



AGENDA

**BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(BPAC)**

Members:

- Trevor Roark
- Bill Fehrenbach
- Michael O’Meara
- Janis Borski

Date and Time:	July 19, 2017 9:00 AM	Location:	County – City Building, Conference Room D 1516 Church Street Stevens Point, WI 54481
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1. Call to Order.
2. Minutes and Actions from the June 14, 2017 meeting.
3. Persons who wish to address the committee for up to three (3) minutes on a non-agenda item.*

Consideration and Possible Action on the Following:

4. Staff Update
5. Discuss Farmer’s Market open street survey
6. Discuss September bicycle and pedestrian count
7. Review of draft Comprehensive Plan Chapter 7 (Economic Development)
8. Review of statistics class student project data on bike parking failures
9. Schedule next meeting
10. Adjourn.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that any person who has special needs while attending these meetings or needs agenda materials for these meetings should contact the City Clerk as soon as possible to ensure that a reasonable accommodation can be made. The City Clerk can be reached by telephone at (715) 346-1569 or by mail at 1515 Strongs Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481.

Maps further defining the above area(s) may be obtained from the City of Stevens Point Department of Community Development, 1515 Strongs Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54481, or by calling (715) 346-1567, during normal business hours.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that a quorum of the Common Council may be in attendance at this meeting.

REPORT OF BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

June 14, 2017 - 9:00 AM

City Conference Room
1515 Strongs Avenue - Stevens Point WI 54481

PRESENT: Trevor Roark, Michael O'Meara and Janis Borski

STAFF PRESENT: Kyle Kearns (Associate Planner), and Andy Felt

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1. Call to Order.
2. Minutes and Actions from the May 11 regular meeting; and May 18, 2017 special meeting.
3. Persons who wish to address the committee for up to three (3) minutes on a non-agenda item.*
Consideration and Possible Action on the Following:
4. Staff Update
5. Discuss content and photo contest for Portage County Library window display.
6. Discuss (and assign research tasks for) APBP bike parking standards and the creation of a Bike Parking Plan.
7. Discuss housing study and recommendation implications for bicycle & pedestrians access/equity/planning.
8. Schedule next meeting.
9. Adjourn.

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1. Call to Order.

Meeting called to order at 9:19 a.m. by Chair Trevor Roark.

2. Minutes and Actions from the May 11 regular meeting; and May 18, 2017 special meeting.
Motion by O'Meara Minutes to approve the minutes of May 11 and May 18; seconded by Borski. Motion Carried 3-0.
3. Persons who wish to address the committee for up to three (3) minutes on a non-agenda item.
Mr. Andy Felt addressed the committee on a non-agenda item - CN Railroad rails to trails update. Mr. Felt has a continuing interest on the project. Brief discussion ensued. The CN Railroad rails to trails project is a long and slow process which can take years of discussion and forward movement including but not limited to land and financial legal rights and considerations. Mr. Felt mentioned the importance of rail banking and its possible implications. The committee thanked Mr. Felt for his interest and input.

Consideration and Possible Action on the Following:

4. Staff Update.
Kyle Kearns gave a brief update on the TAP Grant. There is nothing new to report at this time. At the request of J. Borski, he also provided a brief history on the Grant
5. Discuss content and photo contest for Portage County Library window display.

Chair Trevor Roark asked all to check out the BPAC month of June display in the Portage County Public Library window, which was setup by Trevor & Bill and then improved by Tori Jennings. The photo contest will not be held this year due to logistics.

6. Discuss (and assign research tasks for) APBP bike parking standards and the creation of a Bike Parking Plan.

Brief discussion took place and assignments were given. Committee members will research various cities of their choosing and report back to the committee. Each committee member present volunteered and agreed to research the cities listed below but are welcome to research additional cities.

Trevor Roark - *Madison and Appleton*

Michael O'Meara – *Milwaukee and the Twin Cities*

Janis Borski – *Chicago and San Diego*

7. Discuss housing study and recommendation implication for bicycle & pedestrians access/equity/planning.

This agenda item has been postponed until the July regular meeting. Kyle suggested that specific housing data questions be asked of Michael Ostrowski and/or the housing study creator.

