

→ Site Reuse Design

Ferguson Properties Reuse

Richland Center, Wisconsin

12/2023

Prepared by ICF via
EPA Brownfields
Technical Assistance



Regionally-Directed Technical Assistance

This project was performed through regionally-directed technical assistance provided by ICF and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 5 through the EPA Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization (OBLR) Program.

The project was supported by the dedicated staff of the City of Richland Center, Wisconsin. Successful brownfields reuse and redevelopment often depends on early consideration of the range of potential future uses and existing constraints for each brownfield site. Local community priorities, market conditions, infrastructure availability, environmental contamination, public health issues, and local ordinances shape brownfield site reuse opportunities. Having this site reuse plan grounded in these local conditions will directly influence how that site is characterized, assessed, and cleaned up.

TA Recipient

City of Richland Center, Wisconsin



Site Address(es):

Ferguson Property, 3 N Orange St.,
City of Richland Center
Parcels 276-2100-2810, -2830, -2860, -
2871, -2872, -2880, -0520, and -0570

Previous EPA Grants:

FY03 Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund
Grant

DISCLAIMER

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Introduction and Scope

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Brownfield and Land Revitalization (OBLR) and EPA Region 5 provided technical assistance to the City of Richland Center to support the site reuse and revitalization planning for the Ferguson properties and adjacent city-owned parcel ("the site") located in Richland Center, Wisconsin.

The site consists of eight parcels in the core of downtown Richland Center. The parcels on the west block, called the Ferguson properties, were previously used as a diesel car sales lot and as a printing press. Previous notification of contamination was submitted for fuel discharge into the soil on two parcels but was qualified for a No Further Action in 1993. Previous environmental assessments on N Orange Street identified contaminants generally within the corridor, but not specifically on the Ferguson properties.

This site reuse planning effort evaluates reuse options identified by the community and past market analysis work completed under a previous technical assistance project. The plan includes a brief overview of the market analysis work and environmental conditions and the surrounding planning context of the site. The plan also presents two site alternatives, and a preferred alternative, for a hotel and mixed-use development on the Ferguson properties.

Executive Summary

Following previous technical assistance, Richland Center is exploring redevelopment opportunities for the Ferguson properties, a collection of seven parcels near downtown Richland Center, and an adjacent city-owned parcel. Previous technical assistance and recent stakeholder engagement have identified the following three design priorities for the site.

Hotel as an Anchor Use:

Richland Center has a shortage of hotel rooms and is currently at capacity. A new hotel will provide much needed rooms for business travelers and visitors and support new developments, business, and conference uses in the City.

Additional Commercial Spaces and Housing:

Richland Center has similarly expressed a shortage in housing and commercial space for small businesses. Prior investment in a new downtown restaurant was successful and the City would like to replicate that success to create a strong downtown for visitors and residents. The City is also looking to provide more housing in anticipation of a planned hospital development which will bring in new residents and visitors.

N Jefferson Street Partial Closure:

The Tourism Office has recently been hosting a farmer's market with great success. The event is now outgrowing the available space. Richland Center is looking to create additional open space to support a variety of community events and day uses in the downtown. N Jefferson Street, which is not heavily used, will be partially closed to create a prime, flexible public space in the downtown.

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1 Project Background

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Richland Center, Wisconsin is the county seat of Richland County and is located on Highway 14 between Madison and LaCrosse. In 2020 the population was 5,114.

While the Downtown Historic District offers unique shopping and business opportunities, Richland Center continues to look for opportunities for further economic development. Multiple planning efforts, including the Comprehensive Plan for Richland Center 2022–2032, identified the need for Richland Center to attract visitors and young people through restoring vitality to the downtown and creating an active area for residents and visitors to live, work, and play. Already, a 70-acre plot has been acquired for a new hospital construction south of downtown Richland Center and is expected to drive local demand for goods and services through an influx of workers and visitors.



Figure 1: Ferguson properties (unshaded) and adjacent City parcel (shaded in red) included in this analysis.

However, there are a slew of brownfield sites that have been difficult to redevelop along Orange Street (Highway 14), including the Ferguson properties that sit at a key intersection at W Court Street. The City requested assistance to conduct a site reuse design for the Ferguson properties and an adjacent city-owned parcel (**Figure 1**), and suggestions for public realm strategies that would enhance the development potential for surrounding downtown brownfield parcels. These sites are considered priorities for stimulating activity and momentum for brownfields redevelopment across the City.

In early 2023, the EPA provided technical assistance to Richland Center¹ to conduct a market analysis for the Ferguson properties to understand the viability of potential reuse options proposed by the community. The market analysis vetted uses in the context of local spending power, retail business trends, and visitor activity as well as real estate market dynamics. The market analysis work identified a hotel as a much needed and viable option for the Ferguson properties, and additional uses such as mixed-use retail and affordable housing were also identified as feasible options for the site.

