



Appleton State of the Downtown Report

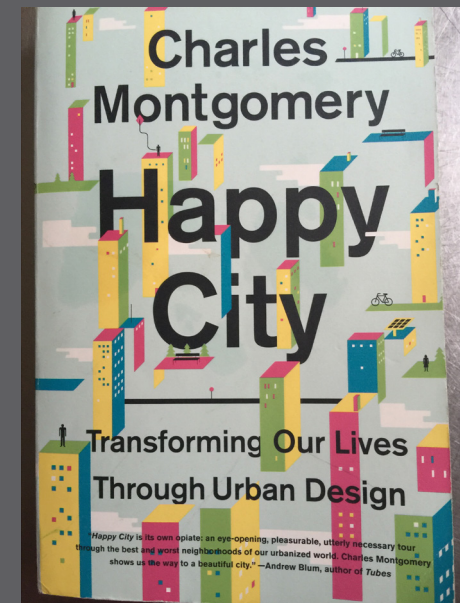
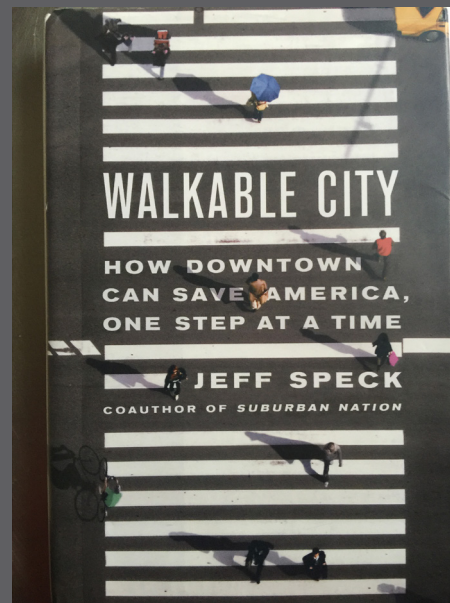
Appleton - Context/History

- founded around Lawrence University
- grew up around paper and other industry tied to river
- a city of ravines previously used as open dumps
- 1922 city plan called for widening of Cherry Drive (Memorial) and creation of parks system
- downtown suffered with flight of retail to suburbs
- city center plaza one of few remaining downtown malls
- urban renewal left north of college bare



Downtowns - Key Trends

- creative placemaking & tactical urbanism
- walkability, biking, and the growth of transit
- growth in downtown housing
- sustainable cities and eco-districts
- a decline in retail & the deliberate consumer



Downtowns - Central Social District

The downtown area with activity venues that make it easy for people to have enjoyable experiences with other people.

They are the town's central meeting place -- today's versions of Greek agoras and Roman forums.



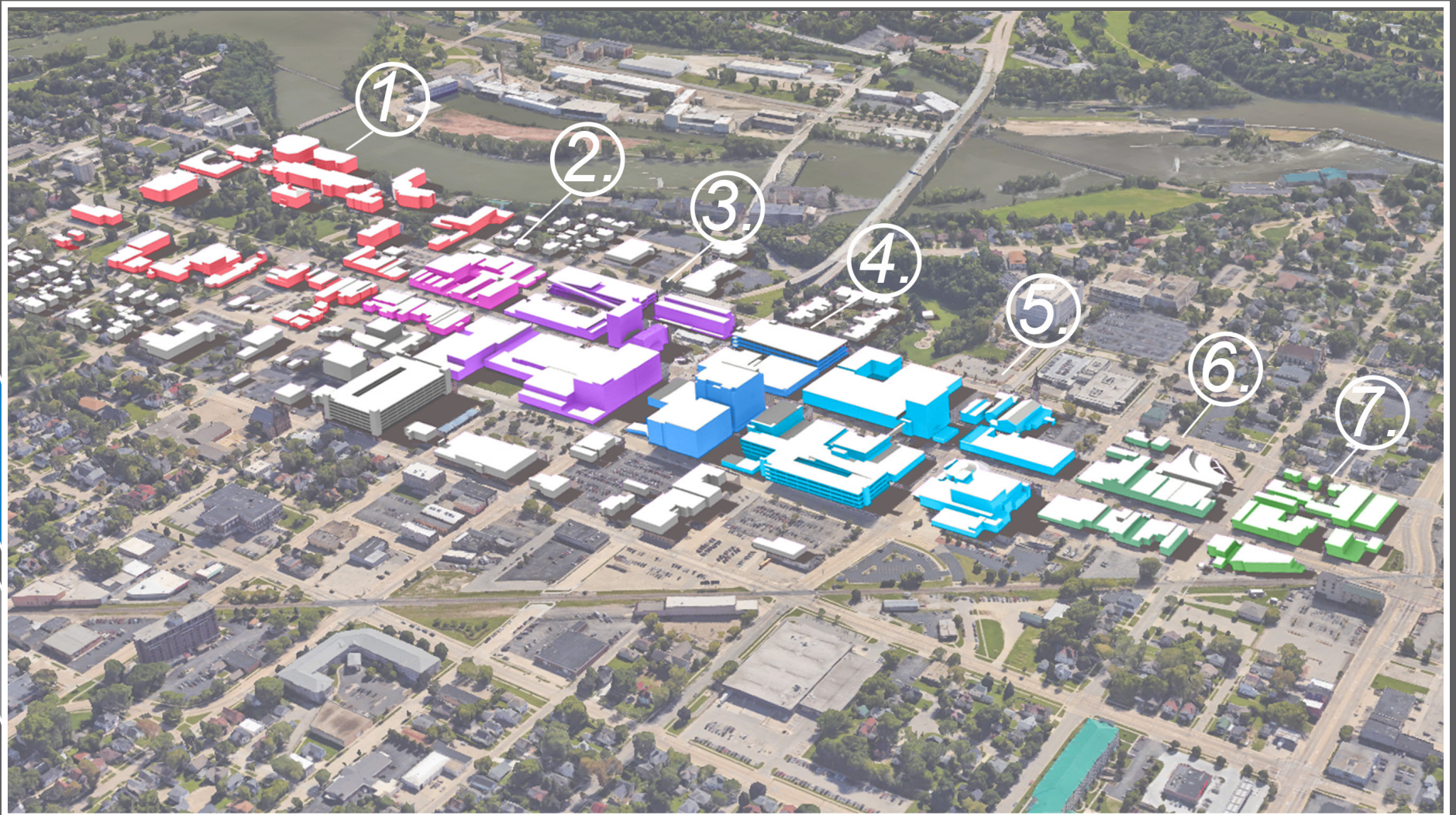
Downtown Appleton - Assets

- thriving business environment along much of College Avenue
- large daytime workforce supports local business activity
- lawrence university and several well regarded educational institutions
- fox river, an extensive park system and growing trail network
- strong healthy neighborhoods, faith-based organizations, and non-profits
- historic buildings and good urban design elements in portions of downtown
- high traffic volumes
- successfull events including Mile of Music, Oktoberfest, and Farmer's Market
- several well regarded arts and entertainment venues

Downtown Appleton - Liabilities

- over dependence on College Avenue
- connectivity and access to the fox river
- confusing street network
- few people living in downtown core
- perception of safety
- maintenance and image in portions of downtown

