinances to create opportunities for affordable housing.		•			•			•				•		Village; Consultant	

Goal 8: Create and Promote a Place Brand Based on the Community's Unique Assets		Priority / Level of Impact			Time Frame				Level of Difficulty			Cost			Partners	Potential Funding Sources	
		Low	Medium	High	1-2 Yrs	3-5 Yrs	5+ Yrs	Ongoing	Easy	Medium	Hard	Low (<\$10,000)	Medium (\$5,000 - \$50,000)	High (>\$50,000)	Public, Private, Community, County, State, Etc.	Grants, Loans, Public, Private, Etc.	
Recommendations																	
8.1	Develop and implement a community brand that establishes a common theme and highlights the community's unique assets. Examples include: Kickapoo Valley Reserve and Kickapoo River.			•					•					•		Village; Property Owners; Community	Tax Incremental Financing
8.2	Continue to establish Vernon County as a leader in organic food production in the Midwest.			•		•			•					•		Village; Property Owners	Village Funding Sources
8.3	Develop La Farge's identity as the home of Organic Valley.		•				•		•					•		Village; Lenders	Village Funding Sources; Lenders
8.4	Install entryway signage into the community that utilizes the Village's brand.		•			•		•			•					Village; Consultant	Village Funding Sources; Local Fundraising

7.0 FUNDING STRATEGY

The Implementation Matrix in the previous section identified a number of potential funding sources for the recommendations identified. These sources are viable opportunities to assist with paying for improvements that will have a positive impact on the community and the Downtown planning area.

Priority Short-Term Funding Opportunities

Below is a summary of funding programs available to the Village during 2020 and 2021 to assist with the implementation of the Main Street Plan. The Village has a unique opportunity to capitalize on existing funding which will serve as a catalyst to “jump start” the revitalization of the Downtown. Following are specific funding opportunities that are recommended for the initial implementation activities.

A. Economic Development Administration (EDA) Economic Adjustment Grant

The Village, through the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC) has received a \$160,000 grant to fund an economic recovery plan. A local match of \$40,000 is being provided by Vernon County. These planning funds can be used to prepare a comprehensive flood mitigation plan in order to protect the community from future flooding and create a sustainable local economy. Major components may include:

1. Public participation;
2. Evaluate alternative flood mitigation alternatives;
3. Community facility & infrastructure assessment including the electric substation;
4. Identification of buildable sites outside of the floodplain;
5. Environmental assessment;
6. Detailed implementation plan; and
7. Design engineering for substation, new development sites and other recommended facilities.

B. Tax Increment District No. 1 (TID No. 1)

1. TID No. 1 is currently projected to generate \$1,183,660 of surplus revenue.
2. The Village can amend TID No. 1 to request a Three Year Tech College Extension, which will generate \$700,000 of additional revenue. The total surplus with the extension is projected to be \$1,883,660.
3. The end of the expenditure period is **04/14/2021**. Construction contracts must be approved before the end of the expenditure period.
4. Amend the TID No. 1 Project Plan to include the following projects located within the one-half mile radius of the TID No. 1 boundary:
 - a. Main Street improvements including: street, sanitary sewer, water main, storm sewer, lighting, signage, sidewalk, bicycle facilities and streetscape.

- b. Recreation & tourism facilities such as bike trails, canoe landing, camp ground and parks.
- c. Downtown revitalization activities including: business incentives, building improvements, façade improvements, acquisition, relocation, demolition, site improvements, electric vehicle charging station, etc.
- d. Community-wide benefit projects such as marketing & promotion, and the electrical substation relocation.

C. CDBG Public Facilities (PF) Grant

- 1. Apply for a \$1,000,000 CDBG PF grant for the Main Street reconstruction project. Eligible activities include: street, sanitary sewer, water main, storm sewer, lighting and streetscape improvements.
- 2. The local match for the CDBG grant can come from the surplus TID No. 1 revenue.
- 3. The application deadline is June 25, 2020.

D. WEDC Community Development Investment (CDI) Grant

- 1. Apply for up to a \$250,000 grant to assist with the acquisition and relocation of the truck repair business to relocate them out of the floodplain and create a new building site on Main Street.

Comprehensive Overview of Potential Public Funding Programs

The following provides an overview of some of the public funding programs that are available to municipalities within the State of Wisconsin. Each of the individual programs is focused on varying types of projects and should be considered as part of a larger funding strategy for any particular project.

Tax Incremental Financing

A. Tax Increment District No. 1 (TID No. 1)

The Village of La Farge created TID No. 1 on 04/14/2003 to promote Industrial Development. The maximum life is until 04/14/2026 and the end of the expenditure period is 04/14/2021.

The Village's Municipal Financial Advisor (Ehlers) is projecting TID No. 1 will generate \$1,183,660 of surplus revenue through the life of the TID. This surplus revenue creates an opportunity to use surplus TIF funds for eligible project costs. However, the TIF funds must be spent by 04/14/2021 to be eligible for TID No. 1 funds. As a note, TIF funds are considered spent if actual payments have been made, or contracts have been executed.

The TID No. 1 Project Plan has been amended twice. Amendment No. 1 was approved on 08/31/2008 and added additional projects in the TID and within the one half mile of

the TID. Amendment No. 2 was amended on 09/13/2010 and added additional eligible projects.

The original Project Plan and Amendments do not include the reconstruction of Main Street or other Downtown Revitalization activities. Based on a review of the existing TID No. 1 documents and tax incremental financing statutes, the following recommendations will allow the Village to use surplus TID No. 1 revenue for projects recommended in this Plan, which are located within the one-half mile radius of the TID boundary.

Main Street in the Downtown is located within the one-half mile radius of the TID No. 1 boundary. As such, the TID Project Plan should be amended to add the following projects:

1. Reconstruction of Main Street infrastructure including street, sidewalk, sanitary sewer, water main, storm sewer and related appurtenances;
2. Construction of enhancements to Main Street including decorative lighting, signage, streetscape, pedestrian facilities, bicycle facilities, traffic safety facilities, pocket parks, gateway features and other improvements to enhance the downtown;
3. Recreation and tourist facilities including bicycle trails, canoe landing facilities, campground improvements and related appurtenances;
4. Development Incentives;
5. Site Development;
6. Land Acquisition, Demolition & Relocation;
7. Community Development, Redevelopment & Affordable Housing;
8. Building Façade & Building renovation; and
9. Community-wide projects that benefit TID No. 1 should also be added to the Project Plan:
 - a. Relocation of the electrical substation; and
 - b. Marketing & Promotion.

B. Three Year Tech Collage Extension

TID No. 1 is eligible for the three year tech college extension. The additional three years of revenue will generate approximately \$700,000 of additional revenue. This additional revenue, combined with the \$1,183,660 of projected surplus funds, will provide \$1,883,660 of available TIF revenue.

C. Affordable Housing Extension

In the last year of TID No. 1, the Village could extend the TID for one additional year to fund affordable housing projects and/or to improve the housing stock in the Village.

D. Tax Increment District No. 2 (TID No. 2)

Since the implementation of the Downtown improvement plan will be completed over an extended period of time, the Village should consider creation of TID No. 2 after TID No. 1 is terminated.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

A. CDBG Eligibility

1. La Farge's LMI percentage is 54.81%.
2. The Village is above the 51% LMI benefit making community-wide projects eligible.
3. "Neighborhood" or "project area" projects must have an income survey prepared to document LMI benefit.

B. CDBG Grant Opportunities

1. CDBG Public Facilities (PF):
 - a. 66.6% grant up to \$1,000,000.
 - b. Downtown revitalization including the Main Street infrastructure and streetscape improvements are eligible for the CDBG Public Facilities program as a Community-wide benefit project.
 - c. Other eligible infrastructure projects include: streets, sanitary sewer system, water system, storm sewer, etc.
 - d. Eligible projects also include fire stations, EMS, libraries, community centers, etc.
 - e. Annual application deadline is June 25, 2020. However, May 14 is the typical deadline.
2. CDBG Planning
 - a. 66.6% grant up to \$50,000 (Need to meet 51% LMI Requirement).
 - b. Eligible projects include: Comprehensive Plan updates, Economic development plans, neighborhood redevelopment plans, etc.
 - c. Applications may be submitted continuously. Non-competitive.
3. CDBG Emergency Assistance Program (EAP)
 - a. 75% grants up to \$500,000.
 - b. Projects must meet 51% LMI requirement (Or eligible under Blight Elimination or Local Urgent Need).
 - c. Eligible projects: Infrastructure damaged by flooding, acquisition, demolition & local match to HMGP.
 - d. Applications must be submitted within 90 days of disaster.
4. CDBG Disaster Recovery (DR): Availability Based on Congressional Allocation
 - a. 70% of funds must be used for LMI. 30% can be used for Non-LMI.
 - b. Eligible projects include acquisition, demolition relocation of flooded properties
 - c. Eligible projects include infrastructure: streets, sanitary sewer, water main, storm sewer, sidewalks.
 - d. Eligible projects include flood mitigation activities: levees, flood proofing, etc.
 - e. Eligible projects also include fire stations, EMS, libraries, community centers, etc.

