



OFFICIAL PUBLIC NOTICE

MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2024 AT 5:45 PM

COUNCIL ROOM AT THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 450 S. MAIN STREET, RICHLAND CENTER, WI 53581

AGENDA

1. **CALL TO ORDER** *Roll Call for the meeting, determine whether a quorum is present; determine whether the meeting has been properly noticed.*
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - 3.1. November 29, 2023 Meeting Minutes
4. **DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS**
 - 4.1. Review Bids for City Wayfinding and Entrance Sign Fabrication and Installation
 - 4.2. Review of the EPA's Orange Street (Ferguson Property) Conceptual Site Design
 - 4.3. Hotel Feasibility Report
 - 4.4. Recommendation for Orange Street Land Acquisition
5. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**
 - *Inquiry on Purchasing Industrial Park Land - Bill Troxel*
 - *Report on Highway 14 Traffic Study - Presentation by MSA*
 - *Regulating Short-term Rentals*
 - *Strategic Implementation of Comprehensive Plan*
 - *Consideration of Modernized Zoning Code*
6. **SET NEXT MEETING DATE** *Fourth Wednesday of the month – January 24th*
7. **ADJOURNMENT**

Posted this 5th day of January, 2024 by 5:30 PM.

Copy to the official newspaper the Richland Observer.

Aaron Joyce, City Clerk/Treasurer

PLEASE NOTE: That upon reasonable notice, a minimum of 24 hours in advance, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals through appropriate aids and services. For additional information or to request this service contact Ashley Oliphant, City Administrator at 450 S. Main St., Richland Center, WI. 53581 or call 608-647-3466. Notice is hereby given that the council members who are not members of this committee may attend this meeting so as to constitute a quorum of the city council. Any such council member attendance will be for information gathering, discussion, and/or related purposes and will not result in the direct decision making by the city council at the committee meeting. The City of Richland Center is an equal opportunity employer, provider, and lender.

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION & ETZ BOARD

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2023 AT 5:30 PM

COUNCIL ROOM AT THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 450 S. MAIN STREET, RICHLAND CENTER, WI 53581

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Coppernoll called the meeting to order at 5:31PM. A quorum was present. Oliphant affirmed proper notice. **PLANNING COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Chair Todd Coppernoll, Karin Tepley, Ryan Cairns, Ray Wilson, Lisa Miller, Mark Jelinek, and Candace Fagerlind. Mark Jelinek departed at 6:45PM. **ETZ BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Matt Schmitz and Aaron Palmer. **ABSENT:** Matt Williams.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE REQUEST OF LAND DIVISION AT 26425 USH 14E: Member of the public Jane Nee inquired about the zoning district and number of parcels being created. Zoning Administrator Steward shared the parcel was zoned Industrial, the request was to divide one parcel into two, and that the request met the requirements for approval. Via telephone, Matt Muchow discussed the out lots depicted on the certified survey map. Motion to close the public hearing made by Palmer, Seconded by Wilson. Voting Yea: Coppernoll, Tepley, Cairns, Wilson, Miller, Jelinek, Fagerlind, Palmer, and Schmitz. Motion carried.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS – CONSIDER THE REQUEST FOR LAND DIVISION AT 26425 USH 14E: Motion to recommend to the Common Council to approve the request for land division at 26425 USH 14E by Fagerlind, Seconded by Wilson. Voting Yea: Coppernoll, Tepley, Cairns, Wilson, Miller, Jelinek, Fagerlind, Palmer, and Schmitz. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE ETZ BOARD: The ETZ Board adjourned at 5:48PM. Motion to adjourn made by Palmer, Seconded by Schmitz. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion to approve the September 27th and October 25th meeting minutes made by Jelinek, Seconded by Fagerlind. Voting Yea: Todd Coppernoll, Karin Tepley, Ryan Cairns, Ray Wilson, Lisa Miller, Mark Jelinek, and Candace Fagerlind.

REVIEW AND DISCUSS SHORT-TERM RENTAL ORDINANCE: A working draft of a Short-term Rental (STR) Ordinance being developed by Richland County was reviewed. Attorney Windle advised the County has not adopted a STR Ordinance but has based their draft largely on the Town of Holland's STR litigation experience. Tourism Coordinator Richards provided feedback & suggestions on several items like "seller's permits," recreational vehicles, parking, and proximity of rental owners. Commissioners cited concerns regarding noise, adequate inspections, fire safety, and ordinance enforcement. Attorney Windle to provide an updated draft at a future meeting.

DISCUSS PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD) FOR FORMER JEFFERSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: Zoning Administrator Steward advised the original plans presented had been changed affecting the zoning process. Rather than pursuing a PUD, the developer is considering multi-family housing allowable in an R/5 district requiring a rezone to R/5. Steward indicated that a portion of the structure may have a commercial use which would be allowable if granted a conditional use permit. A potential safety concern with the Main Street access point was also identified.

RECOMMEND WAYFINDING SIGNAGE BID AWARD: Director Glasbrenner advised that three bids were received and under review. Several questions were filed delaying the review process but will not negatively affect the goal of a spring installation. Item to be brought back to the Commission for consideration at their next meeting.

UPDATES ON ONGOING PROJECTS: Panorama – proforma underway, negotiations to follow; Hospital – development plans paused indefinitely. The city will continue to pursue the infrastructure grant; Hotel – feasibility study determined 48-54 are viable; East Hall – land division was not completed due to a concern about an adjacent use. A solution was identified; Traffic Study – MSA will provide a presentation at a future meeting.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: Wayfinding signage bids and discussion on mutual boundary agreements.

SET NEXT MEETING DATE: The next regular meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 5:30PM.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 6:53PM. Motion to adjourn. Motion made by Tepley, Seconded by Fagerlind. Voting Yea: Coppernoll, Tepley, Carins, Wilson, Miller, and Fagerlind. Motion carried.

CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER

AGENDA ITEM DATA SHEET FOR

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Agenda Item: Review and possible action on City Wayfinding and Entrance Sign Fabrication and Installation Project Bid

Meeting Date: 1/10/2024

Requested by: Jasen Glasbrenner - Economic Development Director

Background:

- Request for Proposal was released 11/9/2023
- 4 Bids were received by 11/27/2023
 - Greeley Signs – \$36,801
 - BL Signs – \$50,052
 - Lacrosse Signs – \$102,245
 - Graphic House – \$185,617
- Bids were carefully compared and clarifying questions were asked
- Project to be completed no later than 4/30/2024

Staff Recommendation:

To award wayfinding sign project to Greeley Signs

Financial Impact:

Low Bid = \$36,801

Funding Source:

TBD

Requested Action:

Motion to recommend to City Finance Committee and City Council, the award of the Wayfinding and Entrance Sign Fabrication and Installation Bid to Greeley Signs for the not to exceed amount of \$36,801.

