



Little Chute

ESTABLISHED 1848

Downtown Master Plan – September 20th, 2017

“Progressing & Preserving Downtown History”



Acknowledgements –

In order to complete the Downtown Master Plan, a significant amount of effort by village staff and others was utilized. By utilizing all resources and expertise on staff, we were able to develop a strategy that will lead the downtown to a more prosperous, higher value and amenity filled area for residents, business owners and visitors alike. While staff certainly contributed the lion share of the effort, there are many others that have contributed along the way, as they say; it takes a village. In no particular order, we would also like to thank East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, the LC Windmill, Little Chute Business Association, Heart of the Valley Chamber of Commerce, UW River Falls, previous village staff, previous Board/Commission/Committee members and consultants who have assisted in providing the studies that support the findings in this document.

Finally, the 2015-2019 Strategic Plan was the genesis for this effort, as it was identified as a strategic area of focus with key actions directed at economic development. That effort was supported by staff, the Board of Trustees, Jim Resick and the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee.

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James Moes, Community Development Director
Teri Matheny, Finance Director
Jeff Elrick, Director of Public Works
Adam Breest, Director of Parks, Recreation, & Forestry
Chris Murawski, Village Engineer
Erik Misselt, Chief of Police – Fox Valley Metro Police Department
Steve Thiry, Director of Little Chute Library
Laurie Decker, Clerk
Tammy Castonia, GIS Manager
Haley Mader, Administrative Assistant

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Introduction and Overview

Purpose

In the spring of 2017, the Village of Little Chute staff began to prepare a master plan for the Downtown or Central Business District. The purpose of this document is to provide the Village of Little Chute with a detailed guide to facilitate the revitalization of the downtown over the course of the next five years (5). Included in the plan is a set of recommendations that have been developed through collaborative efforts with the Village Board, the residents of Little Chute, business owners, and Village staff.

The recommendations in this document seek to improve the downtown by building upon the existing Old World European façade in the area. This document includes an overview of existing conditions, cultivating the vision, implementation strategies that discuss responsibilities, priorities, and key implementation plans in order for stakeholders to accomplish short-term and long-term investment in the downtown.

This plan is organized into nine key areas that culminate with goals, objectives and actions. These areas include:

- Introduction and Overview
- Master Plan Goals
- Planning Area – Central Business District
- Planning and Context
- Downtown Visioning Workshop
- Current and Future Plans
- Summary of Existing Conditions
- Downtown Master Plan
- Conclusion and Implementation

“The mission of the Downtown Master Plan is to foster the development of a thriving downtown to live, work and visit. “

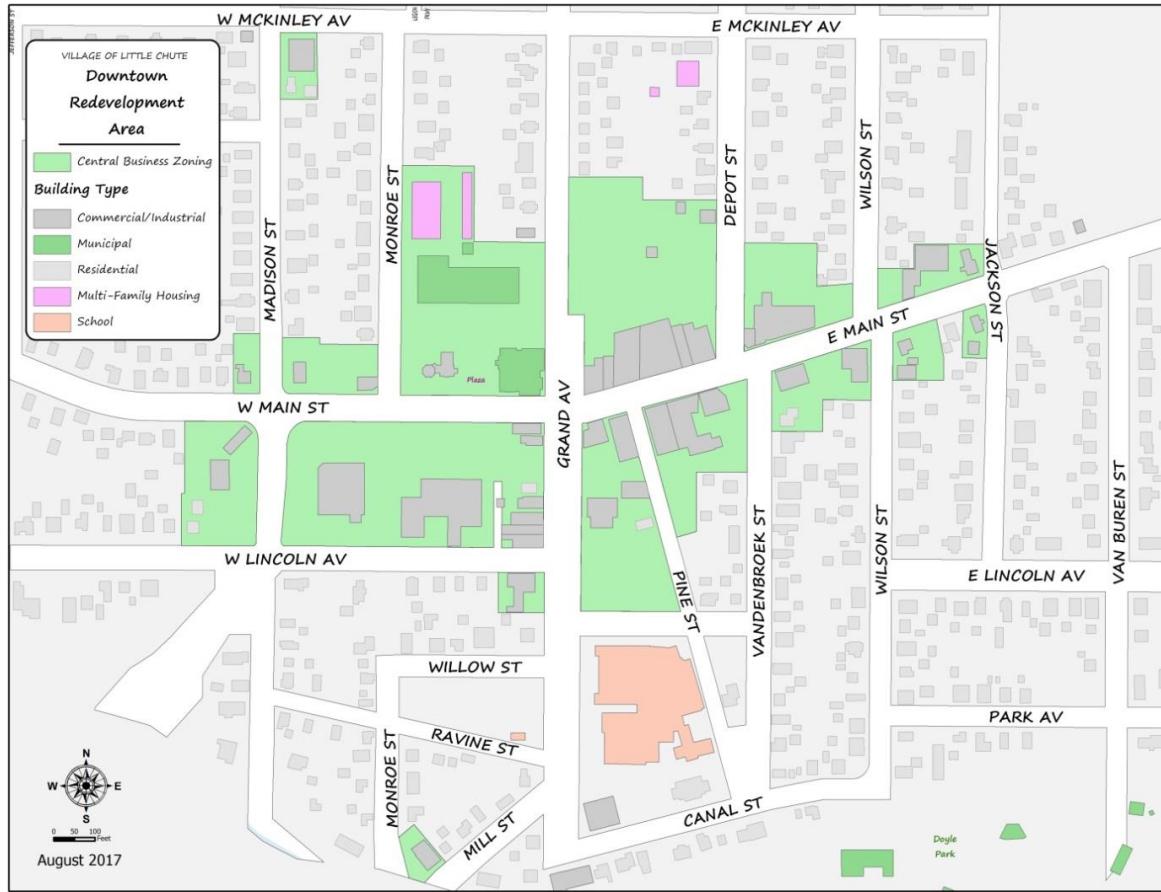
Master Plan Goals

As we set out on this effort, the goal of the master plan was as follows:

1. Engage the public through a multitude of outreach efforts to solicit input on the community's vision for Downtown.
2. Review and refresh polices and plans to preserve and/or enhance the Old World European architecture.
3. Utilize professional direction on traffic and pedestrian mobility; identify traffic flow patterns and pedestrian accessibility opportunities and improvements.
4. Introduce and establish place making opportunities while taking advantage of new or emerging technologies.
5. Assess current businesses and collect data of existing conditions while identifying emerging or potential markets that will complement the current combination of Downtown business and amenities.
6. Identify and implement strategies to retain the current assortment of businesses, attract new business and create a climate that engages the community through placemaking.
7. Presentation of the final Master Plan to the Village Board and public so that recommendations can be made and or updated to reflect a living document and strategy.
8. Through the execution of the plan's recommendations, Downtown Little Chute will become a thriving destination that provides a business environment that is advantageous to residents and visitors of the Village of Little Chute.

Downtown Planning Area- Central Business District

The downtown planning area, also known through municipal code as the Central Business District, is an area of roughly a dozen blocks that provide for high density development with a mix of retail, service and government/civic services. The Central Business District is located on Main Street and Grand Avenue. Sites located within the downtown area will be the primary focus for storefront renovation, increased economic development, and business expansion.



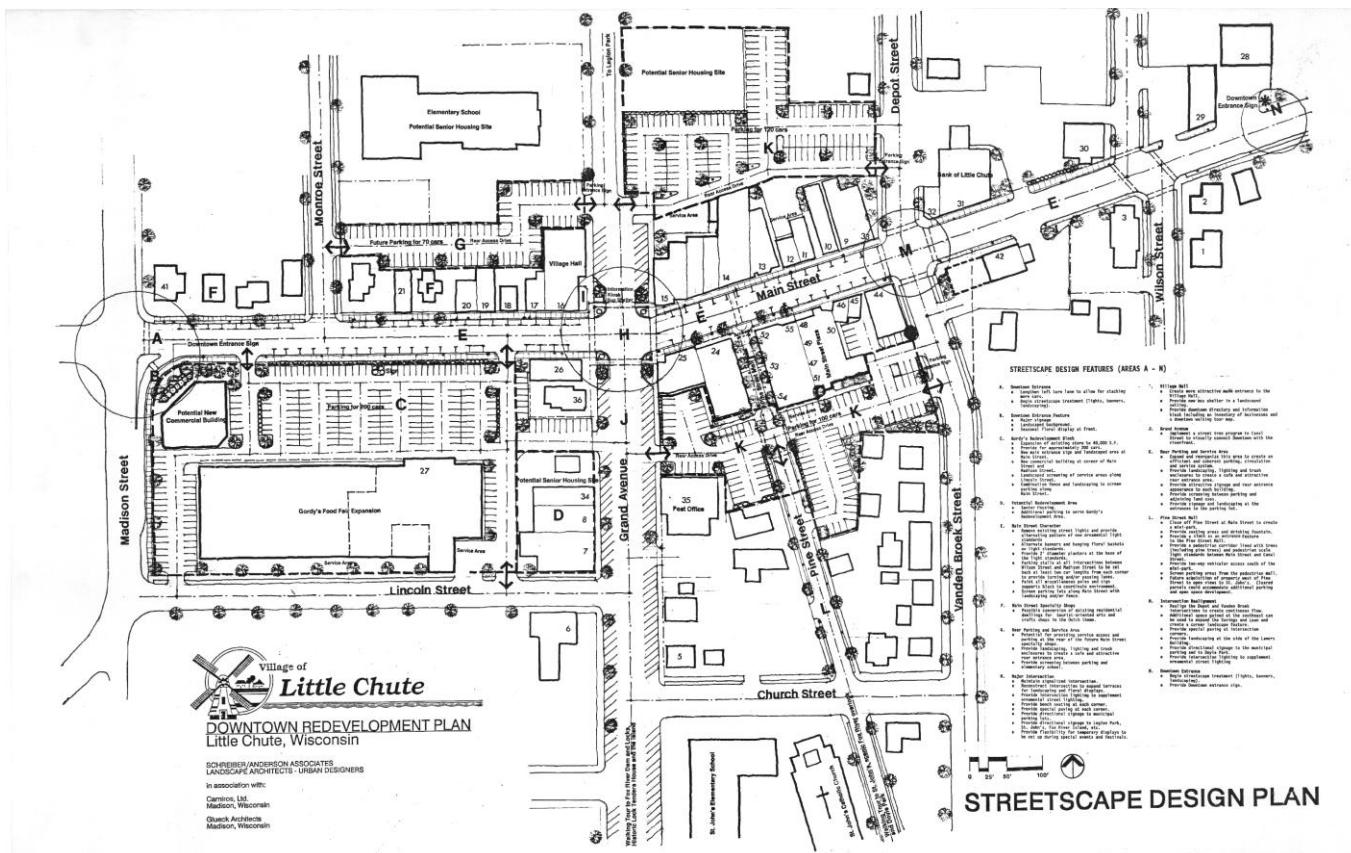
In terms of Village ordinance, the Central Business District is recognized in Section 44-50, as a zoning district. In particular, that portion of code calls for the district to be utilized as *“a centrally located intensely developed core of commercial, service, and governmental uses. It is important that the area develop as a unit offering a convenient and attractive shopping environment. Therefore, permitted uses are limited to those which are compatible, mutually reinforcing, and conducive to common approaches to traffic and pedestrian circulation, parking, and promotion.”* For full ordinance text of Central Business District, please refer to the appendix of this document.