U.S.D.A. Rural Development

A. Eligibility

1. La Farge's Median Household Income (MHI) = \$38,214 (67.7% of Wisconsin's \$56,439 MHI).
2. Based on MHI, La Farge is eligible for a maximum grant of 75%; however the actual grant is based on need.

B. Sewer & Water Program

1. User Rates must exceed +/- \$30 to \$35 / RUE / month to Trigger Grants.
2. Maximum grant = 75% (Due to MHI).
3. Normal grant = 25% to 40%.
4. Current Loan Terms:
 - a. 40 year amortization term
 - b. 1.75% fixed interest rate
5. Eligible costs: sanitary sewer and water main improvements, including street reconstruction and storm sewer, to serve new residential development and improvements to existing sewer and water system.

C. Community Facilities Program

1. Eligible projects: Municipal buildings, fire station, libraries, public works, etc.
2. Grant availability: Minimal amounts.
3. Current Loan Terms:
 - a. 40 year amortization
 - b. 1.75% fixed interest rate

Flood Substantial Damaged Structures – Funding for Acquisition & Demolition

A. Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)

1. Available for properties damaged more than 50%.
2. Eligible properties: residential & commercial.
3. Funding Mix:
 - a. FEMA: Provides 75% grants
 - b. State Emergency Management: 12.5% grants
 - c. Village: 12.5% grants (Vernon County CDBG EAP grant can help fund local share)

B. Wis. Municipal Flood Control Grant Program

1. Provides 50% grants up to \$650,000 for structures located in the flood plain and experienced damage.
2. Eligible projects include acquisition and demolition of structures in the floodplain, flood proofing, and flood mitigation.
3. Eligible properties: residential & commercial.

C. CDBG Disaster Recovery (DR)

1. Available if Presidential Disaster Declaration allocates funds.
2. 70% of the funds must be used for LMI benefit.

3. Can be used as local match for other programs.
4. Eligible properties: residential, commercial & public buildings.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Sewer & Water Programs

A. Clean Water Fund Program

1. Sanitary Sewer & Stormwater Management.
2. Subsidized Loans & Grants (Principal Forgiveness) (1.6% interest, 20 year term).

B. Safe Drinking Water Loan Program

1. Municipal Water System Improvements.
2. Subsidized Loans & Grants (Principal Forgiveness) (1.6% interest, 20 year term).

Parks & Recreation Programs

A. WDNR Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant – Annual Deadline May 1

Maximum Grant: No maximum (additional review for grants that exceed \$250,000). Requires 50% local match.

The Stewardship Program: Aids for the Acquisition & Development of Local Parks (ADLP), Urban Green Space (UGS), Urban Rivers (UR) and Acquisition of Development Rights (ADR). Eligible Projects: Land acquisition, development of nature-based recreation facilities, recreation trails, development of support facilities such as access roads, parking, restrooms, signage, utility systems and lighting.

B. Federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP) – Annual Deadline May 1

Maximum Grant: \$45,000 for 2020 grant cycle. \$200,000 for 2021 grant cycle. Requires 50% local match. Eligible Projects: land acquisition; maintenance and restoration of existing trails; development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities, and development of new trails. Projects must further a specific goal, be included in the SCORP or a local Outdoor Recreation Plan.

C. WDNR Recreational Boating Facilities Grant - Deadlines: February 1, 2020, June 1, 2020 & November 1, 2020.

Maximum Grants: Up to 50% of eligible costs. Largest grant in recent years = \$800,000. Eligible Projects: navigational dredging, boat ramps, docks, access roads, parking, sanitary facilities, navigational aids and weed harvesting equipment.

D. Federal Land & Water Conservations Fund (LWCF) Annual Deadline May 1

Maximum Grant: No maximum. Requires 50% local match. Eligible Projects: Land acquisition; and/or development of outdoor recreation facilities including nature-based and active sports facilities. Projects must be consistent with SCORP and Local Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

- A. Brownfield Grants - No Deadline:** Grants for redeveloping commercial and industrial sites with environmental contamination.
- B. Brownfield Site Assessment Grants - No Deadline:** Grants for environmental investigations, demolition of structures and tank removal.
- C. Capacity Building Grants - No Deadline:** Grants to assist with economic competitiveness assessments, implementation of best practices, and comprehensive economic development strategies. **Maximum Grant:** \$50,000. 50% local match required.
- D. Capacity Building Grants - Entrepreneurial Support - Deadline: No Deadline:** Grants for nonprofit organizations to strengthen entrepreneurial communities and support new ventures through promotion of entrepreneurship. Grants generally range from \$10,000 to \$100,000. 50% local match required.
- E. Community Development Investment Grants - No Deadline:** Grants to incentivize economic development programs with an emphasis on downtown revitalization. **Maximum Grant:** \$250,000. 75% local match required. Eligible activities include the following:
 - 1. Building renovation;
 - 2. Historic Preservation;
 - 3. Demolition;
 - 4. New Construction;
 - 5. Infrastructure Investment; and
 - 6. Project or site development planning.

Eligible projects include the following:

- 1. Development of significant destination attractions;
- 2. Rehabilitation and reuse of underutilized or landmark buildings;
- 3. Infill Development;
- 4. Historic Preservation;
- 5. Infrastructure efforts, including disaster prevention measures, providing substantial benefit to downtown residents/property owners; and
- 6. Mixed-used developments (not exclusively residential).

Tourism, Arts Program & Quality of Life

A. Wisconsin Arts Board

The Wisconsin Arts Board serves as a clearinghouse for many different grant programs, which may be suitable for future arts activities within the downtown. For example, the creative communities' grants, reviewed each February, provides up to 50% of funding for local arts and arts education programming. Applicant projects must be less than XX years old or represent an expansion of an existing activity.

B. Wisconsin Dept. of Tourism – Joint Effort Marketing

The Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) grants available from the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, fund five categories of marketing initiatives to promote tourism.

1. Destination Marketing (Maximum funding \$39,550 for one year);
2. New Event (Maximum funding \$39,550 for three years);
3. Sales Promotion (Maximum funding \$39,550 for two years);
4. Existing Event (Maximum funding \$39,550 for three years); and
5. One-tie, one-of-a-kind (Maximum funding \$28,250 for one year).

C. National Endowment for the Arts – Our Town Program

The Our Town grant program supports creative placemaking projects that help to transform communities into lively, beautiful, and resilient places with the arts at their core. This funding supports local efforts to enhance quality of life and opportunity for existing residents, increase creative activity, and create a distinct sense of place. Our Town offers support for projects in several areas, arts engagement, cultural planning, and design projects along with projects that build knowledge about creative placemaking.

D. AARP Livable Communities Challenge Grants

The AARP Community Challenge provides small grants to fund "quick-action" projects that can help communities become more livable for people of all ages. Applications are being accepted for projects to improve housing, transportation, public space, technology ("smart cities"), civic engagement and more.

APPENDICES

Results of Stakeholder Interviews & Focus Groups
Results of Public Engagement Workshop No. 1
Main Street Resources from WEDC
Sources & Uses for Main Street Reconstruction

APPENDIX 1:

Results of Stakeholder Interviews & Focus Groups

**Village of La Farge
Main Street Plan
Stakeholder Interview & Focus Group Input
February 12 & 13, 2020**

Interviews conducted with the following individuals:

- Kathryn Ashley-Wright, Ewetopia
- Shane Nottestad, Zzip Stop
- Greg Lawton, La Farge Medical Clinic
- Deb & Earl Nelson, Truck Stop
- Debra Moore, Salon Owner
- Meaghan Gustafson, School District
- Marcy West, Kickapoo Valley Reserve
- Ron Johnson, Kickapoo Valley Reserve
- Eric Hartwig, Organic Valley
- Matt Mueller, Organic Valley
- Maggie Becker, Organic Valley
- Brad Steinmetz, Lion's Club
- Maureen Hysel, Lion's Club
- Don Foy, Lion's Club
- Kathy Appleman, LAPA, HTC Realty
- Patsy Alderson, LAPA

Public Workshop No. 1 Attendees: Fred David, Bonnie Sherman, Nick Burnard, Cheryl Purvis, Kimberly Walker, Reggie Nelson

Challenges

- DAYCARE is a major need in the area. School district looked at opportunities to house this service under their roof, but ultimately couldn't make it work due to facility constraints. Organic Valley conducted a feasibility study to provide daycare services on their campus; ultimately was too expensive. School District did feasibility study of introducing this option as part of the district, but ultimately they couldn't accommodate it within their facilities.
- Difficulty recruiting employees to this rural areas; people are unwilling to commit. Younger demographics want to live in more urban areas, like La Crosse.
- Feels like town is dying.
- Not enough population to support small businesses, especially restaurants.
- Buildings on Main Street are not appealing. Not a good selection for potential buyers to pick from.
- There is a disconnect between Organic Valley employees and Main Street – how do we get them there?
- Nothing on Main Street to attract Organic Valley workers. If there were things that catered to them, they would be there.