8. Schedule Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for July 13th (Thursday) at 9:00am.

9. Meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

7.0 Economic Development

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Existing Conditions

7.3 Assessment of Future Conditions

7.4 Local Plans and Programs

7.5 Goals, Objectives and Policies

7.1 Introduction

Economic development is a critically important function for the City of Stevens Point. Without a strong tax base, there is insufficient revenue to make the types of investments successful communities require, including investments in education, transportation, safety, clean water, and a thriving downtown. The Economic Development Chapter provides a framework for public investment in economic development activities consistent with the overall goal of pursuing economic development that brings good, living wage jobs to the City and supports the long-term growth and vitality of the City's industrial areas, downtown and neighborhood business areas.

7.2 Existing Conditions

The labor force is that portion of the population that is 16 years or older who are employed, or unemployed but actively seeking employment opportunities. As a business, it is helpful to know information about the population that will be depended on to fill open positions in the future.

As identified in the Issues and Opportunities element, Stevens Point's population has grown at a rate relatively consistent with Portage County for the past several decades. According to population projections, the City is projected to grow at a slightly faster pace than Portage County through the year 2040. In 2014, Stevens Point had a labor force participation rate of 67.4 percent.

As shown in the Issues and Opportunities element, in 2014 Stevens Point had a median age of 26.7, which is significantly younger than Portage County's.

Educational Attainment

A good indicator of the economic potential of an area is the education attainment of its residents. Generally speaking, a population with a higher level of education reflects a more skilled workforce with higher earning potential. A more skilled population can be seen as an attractive quality for businesses relocating as well. Nearly 94 percent of Stevens Point residents had at least a high-school diploma in 2014. Over 34 percent of Stevens Point residents had attained at least a Bachelor's degree. These numbers are quite high compared to County (28.3%) and State (27.4%) numbers.

Income

In the Issues and Opportunities element, the income for Stevens Point and Portage County residents is identified. The median family income in Stevens Point is \$55,925, while Portage County's is \$65,735. Household incomes are also a bit lower for the City of Stevens Point when compared to Portage County and the State of Wisconsin. These differences are likely attributable to the younger population within the City.

Economic Base

The Issues and Opportunities element indicates Portage County's prominent industries and occupations. Approximately 28 percent of Stevens Point residents are employed in the Education, Health and Social Services Industry.



In 2014, there were three percent of Stevens Point residents who indicated they worked from home. City of Stevens Point businesses employ approximately 67 percent of City residents. Approximately 85 percent of Stevens Point residents work somewhere within Portage County.

Employment Projections

Employment projections for the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Area are presented in the Issues and Opportunities element. The industries in this region expected to see the largest growth rate through 2022 are Construction and Professional/Business Services, with expected increases in employment of over 18 percent each. The occupation expected to see the largest increase through 2022 is Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations (17.7 percent increase expected), followed closely by Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations (15.9 percent growth expected) and Personal Care and Service Occupations (14.8 percent growth expected).

Economic Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

- Certified Site – Industrial acreage availability
- Diversified Economy
- Young median age and relatively low wage scale
- Education and Training – Stevens Point residents have very high high-school graduation rates and excellent access to secondary education and training facilities in the region.
- Excellent transportation facilities and options – freight rail, airport, located on Interstate system.
- Excellent Infrastructure – including roads, utilities and broadband/technology.
- High quality of life – natural resources, recreational amenities, access to medical care, arts and culture, strong civic organizations
- Niche area businesses – high-tech, insurance fields
- Redevelopment opportunities
- Centralized geographic location within State

Weaknesses

- Limited financial resources for development assistance.
- Territory expansion limited by environmental and development constraints
- Limited available development space
- Tax exempt properties
- Limited airport operations
- State-wide budget and local revenue sources declining

According to the National Governor's Association, Center for Best Practices, the seven New Economy Development Strategies are:

- 1) Invest in People
- 2) Build state-of-the-art infrastructure
- 3) Treat citizens as customers
- 4) Streamline taxes and regulations
- 5) Nurture entrepreneurs
- 6) Create hi-tech magnets
- 7) Preserve quality of life



7.3 Assessment of Future Conditions

Key Trends

Several emerging trends will shape Stevens Point's future economy and appropriate economic development programs and policies of the City.