Planning and Context

Downtown History

Downtown Little Chute has historically been recognized for its commitment to its heritage. Traditional historic uses in the downtown include: retail and service related businesses such as a hardware store, hotel, bar, general store, appliance store, gas station, family restaurant, and furniture store.

The most recent formal downtown planning effort was executed in 1988 (a PDF of that efforts master plan is attached in the appendix section of this document). In that effort, there was a focus on increasing public parking and realigning streets. In addition, there was a focus put on increased retail opportunities. With regards to increased public parking and retail, those efforts have seen gains. However, with the change in the general retail market over the past thirty years, those gains have been offset by other closures or departures. Public parking at this time in the Central Business District is adequate due to the gains made since the late 1980's. Given the focus and efforts of the current staff, residents and elected officials, if successful, public parking will have to be reexamined.



Two main areas of the 1988 plan that did not get accomplished and still need attention today are increased senior housing (housing in general) in the Central Business District and the realignment of streets, including signalization. In particular, the realignment of Depot and Vandenbroek Street is a priority, as that has been an issue highlighted by staff for a significant time. In addition, the closure of Pine Street and the extension of Lincoln Avenue to Vandenbroek Street have also exists as key areas that will be addressed.

Finally, a good historical overview of the Central Business District is contained in “A Century of Progress: 1899-1999”. The book was written by a group of passionate residents in commemoration and in celebration of the Village’s centennial, which was celebrated nearly twenty years ago. The book contains a historical overview of the businesses that served the Village of Little Chute, many of whom were located in the Downtown. Today, only a handful remain tenants of the current downtown and include, BLC Community Bank and

“The Downtown Plan will cultivate a business environment that drives community engagement, encourages redevelopment and new investment in an Old World European feel while providing amenities for residents and visitors alike – ultimately providing for increased investments and spending of visitors.”



BLC Community Bank

The Carpenter, Hietpas Realty, Van Lieshout Law Offices, Vanderloop Shoes, and Verkuilen Funeral Home. This text is available for purchase through the Little Chute Historical Society or at the Village Hall.



BLC Community Bank

Downtown Today

Throughout time, the downtown has transformed into a destination that is seeking to increase local employment opportunities, offers a diverse mix of retail and services to residents and visitors alike. Recognizably a sense of community pride is something that the Village is devoted to preserving through the encouragement of residents and employers. As a true symbol of

the deeply rooted Dutch heritage, the Little Chute Windmill was built to represent the village. In an effort to keep the downtown vibrant, the Village will be taking action to rejuvenate the downtown with the Windmill as its centerpiece or main attraction.



Salon Indulgence



Bakers Outlet

The Downtown today has not been immune to changes since the first plan was adopted in the late 1980's. Changes in consumer habits and rapidly changing market trends have led to challenges that are witnessed in economic development across the United States. In general, retail sectors have struggled to keep up with national retail competitors, which have led to various decreases in the number of retail options in the downtown.

As our global economy continues to advance and evolve, e-commerce will continue to exude pressure on current retail operations in existence. Existing downtown retailers cater to niche markets or niche service industries. This is one of the many aspects we will focus on as a primary strategy moving into

the future. It will be the niche markets where we can exert our influence and strategy on in order to see positive outcomes. In addition, with the exception of Seth's Coffee, Jet's Pizza, and Shelley's, dining options are limited in the Downtown.

On August 26th, 2009, the Village Board of Trustees adopted a comprehensive Design Review Manual to assist and guide development in the downtown to preserve, create and promote the unique charm, atmosphere and character of the community. The ultimate goal of that manual is to create and retain the vision of a heritage destination. With the manual, the village laid the necessary



Little Chute Village Hall

groundwork for businesses to play a more integral role in the community through the design of their building facades. The manual explains Old World European architecture, colors and buildings elements that allows developers and property owners to make informed decisions when redeveloping or building new.