1.1 Site Context

The target site for this study is situated at the edge of Richland Center's downtown core within the Downtown Planning Area, as identified in the 2013 Downtown Revitalization Plan. The site is bound by N Orange Street to the west, W Mill Street to the north,

and W Court Street to the south. The eastern boundary extends across Jefferson Street to include another parcel under private ownership and a city-owned parking lot. Overall, the project consists of 7 parcels across two blocks privately owned by Larry Ferguson and one publicly-owned parcel. The northwest corner parcel within the western block is currently not considered for this study.

Given its central location in downtown Richland Center, the City considers the properties as a key site for economic development. Historically, downtown Richland Center was the commercial core of the community. However, a revitalization plan focused on the downtown core identified the decline of economic vitality to be in part due to conflicting land uses, loss of businesses, aging and obsolete buildings, and a general lack of pedestrian amenities². Furthermore, larger retailers and new development just outside of downtown Richland Center have drawn away customers.

In recent years, growth has been coming back to Richland Center. A new hospital is slated for development just south of Richland Center, which is expected to increase population and employment. A Kwik Trip gas station was recently constructed directly south of the Ferguson properties, providing convenient access to groceries and other daily needs for residents. Interviews with local stakeholders also revealed an appetite for new commercial and retail spaces downtown. The Ferguson properties provide an opportunity to supplement and support recent and upcoming development and needs in the City.

¹ Market Analysis for the Ferguson Site. ICF 2023.

² Downtown Revitalization Plan, March 2013. MSA Professional Services.

1.2 Previous Planning Efforts

The Downtown Revitalization Plan was completed in March 2013 and outlines several key recommendations for economic development in the central business district of Richland Center and highlights the Ferguson site as a potential for catalytic redevelopment and proposed commercial, residential, and open space development on the site. The downtown plan served as important context for the site plans developed as part of this technical assistance.

Additionally, Richland Center finalized the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan in 2016 to direct community development of trails, parks, and open spaces. The plan highlights some of the important aspects that impact the site plan of the Ferguson site, including the lack of downtown gathering spaces, connections to trails, and pedestrian connectivity.

1.3 Zoning and Parking

The site covers two zoning districts across two blocks. The western block along Highway 14 is zoned as General Business (C-G), which allows for various commercial uses, including retail and service businesses. A hotel is an allowable use under the C-G zone, provided that the unit size is less than 600 square feet per unit.

The two eastern parcels are included in the Central Downtown District (C-DT), which also allows for several commercial business types. Importantly, the C-DT zone allows for residential uses but restricts these uses to upper stories to follow the pattern of downtown mixed-use buildings.



Figure 2 Downtown Revitalization Plan and Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

General parking requirements for C-G zones require one parking space per hotel room, and additional parking for staff. Commercial and retail parking requirements average about one space per 150–200 square feet of use. Parking spaces have an additional 10-foot by 20-foot minimum size requirement on the County level. Such parking requirements will limit the amount of development on a large portion of the site. The parcels within C-DT zones have parking requirements waived. Given the site's close proximity to C-DT zones and the downtown, Richland Center has expressed that parking requirements can be alleviated through zoning mechanisms and that a full feasible build out of the site should be studied and supported by a modest and reasonable parking arrangement.

1.4 Connectivity

The site is surrounded by several access points: Highway 14 that connects north and south through Richland Center and W Court Street, which is the main arterial downtown. The site has existing sidewalk coverage on all sides for pedestrian access, with access continuing into downtown to the east and other community and commercial uses to the west.

The site is walkable to the Pine River Trail which runs approximately 6 miles through town and includes five canoe ports and five fishing platforms. The Trail is designed for pedestrian and bike access and connects downtown to the popular Krouskop Park to the north that provides recreational access, swimming pools, and other amenities.

1.5 Environmental Conditions

Prior to its present use, the Ferguson site was formerly used as a diesel truck sales lot (Port Truck Sales) and a printing press. Previous Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) were conducted generally on the Orange Street Corridor between 1st Street and Seminary Street but were not focused directly on the Ferguson site. The previous ESAs identified some Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs) within the corridor generally, including volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and heavy metals. The Ferguson site specifically has a documented prior discharge of fuel oil into the soil related to the Port Truck Sales business, and subsequently qualified for No Further Action by the State of Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources in 1993. The

Ferguson properties and the adjacent city-owned parcel across Jefferson Street are ready and available for redevelopment.

1.6 Market Analysis Summary

In early 2023, OBLR and Region 5 provided technical assistance to Richland Center to complete a market analysis³ of the Ferguson properties to guide reuse decisions. The analysis focused on market trends to understand current and future demand, labor and demographic information, and an assessment of the real estate market. As noted in both the Comprehensive Plan for Richland Center⁴ and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy⁵, the economy of both Richland Center and Richland County is rooted in agriculture and manufacturing, with the region experiencing concentrated activity in forestry, fishing, and hunting when compared to the rest of the state. Other top industries of employment for Richland Center include educational services, health care and social assistance, and retail trade.