Globalization

An increasing number of products and services are free flowing across international borders due to low-shipping costs, favorable trade agreements, and improved telecommunication. This has expanded markets for some products, but also made certain industries with prevalence in Stevens Point vulnerable, including paper and machinery manufacturing.

Manufacturers seeking to be competitive while still retaining local production seem to generally focus on niche markets or substitute technology for labor to increase productivity and decrease labor costs. Many incentives offered by state and federal programs do so to generate job creation or retention. This mismatch can leave some economic development organizations with few tools to assist companies looking to remain competitive without investing in manual labor production.

Local businesses have been engaged in efforts to combat globalization while focusing on "buy local" campaigns. This concept – whether business-to-business or business-to-consumer, looks to retain as much money in the local economic as possible.

Manufacturing vs. Services

The well-publicized loss of jobs has created a general perception that manufacturing has been in a long-term decline in the United States. While true in some sectors, manufacturing output overall has grown due to productivity gains, even while industry employment has decreased. The challenges facing manufacturers have in many cases been due to competition, structural changes, or both. Printing has been impacted by the increased use of electronic media. Machinery manufacturing has faced challenges due to lower foreign wage scales. Paper manufacturing faces both concerns – declining demand along with competition from Asian countries.

Service employment overtook manufacturing and has been seen as the source of future job growth in the United States. Once thought to be secure from foreign competition, services have now begun to be "off-shored" in the same way that manufacturing jobs were twenty years earlier.

Creative Economy

In the 1990's a researcher by the name of Richard Florida put forward the idea that future economic growth would be largely attributed to a "creative class" of people who comprise a knowledge-based, instead of product-based economy. The creative class does include the artists that are frequently mentioned, but it is largely made up of professions such as engineers, designers, writers, programmers, scientists, and others. Other work by Florida has demonstrated that a critical subset of the creative class is that comprised of fine, performing, and applied artists. His "Bohemian index"—the share of employment in arts occupations—is strongly associated with new firm formation and high-tech specialization in metropolitan areas.

People in these occupations are drawn to a handful of places. The presence of major research facilities is one factor in determining where these places will be, but other considerations include quality of life amenities that may include natural features or offer a vibrant urban lifestyle. The City of Madison is one Wisconsin community often cited as a magnet for the creative class, but the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service has prepared county-level data that show several other Wisconsin places as leading creative class destinations. The



following table contains data on county rankings among all of the United States and Wisconsin Counties, for both their share of overall creative class employment and for their share in the arts-related subset.

Creative Class County Rankings, 2000 and 2011

	Creative Class Rank - US			Creative Class Rank - Wisconsin		
	2000	2007-2011	Change	2000	2007-2011	Change
Portage County	613	769	-156	12	17	-5
	Arts-Related Rank - US			Arts-Related Rank - Wisconsin		
	2000	2007-2011	Change	2000	2007-2011	Change
Portage County	391	883	-492	8	20	-12
<i>Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, share of total county employment in creative occupations and in arts occupations</i> <i>US ranking is based on 3,136 counties; Wisconsin ranking is based on 72 counties</i>						

The data in this table indicate that Portage County is in the top 30% of counties for creative class and arts-related employment in the country and the State.

In response to these theories of economic growth, many communities have prepared economic development strategies that attempt to create an environment that is attractive to creative class workers. This usually takes the form of promoting vibrant mixed-use neighborhoods, parks and other recreational facilities, cultural venues, and other urban amenities.

Portage County has had and still retains a strong creative class and arts status. Ensuring that this continues to grow and evolve will be important to retaining an environment that is supportive and enticing to these populations.

Entrepreneurship

Economic development is increasingly focused on promoting entrepreneurship. The 2016 Kauffman Growth Entrepreneurship Index, an indicator of how much entrepreneurial businesses are growing, rose in 2015 for the third year in a row, suggesting that business growth has largely recovered from its Great Recession slump. Several facts may suggest a coming surge in entrepreneurial activity.

- The population is aging, and contrary to popular belief, the highest rates of entrepreneurship are among those people between the ages of 55 and 64.
- The 20-34 age bracket has the lowest rate of entrepreneurial activity.
- Business formation rates are also higher among recent immigrants.