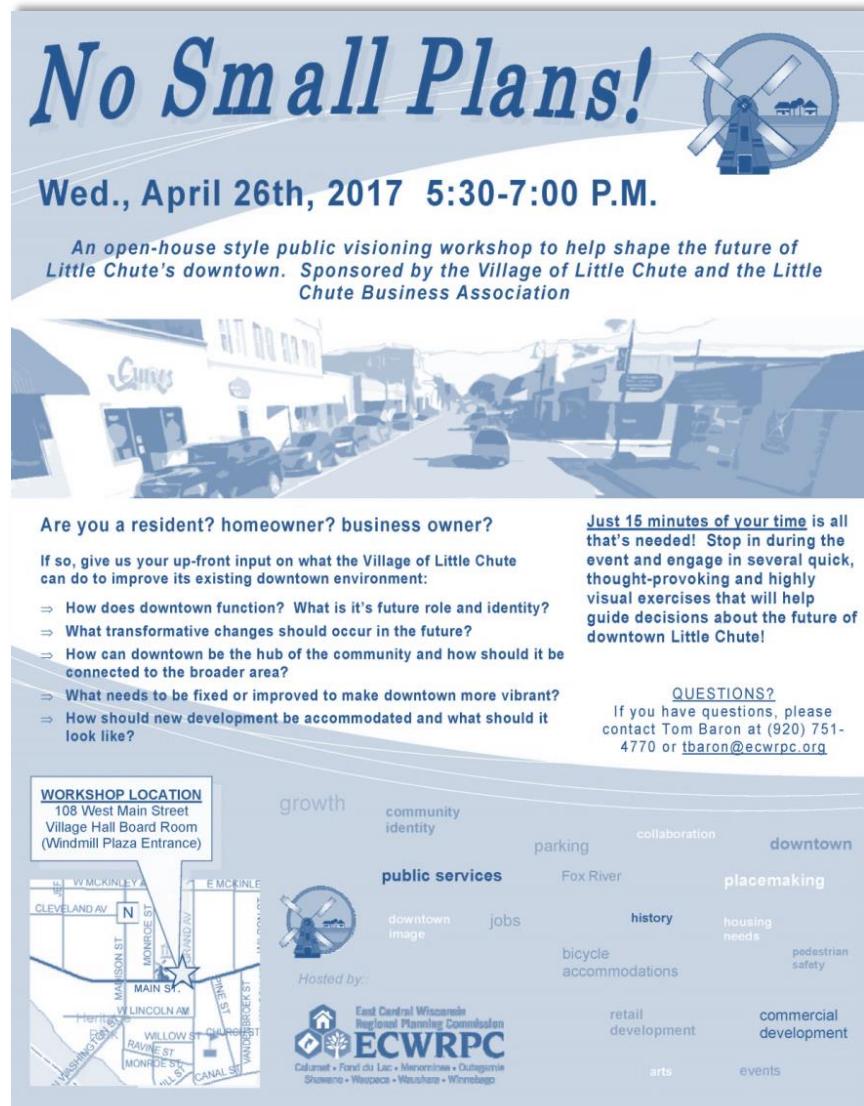
Downtown Public Visioning Workshop

To capitalize on the Downtown's existing assets and become a place for community engagement the Village focused on promotion and organization of the existing businesses Downtown as well as developing strategic economic development goals to expand Downtown conditions. Through these efforts, village staff began working with East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission on the possibility of a contributing to the planning process.

To assist the downtown planning process, a public visioning session was held in late April. The event's goal was to gather input from residents, business owners, and other community stakeholders. Ultimately, this workshop assessed existing conditions in the downtown, gathered new insights, and helped attain a better vision of the downtown from the community.

Visioning Workshop Summary

On April 26, 2017, the Village of Little Chute, through the technical assistance and facilitation of East Central Wisconsin Planning Commission, conducted a visioning session with approximately 30 Little Chute residents, business owners, and other community stakeholders to obtain their thoughts, opinions, and ideas about the Downtown. In all, the participants were asked to participate in eight different exercises all focusing on different element of the downtown. The exercises focused on perceptions, big ideas, housing, business and development and redevelopment opportunities. The complete report can be found here in the appendix of this document.



No Small Plans!

Wed., April 26th, 2017 5:30-7:00 P.M.

An open-house style public visioning workshop to help shape the future of Little Chute's downtown. Sponsored by the Village of Little Chute and the Little Chute Business Association

Are you a resident? homeowner? business owner? If so, give us your up-front input on what the Village of Little Chute can do to improve its existing downtown environment:

- ⇒ How does downtown function? What is it's future role and identity?
- ⇒ What transformative changes should occur in the future?
- ⇒ How can downtown be the hub of the community and how should it be connected to the broader area?
- ⇒ What needs to be fixed or improved to make downtown more vibrant?
- ⇒ How should new development be accommodated and what should it look like?

Just 15 minutes of your time is all that's needed! Stop in during the event and engage in several quick, thought-provoking and highly visual exercises that will help guide decisions about the future of downtown Little Chute!

QUESTIONS?
If you have questions, please contact Tom Baron at (920) 751-4770 or tbaron@ecwRPC.org

WORKSHOP LOCATION
108 West Main Street
Village Hall Board Room
(Windmill Plaza Entrance)

Hosted by:

East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
ECWRPC
Calumet • Fond du Lac • Menominee • Outagamie
Shawano • Winnebago • Winona

growth **community identity** **parking** **collaboration** **downtown**
public services **Fox River** **history** **housing needs** **pedestrian safety**
downtown image **jobs** **bicycle accommodations** **arts** **commercial development**
Hosted by: **East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission**
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Map of Little Chute downtown showing streets: W McKinley St, N McKinley St, Cleveland Av, Monroe St, Main St, W Lincoln Av, Willow St, Ravine St, Monroe St, Hill St, Canal St, E Lincoln Av, E McKinley St, and W Washington St. A star marks the location of the workshop at 108 W Main St.

Based on feedback received by participants, one can make the following assumptions which will serve as a guide in future staff and board discussions:

- Areas for future redevelopment were highlighted in the workshop. These areas seem to indicate a plethora of opportunities for development and redevelopment.
- Areas for future housing, including the type of housing stock most preferred. This could be clarified by conducting an official housing study.

If these improvements are made, the downtown will thrive as a more sustainable place for investment by the private sector or others looking to establish retail and commercial space. It will also be more inviting from a homeowner or residential perspective, which in turn will drive additional interest in commercial services. Finally, moving forward on improvements as suggested by the Visioning Workshop will create a more welcoming experience for visitors and continue to improve upon Little Chute's status as a heritage destination.

Summary of Existing Conditions & Market Analysis

Village Demographics and Economic Analysis

There are many factors which help define a market area and the market potential. These include local and regional traffic connections, the current business mix, opportunities for development or redevelopment, and the demographics of the local and regional area.