Downtown - Building Massing



300 East

200 East

City Center/100 East

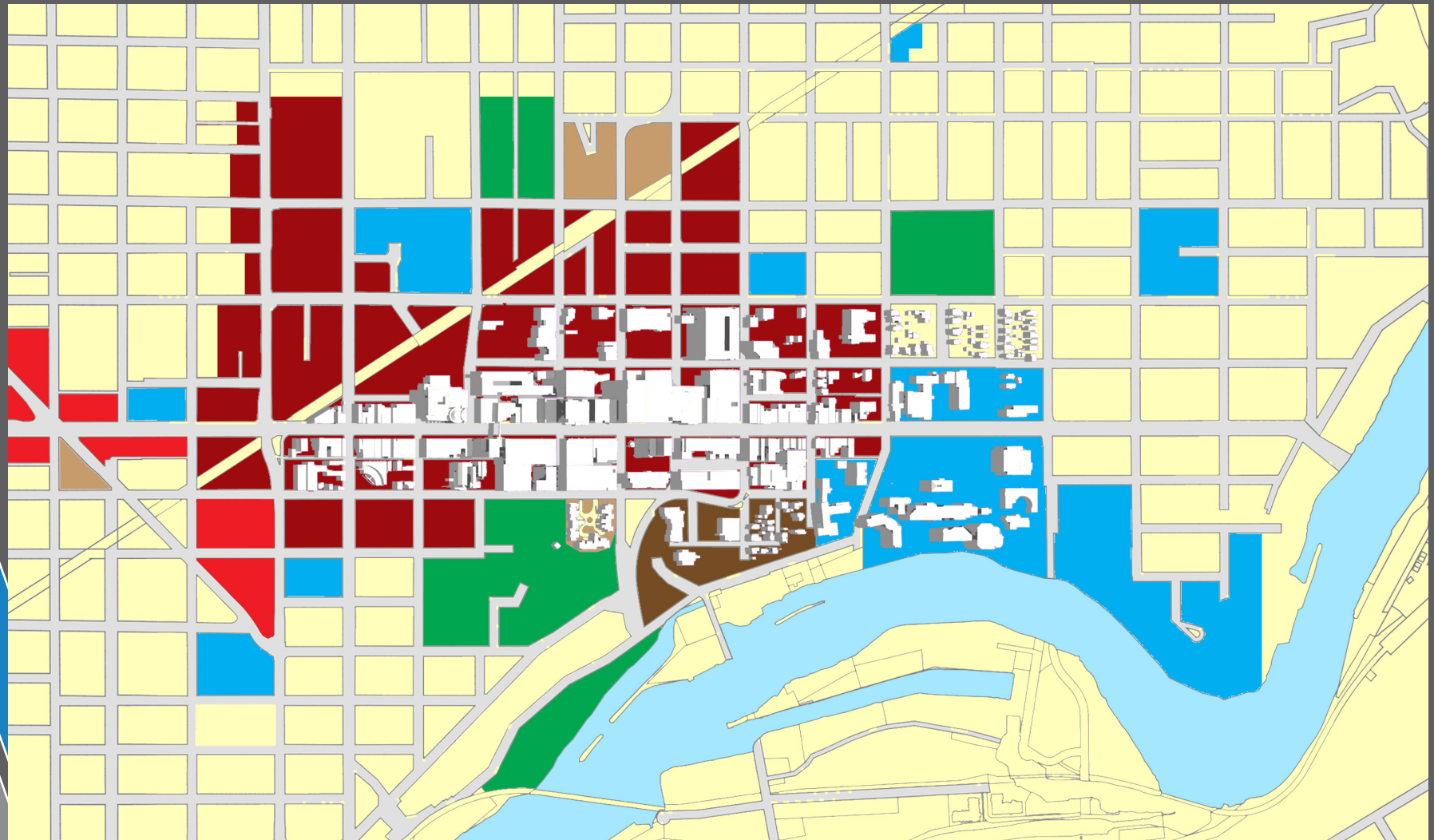
200 West

400/300 West

500 West

600 West

Downtown - Future Land Use



Commercial

CBD

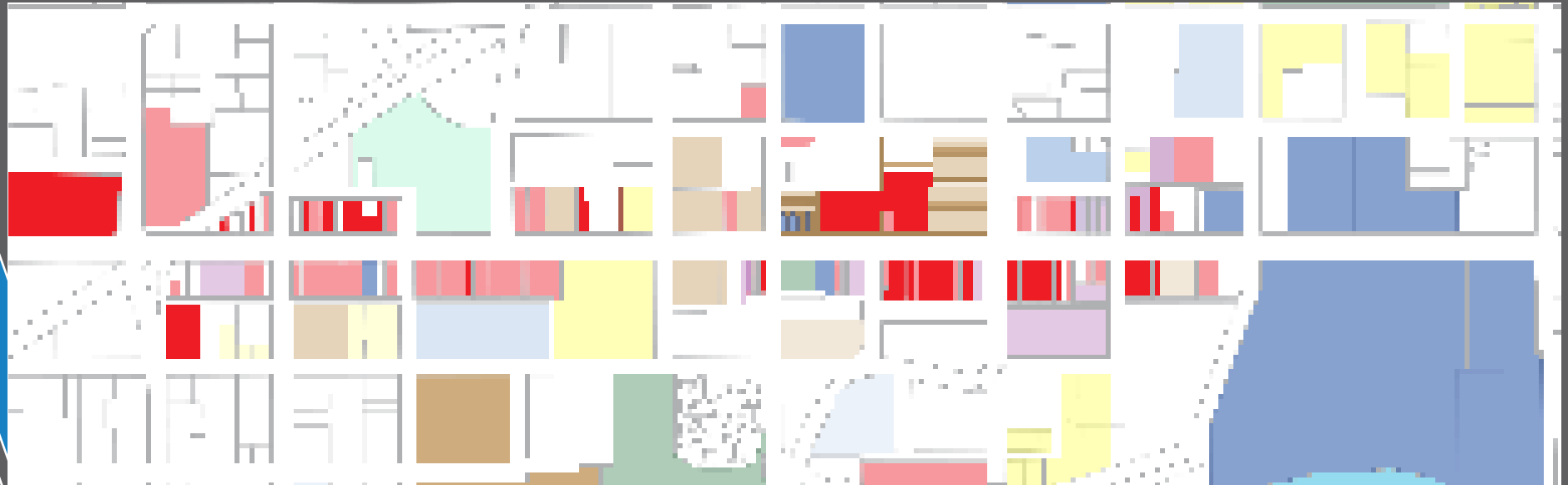
Public Parks

Institutional

Mixed Use

Multifamily

Downtown - Land Use Activities



Living & Staying downtown

Gathering & Celebrating

Exercising & Looking Good

Shopping

Worshipping

Learning

Working & Banking

Eating & Drinking

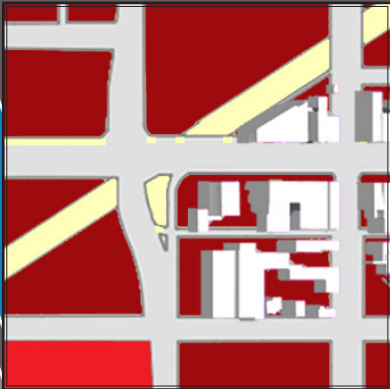
Making Art & Music

Enjoying Music & Entertainment

West College Ave : 600 Block (North View)



Land Use



Block Structure



Building Massing



Activities



West College Ave : 600 Block (South View)



Appleton - West 600 Block

NORTH VIEW

Strengths

- Historic buildings
- Variety of retail, service and hospitality on this block
- Low rents, affordable spaces

Weaknesses

- Several stores do not maintain regular hours
- Buildings on western edge of block before train tracks appear in poor condition
- Irregular lots very close to train tracks
- Poor façade treatments on some buildings