Richland Center (population 5,114) and Richland County (population 17,304) both experienced an aging and slightly declining population between 2010 and 2020. However, this decline does not reflect surges in temporary migrant workers that support seasonal farm work and increased demand on housing, goods, and services. While predominantly White, Richland Center saw a 200% increase in its Latinx population between 2010 and 2020. Median income in Richland Center is 20% less than in the County, however employment is stable in key industries such as educational services, health care and social assistance, manufacturing, and retail trade. Increasing rental prices coupled with relatively stagnant vacancy rates and retail square footage over the past five years suggest a retail real estate market with

³ Market Analysis for the Ferguson Site. ICF 2023.

⁴ Comprehensive Plan for Richland Center, Wisconsin 2022-2023. Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

⁵ Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2014-2019. Published April 2014. Southwestern Wisconsin Economic Development District.

little new activity at the local and county level. Multi-family housing, affordable single-family homes, and senior homes are in very high demand and there is a noted gap between an affordable mortgage among the available housing stock and new jobs in the County, meaning that homeownership is a challenge. The lack of affordable housing options is a barrier to attracting and maintaining a quality workforce in the County.

Previous community visioning identified potential reuses for the site, including a grocery store, hotel coupled with a restaurant or mixed-use retail and housing. The goal of the study was to assess Richland Center's market to understand the feasibility of those uses on the Ferguson site. Findings from the market analysis indicate the potential for Richland Center to support new retail businesses as well as food and drinking establishments. In addition to meeting local demand for new businesses, the City has experienced an increase in visitor activity from tourists and short- and medium-term employees at local businesses, which is expected to increase further with the upcoming hospital development to the south. These retail and restaurant options identified by stakeholders could align with mixed-use development as well as a hotel to meet ongoing demand. The Ferguson site's central location at a key access point to downtown makes a hotel, residential, and mixed-use commercial development a viable option.



2 Site Plan Alternatives

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In collaboration with stakeholders during a site visit on July 24, 2023, two preliminary site plans were developed. A hotel was identified as an anchor use as Richland Center currently has limited rooms available and demand exceeds occupancy capacity. This use is to be supported by commercial uses for small businesses, food establishments, and offices. The two plans both include the same uses, with a hotel as an anchor use and retail and food establishments as complementary uses. However, the two plans consider different siting strategies as they relate to future development, parking layout, and connectivity with the downtown. Both plans consider the partial closure of N Jefferson Street to daily traffic, limiting access to event uses (such as loading/off-loading and food trucks) and emergency vehicles, to create new open spaces in the City. Existing spaces are insufficient to support the types of community events, such as farmer's markets, which have become popular recently.

In each plan, the hotel footprint is based on a 60-unit, 4-story typical hotel layout. The hotel is approximately 9,500 gross square feet (SF) per floor, with a total of 38,000 SF. The first floor is mostly hotel amenity uses, such as a reception area, offices, a pool, and a breakfast area. The first floor also includes space for a restaurant and some hotel rooms. The second to fourth floors will provide the remaining hotel rooms. Two additional buildings provide retail spaces, including food services, and office uses. In total, there are 8 first floor spaces of varying sizes for commercial use, totaling approximately 16,000 SF.