Demographic and Economic analysis considers current information about a specific area and trends that may help guide planning. It also gives us the opportunity to compare certain market areas to others which can be a benchmark for understanding competition, or for validating the positives and negatives of a particular area. There are multiple sources of data on demographics. In order to establish baseline data, we present current U.S. Census Bureau data below (source: U.S. Census Bureau Fact Finder data on Little Chute, WI):

• 2010 Total Population	10,449
• 2016 Population Estimate (as of July 1, 2016)	11,250
• Median Age	39.2
• Number of Companies	700
• Educational Attainment: % high school graduate or higher	94.2%
• Total housing units	4,689

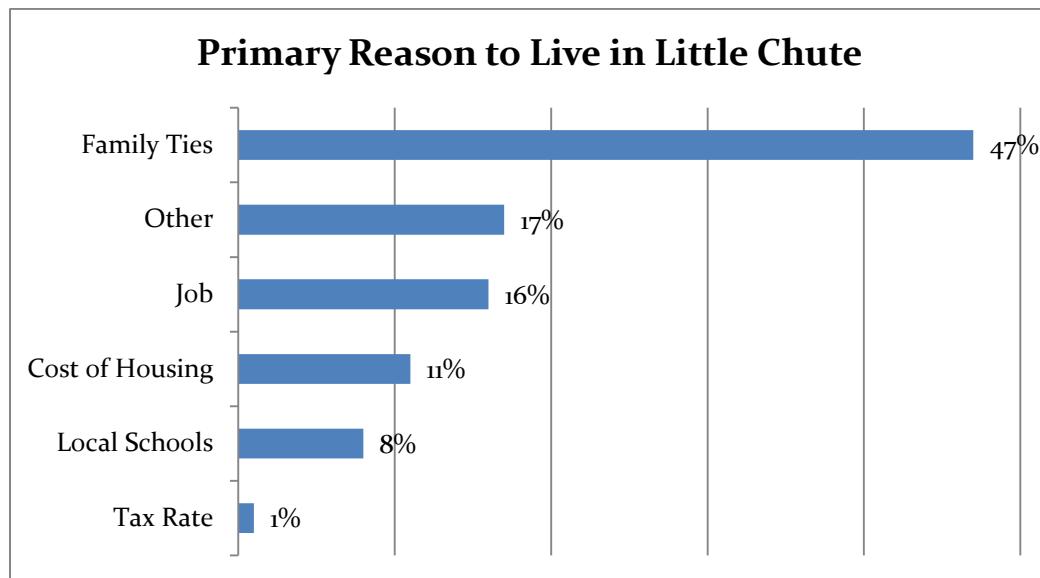
• Median Household Income	\$57,176
• Individuals below poverty level	6.8%
• Veterans	645

2016 Community Survey

In 2016, the Village conducted a community survey through the technical assistance of UW River Falls. The purpose of the survey was to gather resident input for the development of a strategic plan for the Village. About one-thousand surveys were mailed to randomly selected households throughout the Village. The Village received 471 useable responses.

❖ Primary Reason to Live in Little Chute

When respondents were asked why they chose to live in Little Chute, the primary reason was family ties.



❖ Assessing Infrastructure Conditions

Large majorities of respondents rated Village infrastructure and utilities as excellent or good; however, larger percentages of respondents rated them as good compared to excellent. In addition, two-thirds of respondents would support a tax increase if necessary for maintenance of existing roadways, and six in ten would support a tax increase for improvements to existing roadways. About half would support taxes to improve existing sidewalks or to develop separate bike trails. Majorities gave mostly good or excellent ratings to municipal services, particularly fire protection, garbage and recycling collection, police protection, library services, and parks and recreation.

Ratings for snow removal, youth, adult and senior programing, zoning and building inspection, and street and road maintenance were rated slightly lower.

❖ Assessing Village Services

Majorities said they would support a tax increase for improvements to fire protection, street and road maintenance, snow removal, park and recreation facilities, and police protection. About half of respondents agree that the Village should expend funds on an outdoor pool or aquatic center but only a third support funds for a community center. Only multi-use trails were rated as a high priority or medium priority by more than half.

❖ Fees and Taxes

Respondents favored either a combination of fees and taxes or fees for specific uses to finance recreational facilities they support. Large majorities agreed or strongly agreed that Little Chute has a strong sense of community, that community events build a sense of community, that volunteerism enhances a sense of community, and that Little Chute will be able to maintain its sense of community if growth continues.

❖ Focusing on Economic Development

The highest priority for focusing economic development efforts is for the downtown area, followed by retail development at the I-41/CTH N interchange (Chart 10). Smaller majorities also agreed or strongly agreed with a focus on industrial park areas and the Foxdale Plaza area. Very few respondents said there is too much industrial or light industrial development, office development, restaurants, or retail development in Little Chute. Additional retail development is favored by nearly three-fourths of respondents. Family restaurants are the top priority for additional retail businesses, followed by discount department stores, health and personal care and grocery stores. Entertainment establishments and elderly care are the top priority for additional service businesses.

❖ Village Communication

A majority who has used the Village's website find it useful. Over six in ten said they receive the seasonal Village newsletter. Only about a third use autopay for payments to the Village. Relatively few subscribe to E-Notify or follow the Village on social media.

2016 Downtown Survey

In addition to the community survey, in the summer of 2016 Village staff conducted an informal downtown survey of existing business owners. The survey was sent out to business owners within the downtown planning area and while only six survey responses were received back by village staff, it did provide a baseline of data for downtown specific businesses. One thing that stood out was the longevity of some of the responding businesses. In some cases, ownership and operation exceeded 30 or 40 years and that was the majority. This type of commitment is noteworthy. In addition to that, the six respondents all owned their building and two thirds of respondents were considering building improvements (expansions, façade update and general maintenance).

In terms of items that seem to be working well based upon the respondents, the available free public parking is greatly utilized by customers. In some cases, customers do utilize private lots. In addition, average foot traffic per store exceeded 500 customers weekly and those customers were traveling from all over the Fox Valley, not just Little Chute. Businesses also reported finding increased sales as a result of community (village sponsored) events like the former Kermis festival, the Great Wisconsin Cheese Festival and the former sidewalk sales.

On the challenges front, respondents indicated that the downtown look and feel did not contribute or benefit to their business. There were comments made in voluntary form that indicated greater access to village sponsored financial programs, loans or grants would be warmly received and benefit their business.

