Downtown Directions Plan

Stevens Point • Wisconsin • USA

A project of

Portage County Business Council

Prepared by

Downtown Professionals Network

Marketing • Management • Planning

Batavia · Illinois · USA
www.downtownpros.com

October 1, 2001

Table of Contents

Introduction – Scope of Work 1

Phase I

Market Analysis Component 2
- Stevens Point Trade Area 2
- Claritas Report Summaries 3
  - Market Trends Report Summary 3
  - PRIZM Report Summary 5
  - Consumer Spending Report Summary 7
  - Retail Trade Potential Sales Report Summary 9
- Focus Groups Summary 10

Phase II

Urban Design Component 13
- Context 13
- Concept 15
- Development Strategies 16

Real Estate Development Component 27
- Highest and Best Use 27
- Site Analysis and Recommendations 30
- General Practices for Study Recommendations 34

Strategic Plan Outline 35

Closing – Beyond the Scope of Work 37

Addendum

Exhibit A: Trade Area Maps and ZIP Code Lists

Exhibit B: Claritas Reports:
- Market Trends Report
- PRIZM Report
- Consumer Expenditure Report
- Retail Sales Potential Report

Exhibit C: Focus Group Transcripts

Exhibit D: Task Force Photos

Exhibit E: Traffic and Parking Elements Study

Exhibit F: Sample Public Input Priority Ballot

Exhibit G: DPN and Team Member Profiles

Introduction
Scope of Work

The Central Business District of Stevens Point Wisconsin – *Centerpoint* – is a healthy commercial area. It hosts numerous small retailers, as well as a large national chain store, several interesting dining establishments, various professional and financial institutions, government offices, cultural and religious institutions, and residential facilities. It enjoys local support from three important market segments: college students and faculty; a large downtown employee base; and senior citizens. In an effort to retain its vitality, community leaders commissioned a study to maintain the current level of prosperity and provide future direction.

Prior to beginning this planning effort, a task force comprised of downtown "share holders" was established by the City of Stevens Point and the Portage County Business Council. The task force, with technical assistance from the organizing entities, served as an advisory committee and provided initial citizen input to identify key issues and the needs of Centerpoint.

Phase I included a limited, demand-side, market assessment that included the convening of various segmented focus groups and the analysis of current demographic and psychographic data obtained from Claritas, Inc. Phase II consisted of two components: urban design and real estate development options.

Phase I

Market Analysis Component

by Dale Helmich, CMSM, Dale Helmich, Ltd.

Following is a summary of significant findings derived from the various Claritas reports obtained for the Stevens Point trade area. Copies of the complete Claritas reports are included in the addendum to this document.

Claritas

Claritas is a division of VNU Marketing Information, Inc., one of the nations leading providers of geodemographic commercial marketing and business information. For over 20 years, their data has been considered among the most comprehensive, reliable, accurate and up-to-date available. Their expertise lies in the depth and quality of integrated marketing databases they are able to supply their clients. Claritas is a valuable resource in performing all types of market analysis. Their numerous sources allow them to report, geographically, on business establishments by SIC, consumer demographics and psycho-graphics, crime indexes, healthcare, GIS, educational enrollment, actual and projected sales, development patterns and sites, direct mail criteria, competition analysis, and tracking, estimating and projecting target markets. They have over 60 databases composed of thousands of variables.

Stevens Point Retail Trade Areas

Information was acquired to perform certain Phase I Market Analysis services based on lists of ZIP codes generated by the Portage County Business Council (please see addendum for numerical code listings and digital maps). The geographic trade area is described, generally, as: all, or a portion of, three counties in central Wisconsin approximate to the Wisconsin River. Its configuration is that of a polygon in nature. Both primary (core) and secondary (band) were identified. The primary core being the distance shoppers come from on a frequent basis to purchase necessary and basic goods and services - groceries, dry-cleaning and gasoline. The secondary band is the greater distances the consumer will travel to do comparison shopping - clothing, shoes and computers (see addendum for ZIP code list and maps).

Claritas Market Trend Report

The Market Trend Report is a compilation of detailed population, income and household (HH) information in the given aggregate trade area. Current year estimates, historic and five-year projections are given on most data. Table and graph formats are utilized.

Primary Trade Area (core):

- Population and Household Trend - The current estimated population of the primary trade area is 110,189 living in 41,445 households. Average HH size is estimated at 2.57. The population is expected to remain stable the next five years while HHs will increase by 3.5%. The average family size will continue to shrink very slightly to 2.53.

- Income Trend - The current estimated per capita income is $20,415 and is expected to continue to increase to $25,598 in 2005. Average HH incomes are currently estimated to be $53,587 and are likely to increase to $66,043.

- Household Income Distribution Trend - The percent of HH income in the category of $5000-$9,999 are estimated to continue to decline while those in the upper ranges, above $50,000, have and some will continue to grow on the average of 2.9%.

- Age Distribution Trend - The current estimated median age is 34.5. In five years it will increase to 35.5. The bulk of the population are, and will be, 5-14 years and 16-65 years in fairly even age range distribution.

- Population by Age and Sex Trend - The genders of the total populations are relatively equal with males at 49.4% and females at 50.6%. Approximately one third of the population is 1-14 years and 35 to 49 years. Historic through projected data indicate very little change has or will occur.

- Female Population Trend and Male Population Trends - This data follows that for the general population. Even distribution patterns with the smallest age groups 5-17 years and 60+ years.

- 1990 Household Income by Age of Householder - Median HH incomes rose steadily with age from $15,490 (15-24 years) to $42,919 (45-54) then steadily dropped to $10,911 (55-85+.)

- 2000 Household Income by Age of Householder - The same patterns as above are true for the current estimates. Median HH income has risen from $28,868 to a current estimate of $42,262. The 55-64 age brackets have retained larger HH incomes longer.

- 2005 Household Income by Age of Householder - Projections anticipate the same patterns to continue and the median HH income to continue to rise to $48,789 in 2005.

- Population by M.A.R.S. Race and Hispanic Origin - 97% of the population is and will continue to be White. The growth of Black, Hispanic and Native American peoples in the population is not significant at 3.5%.

- Census Race and Hispanic Origin - Less than 2% of the population are estimated and are projected to be of Asian origins.

Claritas Market Trend Report

Secondary Trade Area (band):

- Population and Household Trend - The current estimated population of the secondary trade area is 101,003 living in 38,392 households. Average HH size is estimated at 2.55. The population is expected to remain stable the next five years while HHs will increase by 4.4%. The average family size will continue to shrink very slightly to 2.53. Housing units will be developed at a more rapid rate than in the primary core trade area at 5.0% compared to 3.3% respectively.

- Income Trend - The current estimated per capita income is $19,780 and is expected to continue to increase to $24,668 in 2005. Average HH incomes are currently estimated to be $50,461 and are likely to increase to $61,875. The same figures are slightly higher for the primary core area.

- Household Income Distribution Trend - No brackets of HH income are estimated to decline however, those in the upper ranges, particularly the $60,000-$99,999 ranges will continue to grow at the 10+% rate in the next five years.

- Age Distribution Trend - The current estimated median age is 37.6. In five years it will increase to 38.6. The bulk of the population are, and will be, 5-14 years and 25-65 years in fairly even age range distribution. The impact of college students in the primary market area is demonstrated here.

- Population by Age and Sex Trend - The genders of the total populations are absolutely even with both males and females at 50%. Age and gender categories are very similar to those in the core trade area. Historic through projected data indicate very little change has and will occur.

- Female Population Trend and Male Population Trends - As in the primary core area, this data follows that for the general population. Even distribution patterns with the smallest age groups being 15-24 years and 65+ years.

- 1990 Household Income by Age of Householder - Median HH incomes rose steadily with age from $20,781(15-24 years) to $38406 (45-54) then steadily dropped to $10,992 (55-85+.) The HH incomes started higher at an early age but ended almost the same in the 85+ bracket as the primary trade area,

- 2000 Household Income by Age of Householder - The same patterns as above are true for the current estimates. Median HH income has risen from $27,052 to a current estimate of $38,981, The 55-64 age brackets have retained slightly larger HH incomes longer. Median HH incomes are slightly lower in the secondary trade area than in the primary trade area.

- 2005 Household Income by Age of Householder - Projections anticipate the same patterns to continue and the median HH income to continue to rise to $44,047 in 2005. This is approximately $4,500 lower than in the future primary market.

- Population by M.A.R.S. Race and Hispanic Origin - 98% of the population is White and is projected to remain stable. The growth of Black, Hispanic and Native American peoples in the general population is not significant at less than 2%.