2.1 Alternative 1

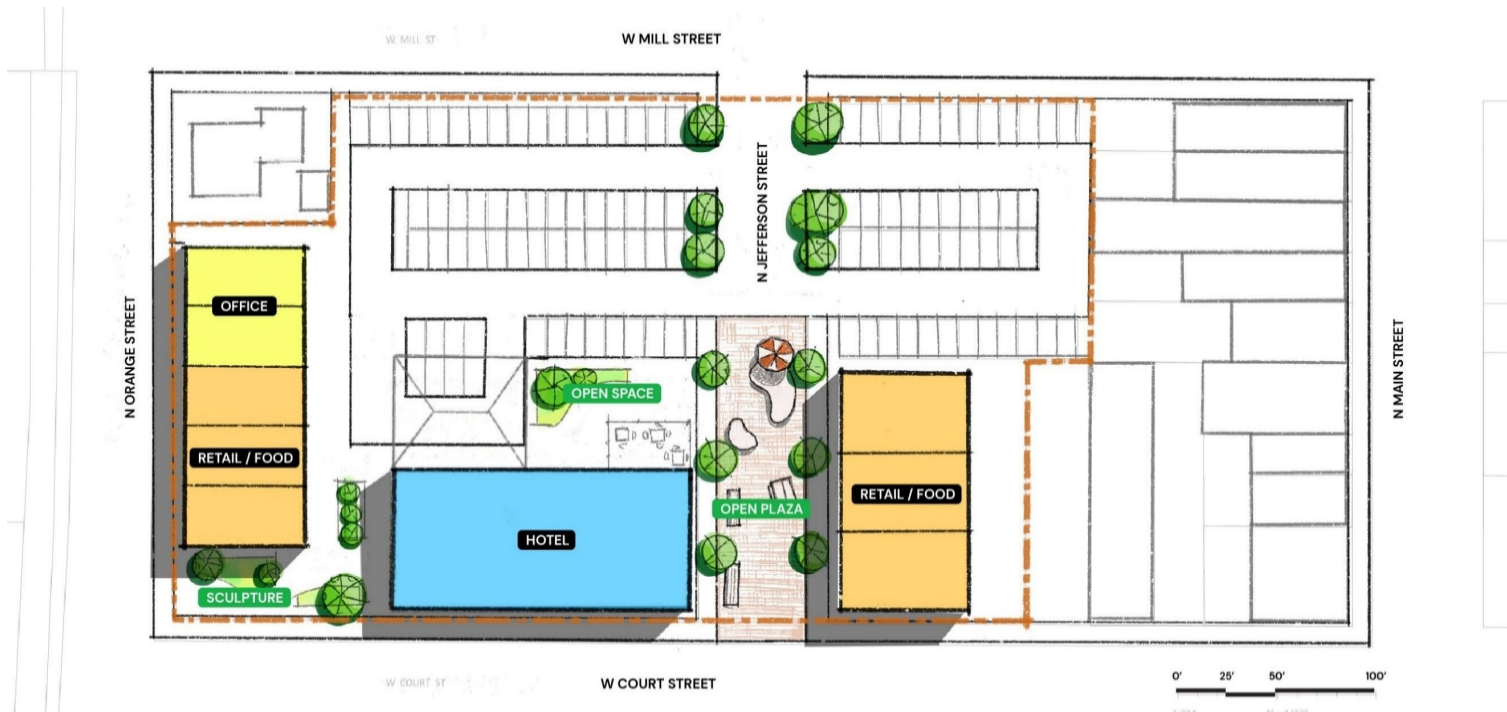


Figure 3 Alternative 1 Sketch, Hotel on W Court Street

Alternative 1 sites the hotel on W Court Street, with commercial uses on N Orange Street (Hwy 14) and along the new N Jefferson Street plaza. Alternative 1 provides potential for continuous commercial development along N Orange Street in the future, as more sites along N Orange Street become available for commercial use. Some new commercial uses have already been implemented recently along the opposite side of N Orange Street. The hotel placement provides convenient and direct access to downtown by opening on to W Court Street. The restaurant on the first floor of the hotel, together with the east retail/food block,

will provide a lively atmosphere for the new N Jefferson Street plaza, supported by local and visiting patrons. The plan creates three public open spaces. The southwest corner of the site will have a sculpture or other landmarking features providing visual wayfinding and an iconic object to visitors traveling along N Orange Street (Hwy 14). The smaller open space north of the hotel provides seating and gathering space for hotel patrons and can act as an additional staging or extended space to the N Jefferson Street plaza.

2.2 Alternative 2



Figure 4 Alternative 2 Sketch; Hotel on N Orange Street (Hwy 14)

Alternative 2 sites the hotel on N Orange Street, with commercial uses on W Court Street and along the new N Jefferson Street plaza. Alternative 2 provides visibility of the hotel on N Orange Street (Hwy 14). The hotel placement allows for more efficient parking arrangements and access. The two commercial buildings create strong support for W Court Street, extending commercial uses from downtown. The two commercial blocks will provide a lively atmosphere for the new N Jefferson Street plaza, supported by local and visiting patrons. The plan creates three open public

spaces. The southwest corner of the site will have a sculpture or other landmarking features providing visual wayfinding and an iconic object to visitors traveling down N Orange Street. One linear open space is created parallel to the commercial building, providing outdoor space for potential commercial use extensions, such as temporary outdoor dining and markets. The linear open space also connects the hotel with N Jefferson Street plaza. Together with the N Jefferson Street plaza, the two open spaces can host larger community events.

2.3 Preferred Alternative



Figure 5 Preferred Alternative include Building 1 (Hotel), Building 2 (Retail), Building 3 (Mixed-use), and additional angled street parking on W Court Street.

The Preferred Alternative is an improvement upon Alternative 2. The alternative sites the hotel on N Orange Street, with commercial uses on W Court Street and along the new N Jefferson Street plaza. Similar to Alternative 2, the Preferred Alternative provides visibility of the hotel on N Orange Street (Hwy 14). The parking arrangements have been improved to support 50 regular spaces and 5 ADA Accessible spaces on the west lot and 45 regular spaces and 2 ADA Accessible spaces on the east lot. The commercial building (Figure 5, Building 2) on W Court Street has been further offset from the street to create an additional 10 regular angled parking spaces and 1 ADA Accessible space for ease of access to the commercial frontage. On-site parking lots can be accessed from W Mill Street. N Jefferson Street will be permanently closed to daily vehicular traffic, except for event uses and emergency uses.