SOUTH VIEW

Strengths

- New investment in downtown brew pub
- Mix of restaurants, art gallery and specialty retail

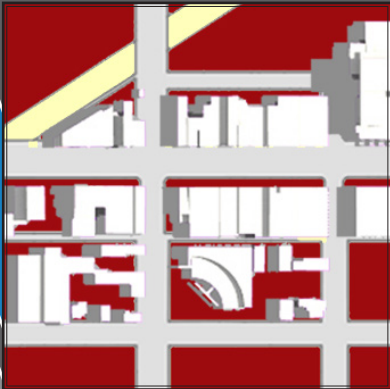
Weaknesses

- Un-screened parking lot creates break in street wall and undermines image of block leaving poor impression at key gateway to downtown
- Poor façades and signage undermine first impressions of downtown

West College Ave : 500 Block (North View)



Land Use



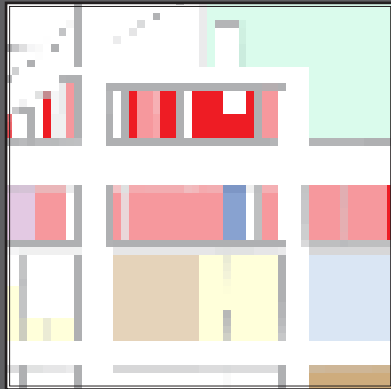
Block Structure



Building Massing



Activities



West College Ave : 500 Block (South View)



Appleton - West 500 Block

NORTH VIEW

Strengths

- Mix of uses include coffee shop, apparel, gift store, vacuum store, liquor, restaurant/bar
- Coventry Glass is a long standing business that showcases several dozen artists work
- Pleasant grade change enhances pedestrian walking experience
- Cozzy Corner one of few downtown businesses operating successfully off of College Avenue.

Weaknesses

- Existing mix of businesses do not appear to complement each other to any significant degree
- Popular liquor/beer/wine store lacks front entrance, thereby decreasing amount of foot traffic on front of block
- Odd mix of facades and lack of decent signage makes this block challenging to comprehend, and therefore somewhat unattractive
- Some of the low two-story buildings could make use of more upper levels, thus giving more height consistency within the block and maximizing the opportunity for upper level residential

SOUTH VIEW

Strengths

- Nice mix of 1, 2, and 3 story buildings
- Concentration of bars along west half of block
- Mr. Taco one of few successful restaurants off of College Avenue
- Pleasant grade change provides interesting walk
- Nearly all hospitality uses on this block feeds to 'entertainment district' label for downtown

Weaknesses

- Image and cleanliness, safety concern at night
- Several buildings not well maintained
- Nearly all hospitality uses on this block (could be strength or weakness depending on how it's leveraged)
-

West College Ave : 300/400 Block (North View)



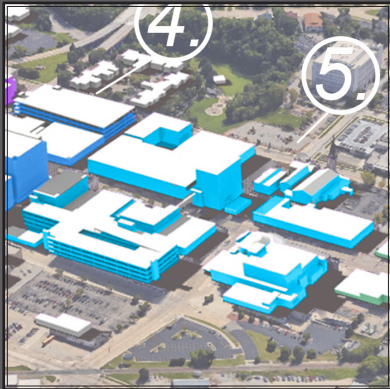
Land Use



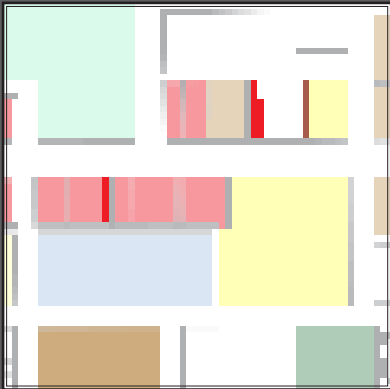
Block Structure



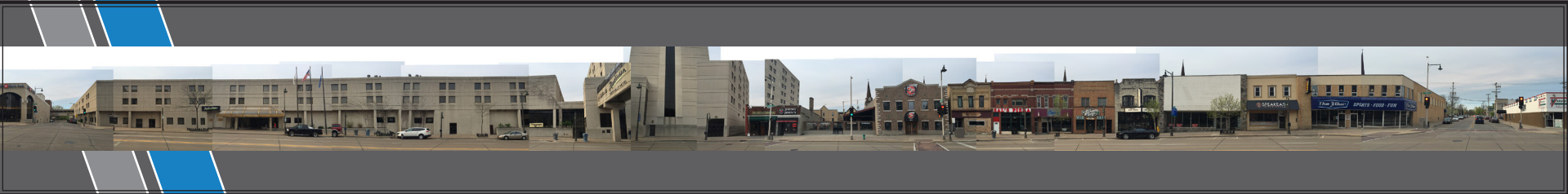
Building Massing



Activities



West College Ave : 300/400 Block (South View)



Appleton - West 300/400 Block

NORTH VIEW

Strengths

- Characterized by distinctive, well maintained buildings including boutique hotel and newly renovated upscale restaurant
- News/pie/snacks/bookstore provides variety of daily needs for visitors, residents, downtown workers

Weaknesses

- Street wall interrupted by deeply recessed green space which is rarely used
- Significant swing from very attractive properties to those needing some attention
- Nice mix of retail, service, office and hospitality but lacks pedestrian activity
- Retail vacancy and some office vacancy in this block
-
-

SOUTH VIEW

Strengths

- Largest hotel downtown, guests help support other downtown businesses
- Strong concentration of bars along western half of block creates a niche where businesses feed off each other's traffic and they are able to tap into larger trade area than they would as stand-alone businesses
- Very active node at night and especially when the PAC is hosting events
- Outdoor seating and dining

Weaknesses

- Some residents, visitors have poor image of area due to concentration of bars, clubs
- Some safety concerns in the area have been expressed
- Some buildings are not being adequately maintained
- Some vacancy/underutilized buildings
- Lack of code enforcement to ensure proper building maintenance
-

West College Ave : 200 Block (North View)



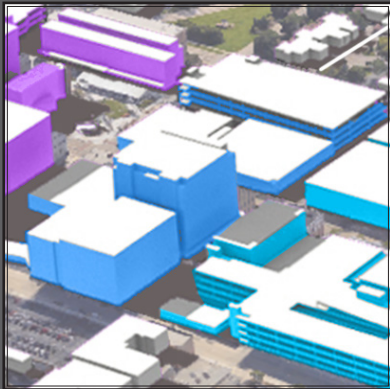
Land Use



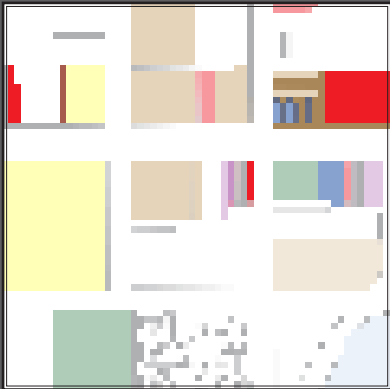
Block Structure



Building Massing



Activities



West College Ave : 200 Block (South View)



Appleton - West 200 Block

NORTH VIEW

Strengths

- Hospitality venues on this block mark transition to 'entertainment district'
- East half of block characterized by attractive (architecturally) nicely preserved 2-3 story historic buildings with interesting architectural details

Weaknesses

- Image of public realm undermined by presence of cigarette butts along sidewalk, in planters
- Dirty windows, some poorly maintained buildings undermine image of block
- Long uninterrupted façade makes for uninteresting walk
- Façade renovation opportunities