- Census Race and Hispanic Origin - Less than 2% of the population are estimated and are projected to be of Hispanic origins. Asians will continue to be less that 1% of the general population.

Claritas PRIZM Report

Using complex statistical techniques that employ U.S. census data as well as consumer data, Claritas has determined that every community in the United States may be accurately assigned to one, or several, of the 62 PRIZM clusters. This report provides counts and percentages for both population and households. Each cluster represents a unique consumer type with its own lifestyle and consumer behavior patterns. Cluster nicknames are intended to capture each cluster's essential characteristics.

Factors used in determining PRIZM assignments include social rank, household composition, mobility, ethnicity, urbanization and housing. The 62 clusters are distributed among 15 Social Groups. Counts for the Social Groups are provided along with the Social Group name, followed by the counts for the specific clusters that make up that Social Group.

Primary Trade Area (core) Target Market Segments:

- Exurban Blues - Red, White and Blues / *Small Town Blue-Collar Families* (Cluster percent: 15.8) (Degree of affluence: 35 - Middle) Great Lakes, the Appalachians, and the Western highlands, these folks love the outdoors. (Age Group: Mixed) (Predominately White)
- Heart landers - Agri-Business / *Rural Small Town and Ranch Families* (Cluster percent: 11.6) (Degree of affluence: 45 - Middle) Famous for very large families with lots of kids, countless animals, apple pie, and fishing, this cluster stretches from Lake Michigan to the Pacific. Occupations are farming, forestry, fishing, ranching, mining, and other blue-collar employment. Most of this cluster's individual are high-school graduates and have attended college. (Age Groups: Under 18, 45-64) (Predominately White)
- Landed Gentry - Big Fish, Small Pond / *Small Town Executive Families* (Cluster percent: 11.3) (Degree of affluence: 18 - Upper Middle) Married couples with or without children dominate this conservative, family oriented cluster. Most are high school graduates and have taken some college classes. These captains of local industry enjoy investing in their homes and vacationing by car in the United States. (Age groups: 45-55, 55-64) (Predominately White)
- Working Towns - Mines and Mills / *Older Families, Mine and Mill Towns* (Cluster percent: 9.8) (Degree of affluence: 56 - Poor) As this clusters name implies, the folks in this cluster live in scenic splendor and work in America's mines and mills, *Mining and Mills* are in the Appalachians, across the Ozarks to Arizona, and up the Missouri River to Montana coal fields. The population is older and mostly single with few children. (Age Group: 65+) (Predominately White)
- Country Families - Big Sky Families / *Midscale Couples, Kids and Farmland* (Cluster percent: 7.2) (Degree of affluence: 23 - Upper Middle) Well-paid craftsmen, and builders who live in scenic locales in New England, the Tidewaters, the Great Lakes region and the Rockies comprise this cluster. Their family-centered lifestyles focus on hobbies, hunting, and boating. Most are high school graduated or have attended college. (Age Groups: Under 18, 35-64) (Predominately White)
- 2nd City Center - Towns & Gowns / *College Town Singles* (Cluster percent: 6.9) (Degree of affluence: 31-Lower Middle) Many towns and university campus neighborhoods are divided into locals and students. This cluster is primarily 18-24 year-olds on limited budgets and highly educated, but perhaps underpaid, professionals. Both of these groups have a taste for prestige products that are beyond their means. (Age groups 18-24, 25-34) (Predominately White, High Asian)
- Country Families - River City, USA / *Middle Class Rural Families* (Cluster percent: 6.6) (Degree of affluence: 34 - Middle) These solid, blue-collar folks in New England and the Mohawk Valley through the corn, grain, and dairy belts to the Pacific orchards are raising their children in single-family homes. Fourth of July parades and front porches are important to *River City USA*. Most are high-school graduates and have attended college. (Age Groups: Under 18, 45-54) (Predominately White)

Claritas PRIZM Report

Secondary Trade Area (band) Target Market Segments:

- Rustic Living - Rustic Elders / *Low Income, Older Rural Couples* (Cluster percent: 18.6) (Degree of affluence: 48 - Lower Middle) This cluster is the oldest cluster in the U.S. and has a low incidence of children. It is concentrated in the Great Plains and along the West Coast. Although life for folks in this cluster is pure country, there is a surprisingly high index for health, walking, golf, boating, and volleyball. (Age groups 55-64, 65+) (Predominately White)

- Heart landers - Agri-Business / *Rural Small Town and Ranch Families* (Cluster percent: 11.9) (Degree of affluence: 45 - Middle) Famous for very large families with lots of kids, countless animals, apple pie, and fishing, this cluster stretches from Lake Michigan to the Pacific. Occupations are farming, forestry, fishing, ranching, mining, and other blue-collar employment. Most of this cluster's individuals are high-school graduates and have attended college. (Age Groups: Under 18, 45-64) (Predominately White)

- Country Families - Shotguns & Pickups / *Rural Blue-Collar Workers and Families* (Cluster percent: 9.6) (Degree of affluence: 43 - Middle) Found in the Northeast, the Southeast, the Great Lakes, and the Piedmont industrial regions of the United States, this cluster is least affluent of their Social Group and leads it in blue-collar jobs. Most are married with school-age children. They are churchgoers who also enjoy hunting, bowling, sewing, and attending auto races. (Age Group: Mixed) (Predominately White)

- Heart landers - Grain Belt / *Farm Owners and Tenants* (Cluster percent: 8.1) (Degree of affluence: 57 - Middle) Centered in the Great Plains and South Central section of the United States, life for *Grain Belt* folks is tied to the land and ruled by the weather. Mostly self-sufficient, family- and home-centered, these families are poor only in money. (Age Group: Under 18, 35+) (Predominately White. High Hispanic, Some Native American)

- Exurban Blues - New Homesteaders / *Young Middle Class Families* (Cluster percent: 6.4) (Degree of affluence: 26 - Middle) More highly educated than the other clusters in their Social Group, the New Homesteaders professionals and executives work in local service fields of administration, communications, health, and retail. The younger married couples have children. Life is Homespun with a focus crafts, camping, and sports, (Age Groups: 35-44, 45-54, 65+) (Predominately White)

- Country Families - River City, USA / *Middle Class Rural Families* (Cluster percent: 6.3) (Degree of affluence: 34 - Middle) These solid, blue-collar folks in New England and the Mohawk Valley through the corn, grain, and dairy belts to the Pacific orchards are raising their children in single-family homes. Fourth of July parades and front porches are important to *River City USA*. Most are high-school graduates and have attended college. (Age Groups: Under 18, 45-54) (Predominately White)

- Exurban Blues - Red, White and Blues / *Small Town Blue-Collar Families* (Cluster percent: 6.2) (Degree of affluence: 35 - Middle) Great Lakes, the Appalachians, and the Western highlands, these folks love the outdoors. (Age Group: Mixed) (Predominately White)

- Landed Gentry - Big Fish, Small Pond / *Small Town Executive Families* (Cluster percent: 6.0) (Degree of affluence: 18 - Upper Middle) Married couples with or without children dominate this conservative, family oriented cluster. Most are high school graduates and have taken some college classes. These captains of local industry enjoy investing in their homes and vacationing by car in the United States. (Age groups: 45-55, 55-64) (Predominately White)

Claritas Consumer Spending Report

The Consumer Spending Patterns Report presents summary tables of weekly and annual expenditures for various consumer product categories. The data provided in this report are drawn from historical information (Consumer Expenditure Survey - CEX) and consumer survey projections The CEX is conducted by the Bureau of the Census based on a survey of some 23,000 households nationwide. Claritas then estimates the U.S. consumer expenditures and blends the information with the CEX data.

Annual estimates of the average consumer expenditure per household for each variable are combined with updated demographic information to calculate the U.S. average. These estimates are then validated against the U.S. total consumer expenditures supplied by the trade, business, and commercial organizations, as well as the Census of Retail Trade Merchandise Line Sales.

No assumptions can be made based on this data as to the location, inside or outside of the trade area, concerning these purchases. Qualification needs to be made in reference to catalogue and Internet sales as these venues are not reportable in several states. To determine leakage / surplus retail sales for Stevens Point, sales tax revenues, collected by the State of Wisconsin for the same time period, can be compared to the information contained in these reports. Wisconsin Department of Revenue information was not supplied for this study.