Attachments:

- Bid Talley Sheet
- Request for Proposal
- Greeley Signs Bid
- BL Signs Bid

City Wayfinding and Entrance Signs Bid Talley
1/2/2024

		Greeley		BL Signs		LaCrosse Signs		Graphic House
Sign Group 1 - Below 35mph								
48x66 Aluminum Wayfinding								
Signs Only	12	\$ 510.97 \$ 6,131.64		\$ 685.00 \$ 8,220.00		\$ 1,287.92 \$ 15,455.04		\$ 3,989.00 \$ 47,868.00
Post Option 1								
2 - 4x6 Treated Breakaway (Per Sign)	12	\$ 277.96 \$ 3,335.52		\$ 280.00 \$ 3,360.00		Posts not Included but		Posts included in price above
Black Stained Posts		Yes		Yes		Metal Framing Supplied		
Post Option 2								
Mounting to existing pole	-			\$ 380.00 -				
Installation Services								
4x6 post application	12	\$ 285.00 \$ 3,420.00		\$ 580.00 \$ 6,960.00		\$ 239.59 \$ 2,875.08		\$ 1,510.00 \$ 18,120.00
Existing post application	-			\$ 250.00 -				
Trip Charge								\$ 3,067.00
Subtotal - Sign Group 1		\$ 12,887.16		\$ 18,540.00		\$ 18,330.12		\$ 69,055.00

Sign Group 2 - Above 35mph								
60x82.5 Alumium Wayfinding								
Signs Only	14	\$ 772.66 \$ 10,817.24		\$ 978.00 \$ 13,692.00		\$ 2,541.07 \$ 35,574.98		\$ 5,603.00 \$ 78,442.00
Post Option 1								
2 - 4x6 Treated Breakaway (Per Sign)	14	\$ 277.96 \$ 3,891.44		\$ 280.00 \$ 3,920.00				
Black Stained Posts		Yes		Yes				
Post Option 2								
Mounting to existing pole	-	- -		\$ 380.00 -				
Installation Services								
4x6 post application	14	\$ 285.00 \$ 3,990.00		\$ 580.00 \$ 8,120.00		\$ 1,711.79 \$ 23,965.06		\$ 1,510.00 \$ 21,140.00
Existing post application	-			- -				
Trip Charge								\$ 3,067.00
Subtotal - Sign Group 2		\$ 18,698.68		\$ 25,732.00		\$ 59,540.04		\$ 102,649.00

Entrance Signs								
Remove / Reface / Replace	2	\$ 2,607.75 \$ 5,215.50		\$ 2,890.00 \$ 5,780.00		\$ 24,375.00		\$ 10,846.00
Trip Charge								\$ 3,067.00
Subtotal - Sign Group 2		\$ 5,215.50		\$ 5,780.00		\$ 24,375.00		\$ 13,913.00

\$ 36,801.34	\$ 50,052.00	\$ 102,245.16	\$ 185,617.00
Grand Totals			

Conflict Of Interest Concerns	None	None	None	None
Shop Drawings / Spec Drawings - Each Sign	Yes	Yes	-	-
DOT Permitting - Location Verification	Yes	Yes	\$250	-
Engineered Drawing	No	No	No	Included



GREELEY SIGNS & GRAPHICS, LLC
1209 US Hwy 14 East
Richland Center, WI 53581
Office: 608-647-2628 Fax: 608-647-2020
www.signface.com

Item 2.

PROPOSAL / CONTRACT

Customer: City of Richland Center

Job Name: Sign Group One

Address 450 S. Main St.

Salesman Alan J Greeley

City, State Richland Center, WI. 53581

Price:

Attn: Jasen Glasbrenner

Deposit: \$3,678.98 for just signs

Phone:

Terms: Balance upon Completion

TERMS - UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED BY GREELEY SIGNS & GRAPHICS LLC.

1) This agreement will not obligate or become effective upon the customer or supplier until Greeley Signs & Graphics LLC. receives a deposit on the product in an amount of no less than 60% of the contract price. 2) Quotes are valid for 30 days. 3) All signs remain the property of Greeley Signs & Graphics LLC. until paid in full. 4) Prices do not include sales tax or permit fees.

PRICE INCLUDES: Fabricate and install twelve (12) single sided directional signs mounted on double poles or double 4 x 6 posts. See options below. The signs will be made out of 1/8-inch-thick aluminum (Two pieces – one being the top pictographic 48 x 18 and the second being the directional 48 x 48) and use 3M Hi Intensity reflective and 3M EC colored film. This film is translucent and will still allow the reflective material behind it to show through. Just using translucent material will not allow the sign to be reflective where the colors are. Each sign measures overall 48" wide by 66" tall.

Each sign cost - \$510.97 for a total of 12 signs = \$6,131.64

4 x 6 stained treated posts and supports - \$277.96 per sign x 12 = \$3,335.52 Updated 12/01/23

Install of each sign using 4 x 6 posts - \$285.00 per sign x 12 = \$3,420.00 Updated 12/01/23

Black stain will be used on the treated posts because the posts are meant to repel paint and it will become a maintenance issue with paint.

***Two 4 x 6 posts per sign**

Black metal poles and tops - \$1,074.55 each x 24 = \$25,789.20

Install of black metal poles = \$376.00 each x 24 = \$9,024.00

***Greeley Signs & Graphics LLC. will warranty each of these signs for 5 years after installation for defects in workmanship and materials.**

***Project Completion Date April 30, 2024**

The dimensions, specifications, drawings, terms and conditions applying to the above product(s) are approved and accepted by the customer. The customer agrees to order the products from the company as specified on this document and the attendant drawings and to pay for them according to their stated terms and conditions.

Not included, any hearings or engineered drawings if required by the governing authority. Quotation assumes soil contains no solid rock or frost to a depth of 10', should these conditions be encountered time and materials charges may apply. This quote does not include sales tax or permit fees.

City of Richland Center

For: Greeley Signs & Graphics LLC.

Signature

Date

Alan J Greeley

November 27, 2023

Updated 12/01/23

Email-



GREELEY SIGNS & GRAPHICS, LLC
1209 US Hwy 14 East
Richland Center, WI 53581
Office: 608-647-2628 Fax: 608-647-2020
www.signface.com

Item 2.

PROPOSAL / CONTRACT

Customer: City of Richland Center

Job Name: Sign Group Two

Address 450 S. Main St.
City, State Richland Center, WI. 53581
Attn: Jasen Glasbrenner
Phone:

Salesman Alan J Greeley
Price:
Deposit: \$6,490.34 for just signs
Terms: Balance upon Completion

TERMS - UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED BY GREELEY SIGNS & GRAPHICS LLC.

1) This agreement will not obligate or become effective upon the customer or supplier until Greeley Signs & Graphics LLC. receives a deposit on the product in an amount of no less than 60% of the contract price. 2) Quotes are valid for 30 days. 3) All signs remain the property of Greeley Signs & Graphics LLC. until paid in full. 4) Prices do not include sales tax or permit fees.

PRICE INCLUDES: Fabricate and install fourteen (14) single sided directional signs mounted on double poles or double 4 x 6 posts. See options below. The signs will be made out of 1/8-inch-thick aluminum (Two pieces – one being the top pictographic 60 x 22.5 and the second being the directional 60 x 60) and use 3M Hi Intensity reflective and 3M EC colored film. This film is translucent and will still allow the reflective material behind it to show through. Just using translucent material will not allow the sign to be reflective where the colors are. Each sign measures overall 60" wide by 82.5" tall.