SOUTH VIEW

Strengths

- Very popular coffee shop draws visitors and neighborhood residents from early in the morning until late in the evening
- Renovated parklet provides opportunity for outdoor programming, dining, music
- 222 building is a recognizable landmark, built with quality materials, attractive texture and color
- Well maintained block

Weaknesses

- Some ground floor vacancies
- With only three buildings on this block, there is not another retail draw other than the Copper Rock.
- Lack of service related business serving the needs of nearby downtown office workers

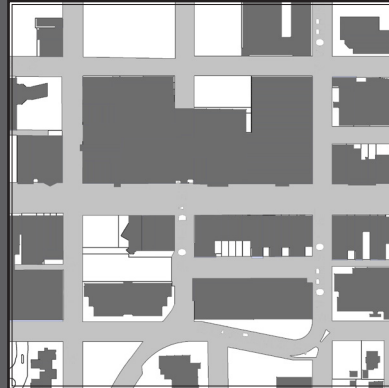
East College Ave : City Center (North View)



Land Use



Block Structure



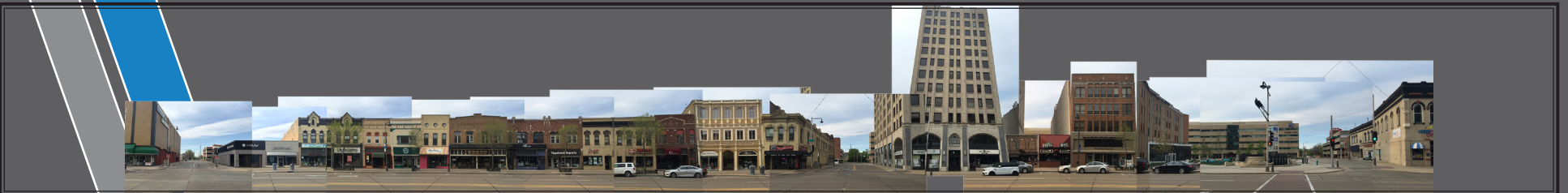
Building Massing



Activities



East College Ave : 100 Block (South View)



Appleton - East 100 Block

NORTH VIEW

Strengths

- Zuelke building (12 stories) is a recognizable landmark downtown
- Empower Yoga draws people to block throughout the day and on weekends
- Salon/hair care use compliments yoga studio as part of health & fitness niche
- Excellent location for mid to high level apartments

Weaknesses

- Scale of two 1 -story buildings sandwiched between 12 story and 4 story buildings in heart of downtown is slightly awkward
- Trees only extend half way along block from Houdini Plaza
- Several vacant office spaces in this building, approximately ½ the office space is available
-

SOUTH VIEW

Strengths

- Strongest retail concentrated block on College Avenue
- Gift store niche with several complimentary businesses represented
- Solid block wall, narrow, historic buildings with excellent façade transparency creates inviting pedestrian environment
- Comfortable opportunities to socialize in and out front of coffee shops, restaurants, salons
- High degree of pedestrian activity
- Excellent building conditions

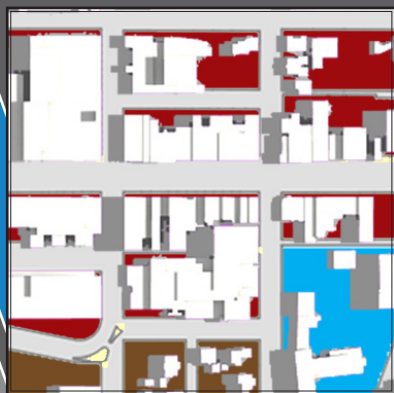
Weaknesses

- Plastic garbage/recycling containers out of character with outstanding public realm found along most of College Avenue
- Few attempts to leverage and grow pedestrian activity (eg, outdoor games, sidewalk play area)
- Opportunities
- Add more outdoor seating, public art
- Consider a small interactive game table such as outdoor checkers or place for kids to draw with sidewalk chalk
- Second story residential should be maximized on this block
-

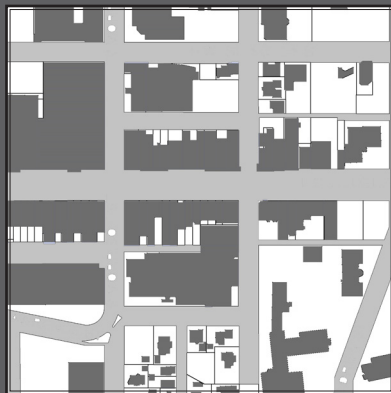
East College Ave : 200 Block (North View)



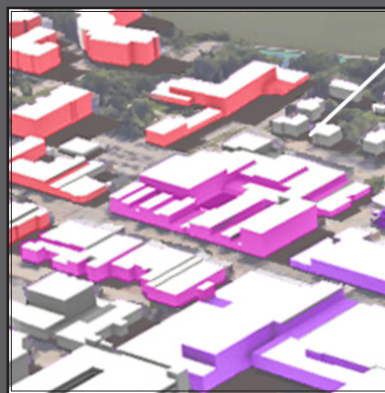
Land Use



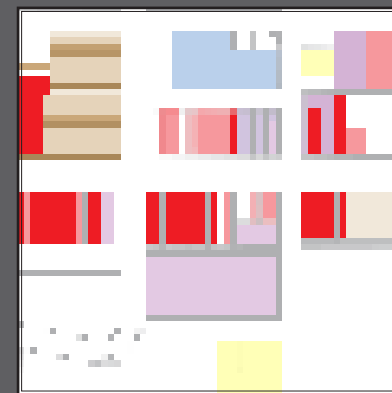
Block Structure



Building Massing



Activities



East College Ave : 200 Block (South View)



Appleton - East 200 Block

NORTH VIEW

Strengths

- Strong restaurant, retail, and services mix creates high level of pedestrian activity
- The Fire, Pino's Palette compliment Heid Music and serve to anchor business niche focused on participant learning and hands on experiences creating art with friends and loved ones
- Attractive buildings and materials, well maintained
- Awnings, recessed entries, transparent facades make for an interesting walk
- Popular outdoor seating at Antojos Mexican restaurant creates sticky pedestrian environment
- Accessible destination for office workers from City Center Plaza over lunch hour

Weaknesses

- Not all businesses fully embrace window display areas
- Poor N/S connections with lack of pedestrian wayfinding
- Opportunities
- Explore opportunities to use underutilized window displays for public art or other displays which change regularly

SOUTH VIEW

Strengths

- Strong retail block including Gabriel Furniture and gift stores
- Popular cafe and restaurant/taverns easily accessible to neighborhood and Lawrence University
- Well maintained historic buildings with good levels of façade transparency contributes to interesting walking environment
- Sense of enclosure and human scale environment
- Retail and hospitality provides great opportunities for higher traffic uses

Weaknesses

- Limited outdoor seating
- Without any blade signage, it is difficult to know what is on the block without walking or driving right in front of the building or store.
- Places for small groups to gather, play music, interact with one another
-

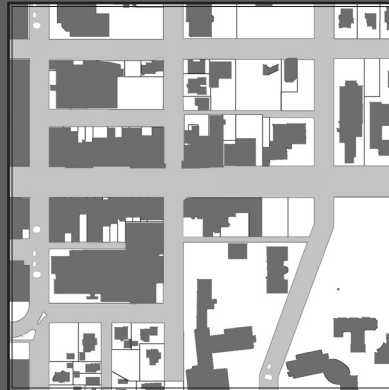
East College Ave : 300 Block (North View)