Primary Trade Area (core):

- Generally, categories of average weekly HH expenditure in the primary trade area fall within 10 points, on either side, of the national average.
- Indexes for the Travel and Floor Covering categories fall further below national averages than indicated by the above statement. This could be an indication of a lower frequency of purchases or lower price range availability.
- Conversely, Smoking Products & Supplies are the highest expenditure index at 108.6. This may be a sign of more purchases or a higher price range.
- The index for Prepared Foods (105.7) may be indicative of a propensity to purchase deli food stuff while Bakery Products at 100.8 may show an opportunity for a unique bakery.
- The indexes for apparel of all types would evidence a healthy, moderate market in the primary trade area. Checking with the Centerpoint employee base, as to need, interviewing current apparel providers in the Centerpoint, and local dry cleaners will assist further in determining potential development of this category of business.
- Consumers either are potentially paying low to moderate wages for Household Services (Index 55.6) or they plan to do a large portion of their own household work.
- Consumers in the primary trade area, like consumers elsewhere in the upper Midwest, have and plan to continue to pay a high price for Gasoline this year.
- Rented Vehicles (index 85.1) may be related to Travel (83.9).
- Expenditures for Tuition & School Supplies (index 89.0) is surprisingly low for a college town. However, remember that data is not included in these reports for Group Quarters.
- Consumers appear to expend a fairly large amount on their pets.

Claritas Consumer Spending Report

Secondary Trade Area (band):

- The ranges for all categories of annual and weekly expenditure indexes continue to remain close to national averages with slightly lower degrees of point change.
- Expenditures for Smoking Products & Supplies and Prescription Drugs increase over that in the primary trade area.
- Generally, expenditures for Food Away From Home, Alcoholic Beverages Away From Home, Home Computer Hardware & Software, Transportation, Apparel and Entertainment decrease in the secondary trade area.
- The greatest HH expenditures are for Food, New & Used Automobiles, Automotive Repairs, Gasoline and Cash Contributions.
- Household Services expenditures are comparable to those in the primary trade area and well below the national average at 52.4.

Claritas Retail Trade Potential Report

The retail trade potential sales have been grouped into 12 major store types according to the Standard Industrial Code (SIC). The report, based on trade area historical (surveys done every five years by the Census of Retail Trade) and consumer planning data collected by Claritas, indicates the amount of sales store categories in the trade area might expect to generate in the current calendar year.

"Total retail sales" is the potential of establishments primarily selling merchandise to customers for personal, household, and farm use. This category includes many retail species not included in any of the twelve basic store types. Thus figures for it will be greater than the sum total for the twelve other categories.

Specialty shops (such as book, photo, stationary, game, pet and gift & novelty) are not included in any of the twelve major categories.

Claritas created the twelve potential estimates by utilizing four data sources:

- Census of Retail Trade
- Claritas current-year demographics
- Monthly and Annual Survey of Retail Trade
- Current-year national sales forecast

Primary (core) and Secondary (band) Trade Areas:

- Total potential retail sales for the Stevens Point trade area are estimated to be $2,641,878,000 for the current year.

- Consumers living in the primary trade area are expected to spend 30% more than consumers living in the secondary trade area for apparel..

- Consumers living in the primary trade area are expected to spend 13% more than those living in the secondary trade area in the eating & drinking places category.

- Consumers living in the primary trade area are expected to spend 29% more than consumers living in the secondary trade area in the furniture / home furnishing stores category.

- Consumers living in the primary trade area are expected to spend 10% more than consumers living in the secondary trade area in general merchandise stores.

- All other store categories' potential sales are equal relative to their trade area populations.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were arranged through the auspices of the Portage County Business Council, Stevens Point, Wisconsin. One-hour sessions were conducted on May 9 & 10, 2001 with eight groups who represented various components of the local market. The groups were broad-based in terms of age, gender, and occupation. The discussions were structured in a consensus-building format with a facilitator, scribe, group dialogue and priority voting. Participants were encouraged to be candid and creative, drawing on their own knowledge, opinions and experiences to respond to the following questions:

Assessment – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats (SWOT)

1. What are Centerpoint's greatest current assets?

- Top Priority Response: The Centerpoint's proximity to the Wisconsin River and the riverside park.
- Second Priority Responses: The unique collection of independent, locally owned, specialty shops and restaurants. The "sense of charm" created by the historic architecture and the strong consumer core of Centerpoint employees.
- Third Priority Responses: The compact, "walkable" streetscape with its trees and flowers and the public library.

2. What are Centerpoint's greatest current liabilities?

- Top Priority Response: The lack of an economically healthy business mix due to unsuccessful business retention and recruitment - especially the complementary retail, and fragmented promotional efforts.
- Second Priority Responses: The lack of public-private sector maintenance and aesthetics, enforcement of vandalism, pride in property, and a general perception of eminent Centerpoint failure.
- Third Priority Responses: The lack of convenient parking and confusing traffic patterns.
- Fourth Priority Response: Because of the numerous vacancies and lack of eating choices in the Center Point Market Place, there is concern for its long-term success.

3. What are Centerpoint's greatest opportunities in the future?

- Top Priority Response: Business enhancement through the retention of existing businesses, the development of new ones, and an improved mix. A great deal of optimism was expressed concerning the new Center Point Market Place ownership.
- Second Priority Responses: Real estate development by expanding Centerpoint to the north and west for commercial or residential uses (but definitely not industry) was considered feasible. Innovative green spaces such as an outdoor market and second floor residential development were also suggested.
- Third Priority Responses: Aesthetics improvements like the renovation of historical buildings and more trees and plants. In particular, the preservation of the Fox Theater through a new use seemed important to the focus groups.
- Fourth Priority Responses: There was interest in a parking ramp expressed and a less confusing way to enter and navigate the Centerpoint. Perhaps less dependence on fossil fuel modes of transportation, for example a campus-to-Centerpoint bicycle path, and the proverbial discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of a pedestrian mall occurred.
- Fifth Priority Response: Development of a Wisconsin River marina complex was a popular concept. A waterfront restaurant and an improved swimming area were felt to be activity generators that would attract boat people to the Centerpoint area.

Focus Groups

4. What are Centerpoint's greatest threats in the future?

- Top Priority Response: Continued, uncontrolled sprawl to the east along Highway 10 was the "walk away" choice of all focus groups. The results of this occurring were all discussed - more store closings, eventual neglect and building deterioration, and the ensuing loss of creative, cooperative business owners and managers.
- Second Priority Responses: The potential for a Highway 10 bypass of the community, the loss of major employers in the Centerpoint, and the slowdown of the National economy were "also rans."

Vision

5. What would you like Centerpoint to be known for in the future?

- Top Priority Response: The vast majority of responses described opportune consumer activities. Unique, quality, specialty shops not found elsewhere versus chain stores. "Not a typical mall or downtown experience." Art galleries and businesses representing cultural diversity were given as examples.
- Second Priority Response: To less of an extent than the above response, groups discussed the entertainment aspects of the future Centerpoint. They saw the central business district as being known for having nighttime activity, affordable family-oriented venues; theater, dance clubs and outdoor eating places.

6. As you visualize Centerpoint in the future, how will it look, feel and function?

- Top Priority Response: The majority of comments had to do with how the future Centerpoint would function. A mix of people, age groups, uses, events and activities. A community gathering place that demonstrates fun, accessibility, prosperity and has an easy link to the riverfront.
- Second Priority Response: The focus groups described, in detail how they would like the future Centerpoint to appear - green, clean, and of a human scale, comparable to Red Wing, Minnesota.

7. What would you like the younger generations to remember about the Centerpoint?

- Top Priority Response: A fun, positive experience with lots of things to see and do.
- Second Priority Response: A quality physical environment that was friendly and safe.

Focus Groups

Specific Issues

8. What are your perceptions or experiences concerning parking in Centerpoint?

- Top Priority Response: There are an inadequate number of spaces, particularly for the Centerpoint employee base but also for customers of businesses along Main Street. Some parking lots are considered inconvenient, difficult to find and hard to utilize.
- Secondary Priority Response: A number of responses indicated that people did not have any problems in general with the Centerpoint parking situation. It has problems relative to the time of day. The "library lot" was actually termed as "good."

9. How does Centerpoint work now - access, egress, vehicular, pedestrian, signage, aesthetics?

- Top Priority Response: Most of the responses given pertained to the need for a comprehensive master program for the entire Centerpoint. More "green living things," creative links between the Centerpoint and the River, controlled development of the riverfront, an enforceable sign ordinance to eliminate visual pollution, and a maintenance plan are all desired components of the program that should be outlined.
- Second Priority Response: Along with the reiteration of inconvenient Centerpoint parking, the "disjointed traffic pattern" was of major concern. No direct path to the Centerpoint is an issue and the opening up of Main Street should be addressed.