The Linear Plaza will provide open space for both the hotel and commercial uses in Building 2. Building 2 will have access from both W Court Street and the plaza, activating both the street front and the plaza. N Jefferson Street plaza will be supported by spillover use in Building 2 and Building 3 services. The plaza will provide a prime space for day use, performances, food, and seating, especially during good weather and in the summer months.

Richland Center has also expressed a need for more housing and supports the addition of housing uses on the site. The east commercial building (Figure 5, Building 3) in previous alternatives is proposed to be a mixed-use residential use instead, with 2 to 3 additional stories to support 12-18 residential units. To ensure potential evening restaurant and retail activities do not affect residential uses, retail and food uses are sited in Building 2, and office and small café uses with limited evening presence in Building 3.

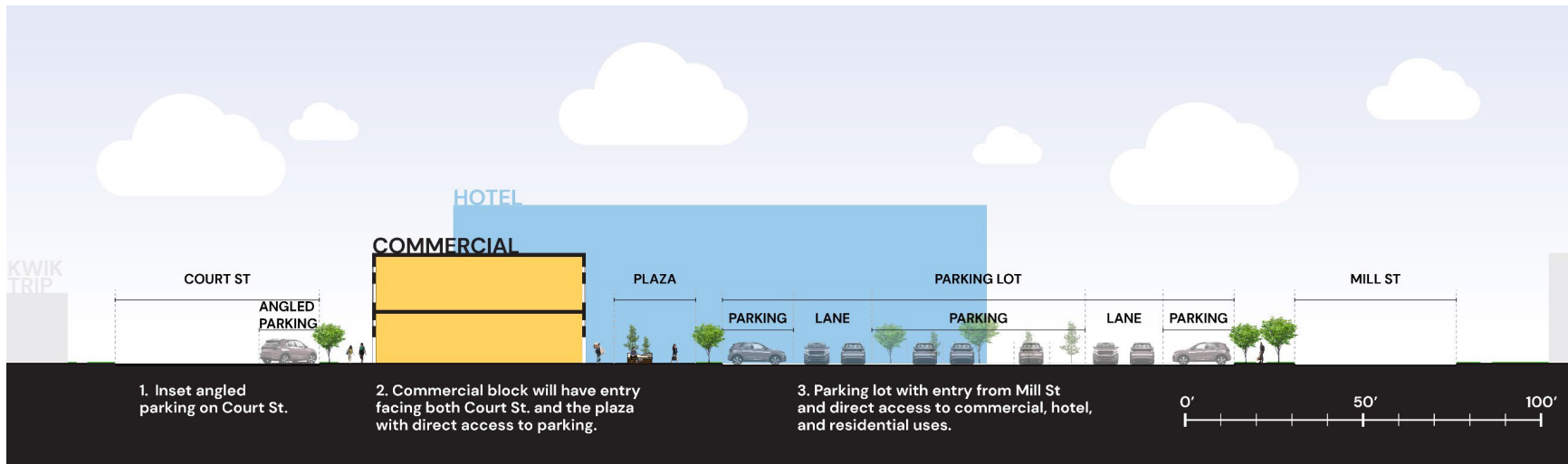


Figure 6 Section through W Court St, Building 2, the parking lot, and Mill Street illustrating access and basic streetscape.



Figure 7 Artistic rendering of N Jefferson Street with temporary seating and food trucks.



3 Public Realm Improvements

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The Ferguson site and the W Court/Orange Street intersection make up the “front door” for Richland Center. Improving the public realm illustrates the initiative from the City to revitalize the downtown corridor and can establish the downtown business center as a unique destination, separate from the rest of Richland Center. Such improvements create an interesting and safe environment for all users and can support pedestrian activity that generates returns for local businesses. The public realm is often defined as everything outside the parcel lines of a property, including the sidewalks, crosswalks, curbs, benches and seating areas, lighting, and plantings that make up the fabric of downtown. Appearance is also an important component of a recreation program⁶. Maintained streets and sidewalks, attractive trees and shrubs, flower plantings, well-cared for homes and commercial buildings, neatly landscaped home lawns, public open space, and parks are principal contributors of community beautification. A program for community beautification is most rewarding to persons engaged in passive recreation and should be encouraged.

Keeping in mind the traffic needs of the Kwik Trip gas station, the need for additional turning radii on W Court Street to accommodate trucking traffic, and the orientation along Orange Street/Highway 14, this section and Figure 8 describe potential upgrades to the public realm that can enhance the attractiveness of Richland Center’s downtown.

⁶ Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2016–2020. Richland Center Parks & Grounds Board

Improve streetscaping efforts and extend the downtown character to the Ferguson Site.