Each sign cost - \$772.66 for a total of \$10,817.24

4 x 6 stained treated posts and supports - \$277.96 per sign x 14 = \$3,891.44 Updated 12/01/23

Install of each sign using 4 x 6 posts - \$285.00 per sign x 14 = \$3,990.00 Updated 12/01/23

Black stain will be used on the treated posts because the posts are meant to repel paint and it will become a maintenance issue with paint.

***Two 4 x 6 posts per sign.**

Black metal poles and tops - \$1,074.55 each x 28 = \$30,087.40

Install of black metal poles = \$376.00 each x 28 = \$10,528.00

***Greeley Signs & Graphics LLC. will warranty each of these signs for 5 years after installation for defects in workmanship and materials.**

***Project Completion Date April 30, 2024**

The dimensions, specifications, drawings, terms and conditions applying to the above product(s) are approved and accepted by the customer. The customer agrees to order the products from the company as specified on this document and the attendant drawings and to pay for them according to their stated terms and conditions.

Not included, any hearings or engineered drawings if required by the governing authority. Quotation assumes soil contains no solid rock or frost to a depth of 10', should these conditions be encountered time and materials charges may apply. This quote does not include sales tax or permit fees.

City of Richland Center

For: Greeley Signs & Graphics LLC.

Signature

Date

Alan J Greeley

November 27, 2023

Updated 12/01/23



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1209 US Hwy 14 East
Richland Center, WI 53581
Office: 608-647-2628 Fax: 608-647-2020
www.signface.com

Item 2.

PROPOSAL / CONTRACT

Customer: City of Richland Center

Job Name: Sign Group Three

Address 450 S. Main St.
City, State Richland Center, WI. 53581
Attn: Jasen Glasbrenner
Phone:

Salesman Alan J Greeley
Price: \$5,215.50
Deposit: \$3,129.30
Terms: Balance upon Completion

TERMS - UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED BY GREELEY SIGNS & GRAPHICS LLC.

1) This agreement will not obligate or become effective upon the customer or supplier until Greeley Signs & Graphics LLC. receives a deposit on the product in an amount of no less than 60% of the contract price. 2) Quotes are valid for 30 days. 3) All signs remain the property of Greeley Signs & Graphics LLC. until paid in full. 4) Prices do not include sales tax or permit fees.

PRICE INCLUDES: Remove the two existing signs on the east and west side of the city and redo the faces to match the new design. The top caps on the brick work will have to be removed so the faces can be taken down. The faces will be sanded down and primed along with new paint applied. Vinyl will be cut and applied for the new design and then the sign will get clear coated. This will give some added protection to the paint and vinyl from UV and road dust and salt flying around. Each sign - \$2,607.75 x 2 signs = \$5,215.50

***Price does include removing top caps and reinstalling them.**

***Greeley Signs & Graphics LLC. will warranty each of these signs for 5 years after installation for defects in workmanship and materials.**

***Project Completion Date April 30, 2024**

The dimensions, specifications, drawings, terms and conditions applying to the above product(s) are approved and accepted by the customer. The customer agrees to order the products from the company as specified on this document and the attendant drawings and to pay for them according to their stated terms and conditions.

Not included, any hearings or engineered drawings if required by the governing authority. Quotation assumes soil contains no solid rock or frost to a depth of 10', should these conditions be encountered time and materials charges may apply. This quote does not include sales tax or permit fees.

City of Richland Center

For: Greeley Signs & Graphics LLC.

Signature

Date

Alan J Greeley

November 27, 2023

Updated 12/01/23

Email-
agreeley@signface.com

blsignage@gmail.com

11/27/2023

**City of Richland Center
450 S. Main Street
Richland Center, WI 53581**

Sign Proposal

RE: Wayfinding Signage and Entrance Signs

Sign Group One

Signs Only

Manufacture (12) 48" W x 66" H single-faced .125" aluminum signs. Each sign will consist of (1) 18" x 48" top panel and (1) 48" x 48" destination panel.

Top sign panel custom routed. 3M High Intensity Prismatic Sheeting Series 3930 with printed and laminated colored background covering panel. 3M™ Scotchcal™ Translucent Graphic Film 3630 color blocks, and black 3M™ Scotchcal™ ElectroCut™ Graphic Film 7725 applied over sheeting.

Destination panels will be covered in 3M™ High Intensity Prismatic Sheeting Series 3930. 3M™ Series 1170 ElectroCut Film in blue (1175) applied over sheeting with cut out letters to allow reflective background to be visible.

Total: \$8,220.00 (\$685 each)

Post Options

Option 1: Two 4' x 6' treated break away posts, stained black, with stainless bolts

Total: \$280 per sign

Option 2: Galvanized or aluminum frame with three stainless steel quick clamps (for mounting on existing single light pole)

Total: \$380.00 each

Installation

Option 1: Install 4' x 6' Breakaway Wood Posts

Mark out locations and call Diggers Hotline. Dig holes, set posts and install sign.

Total: \$580.00 each

Option 2: Install Signs with Galvanized Frame (frame price is above)

Total: \$250.00 each

Sign Group Two

Signs Only

Manufacture (14) 60" W x 82.5" H single-faced .125" aluminum signs. Each sign will consist of (1) 22.5" x 60" top panel and (1) 60" x 60" destination panel.

Top sign panel custom routed. 3M High Intensity Prismatic Sheeting Series 3930 with printed and laminated colored background covering panel. 3M™ Scotchcal™ Translucent Graphic Film 3630 color blocks, and black 3M™ Scotchcal™ ElectroCut™ Graphic Film 7725 applied over sheeting.

Destination panel will be covered in 3M™ High Intensity Prismatic Sheeting Series 3930. 3M™ Series 1170 ElectroCut Film in blue (1175) applied over sheeting with cut out letters to allow reflective background to be visible.

Total: \$13,692.00 (\$978.00 each)

Post Option Two 4' x 6' treated break away posts, stained black, with stainless bolts

Total: \$280 per sign

Installation: Install 4' x 6' Breakaway Posts

Mark out locations and call Diggers Hotline. Dig holes, set posts and install sign.

Total: \$580.00 each

Entrance Signs

Remove existing entrance signs and bring back to our shop. Remove old vinyl. Sand, prime and paint sign panels with Matthews polyurethane paint. Manufacture and apply new 3M black and color vinyl graphics. Reinstall signs.

Total: \$5,780.00

BL Signs requires 50% deposit with signed proposal and signed drawing in order to proceed. Proposal is good for 30 days. Permit, permit acquisition fee and taxes are not included. A 3% processing fee will be charged if paying by credit card. This bid is subject to further clarification between the parties and does not constitute an offer to perform the aforementioned services.