Common practices adopted to encourage entrepreneurship include facilitating networking and collaboration, improving access to financing, providing training and education, offering supportive services such as incubators and technical assistance, and adopting favorable public policies. Most of the entrepreneurial programs that have been created are focused on a set of targeted industry sectors, such as high technology, manufacturing, or in some cases retail businesses.

The most common entrepreneur, however, is a solo individual often starting a business within their own home. This includes a group of people recently termed “pajama entrepreneurs” or “third bedroom entrepreneurs”, who leverage their expertise to provide design, business and technical consulting, business management, and other services.



As mentioned above, the highest rates of entrepreneurship are among those people between the ages of 55 and 64. Other common entrepreneurs may include those 65 years and older. They represented 12.9% of the U.S. population in 2010. By 2030, their number will reach about 72.1 million, more than twice their number in 2000. People 65+ represented 12.4% of the population in the year 2000 but are expected to grow to be 19% of the population by 2030.¹ Many seniors over 50 are looking to reboot their careers and lives.²

A different set of programs may be needed to foster development of this group. The few programs targeting these entrepreneurs focus on helping them get additional work, providing business support services, and providing locations where they can conduct business functions, including amenities such as broadband access, meeting rooms, teleconferencing equipment, and general office equipment.

Financial Markets

Tightened lending practices have been a lasting outcome of the economic recession. This affects both business and consumer credit, as well as financing for development projects. Businesses have been impacted by reductions in lines of credit and higher requirements to borrow adequate funds to meet their expansion needs. Consumers are less able to borrow to fund major purchases, contributing to a drop in sales. Developers are sometimes finding it harder to secure the funds they need to invest in new construction or rehabilitation projects. For example, stringent regulatory requirements specific to condo mortgage insurance were introduced in the wake of the housing finance crisis³, which have made it more difficult to secure condo financing. These barriers are being addressed by Congress, which may help stimulate demand for more condos in the future. On the other hand, tighter lending requirements for first time homeowners are helping stimulate the development of new multi-family rental housing projects. Stevens Point may benefit from this trend as millennials, empty nesters, and others increasingly seek out more urban housing options.

Agriculture

Portage County has historically led Wisconsin in production of potatoes, processed snap beans, and sweet corn, and second in green pea production. While much of this production occurs outside the City limits, it drastically impacts residents by directly providing jobs, and providing industry support to related businesses necessary to produce these products.

Retail Revolution

Consumers are becoming more deliberate in their shopping habits, empowered by the convenience of on-line shopping and constrained by the slow growth in levels of personal income. Demand for retail space is on the decline in most markets, with newer development taking place in central city locations where population growth has occurred. Existing retailers are responding to this trend by embracing social media, mobile payments, and unique offerings such as hands on learning opportunities for shoppers.

Designated Economic Development Sites

Development pressure is anticipated to continue in Stevens Point. With good access to transportation systems, rail and airport infrastructure systems, and a strong economic base, the City is an attractive place for economic growth. Economic development sites and projects should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Of foremost importance is to determine if the proposed project is consistent with the City's vision and Plan.

¹ [http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/\(S\(2ch3qw55k1qylo45dbihar2u\)\)/Aging_Statistics/index.aspx](http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/(S(2ch3qw55k1qylo45dbihar2u))/Aging_Statistics/index.aspx)

² Philip M., Burgess, "Reboot!: What to do when your career is over but your life isn't."

³ <http://urbanland.uli.org/development-business/u-s-congress-approves-less-restrictive-fha-condo-financing-program/>



The City's downtown has seen rapid economic activity in the past several years – and that should be expected to continue. There are sites that are available for redevelopment, including the Lullaby Site, that – along with the new hotel being developed on the former mall site, will be in high demand for private investment. The City should consider improving and strengthening the connection between the downtown area and the riverfront – as that will also aid in attracting private investments.

The City has several Business/Industrial Parks with sites available for businesses looking to expand or relocate to Stevens Point. The East Park Commerce Center is over 700 acres and is Wisconsin's largest Certified Site – meaning it is shovel-ready and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation has offered assistance in marketing the site.

The Portage County Business Park is over 400 acres that is largely developed. There are fewer than ten sites still available in this park that is located directly west of the East Park Commerce Center.

The Stevens Point Industrial Park is directly west of I-39. This park is nearly fully developed – which led to the creation of the Portage County Business Park and subsequently the East Park Commerce Center. There are still some smaller lots available.