Streetscaping efforts could improve the existing perception of the site and strengthen the link between the site and the downtown area. This will support marketing efforts to attract development and operation interests. The City may also explore the development of a Business Improvement District (BID) with local businesses for downtown façade improvements and public realm upgrades that could incorporate the Ferguson site. Additionally, as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, Strategy 3, there are several recommendations that would further support the vitality of downtown businesses. Moreover, connecting the City with pedestrian and bike-friendly routes and wayfinding signage would support resident and visitor movement throughout Richland Center.⁷

Better streetscapes can add value to properties, resulting in higher market value. In light of post COVID-19 recovery, downtown retail could use a boost that promotes foot traffic and activity to return to the downtown sphere.

In 2014, Richland Center had a Façade Loan Program for store front and building improvements. The funding was provided by the Neighborhood Housing Services of Southwest Wisconsin as part of an expenditure of HUD Community Development Block Grant funding. While this program may not be active, it provides a framework for restarting a similar program when funds become available again. Paired with community and business outreach, in-kind contributions from Richland Center, or other city-funded public improvements, this program could support significant upgrades to the downtown commercial district.

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) provides several resources for rural community development that could be useful to consider. The WEDC runs a Community Development Investment (CDI) Grant Program⁸ that is used to support shovel-ready downtown development and could be used to fund parts of the public improvements discussed here.

⁷ Comprehensive Plan for Richland Center, Wisconsin 2022-2023. Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

⁸ <https://ruralwi.com/resources/community-development-investment-grant-program/>