Approved By: _____ Date: _____

B-L Signs _____ Date: _____

CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER

AGENDA ITEM DATA SHEET FOR

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Agenda Item: Review of EPA Conceptual Site Design for Orange St. – Ferguson Property

Meeting Date: 1/10/2024

Requested by: Jasen Glasbrenner - Economic Development Director

Agenda Item Prepared by: JG

Background:

- Since 2022 Economic Development and the City have been working closely with the DNR and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through a technical assistance program through the Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization (OBLR). Technical assistance in the field was provided by a consulting firm - ICF.
 - The EPA-OBLR and ICF completed a Market Analysis for the Furguson – Orange St. site and a Road Map to Remediation for Weber’s Dry Cleaners Remediation in April of 2023.
 - The in-kind (grant) value of this assistance and the reports was \$60,000.
 - The EPA-OBLR and ICF completed a Site Reuse Design for the Furguson – Orange St. site in December of 2023.
 - The in-kind (grant) value of this assistance and the reports was \$45,000
- These reports coupled with the recently completed Hotel Feasibility Study provide a strong foundation for the further redevelopment of Orange St. (Hotel Study = \$12,500)

Staff Recommendation:

Continue investment and take further actions on the provided plans to redevelop Orange St. and this critical section of pf Court St.

Financial Impact:

N/A

Funding Source:

N/A

Requested Action:

Attachments:



Site Reuse Design of the Ferguson Properties

in Richland Center, WI

Regionally-Directed Technical Assistance



Regionally-Directed Brownfields Technical Assistance

- **Brownfields Site Visioning/Market Analysis/Site Design**
 - Community Engagement, Visioning, and Planning
 - Technical, facilitation and logistical support to assist EPA regional staff and existing brownfields grantees or TBA recipients in planning and carrying out technical assistance for community revitalization efforts
 - Market Analyses and Economic Research
 - Conducting market studies analyzing options for feasible site reuse of one or more brownfields in specific grantee or TBA recipient communities
 - Brownfields Site Design and Revitalization Planning
 - Assistance in developing brownfield site designs or site revitalization plans, based upon community visioning exercises

Project Introduction

- Richland Center Wisconsin received Technical Assistance support from EPA's Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization and EPA Region 5.
- Provided contractor technical assistance to provide site reuse design support for the Ferguson properties and an adjacent City-owned parcel.
- The team conducted a site visit and provided a preferred alternative to support future development of the site.



Figure 1: The Ferguson properties southwest corner.

Background on The Ferguson Site

- Richland Center, Wisconsin is the county seat of Richland County and continues to look for opportunities for economic development.
- Multiple planning efforts, including a comprehensive plan for 2022-2032 have identified key goals for the city. The plan identified the need for Richland Center to restore vitality to the downtown and create an active area for residents and visitors to live, work, and play. Prior technical assistance also identified hospitality as a preferred use for the site.
- The Ferguson properties are a series of parcels located at the edge of downtown Richland Center. The sites are owned by a single owner and were historically used as a diesel care sales lot and printing press. An additional City-owned parcel is included for redevelopment planning.



Figure 2: Ferguson properties (unshaded) and adjacent City-owned parcel (shaded in red)

Challenges + Opportunities

- The Ferguson properties offer immediate opportunities for redevelopment and are considered priorities for stimulating activity on brownfields redevelopment across the city.
- Hotels in the City are frequently at capacity and reflect demand for more hotel rooms.
- Additional public spaces is needed in the city to support existing public events such as farmers' markets that are quickly outgrowing available space.



Figure 3: The Ferguson properties

Site Reuse Design

- The reuse plan provided two initial layouts for three buildings and parking spaces on site. The preferred alternative provided further development of a chosen layout, providing additional strategies for site access and public realm improvements.
- The reuse plan employs a horizontal mixed-use strategy to include a hotel, retail uses, restaurants, services, and residential units. Partial street closer and siting create additional public spaces to support events and day-use.
- Provided sample event layouts for programming of the public spaces and other related public realm improvement recommendations.



Figure 4: Initial layout options for the site.



Figure 5: Preferred Alternative site plan



Figure 6: Rendering of public space programming

Project Benefits

- The site design and public realm improvement recommendations are critical pieces to communicate the vision for the Ferguson properties to both internal stakeholders and private interests.
- Key next steps include
 - Market the site to attract hotel developers, operators, and potential ground-floor tenants.
 - Complete a Hotel Feasibility Study and market the site.
 - Develop a funding strategy and apply for grants for public realm improvements.

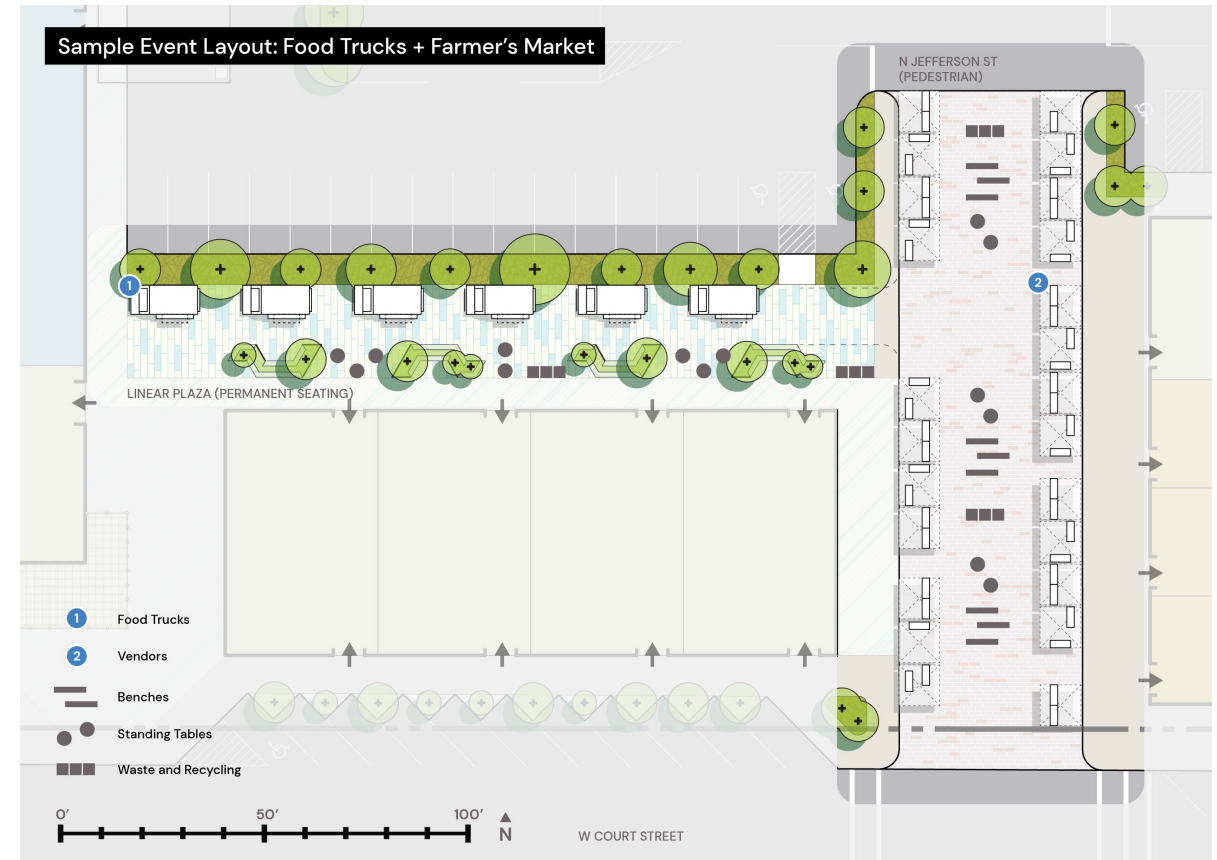


Figure 7: Sample event layout for new public spaces on site

→ 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

This report reflects ICF's analysis of data obtained from external data sources. The report was developed for Richland Center, Wisconsin under contract EP-W-12-020 with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization. This is a contractor-prepared report and does not represent EPA's position. Any publication, distribution, or use of this report beyond the stated purpose is outside of ICF's control.