There are 19 buildings and 35 sites within the City that are being actively marketed on LocatelInWisconsin, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's marketing website.

Brownfield Redevelopment Sites

A search of the Wisconsin DNR BRRTS database revealed that Stevens Point has 491 sites that have been contaminated. 278 of these sites are "Closed," meaning that the sites have been satisfactorily cleaned according to state standards. There are several "No Action" sites which means that based upon the action or site attributes, no action needs to be taken to clean-up the site. 107 sites are "Historic," meaning spills were cleaned prior to 1996. There are 20 "open" contaminated sites in the City.

Brownfield Definition: "...real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence of hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, controlled substances, petroleum or petroleum products, or is mine-scarred land."

-Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

These sites can often be remediated and reused for commercial or industrial businesses. This would allow the City to reuse these lands and enables the preservation of farmland, as businesses can avoid developing greenfield acreage.

Tax Increment Financing

The City has several tax increment financing districts (TIDs) that have been successfully used to assist with economic development. The City has five (5) active TIF Districts and has additional capacity to utility TIF. The use of TIF dollars in a sensible manner to promote and encourage private sector economic investments is important.

Guiding Principles

LIVABILITY

Economic development, and the resulting jobs, business investments and workforce development programs are the lifeline of a livable community. Without adequate living wage jobs, residents will not be able to afford basic necessities. Without residents – through a stable workforce and a consumer base – businesses will not invest in the community. Stevens Point is in a good position economically with a strong labor force, good education systems and a strong employment base that will allow it to remain the economic hub of the region.



CONNECTED

Stevens Point has a significant business base with international economic impacts. Making sure private utility providers, particularly those in the telecommunication industry are providing fast, reliable and secure telecommunication access that is competitive on the global market is critical to retaining and attracting businesses to the community.

RESILIENT

From an economic standpoint, resilient communities have economic bases that are growing and diverse. A diverse economic base mitigates the potential devastation that can be seen when disaster strikes a particular industry – such as those ag-related industries susceptible to disease outbreaks. Stevens Point's economic base is discussed in the Issues and Opportunities section. In general, there appears to be good diversification locally. Based on regional projections, the City is poised for continued economic growth and prosperity. This is aided by the continued relationships the City and local employers have with secondary education institutions in providing qualified and trained workforces capable of being productive and reliable employees.

Resiliency also encourages an entrepreneurial atmosphere – in which individual investors and inventors are supported and encouraged in developing new ideas, products and technologies. Having a strategic approach to foster these atmospheres will aid in the recruitment of new businesses.

SUSTAINABLE

Sustainable economic development revolves around having businesses that are able to compete in a global marketplace while providing local residents a stable living wage.

Private businesses should also be able to develop in a sustainable manner. For this reason – it is imperative that City leaders and officials have in place an efficient regulatory review process that supports and encourages sustainable development.

Local Needs

The City of Stevens Point has made significant investments in business and industrial park development. It is known as having land readily available for these purposes throughout central Wisconsin. As one of the few communities in the state – particularly in the central Wisconsin area as having multiple venues for secondary education, the City is well positioned for sustainable economic growth. Fostering the relationships with UWSP and Mid-State Technical College will continue to benefit not only existing residents and businesses, but also future students and entrepreneurs throughout the region.

The City of Stevens Point participated with Plover in an Economic Analysis in 1989. Identified were 70 strategies related to economic development in categories related to a range of issues. Many of these strategies are relatively large scale and are still relevant to undertake and implement, including intergovernmental cooperation, providing and developing excellent recreational and natural resources to maintain a high quality of life, attracting new businesses, workforce training, and working to ensure local businesses are thriving and growing.

Downtown

Downtown Stevens Point is a focal area for culture and entertainment. The economic conditions thrive on the service and entertainment industry more-so than other areas throughout the City.