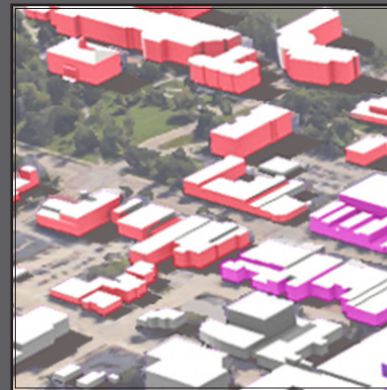
Land Use



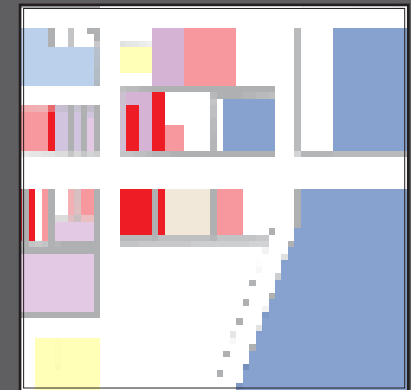
Block Structure



Building Massing



Activities



East College Ave : 300 Block (South View)



Appleton - East 300 Block

NORTH VIEW

Strengths

- Quality public realm including pedestrian scale street clock
- Destination retail including quality jeweler and craft dog treat business
- Diverse mix of office, restaurant, retail
- New business offers art, design classes, helping to strengthen arts/music/culture niche

Weaknesses

- Mostly empty park at southwest corner of Drew and East College sees very little use
- Lack of transparency along south streetwall creates uninteresting pedestrian environment
- Some solid candidates for façade renovation on this block.
- Poor public realm along alley path connecting Lawrence University to Durkee Street, YMCA
-

SOUTH VIEW

Strengths

- Heid Music, History Museum contribute to arts/music/culture niche along east end of College Avenue. These are all draws to downtown from the City/region at large.
- Good mix of office, services, tavern, restaurants, art and cultural uses draws people to area at different times of the day
- Older buildings with unique history, mostly well maintained
- Colorful, interesting mural (Alley Project) provides programming opportunity
- Seth's Coffee, House of Rock, north of block draw pedestrians into back alley

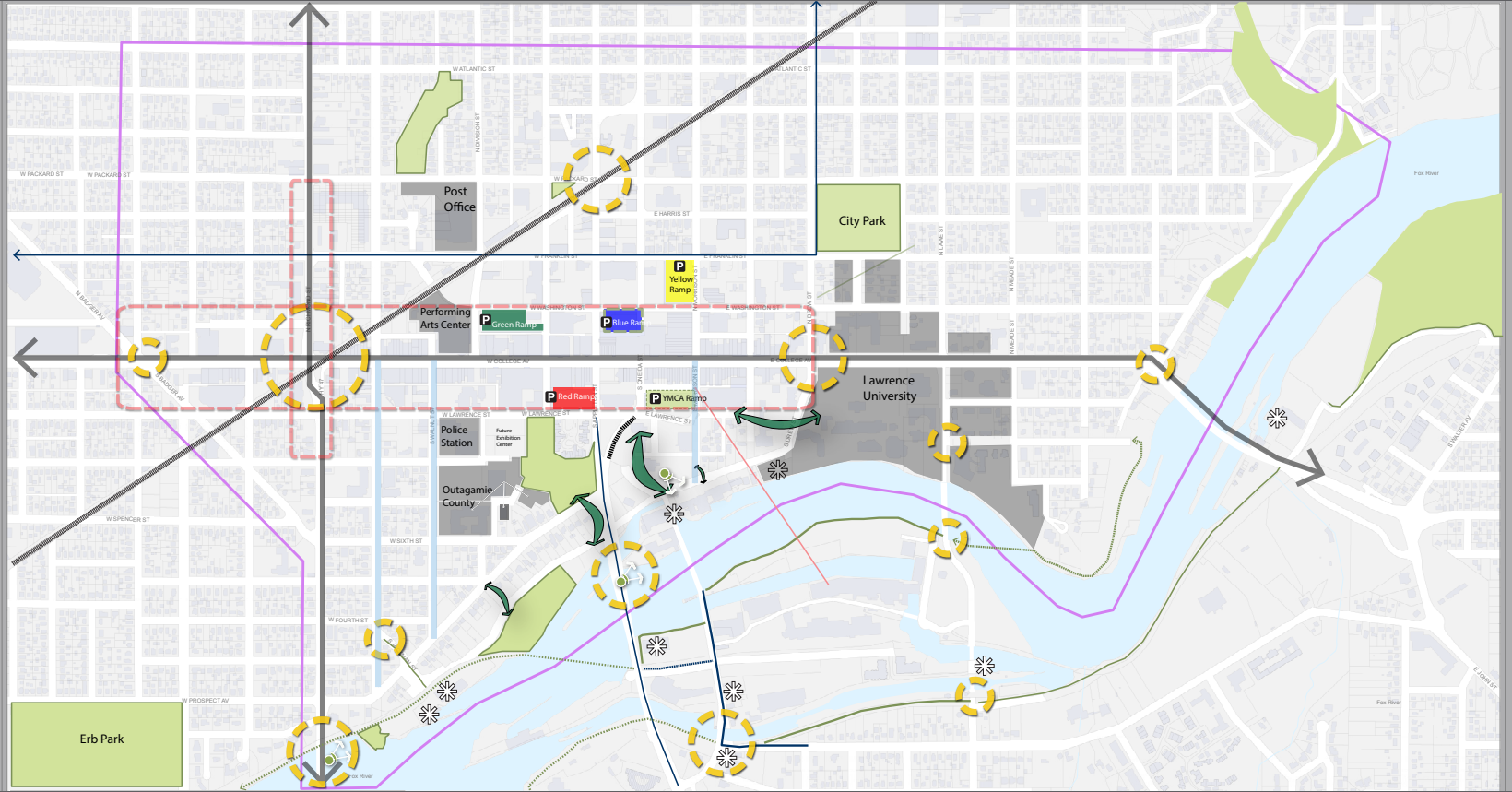
Weaknesses

- Outdoor seating not strategically located near activity nodes or conducive to small groups of people sitting and talking, face to face
- Vacant former bank building undermines mostly pedestrian friendly character of block at east end
- Alley streetscape non-contiguous with adjacent block to west (200 East) across Durkee Street
-

Land Use Block Analysis Key Findings

1. The most successful retail blocks are those where the buildings are narrow, embrace the street, and have highly transparent facades which engage passersby, encourage walking, and discover
2. Longer blocks with uninterrupted and non-transparent facades undermine downtown Appleton's walkability and retail environment
3. The image of downtown varies widely, with a mix of very strong retail blocks further east and deteriorating and blighted properties as one approaches Richmond Street
4. Several business niches have formed: Restaurants/Entertainment; Retail/Gifts; Office niche
5. There is a growing cluster of businesses offering experiential art/music activities and classes, primarily east College Avenue
6. Despite a strong retail and arts/entertainment environment downtown is not currently functioning as a shopping destination that meets ALL the daily needs of residents
7. Too few people are living in and near downtown to support the types of businesses many people want (grocery, theater, more family oriented restaurants)

Access // Connectivity to River



Existing:



Access // Connectivity to River

Strengths

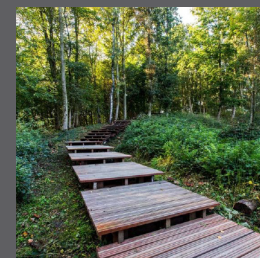
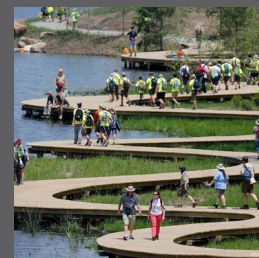
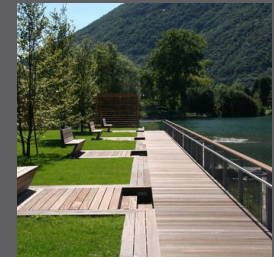
- There are several pedestrian staircases connecting the bluff to the river
- Natural gateways provide exceptional views of river from bridges

Weaknesses

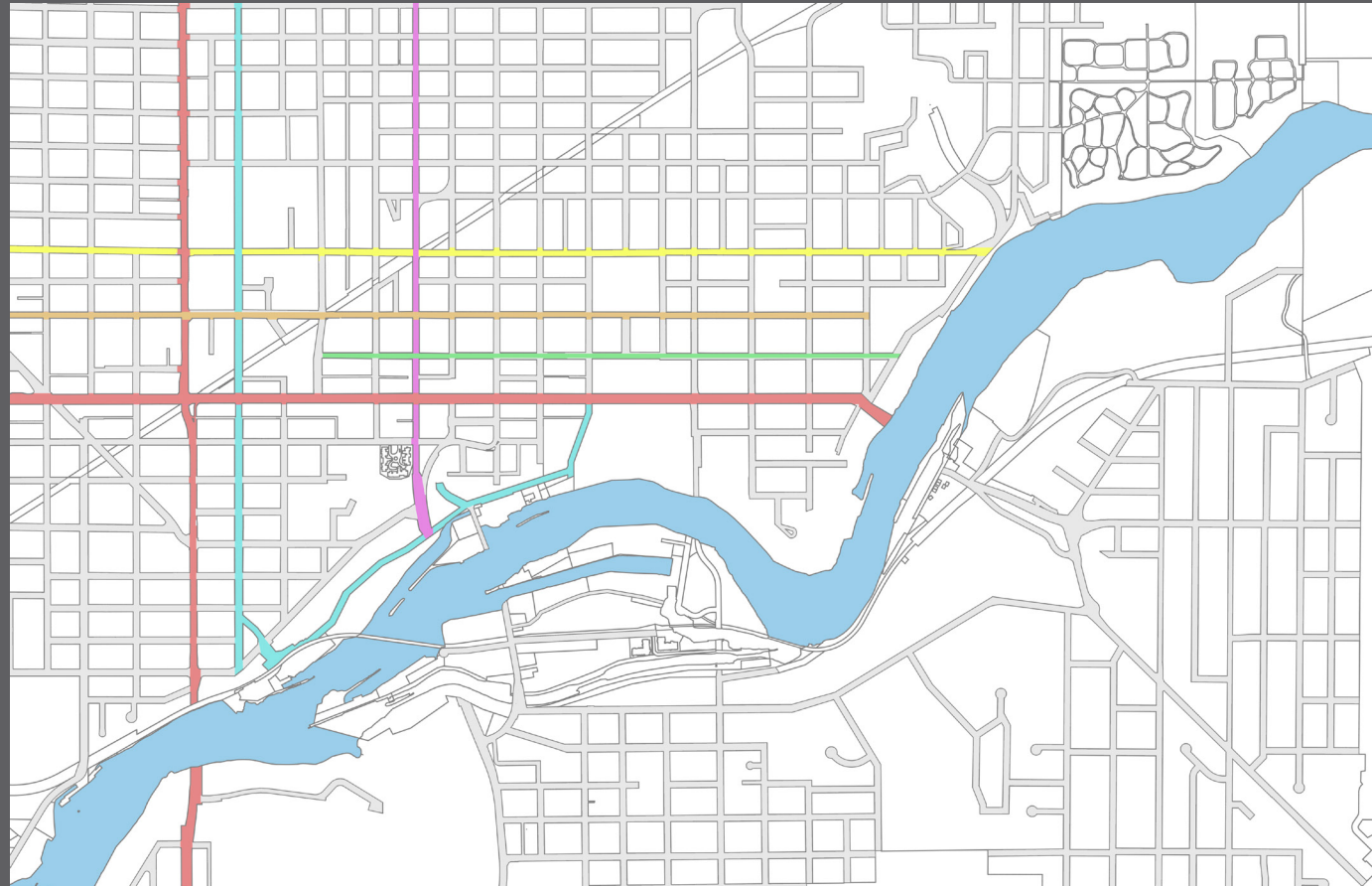
- There are few roads connecting downtown to the river
- Lack of coordinated streetscape and physical infrastructure linking downtown to river
- There is almost no pedestrian oriented wayfinding
- Access to the river is confusing

Opportunities

- Focus efforts on linking highest activity areas to river
- Grand staircase connecting Olde Oneida to bluff
- Planned trestle trail connections
- Riverwalk
- Fox River Visitor Center
- Explore “folly” concept such as a zip line, funicular, or slide which becomes destination
- Art as wayfinding, wayfinding as art



Streetscape



College



Washington



Franklin



State



Richmond



Water



Appleton



Streetscape

Strengths

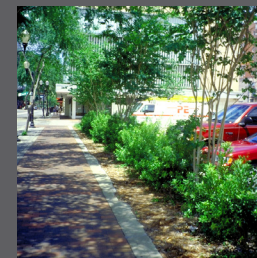
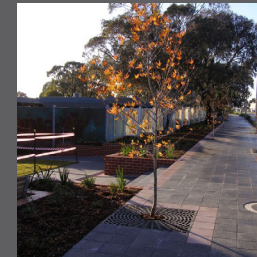
- College Avenue is a well-defined, well-furnished Street with quality public realm including nicely composed lighting, evenly spaced trees, benches, planters, clocks, stamped concrete

Weaknesses

- College Avenue streetscape provides few opportunities for people to sit down and talk face to face because benches face one way
- Parklets lack sitting, standing architecture to encourage people watching up and down the street
- Lack of bicycle infrastructure
- The public realm rarely “turns the corner” to extend north or south off of College Ave
- Other than College Avenue, the balance of streets in the core downtown lack definition and structure
- Many streets are suburban in nature with adjacent land use patterns characteristic of strip mall development typically not found in the core downtown area of a City

Opportunities

- Develop a unique set of streetscape standards which define individual streets downtown while reinforcing other plan objectives such as increased connectivity to the river
- Implement a comprehensive system of pedestrian scaled wayfinding throughout the downtown in conjunction with streetscape enhancements
- Define streetscapes using a set of standards which require buildings to front directly onto public sidewalks and right of way



Walkability: The walk must be... useful



Useful

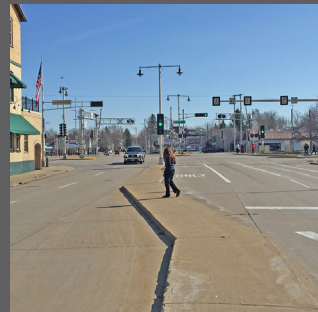
Strengths

- Variety of uses support people's daily needs: banking, apparel, hotels, eating/drinking, florist, jeweler, coffee shops, professional offices, government services, entertainment, library, education, religious, musical instruments, etc.
- Mix of on street, off street and multi-story garages

Weaknesses

- Motor vehicles dominate the public realm
- Limited transit service
- Lack of transit amenities
- Limited supply and options for housing
- Limited public open space and greening
- Overabundance of bars

Walkability: The walk must be... Safe



Safe

Strengths

- Adequate lighting on College Ave.
- Well marked cross walks on College Ave.
- Mix of night uses on College Ave. activates public realm
- Plentiful 1st floor building windows allowing eyes on the street
- On street parking protects sidewalk users

Weaknesses

- Inconsistent lighting of other streets
- Inconsistent lighting of building back sides
- Numerous blank walls along other streets
- Right turns on red
- Inadequate cycling infrastructure has bikes using the sidewalk
- Rail lines & rail crossings north of Franklin St.