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

1 Project Background

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

2 Site Plan Alternatives

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.

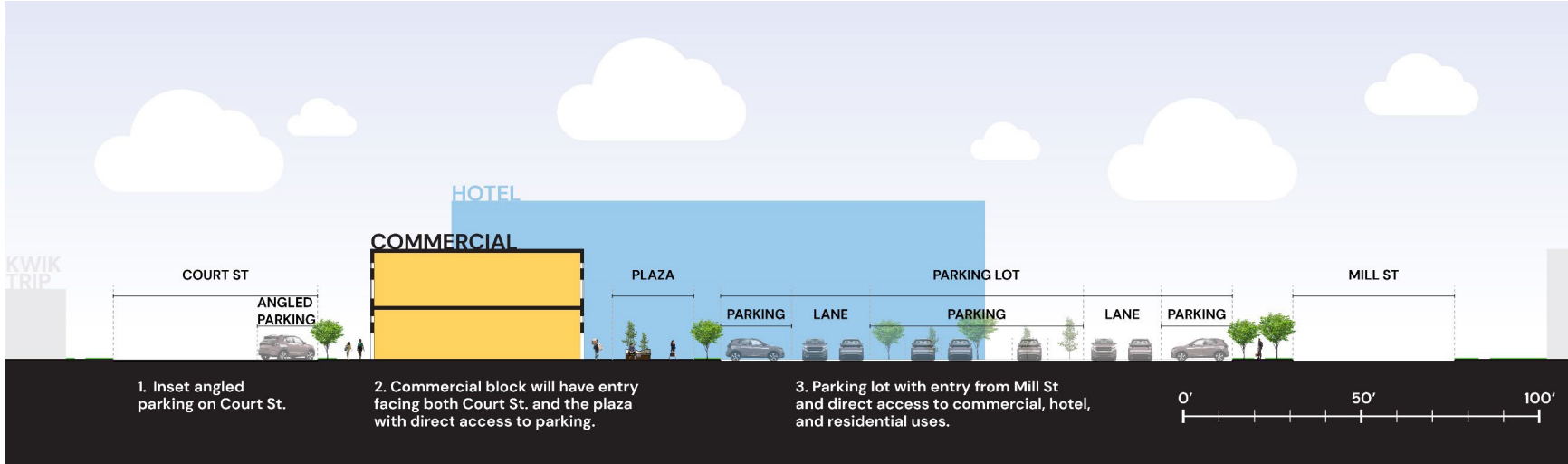


Figure 6 Section through W Court St, Building 2, the parking lot, and Mill Street illustrating access and basic streetscape.



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

3 Public Realm Improvements

3 Public Realm Improvements

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/>

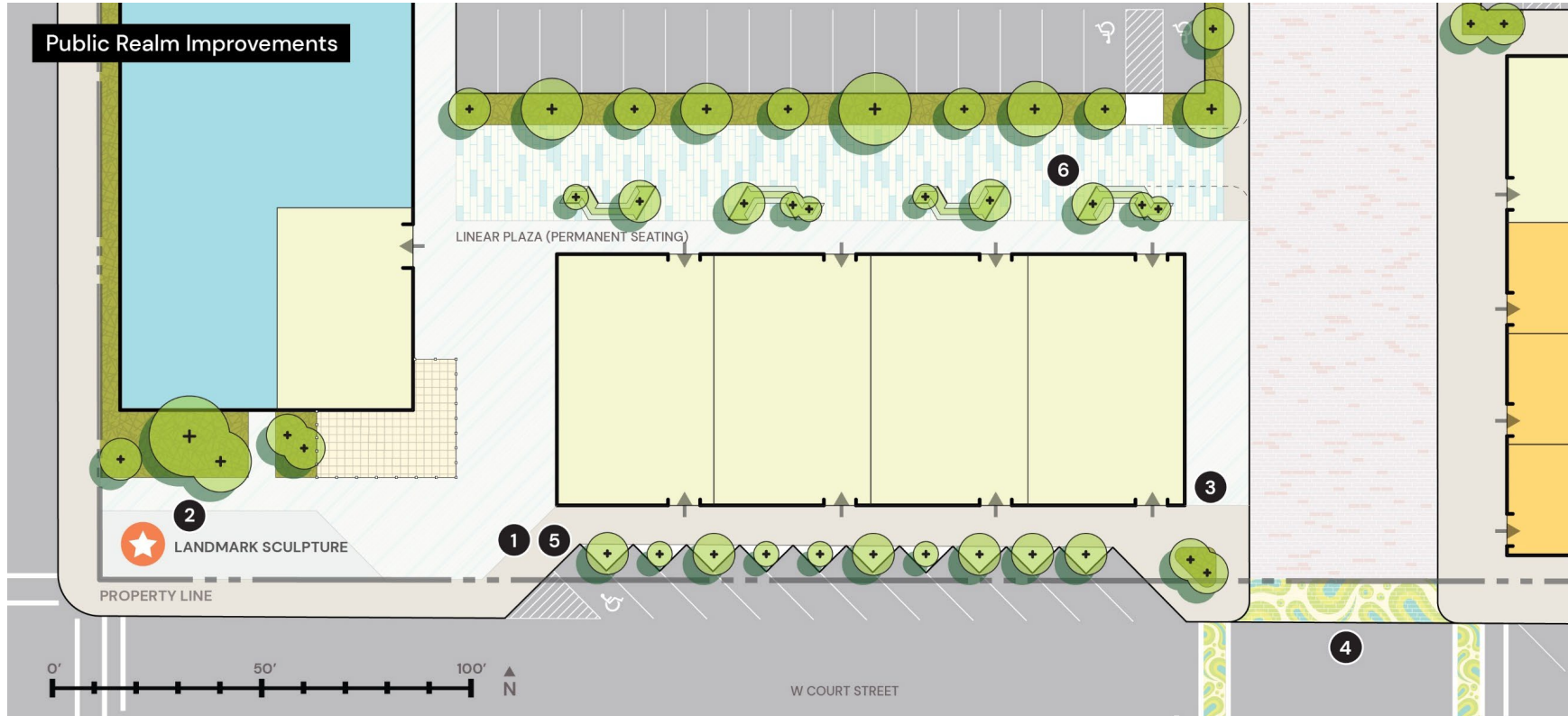


Figure 8 Public realm improvement opportunities

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.