10. What types of businesses would you patronize if they were located Centerpoint - on the average, how often and how much?

- Top Priority Response: Twelve subcategories of food and restaurants were suggested by the focus groups. Venues such as outdoor, with live entertainment, fast, evening dining, cafeteria and Internet were described. A gourmet deli with bakery and a fast-food offering in the Center Point Market Place appear to be suggested as the most lucrative ventures.
- Second Priority Response: Fourteen types of specialty retail shops were thought to have potential by the focus groups. Books, hardware and sporting goods seem to be estimated as the most likely to succeed.
- Third Priority Response: Women and children's apparel. Working attire and young peoples usual wear were thought to be profitable lines because of the proximity of their respective market segments to the Centerpoint.

11. What "burning issues" should be dealt with in Centerpoint?

- The utilization of the "Castle."
- The lack of strong participation in the redevelopment process from business owners.
- The improvement of second floor window treatments.
- More activities for teenagers like *Reflection's* in Marshfield.

Phase II
Urban Design Component
by Michael Schroeder, RLA, Hoisington Koegler Group, Inc.

Context

Stevens Point's central business district – *Centerpoint* – is not a blank slate. Conditions exist that will either limit development opportunities or the enhancement of the public realm – or that will encourage improvements. The key is to understand how those constraints and opportunities can be shaped (or re-shaped) to reflect desired patterns for Centerpoint, making the experience of Centerpoint better than what is found today. Important factors include:

Vacant Sites

Vacant Sites

Areas near Centerpoint that are empty present the opportunity for new development, but it is critical to consider how those sites can be made a part of Centerpoint – rather than simply making something happen there. It is important to note that patterns that reflect suburban development do not belong here.

Non-contributing Sites

Non-contributing Sites

The "Castle" and the Fox Theater – are treasures and need to be brought back to the life of Centerpoint. Others are simply underutilized, have uses inappropriate to the district, or used for parking. Reconsideration of these sites is just as important as creating new uses on vacant sites.

Difficult access to riverfront

Difficult access to riverfront

The natural highlight of Centerpoint is the Wisconsin River, but it is virtually cut off from the district by Water Street. Logical and safe connections to the river should be a priority for the evolution of Centerpoint.

Barrier of "Center Point Marketplace" and Centerpoint Drive

Barrier of "Center Point Market Place" and Centerpoint Drive

The north side of the Center Point Market Place is essentially a blank wall several hundred feet long; Centerpoint Drive and Water Street feel like a "race track" around the district. Neither adds to the experience of Centerpoint, and in fact, they limit the experience by cutting off views and access to Main Street and severing connections to the neighborhood to the north.

Context

Limited access to Main Street

Aesthetics of Main Street

Aesthetics and supply of parking

Limited access to Main Street

For Centerpoint to achieve the desired level of vibrancy, people have to be able to easily get into the district. Today, there are only a few places to get to Main Street, when in fact the edges of Centerpoint should be so permeable that just about any route one would pick would lead naturally to Main Street.

Aesthetics of Main Street

While Main Street has a streetscape, it feels dated and has not received the level of care that people in the community desire. Other streets in Centerpoint do not even have the level of enhancement that is evidenced along Main Street, even though they are important to the fabric of Centerpoint.

Aesthetics and supply of parking

Parking overwhelms parts of Centerpoint and severely limits the pedestrian experience. The amount of parking would seem to be adequate to serve existing uses in most areas, but other areas are under-served due to the high number of daytime employees.

Vandalism

Centerpoint business owners are reluctant to invest in their storefronts due to vandalism. Whatever the causes of illegitimate activity in Centerpoint, it must be reduced (and preferably eliminated) to encourage the kinds of investment that will be required to keep Centerpoint vibrant.

Concept

Several key ideas underlie a concept for the evolution of Centerpoint. Taken separately, they will accomplish little; in aggregate, they offer the ability to create the kind of Centerpoint that has been articulated by the community and Centerpoint interests.

Keys

- Compact district

  Centerpoint cannot sprawl and maintain a pedestrian scale. Definition of a boundary for Centerpoint based on how far people walk will be critical to planning Centerpoint's future.

- Public spaces

  Centerpoint depends on the public realm – its streets and spaces meant for public gathering. A concept for Centerpoint should focus on the creation of a series of engaging public spaces that occur throughout Centerpoint.

- Connection to the riverfront

  The Wisconsin River is Centerpoint's great natural feature, but it is hard to get to from Centerpoint. Any concept for Centerpoint must forge a strong connection to the river – not just as a visual link or a physical connection, but also as an extension of Main Street.

- Evolution in increments

  It has taken years of change for Centerpoint to get to where it is today. It is illogical to believe it can change overnight. It is important to allow Centerpoint to evolve in smaller increments, over a longer period of time. Change cannot be put off, but it cannot happen in one step; allow time for change to proceed, and it will more directly reflect the desires of the community.

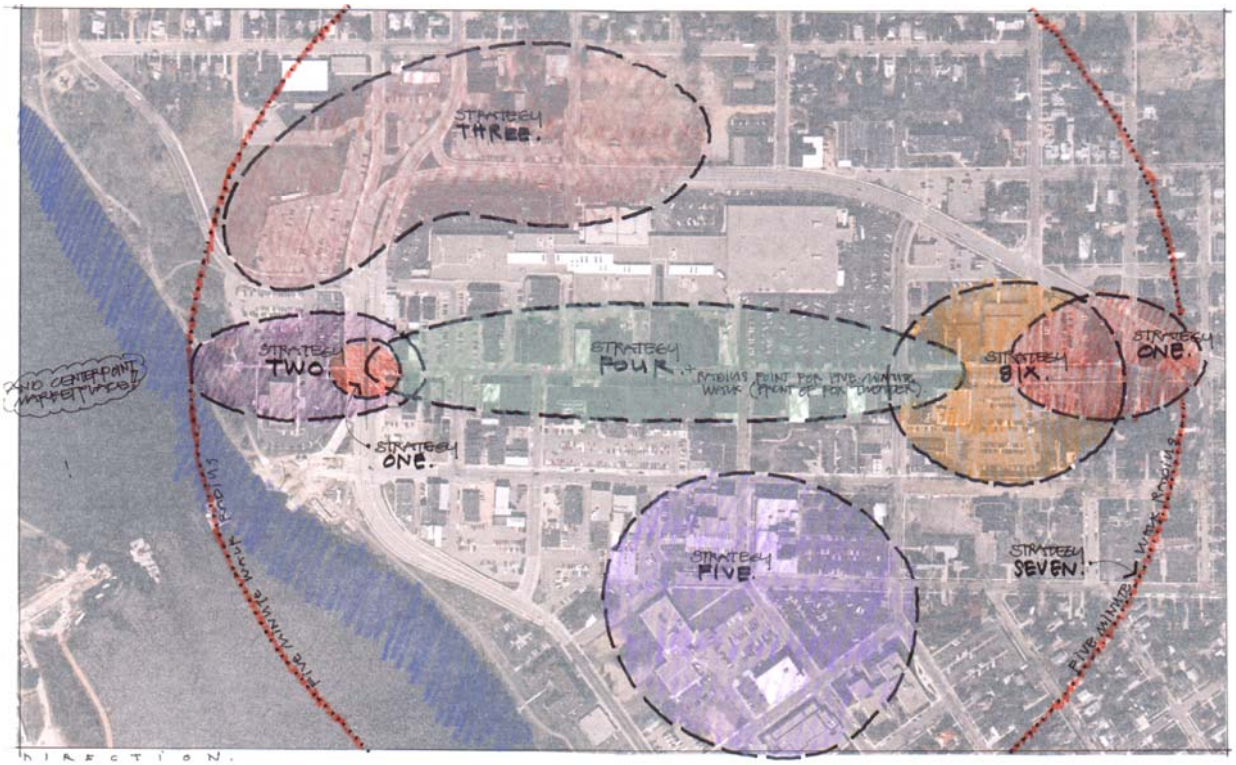
- Vandalism

  Vandalism cannot stand in the way of Centerpoint's future, but it will not simply go away. The presence of police – on foot – in Centerpoint will help in important ways: they may be a deterrent to vandalism, but the ability to create a personal relationship between Centerpoint businesses and officers assigned to Centerpoint results in a direct line of communication which may be even more important. It is also important that the results of vandals are corrected as soon as possible – broken windows and graffiti only stand as an advertisement for subsequent acts.