- Canoe landing is currently in a cow pasture. Needs to be relocated and improved. Most people get out in Rockton. Rockton & Ontario have 4-6 nice canoe landings.
- Buildings and streetscape need some aesthetic attention. Downtown corridor is run-down and unsightly. New lights, planters, etc. would be a major improvement.
- Lack of recreation opportunities for the kids. Used to have a movie theater, soda fountain, etc. Not a lot for kids to do during the summer or winter months. Library gets a lot of pressure to cater to them. A community center or Boys & Girls Club would do well.
- Concern around closing of Nuzum's. Don't want the site to deteriorate and become blighted at a key intersection to downtown.
- Water & sewer bills are exceptionally high when compared to other communities. (CHECK THIS)
- Too many service-based businesses in downtown; need more retail.
- Current building owners are trying to maintain their buildings for the lowest cost; cheapens what we do have with no design aesthetic.
- Families don't want to live here, only elderly people do. They come back to the area after they retire.
- Cost of flood insurance was too much for some businesses to move forward.
- The first impression on the west end of the downtown is the Truck Center. Some people like it, others don't.

Local Business Climate

- Pottery studio is a perfect example of a business that should be here, but it's never open.
- Hardware store is a major amenity, but worry about succession planning. Who will take over? How do we keep it from closing?
- Should grocery store and Organic Valley collaborate or combine to make more of a unique destination?
- Need a coffee shop and ice cream shop, particularly in summer time, to capture traffic moving through town.
- Everyone who goes canoeing goes to gas station after they're finished for food and ice cream. Should have other options.
- There are a few Air BnB's, but we could support more. Not much lodging; people have to go to Viroqua.
- Phil & Deb's is the only place to eat on Main Street.
- Gas station has seen 13% growth per year for nine consecutive years.
- Medical Clinic moved into their new facility in 2015 and added retail pharmacy services. Facilities have two birthing rooms (2019 = 125 births). Population served = 10-15% Amish or Mennonite population. Starting collaborative practice with University of Wisconsin to work with Amish & Mennonite genetic disorders.
- Opportunity to relocate Truck Center? Cost prohibitive, but would open up possibilities for the downtown, if floodwaters could be addressed.
- Nuzum's closing is a major hit to the community. Can that site be re-used? Concern that it will sit and become a blighted site.
- Organic Valley had 4 feet of water in their building, and talked about alternative options, but invested in flood proofing instead.

- Brosie's was starting to draw people, but it wasn't open long enough to make an impact. This business catered more to the Organic Valley employee base and saw good results of those efforts. This building is now for sale, but all of equipment has been sold.
- Flower shop opening across from bank, was previously located in Viola. Combination business with wine lounge in back and garden/patio in sideyard.
- Difficult to sell existing businesses to anyone who is familiar with current situation in downtown. How do we sell if we keep getting flooded?
- Kickapoo valley Ranch has cabins; Church Air BnB; 10-room hotel behind Zip Stop. Need more overnight accommodations.
- Businesses are leaving, but no new ones are coming. Need more businesses, period. Should also add businesses that can support Organic Valley (catering, meeting coordination, lodging, etc.)
- Can't rely on seasonal tourism for businesses to be viable. Need to be creative with business models that have alternative sources of income (online sales, combination business, etc.)

Existing Conditions

- La Farge is more of a destination community, particularly during the summer months
- In the summer, this community is a huge pass-through for traffic. This traffic needs places to stop and spend time, spend money.
- Have a large population of elderly people. Some facilities to support them, including a senior meal site and some senior living facilities (Pine Lawn Apartments, Gold St. Apartments, Bethel Parkside). Need more resources for this population. Also, this demographic can't afford for the taxes to go up, may not support things that impact their tax bill.
- Need more handicap parking areas and to make downtown more handicap accessible.
- A large home-school population in the region. Viroqua has a Waldorf school + 2 Christian-based schools.
- Making money is not a huge motivator for much of the population in this area. You don't have to compete here and hustle to have a comfortable life like you do in larger areas. That's part of the appeal.
- This is a less expensive place to live than other communities in the area, particularly Viroqua.
- Organic Valley cafeteria is now available to public during certain hours.
- 50-70% of Organic Valley employees in La Farge facility have a La Farge address; live within 10-15 minutes of La Farge.

Local Events & Tourism

- Tourism related to Amish destination lasts from Memorial Day through the end of the year.
- Huge hunting & fishing tourism base. Lots of disposable income with types of people that are attracted to the area.
- KVR has primitive camping sites (25); Village has 10 improved ones with new shower building, but do not have water hook-up/only half have electric hook-up. All sites should have water and electric access, but more improved camping sites are needed.

- Girls softball field gets a lot of smaller format activity in the summer months. Larger format games take place at the school.
- Tons of motorcycle groups go through town. Many of them stop at the Rockton Bar.
- Lots of horse trailers parked at Rockton Bar also. Not many places for horse trailers to camp, load/unload.
- 4th of July: Tractor pull, parade, all-school reunion, ball games
- Old Fashioned Christmas at the School
- Winterfest at KVR in January (800 people); standing parade in 2019 was a great example of a creative event.
- Classic car event in Mid July; started by Mark Philips at Free Methodist Church. KVR opens Old River Road for the cars
- KVR Damn Challenge Triathlon in October
- KVR in May = Trom 'n' Chomp
- KVR hosts kid's summer camps.
- KVR hosted a front-line training through Department of Tourism to train people about the resources available.
- LarryFest – Bluegrass music festival (1200-1500 people); natural amphitheater, mid-August.
- Zip Stop currently accommodates tourists the best.
- KVR hosts WinterFest. Recent comedian was a collaborative effort with Village; sold 650 tickets, received very positively by community.
- Need to have a full weekend of activities for visitors. One or two things is not enough.
- Not trying to bring more people; we already have the people. How do we capitalize on the ones we already have moving through?
- Should develop a collaborative, regional Economic Development plan to work together, rather than each community going at it alone.

Infrastructure

- Intersection of West Main St. & N. Silver St. is problematic; there's always water in the intersection, which turns into ice in the winter. The drainage ditch on the vacant lot is always wet and runs under the sidewalk, creating problems with water.
- Village needs to get utility infrastructure out of the flood area. Had to shut down power for 48 hours during flood, which impacted the entire community. Plans have been constructed to relocate the infrastructure, but is cost prohibitive.
- Alley ditch needs to be dug out south of clinic & baseball field. When this ditch is cleaned out, it keeps water off of Main Street in that area.
- Why can't community build a dyke around the town to control water? Look at Richland Center – they seem to do a good job of keeping water out.
- Opportunity to address parking issues. Can parking on one side of the street be angled instead of parallel on both sides?
- Drainage along Main Street is horrible; have to walk through water in the springtime.

Housing

- For housing construction: developer needs \$200/month profit per unit on a duplex to be financially feasible. For new construction, a unit would have to charge rents of \$1,100 per

unit, which isn't financially viable in this location. For a 4- or 8-plex unit, the monthly rent is reduced to \$950/month, which is more marketable, but still difficult.

- New subdivision is close to built out. No more areas within Village for housing development, except a few infill parcels.
- Nothing should be built south of Main Street.
- Need to look at annexing land to the east for more residential growth.
- Multi-family rental = 10 units behind Ewetopia; one multi-family structure where old trailer park was – room for another building; some single-family home rentals.
- Suggestion that school district sell tennis courts for residential development.
- Houses are selling right now without ever going on the market. Major shortage of housing options available.
- All elderly housing is full. Lots of retirees coming to area.
- Lower income housing available in La Farge compared to other communities = larger transient population.
- People displaced by the flooding want to stay here, but there is no housing available.
- No housing available for large families.

Kickapoo Valley Reserve

- Ice caves
- 25 primitive camping sites; intentional. Don't want improved camping sites in Reserve. Wildcat Mountain has nicer camping sites. Recently moved all camping sites out of floodplain because of flash flood problems, too dangerous.
- No direct trail access to town
- Trails are for hikers, bicycles, horses, snowmobiles
- Very grassroots based; lots of community involvement.
- KVR is a strong attraction for Organic Valley to attract employees.
- Visitor's center sees 20,000 people per year.
- Facility hosts conferences & meetings. Small, but growing in use.
- Managed jointly with the Ho Chunk Nation.
- People building around the perimeter of the Reserve have already changed the character of those areas.

School District

- 240 students (4k-12th Grade)
- Enrollment has been steadily increasing for past 5 years.
- Developing a Charter School in cooperation with KVR for developing a forest school. Focusing on environmental education and place-based education.
- Facilities are aging. Cost of maintaining facilities is skyrocketing.
- Original building needs to be repurposed. It's not suitable for instruction and currently only ¼ of it is utilized, the rest sits empty. How can we turn this building into a community space? Currently working with an architectural engineering company to study alternatives.
- Goal of continuing to build community partnerships that will benefit students.
- Lack of daycare facilities on this side of Vernon County is a huge obstacle. District has a 3K program 2 morning a week and all-day 4K programming to help overcome this.