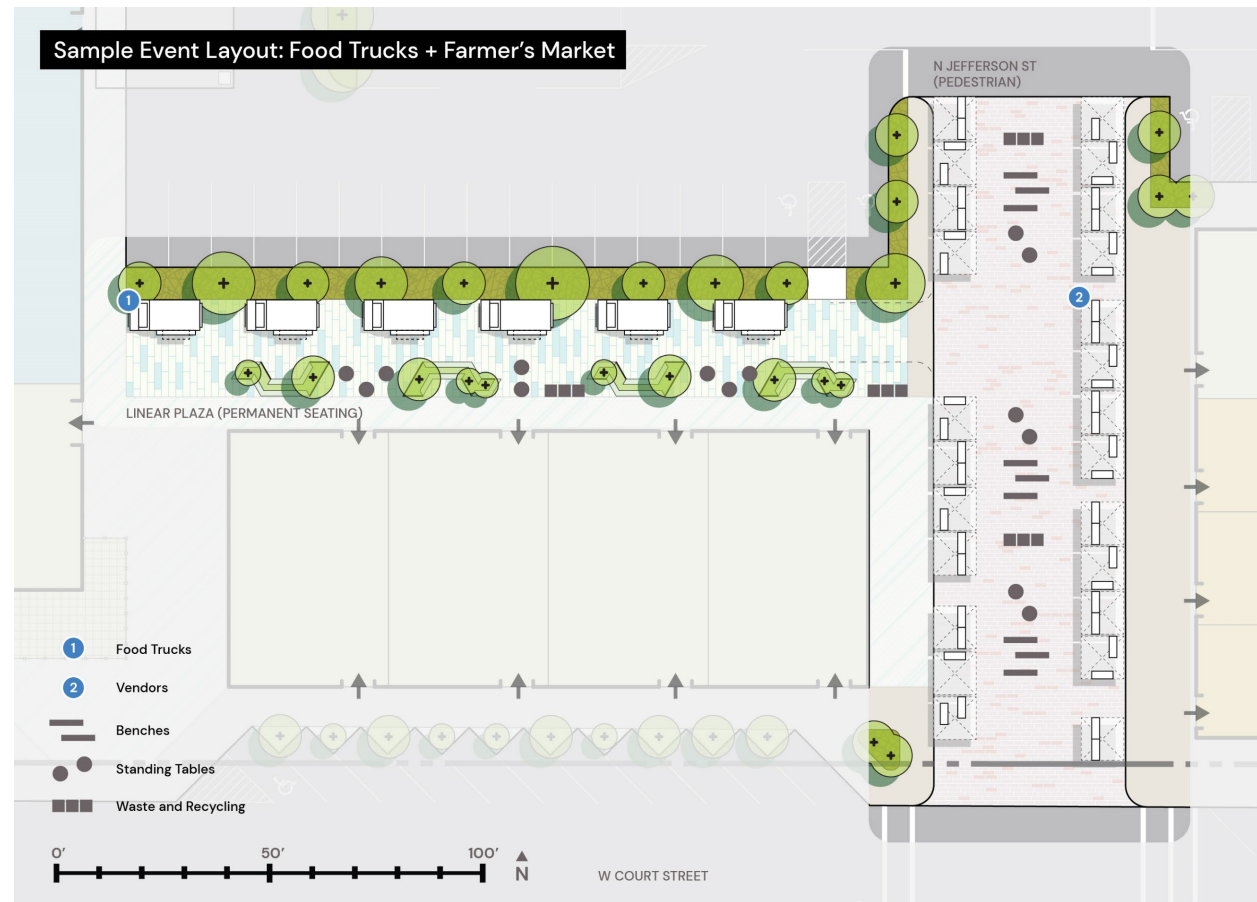


Figure 11 Sample event layout for a food truck and farmer's market event

4 Next Steps

4 Next Steps

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.

→ Market Analysis for the Ferguson Site

Richland Center, WI

Prepared by ICF via EPA Brownfields Technical Assistance

May 2023

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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 and County of Richland, Wisconsin. Successful brownfields reuse and redevelopment often depends on early consideration of the range of potential future uses 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 market analysis grounded in these local conditions will directly influence how that site is characterized, assessed, and cleaned up.

TA Recipient

City and County of Richland, Wisconsin



Site Address(es):

Ferguson Property (6 Lots), 3 N Orange St.,
City of Richland Center

Previous EPA Grants:

Wisconsin Statewide Assessment Grant, 2022

DISCLAIMER

This report reflects ICF's analysis of data obtained from external data sources. The report was developed for Richland Center, Wisconsin under contract EP-W-12-O20 with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization. This is a contractor-prepared report and does not represent EPA's position. Any publication, distribution, or use of this report beyond the stated purpose is outside of ICF's control.

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 and County of Richland to support the site reuse and revitalization planning for the Ferguson Site located in Richland Center, Wisconsin.

The Ferguson site consists of 6 parcels in the core of downtown Richland Center. The site was previously used as a diesel car sales lot and a printing press. Previous notification of contamination was submitted for fuel discharge into the soil on two parcels but has since been qualified for a No Further Action in 1993. Previous environmental assessment on N Orange St identified contaminants generally within the corridor, but not specifically on the Ferguson property.

The market analysis assesses the feasibility of re-use options identified by the community as part of a previous visioning exercise. The analysis includes an assessment of the market potential and real estate dynamics and concludes with recommendations and next steps. The assessment of market potential evaluates the demographics and labor force to understand the spending profile and workforce characteristics in the region, the analysis of the retail market to identify demand for local retail sectors and an assessment of visit trends.

Executive Summary

Richland Center (population 5,114) and Richland County (population 17,304) both experienced an aging and slightly declining population between 2010 and 2020. 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 at 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 rate and retail square footage over the past five years suggest a retail real estate market with 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.

Previous community visioning identified potential reuses for the site, including a grocery store, hotel coupled with a restaurant or mixed-use retail and housing. And thus, a goal of this study was to assess Richland Center's market to understand the feasibility of those uses on the Ferguson site. Findings from this analysis indicate the potential for Richland Center to support new retail businesses as well as food and drinking establishments. These uses could align with mixed-use development as well as a hotel coupled with a restaurant. Both of which would support ongoing downtown activation efforts and drive demand with new residents or visitors to patronize existing downtown retail and restaurants. The central location of the Ferguson site makes it a viable option for a destination restaurant or drinking place, such as a destination brewery or distillery as well as retail that would extend the downtown commercial activity to the site.

1 Project Background



1 Project Background

Richland Center, Wisconsin is the county seat of Richland County and is located on Hwy 14 between Madison and LaCrosse. In 2020 the population was 5,114. The Downtown Historic District offers unique shopping and business opportunities.

Richland Center continues to look for opportunities for economic development. Multiple planning efforts, including a comprehensive plan for 2022–2032, have been conducted to identify key goals for the City. The plan 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 in Richland Center and is expected drive local demand for goods and services through an influx of workers and visitors.



Figure 1. Ferguson Property

However, there are a slew of brownfield sites that have been difficult to redevelop, so the City needs assistance outlining the steps forward and understanding the development potential for key downtown sites. Specifically, the six sites clustered on the Ferguson Property (**Figure 1**) offer immediate opportunities. These sites are considered priorities for stimulating activity and momentum for brownfields development across the City.

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 purpose of this assessment is to conduct a market analysis to understand the viability of potential reuse options proposed by the community by vetting those uses in the context of local spending power, retail business trends and visitor activity as well as real estate market dynamics.