Development Strategies

A range of strategies and supporting action can be defined to move Centerpoint toward the vision articulated in the preceding concept description. What is important to recognize is that each action is associated with a cost, many might be seen as controversial, and some may require re-thinking investments that have been made (and paid for). Strong partnerships will be necessary – with private sector entities, local businesses, new investors, and public agencies.

As the community considers these actions, others will surface that are seen as important. In order to maintain coherency in the efforts to set a strong direction for Centerpoint, new actions must have their basis in a concept first, and then bear some relation to one of the larger strategies framed below.



Strategy One
Facilitate access to and mobility within Centerpoint

The long-term viability of Centerpoint depends, to a significant degree, on access to Centerpoint. Quite simply, if it becomes difficult for people to drive into Centerpoint, they will find other choices for the shopping and entertainment activities. At the same time, once a driver gets into "Centerpoint" it should be easy to move about – in a car and on foot. Pedestrian mobility is relatively good; a one-way Main Street causes confusion and frustration for drivers.

1.1 Establish two-way traffic on Main Street

People should be able to navigate Centerpoint on its primary street, even if it means traffic moves slowly and has to wait to move around an occasional delivery vehicle. Centerpoint Drive and Clark Street should be used for movement; Main Street should be a place of local activity, and the presence of two-way traffic will enhance it as a place for people.

1.2 Open Main Street at the east end of Centerpoint

It is necessary to facilitate access into Centerpoint, and the previous closure of Main Street at its east end should be "undone" with the primary goal of inviting easy access into the heart of Centerpoint.

1.3 Create full access at the west end of Centerpoint

Access at the west end of Centerpoint is limited due to the one-way configuration of Main Street, and movements out of Centerpoint are made difficult because of the lack of left turn movements. Creation of a full-access signalized intersection will allow for direct access into Centerpoint and clarify movements out of Centerpoint. In addition, a full access intersection will allow for a direct link to the riverfront for vehicles and pedestrians.

1.4 Re-establish street grid along Third Street

By re-establishing Third Street north of Main Street and "through" the Center Point Market Place, a new access to Centerpoint is created and the Center Point Market Place is provided with a street front presence. The continuity of a Centerpoint street grid helps to "fit" Center Point Market Place into the context of Centerpoint, making it more of a Centerpoint building than a suburban mall dropped into the middle of the traditional central business district. A Third Street extending north from Main Street links the neighborhood to the north to Centerpoint (which had been largely cut off by the Center Point Market Place in the past).

Strategy One
Facilitate access to and mobility within Centerpoint – *continued*

- Third Street looking south from Frontage Street

- Apartments over retail storefronts
- Narrow downtown street
- Renovated Eagle Plumbing building

Strategy Two
Establish a strong link to the riverfront

The Wisconsin River is Centerpoint's great attraction and a powerful feature. Providing a better connection between Centerpoint and the river should be a priority. Development near the river should be an attraction as well, and as opportunities present themselves, the chance to establish public uses and unique proposals should be pursued.

2.1 Create a full access intersection with traffic signals at Main Street and Water Street

The natural and logical connection to the riverfront from Centerpoint is along Main Street. The creation of a true intersection at Main Street and Water Street not only facilitates a connection to the Wisconsin River; it creates a new access into Centerpoint.

2.2 Expand cultural offerings and establish retail opportunities west of Water Street

Development on the riverfront should create a strong public presence on the Wisconsin River, extending and expanding the park and trail links already established on the river. Cultural uses, such as history, arts or performance spaces, with an orientation to the river, will create a significant attraction. New retail, restaurants and entertainment uses, in smaller scale buildings, will ensure that activity on the riverfront is a true extension of the activity in Centerpoint.

Strategy Three
Integrate underdeveloped and vacant sites – and Center Point Market Place – into Centerpoint

The presence of vacant sites and underutilized parcels is a negative image for Centerpoint and for the Stevens Point community. In addition, those parcels are not contributing fully to the tax base of the community. The real challenge for these sites is to find a way for them to evolve so that they are a benefit to Centerpoint – revitalizing Centerpoint as new uses are introduced.

3.1 Re-align Centerpoint Drive to bring vacant industrial sites into Centerpoint

The ability to unite Centerpoint with vacant industrial sites depends on the ability to "bridge" Centerpoint Drive. With a re-alignment of Centerpoint Drive one block further north and the re-establishment of Briggs Street, the current industrial sites are united with existing patterns of development in Centerpoint.

3.2 Redevelop industrial sites with uses complementing Centerpoint

The urban patterns of Centerpoint suffer from the imposition of a suburban use into its fabric. As industrial sites are redeveloped, it will be important to have the patterns relate to Centerpoint; free-standing buildings surrounded by parking, pad development, big boxes and other suburban patterns are not a good fit. Patterns that feel like Main Street should be the model.

3.3 Encourage mixed-use development on redevelopment sites, especially street level retail and upper-story residential

The sense of an active Centerpoint results from the mix of uses that occur there. New development on redevelopment sites should offer this kind of mix to the greatest degree possible, with street level retail, restaurants and entertainment uses and office and housing on upper floors. Housing, especially, must be considered on these sites, and the ability to offer more unique housing opportunities and their proximity to Centerpoint attractions and employment uses will help to market the new units

3.4 Consider structural changes to the Center Point Market Place that result in a better "fit" between a "suburban-style" shopping center and a small downtown

The establishment of Center Point Market Place in Centerpoint was a good idea; it brought retail activity back to the center of the community. Unfortunately, it was a "suburban" idea imposed on a traditional downtown setting – it simply failed to recognize its unique context. In order to establish a proper fit between a large building and a small-scale downtown development pattern, the mall must be "broken" into more appropriately scaled buildings. The re-establishment of Third Street essentially breaks the Center Point Market Place at a point where a street-front can be established; cutting through the Center Point Market Place at Strongs Avenue might offer similar benefits.

Strategy Four
Beautify Main Street and Centerpoint

Traditional downtown districts are necessarily places of pedestrian experiences. The success of Centerpoint will rely in part on the activities that occur there; the environment should be one that highlights activities of pedestrians. To facilitate pedestrian activity, Centerpoint should be a beautiful place – building on Centerpoint's architecture, the power of the river, and vitality of its commercial enterprises.

4.1 Enhance and/or screen the north side of the Center Point Market Place

Simply adding more landscaping will not reduce the monotony of the north wall; more significant changes are necessary. The re-alignment of Centerpoint Drive and the development of new buildings along the re-established Briggs Street will offer the best opportunities for "screening" the Center Point Market Place on its north side.

4.2 Establish "streetscape" at parking lot edges

Drive aisles along buildings should recall the streetscape development along Main Street and, in the future, along other Centerpoint streets. Street trees, pedestrian-scale street lights and other elements added to these areas will make them feel more a part of Centerpoint.

- Shopko "streetscape" and walk along building face
- Windows, new entrances and building-mounted lighting at building

Strategy Four
Beautify Main Street and Centerpoint - *continued*

4.3 Plant Centerpoint Drive to create a "parkway"

The re-alignment of Centerpoint Drive presents the opportunity to create a proper environment for a street that brings people into Centerpoint. Extensive plantings along a properly sized street will lead to the sense of a parkway (as opposed to the arterial feel the road currently has). Two traffic lanes, parallel parking at both sides, and boulevards and walks on both sides of the street are the appropriate configuration for the new Centerpoint Drive.

4.4 Institute a program of public art throughout Centerpoint

Art can be used to create highlights in the fabric of Centerpoint, but it can also be used to tell a story about the Stevens Point community that is "read" by users of Centerpoint. The direction of a public art program in Centerpoint might focus on more "representational" works (rather than abstract pieces) and might be incorporated more directly into the functional elements of Centerpoint. Benches might be art benches, manhole covers in sidewalks might recall important events in community history, and street signs might reflect important cultural, economic and natural elements of the community.

4.5 Enhance "terminal" views

The ways in which streets in Centerpoint terminate is important to the Centerpoint experience. When streets end, there should be a highlight – something that attracts one to that point. The extension of Main Street to the riverfront as a street offers a dramatic event; the termination of Strongs Avenue, which could be an elegant street as it reaches southward out of Centerpoint, could be greatly enhanced with a more exciting Center Point Market Place entrance and Shopko storefront.