Walkability: The walk must be... Comfortable



Comfortable

Strengths

- Wide sidewalks on College Ave.
- Attractive streetscape on College Ave.
- Numerous benches along College Ave.
- Numerous shade trees along College Ave.
- Seating, plantings, fountain in Houdini Plaza

Weaknesses

- Lack of streetscape furnishings beyond College Ave.
- Numerous narrow sidewalks on other streets
- Numerous driveway curb cuts along other streets
- Lack of shade trees along other streets

Walkability: The walk must be... Interesting



Interesting

Strengths

- Numerous buildings with unique/attractive facades
- Occasional murals and historic painted wall signs
- Unique business signs along College Ave.
- Occasional sculpture / public art
- Houdini Plaza
- College Ave. pocket park
- Lawrence College Campus

Weaknesses

- Lack of flexible, public green space
- Overemphasis on College Ave. – other streets are bleak
- Numerous blank walls along other streets
- Lack of visual and physical connections to the river

Public Art



Creative Culture and Public Art

Strengths

- An emerging arts and culture scene anchored by several prestigious venues such as the Trout Museum of Art, Stansbury Theater, Lawrence Memorial Chapel and the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center
- Mile of Music and a thriving local music scene
- Arts and culture are poised to play an increasing role in contributing to downtown Appleton's economic and social vitality

Weaknesses

- Maintenance of public art
- Financial sustainability to support on-going arts programming
- Lack of a public art master plan

Opportunities

- Preservation and upkeep of older, existing buildings with modestly priced rents so entrepreneurs and creatives can afford physical space to operate
- Dependable funding for cultural and arts oriented events and projects
- Formal establishment of an arts council or commission to administer, promote a public art program
- Continue creating temporary events and testing out concepts as a part of ground truthing and building long term support

Gathering Spaces



Gathering Spaces

Strengths

- There are several parks in and adjacent to downtown
- Downtown including Houdini Plaza is well programmed
- Downtown Farmer's Market very successful

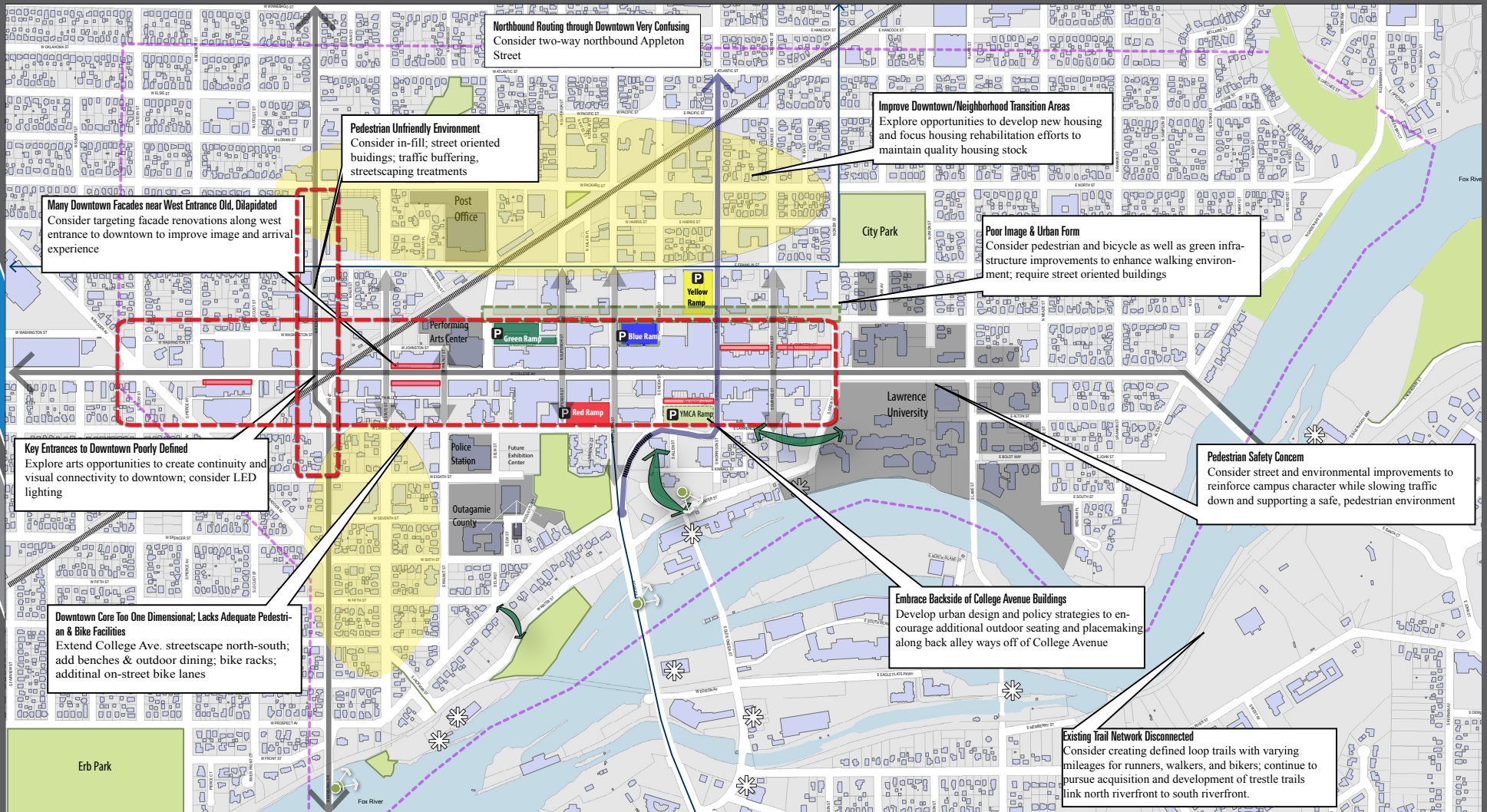
Weaknesses

- Jones Park is underused and is perceived as unsafe by some
- There is no destination gathering space on the river
- Parks and trails are not well marked or connected
- Downtown lacks adequate functional public gathering space to support variety of heavy users including YMCA, downtown events, residential development

Opportunities

- Outdoor ampitheater
- Ellen Korte Peace Park
- Repurpose YMCA Ramp site as Central Plaza
- Riverwalk along Fox River
- Trail connections
- Interactive playground





Northbound Routing through Downtown Very Confusing
 Consider two-way northbound Appleton Street

Pedestrian Unfriendly Environment
 Consider in-fill; street oriented buildings; traffic buffering, streetscaping treatments

Many Downtown Facades near West Entrance Old, Dilapidated
 Consider targeting facade renovations along west entrance to downtown to improve image and arrival experience

Improve Downtown/Neighborhood Transition Areas
 Explore opportunities to develop new housing and focus housing rehabilitation efforts to maintain quality housing stock

Poor Image & Urban Form
 Consider pedestrian and bicycle as well as green infrastructure improvements to enhance walking environment; require street oriented buildings

Key Entrances to Downtown Poorly Defined
 Explore arts opportunities to create continuity and visual connectivity to downtown; consider LED lighting

Pedestrian Safety Concern
 Consider street and environmental improvements to reinforce campus character while slowing traffic down and supporting a safe, pedestrian environment

Downtown Core Too One Dimensional; Lacks Adequate Pedestrian & Bike Facilities
 Extend College Ave. streetscape north-south; add benches & outdoor dining; bike racks; additional on-street bike lanes

Embrace Backside of College Avenue Buildings
 Develop urban design and policy strategies to encourage additional outdoor seating and placemaking along back alley ways off of College Avenue

Existing Trail Network Disconnected
 Consider creating defined loop trails with varying mileages for runners, walkers, and bikers; continue to pursue acquisition and development of trestle trails link north riverfront to south riverfront.