School also runs an after-school program with a sliding tuition for elementary-aged children. Had a \$100K grant to operate a free program, but didn't get renewed. Lack of daycare negatively affects the district's enrollment. People enroll in school where they can also find child care.

- Higher percentage of foster families in this district compared to other districts.

Future Opportunities

- Village should be aggressive and create a Community Development Authority so they can make projects happen.
- Look at Yellow Springs, Ohio as an example of an interesting small town.
- La Farge should focus on being more of an arts/artisanal community.
- Village looked at a solar array at one point. This is something that would make it unique and self-reliant, and is an example of how we can differentiate ourselves.
- Could Nuzum's building be used for a canoe/kayak/bike rental business?
- How can we tie downtown to KVR?
- Bike trail from town to Rockton
- If there were a nice canoe landing in town, more people would use the lower Kickapoo.
- Is there an opportunity to enhance some of the existing buildings? Could a façade program do that?
- Need for a Laundromat to service the large population of campers, hunters, fishermen, etc.
- Don't want to lose Organic Valley in La Farge.
- Need for a foreign car mechanic in the area.
- Opportunity to connect all of the trails together to make a more walkable/bikeable network.
- Need water bottle filling stations around town, close to recreation areas.
- Could Village purchase Nuzum's and re-purpose it? Outdoor concert venue?
- Former Railroad bed could be a great opportunity to create a trail connection.
- Need a canoe landing with cement; currently muddy.
- History is attractive to visitors. History should be displayed on buildings, or via a historical walk.
- "The Flood Project": so much interested in what happened during flood. Could have a Real Reel Tour with 3-4 spots – you dial a number to hear a story of the flood being told by the person impacted.
- What are the specialty businesses that could support hunters, campers, hikers, canoe/kayakers, foragers, etc? Why can't La Farge be the hub for those types of businesses?
- Should promote combination businesses. What are complimentary uses that can pair up to become more viable? Proposed flower shop/wine bar is one example. What about a Laundromat/coffee shop?
- Should highlight artistic talents in town. Why don't we have a store on Main ST. for local makers to sell their products?
- Could use a General Store to cater to the camping/outdoor crowd. Or a sporting goods store with clothing, gear, camping equipment, etc.
- Look at Solen Springs on Hwy 53 in Duluth

- Need business coaching, recruitment, investment – other resources to support business start-ups.
- Look at Lanesborough, MN. Great example community that reflects the people there (artsy, biking, etc.)
- Do ordinances allow food carts? Might be an opportunity to create a transition to service the people coming through until more permanent structures can be developed and businesses created.
- Would like to see permanent, well-designed way-finding signage throughout the downtown and community.
- WiFi in Village Park for campers.
- Desire for design guidelines for Main Street. This corridor doesn't reflect the character of the rest of the Village, but you need ordinances to implement and enforce those ideas.
- Add street trees and water stations along Main Street.
- Sandmire Park may be an appropriate place for canoe access. Improvements being made: trails, kid's fishing, etc.



APPENDIX 2:

Results of Public Engagement Workshop No. 1

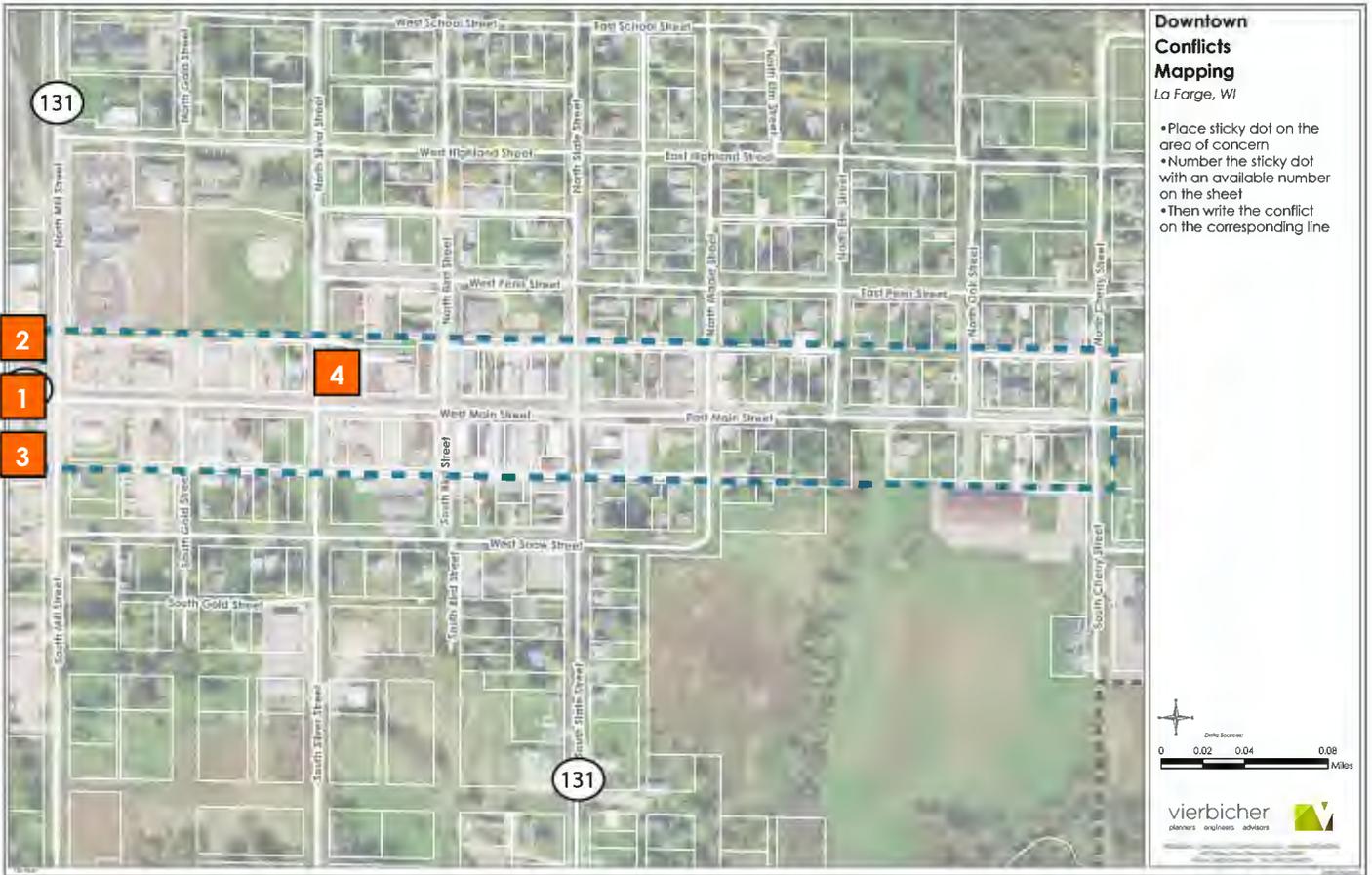
Stakeholders who attended the Public Workshop on February 27, 2020 were asked to prioritize potential street cross-sections for Main Street. The first option was the existing cross section, the second option prioritized bike lanes, and the third option prioritized street trees. Participants were asked to place a sticker in the gray box to the right of the cross-section they felt was most appropriate for Main Street. The stars in the gray boxes represent those votes. The intent of this exercise was to determine the highest priority elements when designing the future cross section for the right-of-way.

FUTURE MAIN STREET:

Please indicate your preferred street configuration in the box below. This will help guide us in our initial design effort over the next weeks.

<p style="text-align: center;">EXISTING MAIN STREET CROSS SECTION</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">No Change- I Like What We Have</p> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; background-color: #cccccc; padding: 10px; min-height: 150px;"> </div>
<p style="text-align: center;">BIKE OPTION: MAIN STREET CROSS SECTION</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Prioritize Bike Travel</p> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; background-color: #cccccc; padding: 10px; min-height: 150px;"> </div>
<p style="text-align: center;">STREET TREES OPTION: MAIN STREET CROSS SECTION</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Prioritize Pedestrian & Planting Area</p> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; background-color: #cccccc; padding: 10px; min-height: 150px;"> </div>

Stakeholders who participated in the Public Workshop on February 27, 2020 were asked what conflicts currently existed in the downtown area. Examples of conflicts were pedestrian safety, parking concerns, etc. The map below represents that conflicts identified by participants, which are identified below.



- 1** Cars coming into town going very fast.
- 2** Difficult to see around Nuzum's building at the stop sign when entering 82 from 131.
- 3** High traffic corner: would be difficult for pedestrians coming from river.
- 4** Direct access to school; Children crossing from school to Zip Stop.

Stakeholders who participated in the Public Workshop on February 27, 2020 were asked to prioritize various streetscape elements on the visual handout shown below. The rankings in the right-hand column represent the overall ranking of each element as well as the aggregated averages of the participants responses.