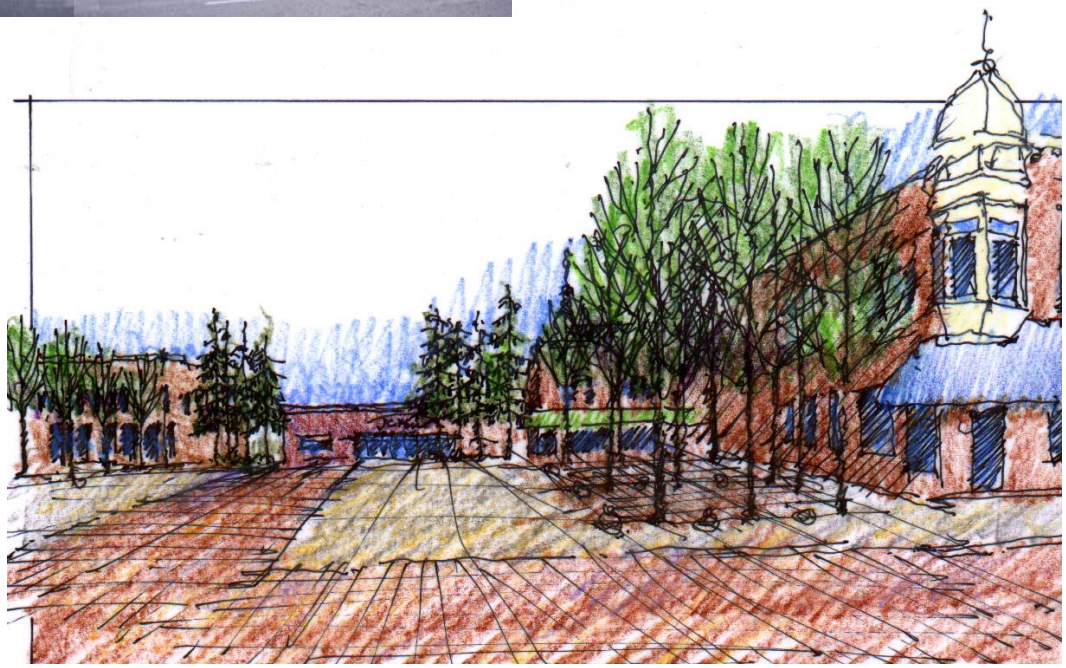
- Strongs Avenue and new retail development leading to Shopko
- Pines at "Bus Stop Square"

Strategy Four
Beautify Main Street and Centerpoint - *continued*

4.6 Create a series of public squares in Centerpoint to complement Main Street

Market Square has become almost unrecognizable in the fabric of Centerpoint, when, in fact, it should be a highlight and a point of reference. At the riverfront, another public square might be developed to celebrate Centerpoint's connection to the Wisconsin River. Squares, some large, some small, should be distributed throughout Centerpoint to enhance the public realm of the city beyond streetscapes and parks.

- Market Square as a public space (not a parking lot)
- Enhanced landscape at edges with cars parking between trees
- Pavement color, texture and pattern used to define drive areas and pedestrian areas



4.7 Update streetscape furniture on Main Street

The elements that make up the streetscape along Main Street feel dated. The introduction of new benches, trash receptacles and information kiosks will bring a new sense of life to the street. Over time, these elements should be extended (although it may be at a lesser intensity) to all the street of Centerpoint to create a continuous pedestrian experience.

Strategy Four

Beautify Main Street and Centerpoint - *continued*

4.8 Enhance lighting at a pedestrian scale

Streetlights of a pedestrian scale along the entire length of Main Street are important to the character of Centerpoint; they will be more in scale with the buildings of Main Street and will be a more recognizable piece of the pedestrian environment. As with streetscape furniture, pedestrian-scale lights should extend throughout Centerpoint.

4.9 Humanize parking lots with landscaping

Once a driver sets foot outside of a car in a parking lot, they become a pedestrian. The expanse of asphalt in a downtown environment, open to the sky and without a real sense of scale, becomes imposing to the pedestrian experience. The introduction of more extensive landscaping – especially trees – will humanize parking areas, making them more comfortable for people (without cars) and giving them a scale more fitting for Centerpoint.

Strategy Five
Secure Centerpoint employers

One of the keys to the long-term health of Centerpoint is the presence of a workforce that can populate the area during the day. Stevens Point is fortunate to have Sentry Insurance, Noel Group and the city and county administrative facilities in Centerpoint; one of the most important actions that the city can undertake is to ensure that they remain a part of Centerpoint.

5.1 Create a shared and structured parking solution for Noel Group, Sentry Insurance and city/county uses

The foremost priority for these entities is parking; anecdotal evidence suggests that their retention or expansion can only occur if their parking needs are satisfied. A shared parking facility will allow for expansion of office uses without consuming land for parking; it will allow for expansion of those entities over a period of time, and it will permit the opportunity for reducing parking supply by recognizing potentially off-setting peak demand.

5.2 Encourage corporate and office development

By creating a shared parking structure, ground space currently occupied by parking lots can be put to a higher use. These parking lots should be seen as opportunities to create new corporate and office uses, expanding the Centerpoint work force and building the community's tax base from its center.

5.3 Create a signature amenity

Buildings in this part of the district could overwhelm the sense of scale of Centerpoint. The creation of a "Courthouse Square," building upon the strategy of creating a series of Centerpoint squares, will provide human scale to development and provide an exterior space that can be shared by employees and visitors of development in the area.

Strategy Six
Intensify development in Centerpoint

The most intensively developed place in a community should be its central business district. The activity that lends a sense of vitality to Centerpoint will be its mix of uses – with people coming to Centerpoint to work, shop, live and be entertained. As the area evolves, expanses of surface parking should be considered potential development sites and a focus should be placed on the creation of Centerpoint housing opportunities.

6.1 Consider structured parking to serve Main Street

Eventually, the ability to create a parking structure may be critical to Centerpoint's future. Without it, surface parking could dominate, and the pedestrian environment would be severely diminished. As businesses prosper and new development opportunities are sought, a parking structure will be useful in maximizing those opportunities.

6.2 Redevelop parking expanses with new Centerpoint uses

As parking is concentrated into parking structures, the opportunity for new development that is not limited by the need for on-site parking is eliminated (or at least greatly reduced). Parcels currently occupied by parking should be considered for new development that matches patterns of street-facing development typically found along Main Street.

6.3 Encourage residential development at the edges of Centerpoint and in upper floors along Main Street

A great opportunity for enhancing the life of Centerpoint is the creation of housing. Housing in Centerpoint should be different than housing found in other parts of the community: apartments over storefronts (especially in new buildings); row houses and urban lofts are all appropriate to Centerpoint and will likely fill a niche in the local housing market.

Strategy Seven
Keep Centerpoint compact

While active storefronts, buildings that address the street, and interesting streetscapes are necessary components of a good pedestrian environment, the relationship between pedestrian-orientation and the size of Centerpoint is critical. If Centerpoint sprawls, pedestrians will not populate the district; if it is kept reasonably compact, people will find the public spaces of Centerpoint to be a vibrant place and will find excuses to stroll through Centerpoint.

7.1 Respect a five-minute walk radius as a boundary for Centerpoint

One of the basic elements of a small central business district is walkability. When the size of Centerpoint extends beyond the distance a person can walk in five minutes, people most often will not walk. By establishing a five-minute walk radius from the center of Centerpoint as the boundary for Centerpoint, the pedestrian nature of Centerpoint can be ensured.

Phase II

Real Estate Development Options Component

by Terrance S. Rathbun, CCIM

Highest and Best Use

Definition – That reasonable, probable, possible and legal use that is financially feasible that when capitalized results in the highest land value. It is a study that determines that use, from among alternative uses, that is found to be physically possible and appropriately supported. It is not to be construed as feasibility, nor marketability, study that addresses investor criteria. It is important to note that implied within this definition are:

- The recognition of that specific use which contributes to the community environment.
- Wealth maximization for the property ownership.
- Highest and best use is not a fact to be found but a subjective judgment leading to an opinion.