In 2001, the Central Business District of Stevens Point – *Centerpoint* – completed a Centerpoint Downtown Directions Plan that looked at market demand in the downtown area. Three major market segments – college



students and faculty, senior citizens, and a large downtown employee base played important roles in the strength of downtown Stevens Point. Today – those roles are even stronger, with a newly redeveloped Mid-State Technical College campus in the downtown area, as well continued employment growth and development growth. Strengths were identified as being the proximity to the riverfront, as well as the unique collection of independent retail establishments. Concerns regarding business retention and recruitment and parking were expressed. A Downtown Redevelopment Plan was also developed in 2008. This planning effort focused on several key corridors and features of the downtown – but again focus was given to improving waterfront conditions, creating better downtown accessibility, redeveloping the mall area, and creating more inviting and scenic atmospheres. Parking remains a concern – and the City embarked in a parking study in 2015 that focused on the University areas, as well as the Downtown.

Today – renewed economic investments in the downtown area have added to creating a vibrant atmosphere. However – there are still opportunities reflected throughout the public input that tie to increasing the connectivity to the riverfront, as well as redevelopment opportunities in the downtown – particularly on the Lullaby Site as well as Wisconsin Public Service Corp.'s former gas plant. The City has been very proactive in revitalization efforts in the downtown – and this is exemplified by the new Cobblestone Hotel currently under construction, among other redevelopment projects. Parking and access will continue to be a contentious topic. The City should ensure that available parking is accessible in the downtown not only for daytime employment and shopping, but also for mixed-use residential uses.

Downtown economics seem to be in relatively good condition with unique niche businesses. Along with eating and drinking establishments, these businesses appear for the most part to be thriving. Efforts to extend regular events to generate additional consumer traffic have generally been well-attended, and with the continued development activities occurring the demand should continue to rise. During a public input strategy meeting with the Association of Downtown Businesses, primary points of emphasis for areas of improvements revolved around access – both vehicular and non-motorized, as well as improved information sharing between the City and downtown businesses.

Significant conversations have occurred with regard to art – in particular performances – and the revival of the Fox Theater in downtown Stevens Point. It appears that the City has significant support for the creative cultures that various populations have displayed – and the revival of this use and potential facility could add to the features and create another destination in downtown Stevens Point.

Corridors

Transportation corridors are an important factor in a community's overall economic well-being. Found throughout the City are transportation corridors that – while their primary function is to provide safe and efficient access to and through the City, provide opportunities for business development activities.

Key corridors throughout the City include:

- Division Street (Business 51)
- Stanley Street/STH 66
- US Highway 10
- West Clark Street



These corridors often times also provide the first *image* of Stevens Point to tourists and travelers as they typically occur in relation to interchanges. Aesthetic improvements to these corridors and entrances to the City are important in providing a positive and vibrant image of the City. This can be accomplished through signage, streetscaping, wayfinding and other infrastructure design elements. These elements should be carried – in some fashion – throughout the City to create uniform and identifiable features. Alternatively – if there are key characteristics of some corridors, there can be a balanced mix of the image carried throughout the City, as well as some distinguishing characteristics that may set particular areas apart from one another.

Corridor-related businesses are generally very dependent on vehicular traffic for customers. Impacts to transportation infrastructure will impact these businesses greatly. East Side Business stakeholders were consulted during the planning process and expressed significant concern over potential changes to Highway 10. The proposed Highway 10 bypass was studied by Wisconsin DOT and is no longer being considered a project to study further.

Northside Business District

The Northside Business District – designated as TID 5 – is located along North Division Street. This area has is one of the gateways into the City, runs parallel to the UW-SP campus, and acts as an important transition area for the City. A grassroots organization – **Revisioning Point** – an eight member volunteer advisory board seeks to enhance the livability, appearance and economy of Stevens Point and is driven to improve and redevelop Division Street. This group was recently accepted into the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation’s Connect Communities Program – which will provide access to resources and training to help revitalization and redevelopment efforts. Strong points of emphasis include making the corridor and district more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

Tourism

Stevens Point’s tourism generates significant revenue for the City, as well as creates service-industry jobs and business opportunities. Recreational opportunities, including the Green Circle Trail, music events, the World’s Largest Trivia Contest, and other annual events attract visitors to the Stevens Point area.

7.4 Local Plans and Programs

There are a variety of local, regional, and statewide economic development plans and tools available to municipalities to assist them with supporting existing businesses and recruiting new businesses. Many of these, the City already takes part in. In addition, there are programs available for individual businesses to assist in start-up and expansion. At the state level, economic development took on the form of creating a strategic framework that refines the state’s priorities, renews commitment to existing programs, and presents new programs.