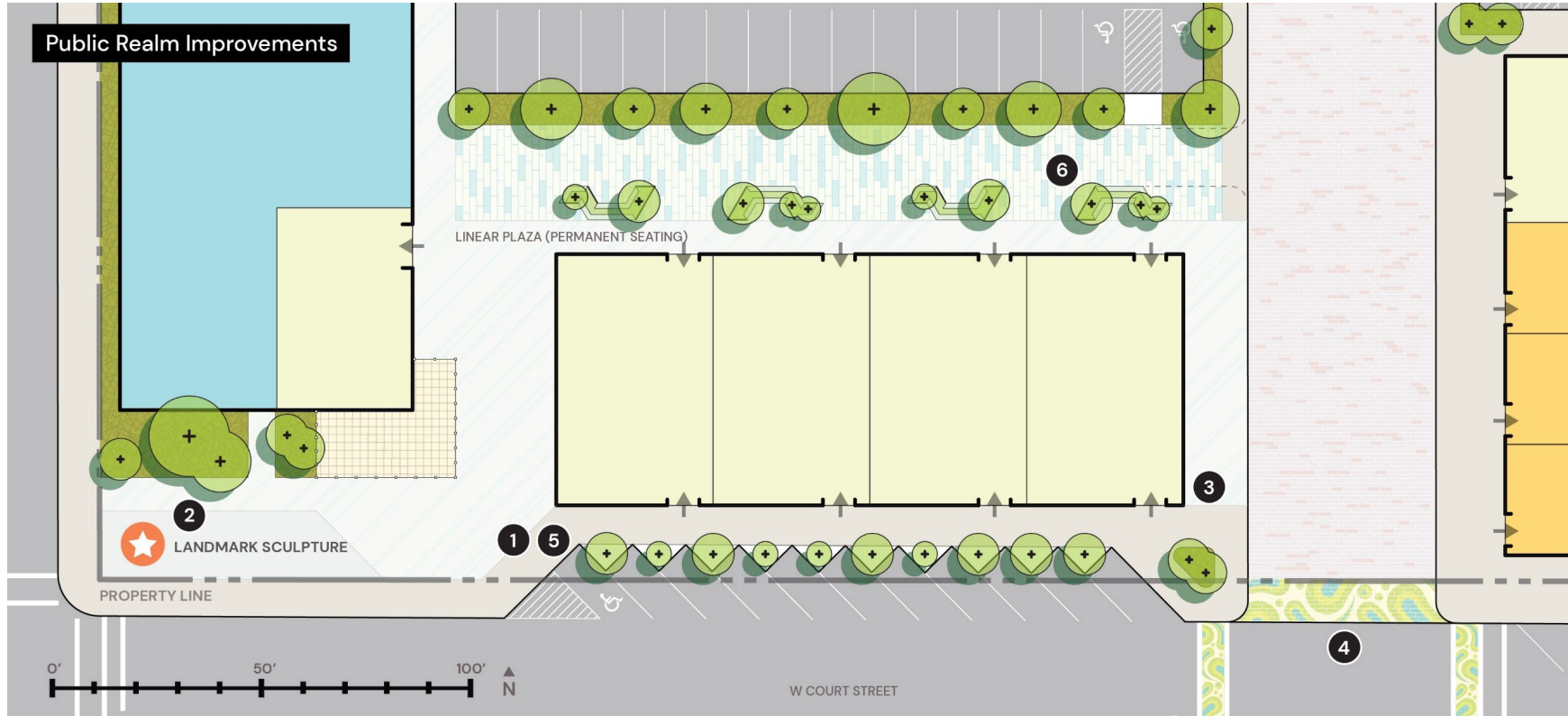


Figure 8 Public realm improvement opportunities

1. Street Trees not only provide shade to reduce the impacts of the heat island effect, but they also improve the aesthetic experience of a street. New street trees planted in a median or planting strip are typically managed by the City. The City has a strong history of tree stewardship and planting, having established a Tree Board in 1998 and designated as a Tree City by the US Arbor Day Foundation for over 20 years. However, there is a lack of street trees extending into the downtown central business district. With site work and improvements slated for the Ferguson site, it would be a good opportunity to start to build out

the tree canopy downtown, encouraging sidewalk use and outdoor seating.

2. Signage and Wayfinding are another opportunity for placemaking and can help visitors navigate to key features of downtown. Richland Center has some existing signage on light poles but adding additional light pole signs to nearby parks, trails, or other downtown buildings can build a sense of a district. Additional wayfinding at key intersections will also support general connectivity in the downtown.

3. Public Art such as community-centric murals, temporary rotating installations in public places or even gallery walls with elementary school artwork can contribute to shared public spaces. N Jefferson St plaza and the adjacent Building 2 wall are prime locations to support public art.

4. Pedestrian Crossings are often forgotten public spaces but can similarly support downtown character and wayfinding. Creative painting can elevate a simple piece of infrastructure into a community attraction and contribute to the general branding and coherence of downtown.

5. Lighting is important to consider in any public realm upgrades to ensure safety and accessibility throughout the downtown. Lighting is also a placemaking tool and can be used to attach signage. Consistent street lighting usage evokes a sense of place and contributes to the coherence of downtown.

6. Seating and Planting can contribute greatly to the aesthetic experience for pedestrians and support retail and commercial activities. Seating and plantings provide a space for rest and connection. Seating and planting areas are often occupied by community members with newspaper or coffee in hand.

3.1 Street Upgrade Case Studies

River Street, Batavia, Illinois

Batavia, Illinois (population 26,480) was confronted with needed capital investments to downtown streets including underground utility upgrades, streetlight and traffic light replacement, and drainage and paving improvements. For the first phase the city selected a block-long segment of River Street in the heart of downtown. The street was repaved with bricks to create a seamless connection with the sidewalk and adjacent businesses. While vehicular access is maintained, the space is now open to public use and temporary seating. Completed in 2013, the street design has been a success and local businesses have embraced the concept. A weekly farmers market is now held in the middle of the street and restaurants spill outside with dining and cooking demonstrations.



Figure 9 River Street (photo: Downtown Batavia)

“The Little Street with Big Ideas,” Wall Street, Asheville, North Carolina

Wall Street in Asheville, North Carolina (population 94,589) was originally a block-long alley servicing commercial businesses on the next block. Concerns about loading on underground utilities caused city leaders to evaluate reducing traffic on the street. The resulting design, completed in 1988, limited parking to one side and removed the curb, gutter, and sidewalks to allow pedestrians to use the entirety of the space. While the street remains open to vehicular traffic, as pedestrian volumes have exponentially risen, average vehicle speeds have decreased to walking speed, resulting in an extremely safe street. The resulting street is an desirable tourist attraction that boasts some of the highest retail rent per square foot of downtown Asheville.



Figure 10 Wall Street in 1978 (photo: David Black) and Wall Street today (photo: City of Asheville)

3.2 Open Space Uses

Richland Center has expressed a desire for a larger open space to support farmer's markets and similar uses, which currently occur in the parking lot of the tourism office on W Seminary Street. The farmer's market is quickly outgrowing the available space.

The two proposed large open spaces can support a variety of uses and events. In tandem, the two spaces can host farmer's markets, food truck events, cultural fairs, movie nights, and other outdoor events. Space usage is flexible, as only the Linear Plaza has permanent seating. In the sample event layout, the space can support six food trucks, 23 vendor booths, one information booth, and a series of temporary seating and tables for patrons to rest and enjoy food and purchases. Temporary seating and tables can be replaced with additional vendor booths depending on the event type. Both the Linear Plaza and the N Jefferson Street plaza can support smaller events on their own.