1.1 Site Context

The Ferguson site is situated at the edge of Richland Center's downtown core within the Downtown Planning Area, as identified in the Downtown Revitalization Plan¹. The site is bound by N Orange Street to the west, W Mill Street to the north, N Jefferson Street to the east, and W Court Street to the south. The Ferguson site consists of 6 parcels within the block owned by Larry Ferguson. The 7th parcel within the block is currently not considered for this study. As ownership and liability affects funding opportunities for remediation and clean-up, the site is under consideration for purchase by the Redevelopment Authority on behalf of the City.

¹ Downtown Revitalization Plan, March 2013. MSA Professional Services.

Given its central location in downtown Richland Center, the City considers the property 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 amenities.² Development options should be aligned to stimulate further economic activity in the area.

The site is zoned as Commercial General, which allows for mixed-use and mixed-use retail, a common development form along I-14. Prior to its present use, the site was formerly used as a diesel truck sales lot (Port Truck Sales) and a printing press. Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) has been conducted on the site or the surrounding area. Previous studies were conducted generally on the Orange Street Corridor but were not focused strictly or directly on the Ferguson site and did not specifically identify Recognized Environmental Conditions (REC) on site. However, the site has had documented prior discharge of fuel oil into the soil related to the Port Truck Sales business and was subsequently qualified for No Further Action by the South Central Region Closure Committee in 1993.

1.2 Local Demographics and Labor Force

This section of the report discusses socioeconomic, demographic and labor market conditions in Richland Center. Understanding the demographics and labor market conditions surrounding the site enables us to understand who the primary users of the site might be and what their spending patterns might tell us about the retail and service amenities that would succeed.

This market analysis will inform the redevelopment of the Ferguson Property but is relevant for other brownfields site redevelopment in and around Richland Center. This analysis focuses on Richland Center, WI, and discusses market trends within the immediate geography (15-minute drive time radius) and daily-commute shed (45-minute drive time radius) of the Ferguson Property, as shown in **Figure 2**, as well as data related to Richland County. All values in this section are derived from data prepared by ICF using the 2017 Retail MarketPlace database from ESRI unless otherwise cited.³

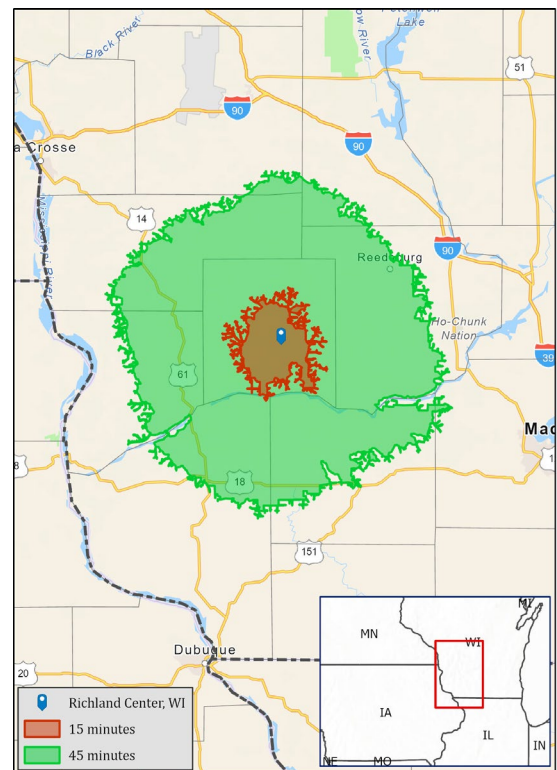


Figure 2. Region of Analysis

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

³ ESRI. (2020). *Methodology Statement: 2017 Esri Retail Marketplace*. Available at: https://downloads.esri.com/esri_content_doc/dbl/us/J9675_US_Retail_Marketplace_2017_in_2020_geography.pdf

Richland Center experienced a 1.1 percent decrease in population from 2010 to 2020, as shown in **Figure 3**, while Richland County saw a 0.5 percent population decrease during that time. Additionally, following decreasing enrollment of the University of Wisconsin–Platteville at Richland campus, the campus will be ending instructional activities after July 2023. That said, there are a significant number of unfilled jobs (~600 based on an interview in October 2022), and the population has seen more recent increases due to the pandemic and the influx of nearly 70 migrant workers on a 9-month visa.

Richland Center is home to an aging population, with total deaths expected to outpace births by 2040.⁴ The population within 15-minutes of the Ferguson Property experienced an increase in median age from 42.1 in 2010 to 43.4 in 2020.⁵ Richland County similarly contains a higher share of the population over the age of 65 than the rest of the region and the state.⁶ These population trends create a need to attract a young workforce to the area to sustain the population, and to ensure necessary housing and amenities are readily available to accommodate a potential influx of new residents.

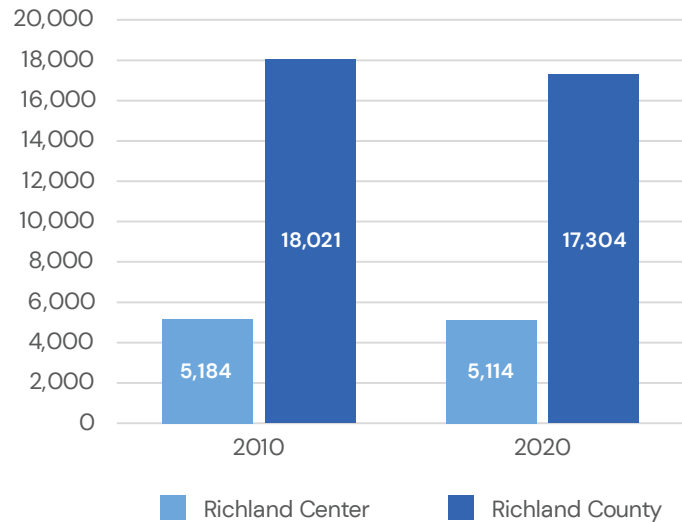


Figure 3. Population Trends in Richland Center and Richland County

43.4

2020 Median Age of the Population

- Increased 1.3 years since 2010

\$41,724

2020 Median Household Income

- About 20% less than Richland County

Both Richland Center and Richland County are predominantly White (91.6 percent and 96.4 percent, respectively), however, Richland Center experienced a 202.3 percent increase in Latinx population from 2000 to 2020.⁷ Over 90 percent of the population of Richland Center has obtained a High School Diploma, but only 21 percent of the city's residents and just 13 percent of the population within 15-minutes of the Ferguson Property have achieved a bachelor's degree or higher. Median household income in Richland Center is below that of Richland County, at \$41,724 and \$52,052, respectively.

In 2021, the labor force within the 15-minute drive radius comprised 4,747 individuals with an unemployment rate of 2.9%. The largest employment sectors are in manufacturing, healthcare, and retail trades, as shown in **Table 1**.

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

⁵ Comprehensive Plan for Richland Center, Wisconsin 2022–2023. Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. Richland Center, WI Downtown Revitalization Plan. MSA Professional Services. 2012.

⁶ Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2014–2019. Published April 2014. Southwestern Wisconsin Economic Development District.

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau.

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

Table 1: Top 5 Occupations by Number of Workers, 15-minute drive radius, 2021.