Finally, business owners would most like to see retail (gift shop, technology, clothing, jewelry, sporting goods), restaurant or brewery, and an office building with a number of professional employment opportunities. It was indicated that the Windmill does complement their business, though the direct results have not been pressing or overly evident.

Existing Business Mix

Currently downtown is home to over 40 businesses that range from retail to restaurants and municipal buildings. This mix of existing business is what helps downtown thrive.

Consumer Based Niches:

- Arts and Entertainment: As one of the leading downtown visitor sites, the Windmill and adjoining Windmill Plaza hosts a variety of events annually.
- Retail: The downtown offers an array of retail options with antiques, gift shops, and pharmacy.
- Restaurants/Coffee Shop/Bakery: Seth's Coffee and Simple Simon Bakery are mainstays in this category with the emergence of other outlets.
- Services: Numerous law, accountants, optical, and dental operations.
- Bars and Taverns: Numerous establishments in the traditional sense of taverns.
- Health/Wellness: Curves and Salon Indulgence are major drivers in this category.
- Dining: Downtown Little Chute has few options for formal and informal dining.

Unique to the downtown, is the fully functioning and operational Dutch Windmill. Housed within the Little Chute Windmill is Little Chute historical society. The Windmill offers tours as well as opportunities to shop at the gift shop.

Downtown Anchors

Another important indicator of a healthy downtown is the types of anchor businesses it has. Anchor businesses are typically thought of as businesses with services that provide basic service needs to customers while filling an important role within the community. Key anchors in Downtown Little Chute are important the wellbeing of the downtown and continue to promote a better community. Recognized business anchors include:

- Seth's Coffee
- BLC Community Bank
- Vanderloop Shoes
- The Little Chute Windmill
- Gerard H. Van Hoof Memorial Library

These businesses represent a wide variety of uses, including municipal, room rental, entertainment, financial services, and retailers. Having such a diverse business mix downtown that delivers a variety services is one of many aspects that continues to draw an assortment of people to the downtown. Although some of this traffic is from visitors and tourism, most of these businesses drive every day, local traffic in and out of the downtown.

Current Approved Plans and Policy

The documents below represent guiding documents, some optional and others required, utilized to guide efforts in the village. Others have been adopted to preserve and incentivize an Old World European design. This effort has developed by utilizing the existing policy and plans currently used by the Village including the following:

- ❖ Strategic Plan, 2015-2019

The Strategic Plan was created in an engaged fashion in 2014 utilizing a community based advisory committee. The strategy created a vision, mission and strategic areas of focus. Each area of focus contains initiatives that are aimed at achieving efficiencies or effectiveness within the key areas of focus.

- ❖ Comprehensive Plan, 2016-2036

A comprehensive plan is a local government's guide to community physical, social, and economic development. Comprehensive plans are not meant to serve as land use regulations in themselves; instead, they provide a rational basis for local land use decisions with a twenty-year vision for future planning and community decisions.

- ❖ Little Chute Design Manual, 2009

One aspect that makes Little Chute unique is the Dutch heritage that is present. Over the years, retaining the Old World European style has continued to be a challenge for the Village. The purpose of the design manual is to preserve, create, and promote the unique charm, atmosphere, quaint, and romantic charter, natural beauty and historical aspects of the community.

The Village will assist residents, businesses and developers with a review of design permit applications. Applications submitting a site plan in a design review district for a new development can submit their Old World Europeans Architecture plan concurrent to prior to village staff review of the site plan.

In order to preserve the Old World European style, the Village offers a façade improvement program to business owners. Interested downtown business owners pay for half of the renovations, while the Village will finance the remainder of the renovation.

- ❖ Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

The plan serves as a guide for the future acquisition and improvement of parks, open space, and outdoor recreation facilities in Little Chute. The plan also supports the guidelines established in the Village of Little Chute Comprehensive Plan.

❖ Bike Pedestrian Plan

The Bike and Pedestrian Plan is a supplemental document to the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. The goal of the plan to promote bicycling and pedestrian facilities throughout the Village by promoting the development of trails, pursuing opportunities to link existing parks, future parks, the downtown, and public facilities by a Village and County wide trail network, and promote the use of bicycle and pedestrian facilities into planning of all Village projects where appropriate.

Streetscape and Open Space

Space and place-making – Programming, Special Events and Amenities

One of the major efforts of this plan is to create more community centered events in the downtown. Utilization of the Windmill Plaza would be a primary goal. The goal of these events would be to attract people to the downtown and local businesses. This effort would also cater to bring in non-residents that may not visit the downtown on a regular basis. Some of these events include the following.

- Village Market
- Weekly music on the plaza
- Downtown Wine Walk
- Ice sculpting along Main Street
- Community Events on the Plaza- Party on the Plaza, Library Events, Community Band Concerts, and Movies on the Plaza
- Christmas Tree Sales
- Winter Community Event
- Ice skating on the Plaza
- Amazing Race
- Craft Fair on the Plaza



View of Windmill Plaza during a Village Market - Summer 2017

Park Improvements

The downtown has little to no park amenity other than Windmill Plaza. One goal of this plan would be to explore in the future what the role of park amenities in the downtown could look like. This could range from community gardens, gardens, small park areas, increased areas for passive/active recreation and more robust options. In staff discussion and recommendations, the idea of a small splash pad in the downtown surfaced. These

all must be explored in order for the village to deliver on business, resident and visitor expectations.

Another area that has received considerable thought and conversation is Doyle Park. Doyle Park Improvements could include boat launches, boat trailer parking, pool remodel, trail connection to Mill Street Bridge, and potential boat slips on the canal. Some of these items are categorized in the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. The effort moving forward will be to prioritize these amenities and explore funding sources.

Place Making

While this effort is new in Little Chute, it is an effort that communities across the state and country are executing. Primarily, placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public space. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being. Placemaking is both a process and a philosophy.