Investment Climate in Centerpoint

In determining highest and best use, it is necessary to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of any potential investment. More particularly for this assignment, it is necessary to assess the general health of Stevens Point's Centerpoint. The purpose is to sensitize oneself as to why investment is or is not presently occurring. Each day, all occupants of any commercial district make a conscious or unconscious decision to remain or relocate. To some degree, retailers and property owners are continually in a state of reassessing their alternatives. As a location, Centerpoint is a quantified plus - it is economically diverse and growing. Observations concerning specific strength and weakness variables are:

- Vacancy Rate: 11-15 percent - plus +
- Appearance: dirty to clean, fair public spaces - minus -
- Economic Activity: retail, service, office, financial and residential - plus +
- Health of Businesses: stable to strong - plus +
- Centerpoint Orientation: Vehicular and pedestrian - plus +
- Parking: See Edward's Report - plus and minus + / -
- Change: stable to increasing vacancies and rents - plus and minus + /-
- Available Financing: moderate to high - plus +

Determining the Use When the Use Is Not Obvious

Very specific steps are taken to most accurately reflect on highest and best use of land. They are as follows:

- Market analysis that determines the land supply in the given area. It is broad in nature and includes several real estate variables.
- Site study that determines the specific conditions of given parcels.
- Preliminary highest and best uses that are possible, probable, and legal.
- An examination of the alternatives within the various potential zoning categories.
- Trade area analysis of demographic, psychographics, opinions and needs of consumers.
- Demand & supply factors study which is a test for market balance of real estate investors and potential uses.
- Marketability and capture, which takes a very specific, narrow, look at use feasibility for any investor or one specific investor.
- Financial feasibility study, which determines investor criterion based on a specific proposal. Pro forma analysis is often used.
- Final highest and best use analysis and indication.

Characteristics of Property Classes as Related to Point Center

This study focuses on the most probable categories of zoning for selected sites in Centerpoint. While it is not with in the confines of this report to detail the complexities of each zoning classification, a brief narrative of Stevens Point zoning and its intent is offered. The consulting team focused on uses ranging from multiple family districts to light industrial. The intents studied would provide medium-density, mixed-residential use, a transition between lower-density, detached housing areas to more intense non-residential land use, and light industrial zoning which would establish manufacturing (or other industrial uses) having the least obnoxious nuisance affects.

General Use Observations Regarding Centerpoint

- Centerpoint rates as a moderately favorable to good investment opportunity for real estate development.
- Centerpoint rates high for smaller local investors and strong for larger corporate investors.
- Centerpoint properties differ in size and improvements to the land.
- Building code compliance was not reported to be restrictive or ruinous to investment.
- Zoning was not detrimental, nor does it seem to be enhancing, to Centerpoint properties.
- Asking prices for undeveloped vacant properties are based on commercial sales and subjective adjustments made for waste contamination.

Retail Commercial - Districts that are established to provide a single contiguous use encompassing the central business district or downtown area which encourage primarily retail and a variety of supporting uses.

- Centerpoint specialty shop profit margins are squeezed by general merchandisers and 'big box" retailers east of town.
- Local appraiser interviewed did not encourage "big box" development for any of the subject sites in the team's scope of work.
- Properties are exposed to the market place as light industrial.
- No transactions on study sites have taken place to date.
- Department stores typically have low-percentage leases in place versus specialty shops that usually have high-percentage leases. Center Point is primarily specialty shops with the exception of Shopko.
- Parking issues - see Edward's Report in addendum to this report.
- Limited financing does not appear to be a problem for Centerpoint merchants and businesses.
- No tenant pass-through appears to exist out of the ordinary.

Office Space - Provision for this type of use is found in a variety of Stevens Point zoning classifications.

- High lease rates due to high construction costs tend to be the rule in most developments of this type. This may apply to Center Point.
- Net rentable square footage appears low as taken from exterior measurements.
- Parking inefficiencies see Edwards parking study report.
- Typical three to five year leases appear to exist in Point Center.
- Nationally speaking, operating expenses create high cost escalators in office building leasing.
- Stevens Point has an ample inventory and a high vacancy rate of office space.

Hotels and Convention Centers - Mentioned by one person interviewed as a potential use, it is briefly discussed but not considered an option for Centerpoint by the consulting team. Information is briefly included in this report which, when discussed by the team, led the team in other directions. Provision for this type of use is found in a variety of Stevens Point zoning classifications as either a permitted or a conditional use.

- While hotels may offer the highest profit potential, expenses are commonly considered high to gross income.
- Hotels are labor intensive. This could have economic impact on Stevens Point, particularly concerning college students.
- Hotel development can have an escalating rate potential.
- Parking issues can be intensified by demand for parking.
- Land requirements are smaller and therefore can have a more workable foot print on a traditional downtown.
- Financing- expensive
- Franchise considerations

Site Analysis

This section of the report is dedicated to a discussion of selected sites in Centerpoint that the team was asked to consider for study. Descriptions, observations and recommendations are given. (Note to reader: Land costs in commercial activities are generally quoted on a dollar per square foot basis. Commercial use typically sells at the highest rate, followed by other classes of zoning. Adjoining property will influence value and use.)

The sites selected for study were analyzed from the following perspectives:

- Topography and vegetation
- Size and configuration of site
- Zoning and conditional uses
- Soil composition and drainage
- Availability of utilities (assessments)
- Accessibility - ingress and egress
- Property history and ownership
- Legal status
- Consumer behavior and purchasing power
- Demand - perceived and actual

The "Lyllaby" Site / Robert Berand Property
The subject site is a 4.04-acre parcel (174,848 square feet) currently zoned light manufacturing. The site is bordered by Center Point Market Place / US Hwy 10 to the south, Portage Street to the north, Union Street to the east, and Third Street to the west. An exacting legal description was not available. Asking price is $475,000. ($2.69 per square foot.)

- Commercial activity takes place to the east, west, and south.
- Neighboring apartments (35 units,) in adjacent vicinity, have a low vacancy rate.
- There are low-rise or freestanding units separating apartment rental units and residential property on Portage Avenue.
- The light industrial zoning is incompatible with the desired future of Center Point, as expressed by the local citizenry.
- Competitive parcels / sales have been offered / executed below the asking price of this property at several alternative locations in Stevens Point.
- It is the opinion of a local appraiser that "big box" retailers are not interested in site.

The "Lyllaby" Site Recommendation
A blend of multi family and limited retail uses with an R-5 zoning is recommended.

- This zoning category is established to provide a mixed use district of high-density living that permits hi-rise housing and allows for a variety of non-residential office types or professional service uses. It is intended that this district will generally be acceptable as a buffer use between lower density residential and commercial industrial uses, and in areas capable of handling heavier traffic volumes. See specific code for permitted and conditional uses,
- Plan a blend of rental units and deeded units should be created with small units of retail as compared to residential. A blend of three to four store rentals with one to one and half story housing units.
- Exercise the above recommendation with the completion of a housing study relative to confirming needs and determining the purchasing power of insurance company personnel. Conduct a feasibility study on the planned improvement.
- The City should negotiate for an option or a first right of refusal on the property.
- After final acquisition of the land, market it to a developer that would be willing to adhere to the development plans as outlined herein.
- Exercise the project to phase with Centerpoint's larger development plans.

.

Wisconsin Public Service (WPS) Site
The legal description for the subject property taken from the appraisal completed by Barnard and Associates reads: Lots 60,61,62 Block 19, and Block 19 and Block 14, S. E.&O Addition, part of Government Lot 1, Section 32, Township 24 Range 8 also vacated improved River Street, owned by Wisconsin Public Service Excluding parts sold in 110/137,112,227 and 121/404, City of Stevens Point, Portage County, Wisconsin.

The parcel size is 2.93 acres (27,631 square feet.) The asking price is $200,000. ($1.56 per square foot.) The appraised value is $235,000 (assumes a 25 percent discount for contamination.) No contaminated site support.

- The property is in an excellent location with waterfront availability.
- The property was a contaminated site and it has been reclaimed to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards.
- It is currently zoned in the B-5 category.

Wisconsin Public Service Site Recommendation
The City should acquire the land and dedicate it as a public park with the transitional hope of locating a cultural arts center there. Further, the public park should be used in conjunction with developing the City-owned parking lot to up-scale residential units.

- Negotiate for a first right of refusal (or a $1.00 option) on the land pending a housing study and a project feasibility study. Previous to the housing study agree to construct a parking ramp to retain the insurance companies work force in the Centerpoint district.
- A deed restriction to prohibit development of the parcel should be executed to provide indemnity to the WPS against any future waste claims.

The "Castle" Property
The following information is based on a verbal report obtained through an on-site interview with the property ownership. The property contains thirteen to fourteen student-type residential units. There are eight off-street parking spaces on the site. Gross income is reported to be approximate $50,000 (net income is approximately $30,000). The asking price is $295,000 (subject to revision to reflect recent improvements).

- The location of the property is at the eastern entrance to Main Street (should the street be reopened to two-way traffic.)
- The historic structure has expansion potential on the third floor.
- Ward Wolf is the assigned selected realtor for the property (extended listing period).

The "Castle" Property Recommendation
If the community desires to make changes to this current use, negotiate for a first right of refusal or make an offer based on the review of financial information and inspection.