Economic development tools include tax increment financing (TIF), low-interest business loans, and business incubators. Effectively using these tools requires an investment by the community to provide resources such as staff to organize and manage these tools, foster partnerships, and secure and manage funding. Numerous other economic development plans and programs exist including:

- Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Administration (WHEDA)

WHEDA offers many financial assistance programs to assist small-businesses with low-interest loans and grants.

*“A comprehensive economic development framework is fundamentally about enhancing the factors of productive capacity – land, labor, capital, and technology – of a national, state or local economy”
 (“Defining Economic Development,” U.S. Economic Development Administration Information Clearinghouse, http://www.osec.doc.gov/eda/html/sa1_whatised.htm).*



- Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA)

DOA offers some financial assistance programs to assist small-businesses with low-interest loans and grants, and communities with grants to build infrastructure necessary to accommodate business development.

- Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)

Wisconsin (WEDC) offers programs that help with many areas of business development, including business planning, initial capitalization, site selection, permitting, regulations, employee training programs, economic development tax credits, and expansion programs.

- Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT)

WisDOT has many programs that provide grants and loans to businesses and local communities for transportation related needs.

- Transportation Economic Assistance and Development (TEA-Grant) Program

This program, operated by WisDOT, offers grant money to communities or private businesses for transportation projects that will attract and retain businesses and jobs in the State of Wisconsin.

- Wisconsin Public Service Corporation

Wisconsin Public Service Corporation offers programs to companies that are looking to expand, relocate, or start-up in their service area. They also maintain lists of available land and marketing resources for communities in which they provide service.

- Centergy

Centergy is the region's economic development organization. They cover Marathon, Portage and Wood Counties.

- Competitive Wisconsin, Inc.

Competitive Wisconsin is a nonpartisan coalition engaging business, higher education, agriculture and labor and provides analysis and recommendations for action on issues affecting Wisconsin's economy and quality of life.

- Mid-State Technical College

The Western Technical College offers employee training programs to maintain competitiveness in today's global business environment.

- UW-Stevens Point – Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

This organization is part of a statewide network of SBDC's working with business owners and entrepreneurs to facilitate business growth and improvement.

- North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Area

This regional organization is a collaborative, interactive, and coordinated network of training resources and support services that provides and retains a well-skilled labor force for employers of north-central Wisconsin.



- North Central Regional Planning Commission (NCRPC)

This organization offers industrial park and site inventories, business park development, loan fund assistance, economic development studies and strategies, and grant writing.

- Association of Downtown Businesses

This is a team of volunteers that run the Stevens Point Holiday and July 4th Parade, Discover Downtown, Fall Festival, and other events in downtown Stevens Point.

- Portage County Business Council

The Portage County Business Council’s mission is to assist their members and communities to retain and attract businesses and employees. They coordinate the region’s Chamber of Commerce as well as the Economic Development Corporation and provide various programs throughout the year targeting business development activities.

Effectively using these tools and programs requires an investment by the City to provide resources such as staff to organize and manage these tools, foster partnerships, and secure and manage funding. A limited amount of technical assistance is available to municipalities from the State, County, Regional Planning Commission, and other organizations.

7.5 Goals, Objectives and Policies

The Economic Development Goals, Objectives and Policies support the four Guiding Principles for the Stevens Point Comprehensive Plan – Livable, Connected, Sustainable and Resilient.

LIVABLE

Goal 1: Prioritize recruitment of businesses to those that provide living wage jobs.

Objectives:

- a) Develop marketing campaign targeting key industry clusters.
- b) Develop an overall economic development plan.

Policies

- a. Continue to utilize and develop additional marketing materials and financial incentives policies to assist with business attraction and recruitment.

Goal 2: Focus on creating a healthy City that provides for a quality of life that attracts and retains a creative, skilled labor force.

Objectives:

- a) Create a vibrant environment that is conducive to attracting and retaining talented people.
- b) Promote tourism, eco-tourism and related businesses that capitalize on the City’s cultural, environmental and geographic resources.