In order to best accommodate this process and philosophy for the village moving forward, it will be a staff recommendation that the Design Review Board, through the direction and authority of the Village Board of Trustees, commission a working group of members, village staff and other interested business owners and residents to advise staff and the Board of Trustees on placemaking. This group will explore and identify areas for development of this effort in addition to acquiring additional pedestrian and transportation related amenities.

Connecting the Downtown to the Fox River and its Future Uses

Staff recommends executing a signage or wayfinding program to better highlight location of space to and away from the downtown. This effort will allow visitors to better navigate to and from the downtown.

Traffic Flow

The Downtown is benefited by having State Highway 96 intersect east and west through the entirety of the district. Also known as Main Street, this two lane road carries just fewer than 9,000 vehicles per day according to a Wisconsin Department of Transportation count in 2016. In 2010, that same count was at less than 8,000 vehicles per day. This would seem to suggest that traffic counts in Little Chute are increasing, which will only serve to enhance viability of downtown development in the future.

On the western edge of the district, the Downtown is also provided access to County Highway N, otherwise known as Madison Street. According to recent counts in 2016, this

roadway carried 14,500 vehicles per day south of State Highway 96 and 7,800 vehicles per day north of State Highway 96. With Walgreens on the southeast side of the 96/CTH N intersection and Moto Mart on the southwest side of the 96/CTH N intersection, one could reasonably assume that with continued increases in traffic counts, development will continue to be an area of focus in this area (the source for the aforementioned traffic counts can be found at <https://trust.dot.state.wi.us/roadrunner/>)

Public Parking-Parking lots

The 1988 Downtown Plan focused on creating public parking opportunities in the Downtown. These stalls exist on Main Street and intersecting cross streets, in addition to a robust collection of large public parking lots meant to serve the downtown businesses. In total, there are an estimated 300 public parking spots in the downtown, which includes street parking and public lots.



Current Central Business District

Pedestrian & Multimodal Improvements

❖ Bike Lanes - Finishing Wisconsin Avenue Connection

Currently, Wisconsin Ave has a dedicated bike lane that begins on the western edge of the Village and continues until Washington Street. The bike lane then picks up again at Franklin Street and continues until the eastern edge of the Village. The Bike and Pedestrian plan calls for a signed bike route through downtown to complete this bike route. A combination of signs and shared bike lane markings will be installed between Washington St and Franklin St.

❖ Bike Lanes - Madison Street/Hwy N Bike Lane

To connect Kimberly and CTH oo to the downtown, the bike and pedestrian plan calls for a dedicated bike lane/multi-use path from the county highway N bridge north to county highwayoo. The plan is to connect the downtown with the River/Canal. This will be accomplished through adding bike routes to Doyle Park and the Heritage Parkway Trail.

❖ River/Canal Connections

Connecting the downtown to the river means more than just bikes and cars. The Village plans to install a Kayak Launch at Heesakker Park to allow for river traffic to connect with the downtown. There is also a small dock located by the Mill Street Bridge. The Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan also calls for a boat launch at Doyle Park.

❖ Fox River Boardwalk

The Village of Little Chute and City of Kaukauna are working towards a bike and pedestrian boardwalk that would begin at Heesakker Park and connect to the City of Kaukauna's downtown district. This boardwalk will complete a 14 mile trail loop from the City of Appleton to the City of Kaukauna and back. By having this connection, users would stop in Little Chute to visit the downtown businesses. This would create a destination amenity that would bring non-residents to the Village of Little Chute.

Downtown Master Plan

This section outlines the financial, organizational and design elements of the Downtown Plan. It lays out key initiatives and actions that should be implemented to improve the long-term vitality and economic efficiency of the downtown.

As previously noted, Downtown Little Chute has historically been recognized as the center for retail and entertainment for the community. The future vision for the area is to build upon that historical recognition while building on and increasing the offerings for a diverse blend of activities to develop Main Street and to stimulate new business development.

Summary of Major Components

Much like other planning documents for the village, this plan will center on a core group of primary initiatives. Under each core initiative will be a set of goals with aligned actions. Theoretically, if the village were to execute on all the aligned actions, we would achieve the goals, initiatives and vision of this document. The four primary strategic initiatives include business development, enhancing the old world European look, creating a welcoming space and connecting the Downtown to the Fox River.

While the primary initiatives listed below are broad based efforts, the true work and heavy lifting of the plan can be found in goal and action areas. While these are the specific actions that will lead to progress in the Downtown, one action or set of actions on their own will not lead to sustained success. It is imperative that over the next decade, village leaders adhere to as many of the efforts as financially and operationally viable. Focusing on the total effort will provide for the greatest chance for success for the Downtown and village in general.

Finally, the initiatives, goals and actions are outlined below and attached in a more detailed plan (see the outline provided in the appendix area). The attached details will indicate preliminary budget estimates, suggested timelines and additional details on the efforts outlined below. In actual implementation, it will be the responsibility of the staff and board to ensure that the efforts match current and ever-changing socioeconomic conditions.

Strategic Initiative 1: Retain, Expand and Recruit Businesses to the Downtown

Goal 1: Maintain and grow existing mix of businesses in the downtown.

- Action 1: Continue to work with existing businesses to identify target clusters or complimentary business (initially start with the business that was studied through UW Oshkosh and other retail ventures).
- Action 2: Create grants to attract identified targeted businesses through a future planning process.
- Action 3: Identify properties for redevelopment by utilizing the resources in this document and work with stakeholders to realize the best use to increase the amount of commercial space in the Central Business District.
- Action 4: Identify opportunities for creating an environment that welcomes entrepreneurs through the creation of incubator spaces.

Goal 2: Increase the population of the Downtown (including daytime population).