Redevelopment Opportunities

Commercial, Residential and Mixed Use Redevelopment Opportunities

- 1 Thompson Senior Center Closing**
Explore opportunities to maintain senior center somewhere downtown; consider incorporating into other development concepts
- 2 Excessive Surface Parking & Underutilized Parcels**
Consider redeveloping Post Crescent area into a higher impact office / residential development incorporating the existing historic portion of the building.
- 3 Excessive Surface Parking & Underutilized Parcels**
Explore opportunities to add office, commercial and/or medium density residential development.
- 4 Lack of Economic Activity North of College Avenue**
If existing library site is redeveloped/re-used consider adding a park where current library parking exists - "town square" green space with mix of development all the way around on four sides.

- 5 Future Uses of City Center Plaza & Blue Ramp**
Explore opportunities to convert portion of mall into a year round "public market"; consider Washington Square location for future grocery as market demand grows with additional downtown housing.

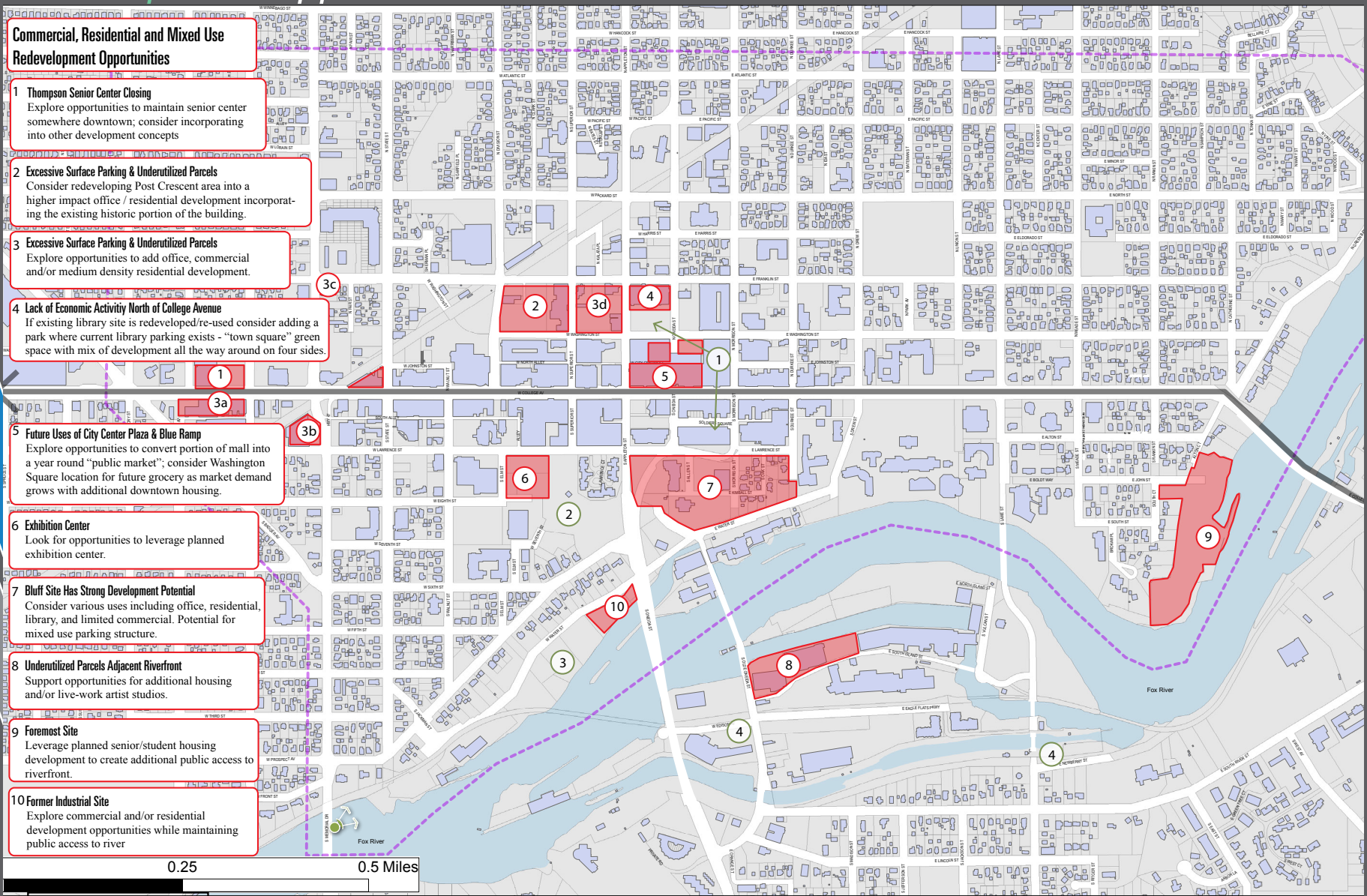
- 6 Exhibition Center**
Look for opportunities to leverage planned exhibition center.

- 7 Bluff Site Has Strong Development Potential**
Consider various uses including office, residential, library, and limited commercial. Potential for mixed use parking structure.

- 8 Underutilized Parcels Adjacent Riverfront**
Support opportunities for additional housing and/or live-work artist studios.

- 9 Foremost Site**
Leverage planned senior/student housing development to create additional public access to riverfront.

- 10 Former Industrial Site**
Explore commercial and/or residential development opportunities while maintaining public access to river



DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES
2016 DOWNTOWN APPLETON MASTER PLAN

DISCLAIMER: Consultant's preliminary opportunities only - based on consultant interviews, public input, & analysis.

Redevelopment Opportunities

1 Thompson Senior Center Closing

Explore opportunities to maintain senior center somewhere downtown; consider incorporating into other development concepts

2 Excessive Surface Parking & Underutilized Parcels

Consider redeveloping Post Crescent area into a higher impact office / residential development incorporating the existing historic portion of the building.

3 Excessive Surface Parking & Underutilized Parcels

Explore opportunities to add office, commercial and/or medium density residential development.

4 Lack of Economic Activity North of College Avenue

If existing library site is redeveloped/re-used consider adding a park where current library parking exists - "town square" green space with mix of development all the way around on four sides

5 Future Uses of City Center Plaza & Blue Ramp

Explore opportunities to convert portion of mall into a year round "public market"; consider Washington Square location for future grocery as market demand grows with additional downtown housing.

6 Exhibition Center

Look for opportunities to leverage planned exhibition center.

7 Bluff Site Has Strong Development Potential

Consider various uses including office, residential, library, and limited commercial. Potential for mixed use parking structure.

8 Underutilized Parcels Adjacent Riverfront

Support opportunities for additional housing and/or live-work artist studios.

9 Foremost Site

Leverage planned senior/student housing development to create additional public access to riverfront.

10 Former Industrial Site

Explore commercial and/or residential development opportunities while maintaining public access to river