Policies



- a. Continue the City’s efforts to expand and improve its amenities such as trails, parks and recreation, performing arts, the downtown library and other cultural and civic offerings.
- b. Continue to proactively market the assets of the region, including the transportation and natural amenities, to stimulate high-quality economic growth.
- c. Encourage the continued development of vibrant mixed-use urban areas in the downtown and along the Riverfront that are both walkable and bicycle-friendly.
- d. Continue to stimulate partnerships with MSTC and UW-SP, as well as the primary schools, to continue the development of programs that address the labor needs of both existing employers as well as businesses targeted for recruitment.
- e. Support efforts to retain graduating MSTC and UW-SP students within the community.

Goal 3: Work to improve the housing conditions throughout the City – particularly student housing and the availability of move-up housing.

Objectives:

- c) Encourage and promote the development of a wide-range of lifestyle housing.
- d) Increase overall median home prices within the City

Policies

- a) Improve overall housing conditions and markets within the City – including the development of additional mid and high-end housing options.

CONNECTED

Goal 4: Continue to develop improved connections between Downtown and the Riverfront.

Goal 5: Strengthen and enhance existing business districts and commercial corridors.

Objectives:

- a) Ensure quality development by requiring that all new construction meets or exceeds the minimum design criteria determined appropriate for the area in which the site/building is located.

Policies

- a. Encourage the clustering of compatible uses; e.g., retail, professional services, lodging, multi-family housing.
- b. Communicate with business and industry leaders regularly to ensure their needs are being met.
- c. Provide necessary transportation and utility infrastructure to support commercial and industrial needs.

Goal 6: Provide property located and designed neighborhood shopping facilities that offer opportunities for non-motorized commerce activities.



Objectives

- a) Encourage reinvestment, redevelopment and infill development on vacant and underutilized land in the downtown.
- b) Use cluster and node development concepts for infill development along key corridors.

Policies

- a. Develop a plan for the Riverfront along with a connectivity element to Downtown Stevens Point.

Goal 7: Support development of commercial enterprises that serve or celebrate Stevens Point's diverse cultures and people.

Policies

- a. Provide opportunities for entrepreneurs to develop businesses by having space and resources available. Use these creative individuals to strengthen the bonds among Stevens Point's neighborhoods and communities.

SUSTAINABLE

Goal 8: Create a regulatory review process that supports and encourages sustainable, private sector development.

Objectives

- a) Develop and implement a routine training and maintenance program for City staff/building officials in familiarization of best practices in review and permitting of sustainable, green development, building design and construction.

Goal 9: Promote the efficient use of land and buildings.

Objectives

- a) Encourage compact and mixed use development and redevelopment opportunities.

Policies:

- a) Develop incentives for infill development in target areas.
- b. Ensure zoning and land use regulations that allow for the development of compact, walkable neighborhoods that provide environments that can accommodate live-work lifestyles.

Goal10: Encourage compact and mixed-use development and redevelop

Goal 11: Continue to develop local renewable and energy efficiency resources.

Policies



- a) Work with local utility providers to develop resource and materials for private homeowners and business owners to promote available energy efficiency technologies.

Goal 12: Facilitate development of a local food system.

Policies

- a) Work with area vendors, growers and business partners to develop a business plan community-supported local agriculture.

RESILIENT

Goal 13: Continue to diversify the City's economic base to improve resiliency to economic shocks and transformations that are outside the City's control.

Objectives

- a) Enhance Stevens Point's brand as business-friendly.

Policies

- a. Support and encourage small-businesses and entrepreneurs. Successful small businesses, particularly in diversified industry sectors will improve Stevens Point's overall economic position.
- b. Continue to explore utilizing public/private partnerships that serve growing sectors in the economic and that drive individual and institutional dollars.

Goal 14: Foster an atmosphere that encourages and supports entrepreneurial activity.

Objectives

- a) Identify existing resources to assist entrepreneurs and early-stage primary-sector businesses. Align existing resources – identify and fill gaps in service(s).
- b) Investigate and evaluate the development of incubator space for entrepreneurial activity.

Policies

- a) Coordinate with UW-Stevens Point on business incubation strategies, including developing a Business Incubator Plan and/or feasibility study.
- b) Work with local Stevens Point organizations – including churches and non-profits, to organize events and make available otherwise underutilized facilities to small businesses for entrepreneurship.

Goal 15: Continue to development and build-out of the City and County's Business and Industrial Parks.

Policies

- a) Identify and inventory properties and that are available and/or suitable for the expansion of business and industrial parks.