- Action 1: Complete a senior housing project(s) in the Central Business District.
- Action 2: Identify sites in the Central Business District for housing development and/or redevelopment opportunities and work with stakeholders to execute.
- Action 3: Identify sites in the Central Business District for corporate style offices.
- Action 4: Recruit developers to partner with the village on increasing the housing stock and corporate office atmosphere within the Central Business District.

Goal 3: Expand village efforts to increase foot traffic to the downtown through programming and economic development support to the downtown.

- Action 1: Continue to invest and increase funding to efforts like the Village Market, plaza activities (Community Band, Movie Night) and other recreation opportunities in the downtown (programming).
- Action 2: Identify future sites and invest in the development for passive and active recreation in the Central Business District.

Strategic Initiative 2: Enhance the Old World European Façade and General Atmosphere

Goal 1: Review the current programs offered by the Village of Little Chute to incentivize façade and other redevelopment efforts.

- Action 1: Amend the current façade program terms to create more interest in program participation (increase village financial participation).
- Action 2: Create grant opportunities for renderings to be completed for businesses that are locating or located in the downtown.

Goal 2: Create new programs to enhance the Old World European Façade

- Action 1: Create grant opportunities for existing or committed businesses to upgrade to signage for their business as directed by the Design Review Board.
- Action 2: Work with a design professional to conduct a draft façade plan for the entire Central Business District

Strategic Initiative 3: Create a welcoming environment to attract visitors, consumers and new residents

Goal 1: Enhance the Village of Little Chute as a destination

- Action 1: Engage the community in programming and space making through direct investment.
- Action 2: Develop itineraries in multiple mediums to better engage visitors (walking, biking and other tours).
- Action 3: Engage in strategic social media and marketing of the businesses, events and Little Chute Windmill.
- Action 4: Explore free public WIFI technology as an amenity.
- Action 5: As activities increase, current parking facilities will be over utilized. Expand public parking behind the Civic Center and in other areas around the downtown.

Goal 2: Focus on place-making

- Action 1: Through the Design Review Board, enact a placemaking effort in the Central Business District.
- Action 2: Create a trail network that provides itineraries similar to other communities.
- Action 3: Find public space for seating, outdoor cafes, public art, striping of crosswalks and pedestrian havens, community gardens and murals.

Goal 3: Accessibility for pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicular traffic

- Action 1: Finalize the realignment of streets from the 1988 Downtown Plan (Depot/Vandenbroek and Pine Street)
- Action 2: Create additional public parking lots to maximize access to the Downtown attractions.
- Action 3: Finalize other realignment efforts from the 1988 Downtown Plan.

Strategic Initiative 4: Connect the Downtown to the Fox River

Goal 1: Create visuals that connect the river to the Downtown

- Action 1: Acquire properties that allow pedestrians and visitors to recognize and/or view the Fox River visually and physically.
- Action 2: Utilize wayfinding to illustrate access from the Central Business District.

Goal 2: Create greater connections

- Action 1: Through the use of Pine Street, create a more direct route from Main Street to Doyle Park
- Action 2: Explore alternative means of transportation for visitors like bike share or other amenities.
- Action 3: Create a local and interpretive trail for visitors through the Heritage Park Trail and other areas of Little Chute.
- Action 4: Work with external partners to create water connections off of the canal system to the downtown.

Goal 3: Enhance amenities between the River and the Downtown

- Action 1: Connect Mill Street to Doyle Park through a pedestrian walk or trail.
- Action 2: Plan and initiate a redevelopment of Doyle park to be more a year round destination.

Conclusion and Implementation –

The implementation strategies outlined in the Table of Actions (provided in the appendix) will provide the downtown with timeline specific implementation recommendations. All recommendations could have budget or other financial impact, so the ability to effectively implement initiatives will be based upon planning, capabilities, and corresponding resources.

It is important to recognize that this is a living document, meaning there is nothing set in stone and nothing that commits the Village of Little Chute to the items related herein, this effort is a planning process, document, and guide. All actions outlined in the table of actions will require additional staff time and further Board action. The adoption of this plan is simply agreeing on the overall vision, goals and likely actions. Individual action items will need to be brought back for Board consideration individually and authorized.

The heavy lifting for the Downtown Master Plan begins now for the Village of Little Chute. At this point, the plan has not accomplished any action item and without further support, efforts and resources, we will see limited progress. However, should we commit ourselves to the effort, vigorously discussing and debating future actions and eventually providing the much needed resources, the Village of Little Chute's Downtown will begin to see gains in the economic vitality of the downtown. In addition, residents and visitors will recognize gradual changes in amenities and opportunities.

We welcome your feedback, critiques, challenges and time. Should something in this document particularly resonate with you, we would like to hear from you. If you are interested in discussing business opportunities or identifying development options, please contact village staff.

In conclusion, we thank you for your time, efforts and passion. We look forward to executing the actions outlined discussed herein so that in five years, we have made enough progress to establish a new crop of goals and have the ability to enhance and progress our mission and vision for Downtown Little Chute.

Appendix

1. [2017 Downtown Visioning Results](#)
2. [Village of Little Chute Comprehensive Plan - 2016-2036](#)
3. [Village of Little Chute Strategic Plan 2015-2019](#)
4. [Village of Little Chute Design Review Manual - Approved 2009](#)
5. [Village of Little Chute Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan - Adopted 2016](#)
6. [Bike and Pedestrian Plan](#)
7. [1988 Downtown Plan](#)
8. [Current Map of the Central Business District](#)
9. [Central Business District Municipal Code Section](#)
10. [ESRI GIS Data from 2015](#)
11. [First Impressions Report - 2009](#)
12. [2010 Downtown Traffic Study](#)
13. [DRAFT: Table of Actions to be implemented](#)