Please rank the potential streetscape elements below for Main Street from 1 through 10, **with 1 being the highest priority, and 10 being the lowest**. Please write the corresponding number on the line in the right-hand column.

Streetscape Element	Examples	Rank (1-10)
Street Lights		1 (2.87)
Vegetation (Street Trees, Planters, Bioswales)		3 (4.00)
Street Furniture (Benches, Trash Cans)		5 (4.14)
Bike Facilities (Racks, Bike Lanes)		3 (4.00)
Public Art		7 (5.71)
Accessories (Banners, Hanging Baskets)		6 (5.54)
Bump Outs (At Intersections)		10 (8.36)
Signage / Wayfinding		2 (3.14)
Decorative Paving		8 (7.71)
Gateway Features		9 (8.23)
Other?	*See Notes Below	_____

**Need to find a compromise for all trucks/semi's coming through to allow, yet slow them down for pedestrian safety; electric vehicle charging + solar; transportation service pick-up (Lyft); Solar phone charging stations. (could be near benches, create shading with solar panels.*

Image	Image #	Appropriate	NOT Appropriate	Because...
	1	X		Pleasing to the eye; not too modern, but "clean"
	1	X		Like the light style; La Farge needs new street lights
	1	X		Small trees (won't block solar panels on top of buildings; low maintenance pavers between sidewalk & curb)
	1	X		Helps looks of Main St. lighting needs
	1	X		
	1	X		
	2	X		Many plants
	2	X		Walker friendly
	2	X	X	Nice but will be hard to maintain
	2	X		Native plants = flood mitigation
	2	X		Plantings make it more difficult to get out of parked vehicles
	2	X	X	

Image	Image #	Appropriate	NOT Appropriate	Because...
	4	X		Tells a story
	5	X		Good for parks
	5		X	

Image	Image #	Appropriate	NOT Appropriate	Because...
	7	X		Draws interest
	7	X	X	Sculpture might be nice but it would be nice to build on mural painted on Nick Burnard's building
	9	X	X	Outside seating is good, but needs solar phone charging
	10	X		Seating & trash cans needed

Image	Image #	Appropriate	NOT Appropriate	Because...
	11		X	Too modern for small community
	11	X		Many plants
	11	X		Bikes
	11	X		
	12	X		La Farge needs signage
	12	X		Need signage!
	12	X		Like how signs direct people to other areas of Village
	12	X		Helps travelers
	13		X	
	13		X	Doesn't Fit
	13		X	Too "busy" & costly to maintain
	13		X	Too much flash. We're a more natural community.
	13		X	
	13		X	Does not fit character of town
	13		X	Ugly

Image	Image #	Appropriate	NOT Appropriate	Because...
	14	X		Many plants
	14		X	Takes up limited parking area
	14		X	Enough room?
	14	X		
	14	X		Like flower garden and seat
	15		X	Could be better kept.
	15	X		Good access from parking
	16		X	La Farge doesn't need stop/go lights

Image	Image #	Appropriate	NOT Appropriate	Because...
	18	X		
	19	X		Lighting is more pleasing than what we have!
	19		X	
	20	X		
	20	X		Love it!
	20	X		Looks welcoming

Image	Image #	Appropriate	NOT Appropriate	Because...
	21		X	
	21		X	Too urban
	21	X	X	Outside seating is good, but needs solar phone charging
	21	X		Would love to have more outdoor seating
	21	X		Like the signage, tables & umbrellas are attractive & inviting
	22	X		
	22	X		Like flower garden and seat
	22		X	I perceive the brick to be a lot of upkeep - winter!
	23		X	

Image	Image #	Appropriate	NOT Appropriate	Because...
	24	X		Flowers, plantings between building/wall & sidewalk very attractive
	24	X		Like the look, plants, etc.
	25	X		Maps are good
	25	X		Good but need a good central area with parking availability that won't deter people from (starting?)
	25	X		Add history of La Farge
	25	X		Add history of La Farge
	25			X
	27		X	I perceive the brick to be a lot of upkeep - winter!

Image	Image #	Appropriate	NOT Appropriate	Because...
	28	X		Street fairs are good
	28	X		Would help grow our farmer's market
	30	X	X	Love the art, but would be afraid of vandalism.
	31	X		Help motorists see crosswalks easier & looks nice
	31	X		

Image	Image #	Appropriate	NOT Appropriate	Because...
	32		X	Really like colored paving, but costly to start & maintain
	33	X		Maybe next to our visitor center?
	34		X	Don't use plantings that require spraying pesticides to control weeds - not consistent with organic

Image	Image #	Appropriate	NOT Appropriate	Because...
	35	X	X	Plants/trees are good but not too wide of area
	35		X	Too much maintenance
	35	X		
	36	X		
	36	X		Rest area - garbage
	36	X		
	36	X		
	37	X		Great!
	37	X		Simple art - understated
	38		X	Waste of money
	38	X		Love it!
	38		X	

Image	Image #	Appropriate	NOT Appropriate	Because...
	39	X		Stop & sit
	39	X		Like look around street poles
	40	X		Shows history & events
	41	X		Need signage!

Image	Image #	Appropriate	NOT Appropriate	Because...
	43		X	
	44	X		Tells a story
	45	X		Keeps sidewalks open for business access.
	45	X		Love tree planting, looks good for street

Image	Image #	Appropriate	NOT Appropriate	Because...
	46	X		Thing different color adds to look of streets.
	49		X	Would be hard to maintain.
	49	X		Good near river accesses
	49	X		Would be nice to have to point people from OV retail to park area, disc golf south of Main St.
	49	X		With more of a natural frame structure
	49	X		Trousim. Informational & beautiful.
	50		X	?

Image	Image #	Appropriate	NOT Appropriate	Because...
	51	X	X	Outside seating is good, but needs solar phone charging
	52		X	
	53	X		Need signage!
	53	X		Like direction signage
	53	X		Good signage
	53	X		

APPENDIX 3:

Main Street Resources from WEDC

Entrepreneurship Support Program Hierarchy

Many communities hope to encourage entrepreneurship at the local level to boost jobs and economic activity within the community for many reasons, including;

- 80% of new jobs and startup activity comes from existing businesses and individuals. It is far more efficient to help existing businesses grow or individuals pursue new business initiatives than recruiting outsiders to come to the area, and
- individuals with local connections are more likely to be successful, making the time and resources spent to assist with their initiatives more efficiently spent.

There are a variety of types of entrepreneurial development activities that communities can pursue, each of which requires different level of engagement and programming. The graphic below indicates the types of entrepreneurial programming, from simplest to most resource-intensive.



Some typical activities or programming associated with the various activities are summarized in the table below. Often, local community partners (SBDC, tech colleges, municipalities) can partner with downtown organizations to offer a full spectrum of services.

	Goal	Typical Activities
Prospect Engagement	Provide a high level of services to businesses and individuals that request information or express interest in entrepreneurship to ensure they are successful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Startup Guide • Available Property Listings • Annual followup with prospects • Assign new businesses mentors and provide marketing assistance
Cultivating Talent	Encourage startup activity by providing assistance to small entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business bootcamps • Coop retail or indoor market • Pitch contests • Co-working spaces and incubators
Outreach & Recruitment	Recruit targeted entrepreneurs in desired sectors to fill gaps in the local economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popup Shops • Business plan contest • Targeted incentives

BUSINESS TRANSITION PLANNING 101

All businesses will reach a point where the current owner will need to exit the company, whether through a planned sale or retirement, or as a result of an unexpected life event. Despite the universal nature of business transitions, few businesses dedicate time and energy to establishing a plan for an orderly transition of the business when the time comes. Only one third of family businesses successfully transition to a second generation, and many of those that do not continue failed to plan for the future.



Why Plan?

In addition to the basic desire to maximize the value of the business for the exiting owner, there are a number of additional benefits which result from establishing a transition plan in advance, including:

- ✓ Providing security to family members and employees in the event of an unexpected life changing event.
- ✓ Increased likelihood that the business will continue to prosper after the current owner/founder moves on.
- ✓ Incentive for long-time employees and engaged family members to grow and evolve their skill sets based on future expectations.
- ✓ Increased attention to critical factors which drive value for the business as part of the operating plan (typically resulting in a more profitable company).

There is no bad time to plan for the future. While it is optimal to being planning at least three years before the anticipated sale or transfer of a business, a plan does not need to refer to a specific period in time, but rather lays out a process for valuing the business and transferring ownership and management, and sets forth criteria for evaluating a potential sale. This type of straightforward process, defined in advance, is helpful in the case of a grieving family managing a disposition, and also helps to remove emotion from a transition, creating a scenario which is in the best financial interest of the business while treating stakeholder concerns into consideration.