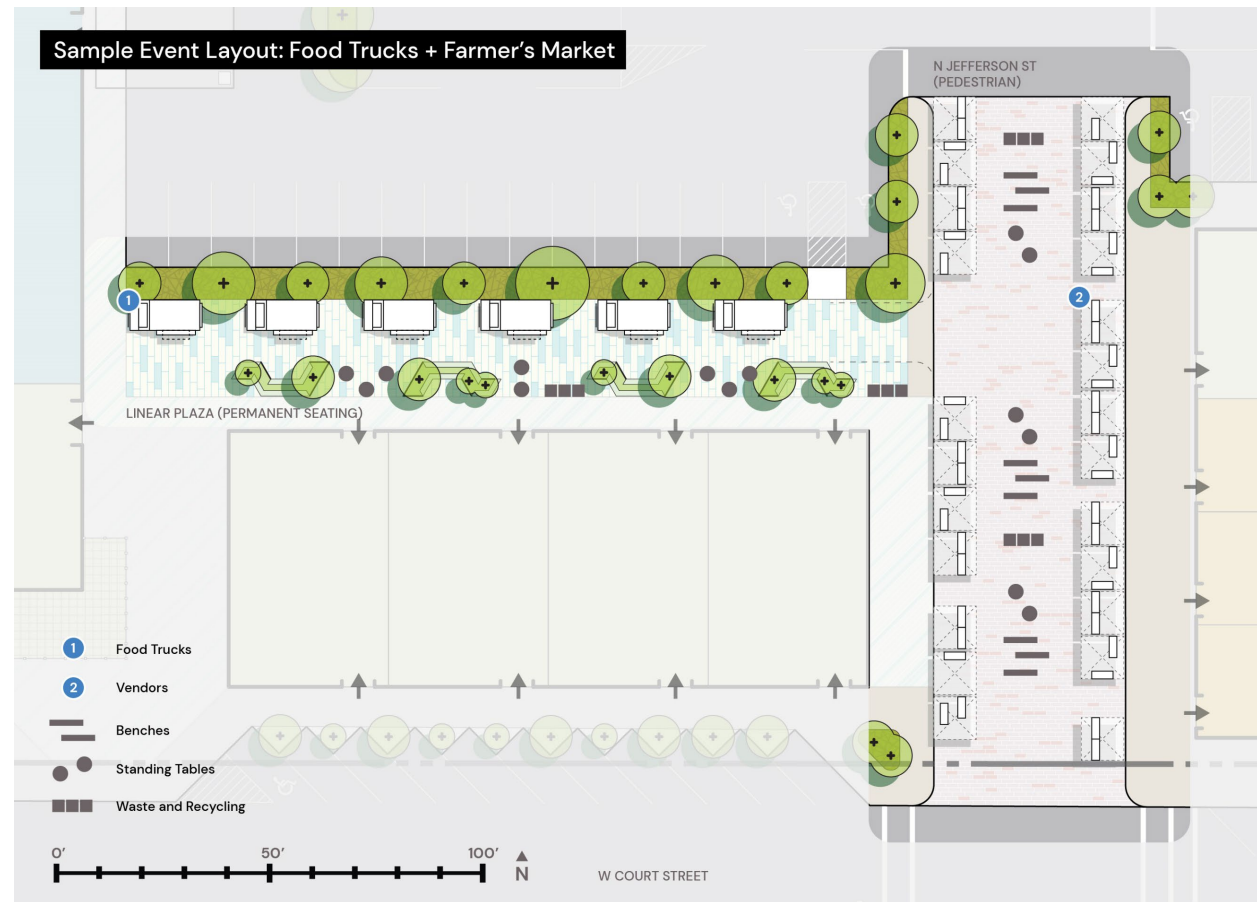


Figure 11 Sample event layout for a food truck and farmer's market event

4 Next Steps

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These site design and public realm improvement recommendations are critical pieces to communicate the vision for the Ferguson properties to internal stakeholders such as Council and the community, as well as the private market. Actual redevelopment will require further support and buy-in from stakeholders in the form of continued leadership from local staff and alignment with Richland Center's overall economic development efforts. Some key next steps for the City to consider include:

- **Market the site to attract hotel developers, operators, and potential ground-floor commercial activity.** Attraction strategies could focus both on outside developers/operators as well as local entrepreneurs. Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission may be an excellent resource for support with planning and economic development activities that are outside of the capacity of local staff. Strategies could focus on retaining and growing existing businesses, nurturing small businesses and startups, and investigating funding opportunities to support economic development.
- **Complete the Hotel Feasibility Study and market the site.** Richland Center is already moving forward with a Hotel Feasibility Study that will describe the feasibility, profitability, and site amenities needed to establish a hotel on the site. This is important foundational information to collect before a private third party commits to site development. With the feasibility study in hand, Richland Center can begin to market the properties to potential buyers, including several small or regional hotel chains and begin to plan additional public realm upgrades to enhance the site's marketability.
- **Develop a funding strategy and apply for grants for public realm improvements.** In addition to private involvement and investment on the site, public realm improvements such as street trees, public art, and repaving require significant public investment. There are several state and national level opportunities that support rural development. Private organizations such as National Endowment for the Arts and Smart Growth America also provide grants for communities of Richland Center's size. A resource roadmap that describes the funding necessary, a timeline, and aligns key project phases with relevant funding sources can support successful project implementation and can help pitch the project to other investors.