- Reserve the right to "assign to a developer" in the agreement documentation.
- Request and review financial information and personal income tax returns relating to the property.
- Evaluate each unit, conduct an analysis of each lease, and have a professional property inspection completed.
- Review (and create if necessary) the available "gap" incentive resources available to a future developer of the site.

Bank Parking Lot (directly across from the "Castle " property)
The consulting team conducted no interviews. The parcel was investigated and, reportedly, the land was acquired specifically for parking purposes.

- The site is improperly zoned.

Bank Parking Lot Recommendation
Attempt to obtain the right of first refusal or an option on the property and combine the site with the future development of the "Castle" property.

Fox Theater
The following information is based on a verbal report obtained through an on-site interview with the property ownership. The property is in compliance with all building codes. It is not for sale. Leasehold interest only is available.

- The property has motivated and willing ownership.
- Ownership is willing to consider a lessee offer and to invest effort to construct a marketing plan to attract a suitable tenant (preferably a movie theater lessee).
- Ownership is willing to participate in leasehold development by abating rent (abatement period subject to negotiation).
- Ownership is willing to consider adjusting rent to accommodate cash flow of Lessee (subject to negotiation).
- Ownership is willing to provide for all mechanicals - upgrades and maintenance.
- Ownership is willing to "brush up" their front elevation to better posture themselves to attract a tenant.
- Ownership is agreeable to restore the marquee, with assistance from the city or PCBC, for mutual benefit.
- Ownership is most genuine and displayed a high degree of pride for their property and Centerpoint.
- Ownership displayed no animosity and was encouraged by the consulting team's effort to engage in dialog. They were appreciative and motivated to respond to consulting team's problem solving recommendations
- The solutions for problem properties usually exist in transaction problems or marketing problems. Regarding transaction problems, the owners expressed abundant flexibility to negotiate with prospective lessees. Regarding marketing problems, owners were eager to revisit current marketing procedures and plans.

Fox Theater Recommendation
Reinforce the good will communicated by the City and PCBC contacts thus far.

- Offer to participate in a marquee maintenance and lighting project.
- Offer to contribute to the efforts to create a marketing plan that identifies prospects and their information needs.

General Practices for Study Recommendations

Regarding offers to purchase -

- Meet the asking price as stated above.
- Set closing date thirty-six months from the date of purchase agreement to allow for development phasing, financing, and marketing efforts.
- Make offer subject to acceptable housing and feasibility studies.
- Rezone property after acquisition to avoid oppositions to change.
- Provide for sellers to retain earnest moneys if sale does not close.
- Provide for assign ability to developer acceptable to City to implement Centerpoint development plans.

Regarding Options to Buy -

- Meet option prices and exercise as above.
- Negotiate three-year terms.
- Rezone after the option is exercised
- Provide for assign ability to acceptable developer as above.

Regarding First Right of Refusals -

- Negotiate for the privilege to meet or match any bona fide offer to purchase, no contingencies (this action provides for less security to the City, however, it typically requires less earnest money).

Corporate Disposal of Property

It was reported to the consulting team that the sale of the Center Point Market Place is in escrow and the closing is pending lien releases. According to representatives of each party, they foresaw no reasons why the sale would not close and transfer ownership.

Strategic Plan Outline

Responsibilities, time lines and costs must be determined in order to complete this outline. Staff and task force members are the obvious technicians to address and complete these details following the determination of the priorities set through the public process currently underway.

Goal: To forge a stronger link between the riverfront and Centerpoint

- **Objective:** Access and signalize Main Street at Water Street.
- **Objective:** The City should acquire the WPS site and dedicate it as a public park
- **Objective:** Expand cultural offerings and establish retail opportunities west of Water Street

Goal: To integrate underdeveloped and vacant sites and Center Point Market Place into Centerpoint

- **Objective:** Re-align Centerpoint Drive to bring vacant industrial sites into Centerpoint
- **Objective:** Consider structural changes to the Center Point Market Place that result in a more compatible look between a suburban-style shopping center and a traditional Centerpoint
- **Objective:** Redevelop parking lots with higher Centerpoint uses

Goal: To encourage a variety of housing opportunities adjacent to Centerpoint

- **Objective:** Respect a five-minute walk radius as a boundary for Centerpoint planning
- **Objective:** Encourage mixed-use development - upper-story residential and street level retail on the "Lyllaby" Site
- **Objective:** Develop the City-owned parking lot (adjacent to the WPS site) for up-scale multi-family residential units
- **Objective:** Construct apartments over current retail establishments
- **Objective:** Construct live-work spaces (Portesi Pizza area)
- **Objective:** Construct row houses (north side of Portesi Pizza area)

Goal: To retain the Centerpoint employee base

- **Objective:** Conduct a Centerpoint employee survey to determine needs, use and perceptions of Centerpoint
- **Objective:** Create a shared structured parking to meet Sentry Insurance, Noel Group, and City-County needs
- **Objective:** Encourage corporate office development as a higher use for vacated surface parking lots
- **Objective:** Create a signature amenity - "Courthouse Square"

Strategic Plan Outline - *continued*

Goal: To undertake traffic changes to facilitate access to Main Street and restore the street grid

- **Objective:** Create full access to Main Street at the east end of Centerpoint
- **Objective:** Establish two-way traffic on Main Street
- **Objective:** Open Main Street at the west end of Centerpoint
- **Objective:** Re-establish the street grid along Third Street

Goal: To encourage beautification of the Centerpoint area

- **Objective:** Remove kiosks and update street furniture and amenities on Main Street
- **Objective:** Install lighting to a pedestrian scale along Main Street (see Clark Street Bridge)
- **Objective:** Restore Market Square
- **Objective:** Create a "public square" at the riverfront and others, large and small, at various locations throughout Centerpoint
- **Objective:** Enhance and or screen the north side of Center Point Market Place.
- **Objective:** Plant Centerpoint Drive to create a "parkway"
- **Objective:** Institute a program of public art throughout Centerpoint
- **Objective:** Enhance street terminations in Centerpoint
- **Objective:** Stepped-up police protection to prevent vandalism and property damage
- **Objective:** Control weeds and graffiti
- **Objective:** Enhance the safety and security of walk-through corridors

Goal: To enhance the use of Centerpoint area public and private parking lots

- **Objective:** Consider structured parking to serve Main Street at the east end of Centerpoint (Shopko parking lot)
- **Objective:** Humanize existing surface parking lots with landscaping
- **Objective:** Establish "streetscape " at parking lot edges

Goal: To encourage the upkeep of the historic character of Centerpoint buildings

- **Objective:** Create additional incentives - low interest loans
- **Objective:** Educate property and business owners as to historic district design guidelines
- **Objective:** Reinforce the thus far communicated good will (by the City and PCBC contacts) with the Fox Theater ownership
- **Objective:** Make an offer, or negotiate for first right of refusal, on the "Castle" property
- **Objective:** Attempt to obtain the right of first refusal, or an option, on the bank parking lot property and combine the site with the future development of the "Castle" property

Closing

Beyond the Scope of Work

The DPN consulting team, in the performance of this study, was made aware of issues outside of the scope of work established for this project. In an effort to save time and frustration on the part of the generous people who took time to provide input to this report, the consulting team recorded the following observations that might serve as a point of reference for local leaders, as well as consultants who might work with Centerpoint in the future.

A need exists to organize a unified, comprehensive marketing plan for Centerpoint. Public relations strategies that include education and advocacy, as well as standard vehicles for marketing and promotion, should be utilized. Main Street merchants (ADB) and Center Point Market Place retailers are the lead players for such an effort. At the appropriate time, other entities and aspects of the community should be drawn in to the process of developing a plan - i.e., tourism, PCBC, the Tavern League, etc.

Care should be taken during the process to acknowledge the similarities and differences of the various retail types in Centerpoint. An experienced facilitator should be enlisted to manage the process in a way that builds consensus. The process should include the identification of Centerpoint's position, an evaluation of current activities, the creation of an annual calendar, and the development of a monitoring system by which a review of the effectiveness of the program can be done periodically.

Another immediate need concerns business mix and active recruitment. Efforts should be taken to fill "gaps" in the market analysis, to match available properties with business concepts, and to develop creative, targeted incentives that will attract desirable businesses. It will be important to carry out the effort keeping in mind that economic sustainability – versus "quick fixes" – is the goal.

Retailers in Centerpoint are smart, enthusiastic, skilled merchandisers. They do, however, appear to be frustrated. There is little faith that their concerns will go beyond discussion. It is hoped that this study will mark the beginning of an ongoing effort to develop a Centerpoint plan that will lead to an economically healthy investment for the City, consumers, businesses and property owners in the near future.