The information in this document is geared primarily toward small retail and service businesses, although it provides a fairly basic overview of the decision-making process, necessary steps and guidelines for achieving a successful transition of any privately held company just beginning the transition planning process.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER

When contemplating a future exit, whether in the next few years or far off in the future, there are a number of factors which come into play. These factors must be evaluated and weighed against the needs and desires of the owner(s), leadership team and family members. Considerations include broad economic constraints, individual and business financial requirements and personal considerations of the owner and/or key staff.

Economic & Financial

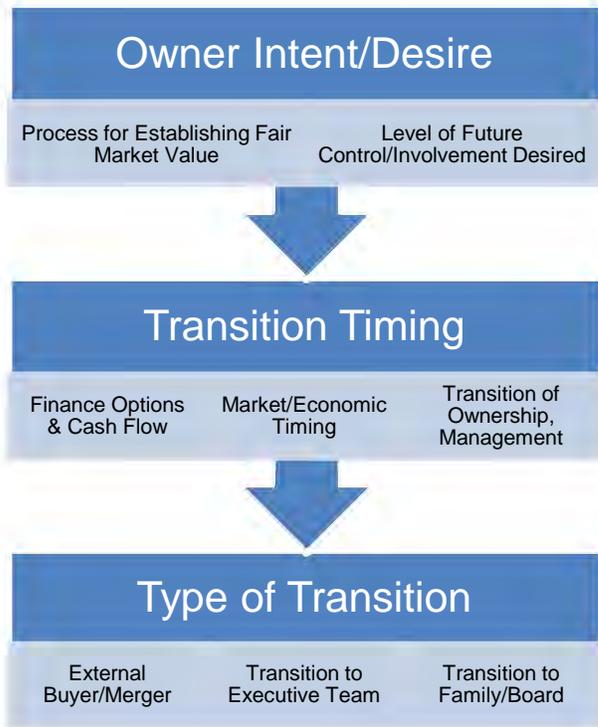
Economic and financial considerations are important to consider as they directly influence the sale/market price of a company at the time of transfer as well as the individual earnings/gains which are transferred along with the business. These financial factors include measures tied to the broader economy, to an individual industry, or to the financial needs of a business, its owner, or the estate, and likely a combination of several of these factors.

If the business is in a cyclical, seasonal or transition industry, timing a future sale to occur during a growth or ramp up period can maximize the value and potentially expand the pool of potential buyers. Similarly, the income, debt and ownership structure of the business may pose limitations on profits from a sale, while taking time to reduce liabilities on the balance sheet or waiting until certain assets have been paid off/depreciated can reduce or eliminate this negative. This also holds true for key officers and owners of the company whom may experience tax liabilities as a result of a sale during a particular period of time. These constraints may be avoided through strategic timing of a transition, or may influence the preferred deal structure (i.e. longer transition period, seller financing capabilities, etc.).

In the instance of a business which also owns real estate, the physical assets of the company should be evaluated separately. Companies that have not periodically assessed their real estate needs and valuation may find that the real estate portfolio is no longer meeting the needs of the business in the eyes of a potential buyer. Similarly, dated or poorly maintained facilities will color the impression of the overall business in the eyes of the buyer. Real estate assets need to be relevant to the present-day needs of the business at the time of transition.

Fact: 70% of the 12 million privately owned businesses in the US will change hands in the next decade. (SBDC)

Key Considerations: When & How to Transition



Personal Considerations

If the business is owned and operated primarily by one or two individuals, and especially if these individuals were the founders, understanding the personal intent of these individuals is critical to a successful transition. Many owners find it difficult to part with a business that has been their livelihood for a significant period of time, and will need to critically evaluate their intent and priorities for selling the business. What personal goals or factors should trigger a sale or transition? Are there issues associated with age, health, family or general burnout that are or may potentially impact their ability to grow and evolve the business? Failing to recognize these conditions frequently leads to a gradual decline in attention paid to the business and similar reduction in business revenues and should be avoided.

Once an ideal timeframe or conditions which might trigger a transition have been established, the owner(s) also need to evaluate personal priorities. Is it the intent that the owner(s) will sell or transfer the business and walk away, are they interested in a transition and training period, or do they envision having some ongoing role in the company? Unless physical limitations are a factor in the transition timing, maximizing the health of the exiting owner and success of the new management team will require that the exiting owners establish personal goals or activities to which they can transition their attentions. Whether this is a hobby, charitable cause or family activity, the personal aspect of the transition can be equally as important to the legal transfer.

Fact: Only one-third of family businesses successfully transition to a future generation. The single largest factor limiting successful transition is the failure the plan. (SBDC)

Personnel & Timing

If the plan is to pass on the business to existing employees or family, additional issues can arise that should be discussed in advance of any transition event. These include; an assessment of existing personnel and ownership structures, discussion around future ownership and management structures (not necessarily the same), and an itemization of roles and responsibilities moving forward.

Even in the case of a straightforward transition to a second generation already employed in the business, it will be necessary to establish a transition period during which future owners will gradually assume control and receive any additional training necessary to succeed in their new roles. In the event that future ownership or management will be divided amongst multiple individuals, a clear list of individual responsibilities, areas of oversight and organization management will need to be established.

If specific skills are identified that may be lacking on the leadership team with the exit of current owners, a longer transition period will provide time to grow existing staff or recruit new individuals to fill these gaps. It is important for future ownership to recognize that they, as successors, are responsible for forward strategy and driving value to the business. As a result, the health of the business should take first priority in the transition plan, NOT individual earnings or titles.

As the existing owners step down, an additional strategy may include the establishment of a Governance Advisory Board of Directors for a period of several years to oversee the transition. This group may or may not include the departing owners, but should be structured to fill any capability gaps and be tasked with holding successors accountable for implementation of the strategic plan developed in the transition planning process.

Avoiding Management Conflicts

Despite the best intentions, it is likely that some interpersonal conflicts will arise, especially if a mix of family, long-term and newer employees are included in the transition plan. A clear transition plan should set forth a method for valuing the business and assigning equity (ownership percentage, bonus structure), identify skill sets and responsibilities needed among the leadership team, and set standards and measurements by which individuals can demonstrate these skills before being included in the future management team. Individuals who feel entitled to a future role without also earning the privilege will ultimately jeopardize the future success of the company. Additional steps can be taken to head off these issues, including the hiring of a mediator and/or separate legal counsel for all future owners and requiring personal guarantees from all future equity shareholders as a condition of ownership. These actions can help impress upon future leadership the official nature of their agreement and ensure that they are aware of the commitment which is expected of them.

Fact: 67% of all business owners plan to retire within 10 years. (SBDC)

PLANNING FOR A TRANSITION

Once the owner, impacted family members and key staff have identified critical considerations and reached consensus on a desired transition strategy and timing parameters, there are still a number of steps left to be completed to prepare the business for an actual sale or transfer. These steps will typically require the business to engage outside assistance, which can be accomplished through the formation of a business assistance team which includes an attorney, accountant, insurance representative and business broker or appraiser, depending on the anticipated type of transition.

Valuation Process

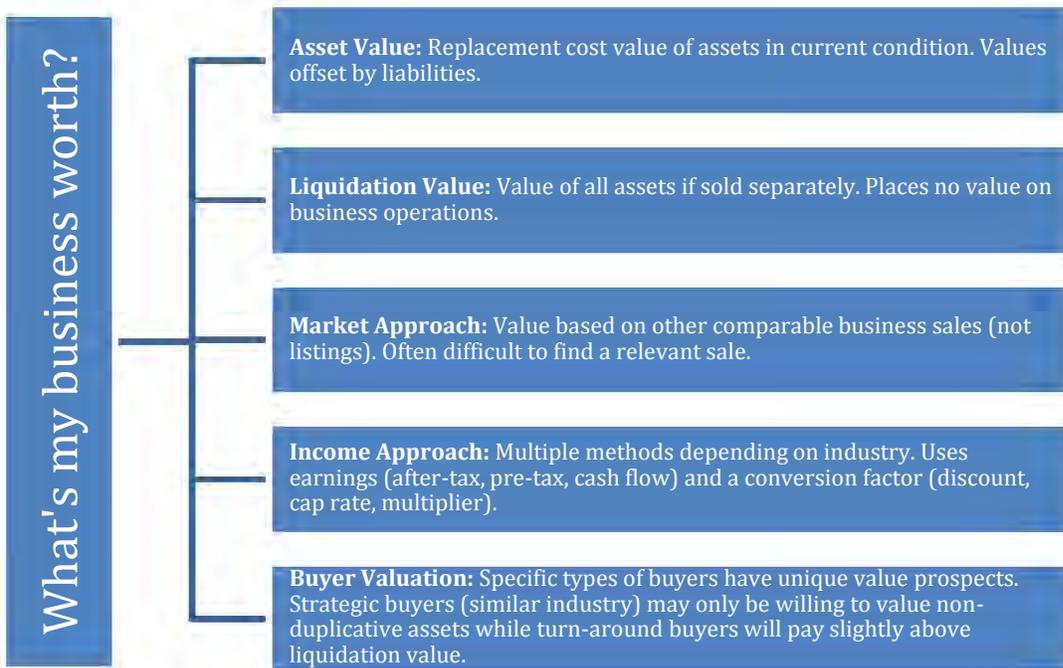
The market value of an individual business will depend on a number of factors, including its customer base, location, sales track record, real estate and equipment and business practices. The type of valuation needed also depends on the intended disposition (internal transition, bank financed buyout, etc.) and the type of buyer targeted. The graphic on the following page illustrates several common methods for valuing a business. All of these methods can be useful and produce legitimate numbers, depending on the audience. Buyers interested in a strategic purchase will be interested in one set of figures, while banks considering a financed buyout will be interested in entirely different variables. There are some types of businesses that are notoriously difficult to value under any scenario, including:

- Primarily cash businesses such as restaurants, bars and small retail storefronts.



- Businesses with a limited market size, seasonal market or inefficient real estate.
- Businesses with poor industry ratios such as high inventory levels, high payrolls relative to earnings and increasing local or online competition.

Sellers of these types of businesses will need to focus on demonstrating the value of the business through solid fundamentals, including the items identified in the final section of this document. Regardless of the type of buyer/transition anticipated, it is important to seek outside assistance in fairly valuing a business. Relying on 'rules of thumb' such as earnings multipliers can result in significant over- or under-estimates of value depending on the individual business. Appropriately valuing a business at the outset is important for securing the maximum value from a buyer. Buyers who see that a business has been listed multiple times at multiple price points may inaccurately assume that the business has been passed over by other buyers or that the owner is not reasonable and will, as a result, place a significantly lower value on the business.



Common Misperceptions

Because individual business owners will likely only experience this process once in their life, there are many unknowns surrounding the transition process, and, as a result, many misperceptions. Some of the most common misperceptions which can negatively impact a successful transition are outlined below.

- **Underestimating the time required to sell/transition.** According to the International Business Brokers Association, the average time to sell a 'good' business is 8-12 months. Businesses expecting a sale in a lesser timeframe will not receive an optimal price, and may be unable to find any qualified buyers. This is also true if there are red flags present in the business, which would need to be cleared up before a sale could take place. Transition planning should begin a minimum of three years prior to an anticipated/potential transition.

- **Assuming that a transition to a family member or key employee is easiest/best.** If a primary goal of business transfer is family continuity, this may be the best strategy. However, a well-planned transition can take longer than a sale, as it typically requires a gradual transfer of control, and is also more likely to incorporate seller-financing which may have tax/retirement implications for the departing owner.
- **Small businesses can be valued and sold in a similar fashion to real estate or multi-million dollar corporations.** Buying and selling a business is not the same as buying a house or stock in a large corporation. There are few to no comparable sales or publicly available market data to provide buyers with an indicator of value, and sales multipliers are only useful if long-term accurate accounting exists and a future buyer intends to run a business in exactly the same manner. What a buyer is willing to pay is strictly based on what they intend to do with the business and/or its assets. This is also why it is important to retain a professional to help market and sell a business, as this individual will be able to appropriately value the business for individual buyer pools and market it effectively to these groups.

What NOT to do



Assume that your business is worth \$1 million.



Start planning less than one year before a planned transition (3 years is ideal).



Fail to consider the tax and insurance implications of your decision on you, your family and employees.



Rely on the proceeds from the sale of your business to fund your retirement.

Increasing Business Value

Fortunately, given time, there are strategies that businesses can use to improve the valuation of their business as well as its attractiveness to potential buyers. The further in advance planning occurs, the greater the ability to remove potential barriers to sale and increase the market value of the business. Areas that businesses can focus on/evaluate include:

- **Cash Flow & Inventory Maintenance.** Upgrading internal systems to track and monitor cash flow and inventory is important for streamlining balance sheets. Improved accounting systems and a reduction in excess inventory will improve the business's bottom line by reducing the amount of non-core assets which will not be valued by investors. Additionally, businesses should work toward 3-5 years of annual balance sheets which reflect a reasonable growth projection for the business. This will also likely require a more strict accounting of business and personal assets (i.e. vehicles and insurance), as well as structured accounting of owner salary, retirement and benefits.
- **Diversify Client Base & Product Offerings.** Companies which rely heavily on one product or client for a significant percentage of earnings are not seen as desirable targets because the loss of a personal relationship between a major client and the existing owner could significantly impact business performance. Additionally, single-product companies offer less potential upside for buyers to increase revenues. The goal should be for no individual product or client to represent more than 10-15 percent of



annual sales.

- **Streamline & Document Operations.** Owners should strive to be able to illustrate and document how they operate the business on a daily basis. A new owner will appreciate not having to reinvent the wheel, and the presence of a structured operating plan provides assurances that the business is well operated and managed. Having key employees that are familiar with the operations and capable of operating various facets of the business is also an important factor, reducing the amount of work which will fall on the shoulders of the new owner. However, employee salaries should also be evaluated in light of industry standards and earnings and paired with more accurate job descriptions, as long-time employees may have received regular raises with no added responsibilities, leading to inflated personnel costs.
- **Spruce Up Marketing & Appearances.** Closer to the time of sale, take a look at the physical appearance of the company's online, social media and physical presence. This is one area where selling a business does have similarities to buying a house. Curb appeal of a business is important for conveying an impression of care and upkeep. Businesses with fresh paint, updated marketing materials and website and the ability to demonstrate local presence and connections will be more compelling than a business which has not undergone any major changes for several decades.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following web resources provide additional information, tools and resources to businesses working to establish an internal transition plan.

UNH: <http://www.familybusiness.unh.edu/usefulinfo/HARCAPFamilyBusinessBooklet.pdf>

Forbes: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/allbusiness/2013/08/28/5-steps-to-create-a-viable-succession-plan-for-your-family-business/>

Family Business Institute: <http://www.familybusinessinstitute.com/index.php/Succession-Planning/>

UMASS: http://www.umass.edu/fambiz/articles/selling_your_business/position_company.html

Entrepreneurship.org: <http://www.entrepreneurship.org/resource-center/positioning-your-company-for-sale.aspx>



Stevie Ray Vaughan Statue – Find him at Auditorium Shores

Texas Rowing Center – Rent a kayak or canoe on Lady Bird Lake

Congress Avenue Bridge – Watch 1.5 million bats fly at dusk

Willie Nelson Statue – See the living legend on Willie Nelson Blvd. (2nd Street)

Stubb's Gospel Brunch – Revel in the Sunday morning joy



SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP WEEKEND

Wild About Music - East 6th Street

Brooks Brothers - Congress Avenue

Ect. Ect. Ect. - 2nd Street District

Csilla Wear - Congress Avenue

Patagonia - Congress Avenue

Mercury Design Studio - 2nd Street District

Prize - 2nd Street District

BookPeople - West End

Hatbox - East 6th Street



OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

Hike & Bike Trails, Lady Bird Lake – Take a jog, stroll or ride

Mellow Johnny's – Rent or buy a bike and hit the trail or road

Texas Rowing Center – Rent a kayak, canoe or paddle board; learn to row

Rowing Dock – Rent a kayak or paddle board; learn to row

Austin Rowing Club – Learn to row; join a novice or competitive crew

St. Bernard Sports – Get the right gear for your day

Patagonia – Stock up on sustainable activewear



YOUNG AT HEART

Downtown offers fun for folks young and old. Be sure to check out the latest Events for more family outing opportunities.

Texas State History Museum – Treat the family to exhibits and IMAX

Congress Avenue Bridge – Watch 1.5 million bats fly at dusk

Austin Farmers' Market – Find fresh-off-the-farm eats each Saturday at Republic Square

Wooldridge Square – Play knee-high chess every Saturday afternoon

Wee – Shop for your little one's clothing and gear



ART & FILM ESSENTIALS

Creativity abounds downtown. These are just a few can't-miss arts outings.

Blanton Museum of Fine Art – Visit one of the country's best university art museums

Mexic-Arte Museum – Celebrate Mexican, Latino and Latin American culture

The Contemporary Austin – See modern exhibits in the heart of downtown

Alamo Drafthouse Ritz – Watch cult classics or current features, beer in hand

Violet Crown Cinema – Enjoy dinner and a movie in an arthouse environment

Paramount Theatre – Check out a classic film or the latest touring act

Bullock Museum IMAX Theatre - Watch the latest blockbuster in 3D on the biggest screen in Texas



DOWNTOWN BEAT

You'll find shows nightly in every corner of downtown Austin. Here are some venue picks to get you started on your live music journey.

- Austin City Limits Live at the Moody Theater** – 2nd Street District
- Paramount Theatre** – Congress Avenue
- Lucky Lounge** – Warehouse District
- La Zona Rosa** – Warehouse District
- The Parish** – E. 6th Street
- Maggie Mae's** – E. 6th Street
- Elephant Room** – Congress Avenue
- Stubb's** – Red River
- Mohawk** – Red River



ECLECTIC E. 6TH STREET

There's much to discover on this historic street, day or night.

- Easy Tiger Bake Shop & Beer Garden** – Enjoy a pint and tasty treats on the patio
- Midnight Cowboy** – Reserve your place at this cozy speakeasy
- The Driskill** – Try this historic hotel's two acclaimed restaurants and sidle up to the bar
- Alamo Drafthouse Ritz** – Watch cult or current features, with full food and drink service
- Parkside** – Tuck into one of the top-rated Texas restaurants
- Esther's Follies** – Discover the music and comedy show that's been running 35 years
- Casino El Camino** – Experience one of Austin's best burgers, served with a side of 'tude
- Austin Overtures** - Tour Austin and the Hill Country in 90 Minutes in air-conditioned Mercedes-Benz comfort
- Museum of the Weird** - In the city known for keepin' it weird, this museum has all the highlights
- Wild About Music** – Pick up the perfect gift for the music lover in your life
- SegCity Austin** – See the downtown sights via a Segway tour



FOODIE FINDS

Whole Foods Market, homegrown in Austin, anchors downtown's many tempting culinary landmarks.

- Whole Foods Market** – Eat in house or stock the fridge at the company's landmark store
- Whole Foods Market Culinary Center** – Take a cooking class – even on your lunch break
- Con'Olio Oils & Vinegars** – Taste artisan offerings before you buy
- Royal Blue Grocery** – Pick up a little something at one of five downtown locations
- Austin Farmers' Market** – Find fresh-off-the-farm eats each Saturday at Republic Square
- Snap Kitchen** – Fresh, healthy take-away. Eat right. Feel Great. Live well!
- The Story of Texas Café** - Dine inside or out overlooking the 35-ft tall bronze star at the Bullock Museum

WEST END WEEKEND

West 6th Street's offerings have exploded over the last few years. In addition to these hot spots, you'll find plenty of places to eat and drink.

- Whole Foods Market** – Eat in house or stock the fridge at the company's landmark store
- Anthropologie** – Explore unique clothing and furnishings
- Book People** – Peruse the stacks at Texas's largest independent



bookstore

REI – Gear up for our outdoor adventures

Hut’s Hamburgers – Enjoy one of Austin’s best burgers

Walton’s Fancy & Staple – Pick up lunch, pastries and flowers

J.Black’s Feel Good Lounge – Have a sip and snack, day or night

Bess Bistro - Happy hour on the patio, or enjoy the perfect setting for a special occasion

EXPERIENCE DOWNTOWN

- Shop
- Services
- Dine & Drink
- Play
- Stay
- Get Around
- Downtown Resources
- Sample Itineraries

DO BUSINESS

- Demographics & Market Data
- Development
- Office Here
- Retail Here
- Meeting Space
- Downtown Resources

LIVE HERE

- Facts & Figures
- Residential Buildings
- Living Essentials
- Play
- Downtown Neighborhood Association
- Stay
- Get Around

THE DAA

- About
- Advocacy
- Programs and Initiatives
- Services
- Contact
- Downtown Resources

Downtown Austin Alliance
 211 East 7th Street, Suite 818, Austin, TX 78701
 (512) 469-1766
 daa@downtownaustin.com

STAY IN TOUCH

Search...

Photos by: Michael Knox, Lomography, Brian Gray

APPENDIX 4:

Sources & Uses for Main Street Reconstruction

La Farge Main Street Improvement Project
Preliminary Funding Summary
May 7, 2020

A. Project Summary

1. Reconstruct Street and Utilities from Mill Street to Cherry Street

- a. Urban street from Mill to Maple Street – 50 feet wide curb to curb with bike lanes & sidewalks
- b. Rural street from Maple to Cherry Street – 25 feet wide pavement with sidewalk on north side
- c. Replace sanitary sewer main, manholes and laterals to R.O.W
- d. Replace water main, hydrants and services to R.O.W.
- e. Replace storm sewer

2. Street Lights and Streetscape Improvements

- a. Decorative concrete behind curb and crosswalks at intersections
- b. Bike racks and street furniture
- c. Decorative street lights

B. Sources of Funds

1. Tax Increment District No. 1

- a. TID No. 1 is projected to generate \$1,183,660 of surplus funds
- b. TID No. 1 can be extended three years using the Tech College Extension, which will generate an additional \$700,000. This will increase the projected surplus funds to \$1,883,660.
- c. End of expenditure period is April 14, 2021. Construct contracts must be approved by this date.
- d. Village must amend the TID No. 1 Project Plan to add eligible project and extend life of TID.

2. Community Development Block Grant Public Facilities Grant (CDBG-PF)

- a. Maximum grant is 67% of eligible costs up to \$1,000,000 grant.

3. USDA Rural Development Rural Utilities Program

- a. Loan funds @ 40 year amortization and 1.7% interest
- b. Grant funds are available after user rates reach threshold (15% to 40% grant)

C. Project Cost Summary

Description	Option #1 Mill to Cherry	Option #2*** Mill to Maple	Option #3*** Silver to Elm
1. Street & Sidewalk	\$ 1,386,400	\$ 1,171,400	\$ 870,000
2. Water Main	\$ 422,700	\$ 265,000	\$ 235,000
3. Sanitary Sewer	\$ 300,000	\$ 195,000	\$ 230,000
4. Storm Sewer*	\$ 95,500	\$ 95,500	\$ 80,000
5. Street Lights & Streetscape	\$ 499,300*	\$ 416,575*	\$ 280,400**
6. Contingency	\$ 270,390	\$ 214,350	\$ 169,540
7. Engineering	\$ 370,000	\$ 294,730	\$ 233,115
8. Grant Admin & USDA Applic.(Opt. #1 only)	\$ 35,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
9. Legal Services (Option #1 only)	\$ 20,000	\$ 0	\$ 0
10. Interim Interest & Misc. (Option #1 only)	\$ 10,000	\$ 0	\$ 0
11. Total	\$ 3,409,290	\$ 2,672,555	\$ 2,118,055

*Note: Budget includes colored concrete. Exposed Riverstone concrete increases cost \$84,460.

**Note: Budget includes colored concrete. Exposed Riverstone concrete increases cost \$40,500.

***Note: Budget numbers for Options 2 & 3 street, sidewalk, sewer & water need to be verified.

D. Sources & Uses of Funds

1. Option #1: Mill Street to Cherry Street

Description	Total \$	USDA	USDA	CDBG PF	Village
		Loan \$	Grant \$	Grant \$	TID No.1 \$
a. Street & Sidewalk	\$ 1,386,400	\$	\$	\$	\$
b. Water Main	\$ 422,700	\$	\$	\$	\$
c. Sanitary Sewer	\$ 300,000	\$	\$	\$	\$
d. Storm Sewer	\$ 95,500	\$	\$	\$	\$
e. Street Lights & Streetscape	\$ 499,300**	\$	\$	\$	\$
f. Contingency	\$ 270,390	\$	\$	\$	\$
g. Engineering	\$ 370,000	\$	\$	\$	\$
h. Grant Admin. & USDA Applics.	\$ 35,000	\$	\$	\$	\$
i. Legal Services	\$ 20,000	\$	\$	\$	\$
j. Interim Interest & Misc.	\$ 10,000	\$	\$	\$	\$
k. Total	\$ 3,409,290	\$ 600,000*	\$ 380,000*	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,429,290

*Note: USDA loan & grant amounts are preliminary estimates, which need to be verified.

: Assumes USDA grant equals 25% of eligible project costs.

: USDA loan - 40 year term @ 1.7% interest = \$20,990 annual debt service on sewer & water

- +/- \$4 per month increase per residential user equivalent (RUE)

2. Option #2: Mill Street to Maple Street

Description	Total \$	CDBG PF	Village
		Grant \$	TID No.1 \$
a. Street Reconstruction	\$ 1,171,400	\$	\$
b. Water Main	\$ 265,000	\$	\$
c. Sanitary Sewer	\$ 195,000	\$	\$
d. Storm Sewer	\$ 95,500	\$	\$
e. Street Lights & Streetscape	\$ 416,575**	\$	\$
f. Contingency	\$ 214,350	\$	\$
g. Engineering	\$ 294,730	\$	\$
h. Grant Admin.	\$ 20,000	\$	\$
i. Total	\$ 2,672,555	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,672,555

3. Option #3: Silver Street to Elm Street

Description	Total \$	CDBG PF	Village
		Grant \$	TID No.1 \$
a. Street Reconstruction	\$ 870,000	\$	\$
b. Water Main	\$ 235,000	\$	\$
c. Sanitary Sewer	\$ 230,000	\$	\$
d. Storm Sewer	\$ 80,000	\$	\$
e. Street Lights & Streetscape	\$ 280,400***	\$	\$
f. Contingency	\$ 169,540	\$	\$
g. Engineering	\$ 233,115	\$	\$
h. Grant Admin.	\$ 20,000	\$	\$
i. Total	\$ 2,118,055	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,118,055

**Note: Budget includes colored concrete. Exposed Riverstone concrete increases cost \$84,460.

***Note: Budget includes colored concrete. Exposed Riverstone concrete increases cost \$40,500.