Occupation	# of Workers	% of Total Workers
Manufacturing	1,022	22%
Health Care / Social Assistance	781	17%
Retail Trade	548	12%
Educational Services	341	7%
Construction	311	7%

Source: ESRI 2021 Labor Force

In 2021, the labor force within the 45-minute drive radius comprised 46,246 individuals with an unemployment rate of 3.1%. The largest employment sectors are similarly in manufacturing, healthcare, and retail trades, as shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Top 5 Occupations by Number of Workers, 45-minute drive radius, 2021.

Occupation	# of Workers	% of Total Workers
Manufacturing	8,337	19%
Health Care / Social Assistance	6,508	15%
Retail Trade	6,005	13%
Construction	3,832	9%
Educational Services	3,426	8%

Source: ESRI 2021 Labor Force

Top Employers in County

- Rockwell Automation
- Foremost Farms USA
- Schreiber Foods
- Richland Hospital Inc.
- Seats Inc.
- Richland County Government

As noted in both the Comprehensive Plan for Richland Center⁸ and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy⁹, 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. The region is challenged,

however, by a decline in the overall number of workers. As noted in the Richland Workforce Attraction Marketing Plan, the workforce age population of Richland County decreased by 9.2 percent between 2010 and 2021 and is expected to continue to decline.¹⁰ These trends indicate a focus on workforce training and improved educational outcomes is needed to address current workforce challenges, while an overall focus on attracting young professionals to the area will serve to improve labor force conditions in the region.

⁸ Comprehensive Plan for Richland Center, Wisconsin 2022–2023. Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

⁹ Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2014–2019. Published April 2014. Southwestern Wisconsin Economic Development District.

¹⁰ Richland Workforce Attraction Marketing Plan. 2021. Richland County.

1.3 Community Input

Over the course of the project, ICF engaged in one-on-one interviews as well as a stakeholder session with municipal staff members during the October 2022 site visit. The goal of these conversations was to understand the community priorities, and further refine our understanding of the market demand and visitor trends.

Prior to ICF's involvement, previous community visioning identified potential reuses for the Ferguson site, including¹¹:

- Grocery store
- Hotel coupled with a sit-down restaurant
- Mixed-use development that includes retail and housing

To that end, our analysis looked to assess the feasibility of those uses in the context of the market analysis and Richland Center's overall economic development efforts.

Richland Center and the broader region have created multiple community planning efforts. The Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SWWRPC) helped Richland Center perform a comprehensive plan for the City through 2032. The plan relied on stakeholder input to create a guide to meet community goals. The plan identified the need for Richland Center to attract visitors and young people through restoring vitality to the downtown and create an active area for residents and visitors to live, work, and play. It suggested increasing outdoor public space and promoting businesses that center around food and outdoor recreation.

During the site visit, ICF discussed current industry trends related to the new hospital and recent vacancies in commercial development beyond downtown as well as the increasing demand for housing, driven by both the almost 70 migrant workers who are in Richland Center on 9-month visas as well as transplants who have relocated to Richland Center from regional population centers looking for a quieter town and slower pace of life. Stakeholders felt that a new hotel and higher price-point restaurant such as a steakhouse would fill an existing gap in Richland Center. Additionally, mixed-use retail that offered flexible space for small-footprint businesses appealed to the community as well. That said, it was reported that current rents were too high for emerging businesses, and thus to be viable, the cost of space would need to be offset.

The business incubator in Platteville was identified as a model that might work in Richland Center to support entrepreneurs and start-up businesses. Other retail and service community needs that were identified include package shipping services such as a FedEx, a dog daycare, a dentist, indoor recreational space for children or a tutoring facility.

Platteville Business Incubator – The Platteville Business Incubator provides office, manufacturing, commercial kitchen, and various other spaces to support entrepreneurs and start-up businesses at below market rate rent. The incubator provides business support services while state organizations including the Wisconsin Small Business Development Center provide planning assistance and start up and expansion loans.



¹¹ The Orange Street Commons Planning Study further identified a bowling alley, pharmacy, senior center and hotel as other needs expressed by the community. It should be noted that currently adjacent to the Ferguson site is a bowling alley, pharmacy and senior living center.

After the site visit, ICF conducted interviews with additional stakeholders to get more information about visitor trends and the market for a proposed hotel. While the details of those discussions are captured more fully in the visitor trends discussion (Section 2.3), stakeholders consistently highlighted the growing visitor market, the current vibrancy of downtown businesses and opportunities to grow non-traditional lodging to satisfy demand and create a brand for Richland Center travel. In addition to short-term rental units (e.g. AirBnB), stakeholders felt there was demand for a small footprint hotel such as Cobblestone that offered amenities that would attract both business and leisure travelers.

Cobblestone Hotels –

Cobblestone Hotels offer upper-midscale accommodations for smaller communities that may not have large hotel chains widely available.

Cobblestone advertises the brands' ability to offer all the amenities of a larger chain but at a smaller scale that communities such as Richland Center are better suited to support.



1.4 Real Estate Market Dynamics

Finally, an understanding of the existing real estate context is also necessary to vet potential redevelopment opportunities. This section provides an evaluation of the existing commercial and residential conditions of the area that could influence brownfield redevelopment opportunities at the Ferguson site.

Retail Real Estate Market

The commercial real estate market for retail locations is focused on two main locations within Richland County: the Highway 14 corridor leading into downtown and the central business district. It's important to distinguish between the types of businesses and spaces that would locate between the two. For example, the Highway 14 corridor is dominated by strip mall development and destination, free-standing retail outlets. Downtown offers smaller footprint, ground floor retail options for businesses. The market dynamics for these two locations are slightly different and this real estate analysis focused on the downtown area, which is more proximate to the Ferguson site.

CoStar data indicates that retail properties are currently being leased between \$7 to \$10/SF. These are slightly lower rents than what the market is commanding for strip mall development (\$9 to \$11/SF). These low rental rates are often a deterrent for owners of commercial properties to upgrade and attract new tenants because the value of leasing the space would not generate a high enough return on investment to commit and often, public investment or support is needed to entice activity within the market. Vacancy rates in Richland Center's central business district are lower than the freestanding retail along the highway but are still concerning (about 10% vs 20%). Typically, a 5% vacancy rate is an accepted benchmark of a well-functioning commercial market, which allows for a balance of lease choice for potential tenants and strong enough tenant demand. However, it is important to consider the recent closure and particular operator of the strip mall that may be impacting the vacancy trends across those developments. Downtown locations may have several different landlords or owners that would protect it from major impacts of one leaving the area.

Residential Real Estate Market

On the residential side, having an adequate and attainable housing stock for local residents provides not only a quality of life but can help to attract a sustainable employee pool, and can further attract businesses to the area where workers reside. SWWRPC performed a Housing and Workforce Study in April 2019 for both the County and Richland Center specifically, to understand the housing issues in

the region and provide near-term policies that would help address these issues. Through extensive outreach to stakeholders and developers and data analyses, the study identified the following key findings.

- The current housing market is characterized by a low inventory of homes and strong demand, leading to inflated values of for-sale properties.
- Strong demand for affordable low-maintenance, single-family housing. Other research by this project team noted that attainable housing, targeting median incomes between 80% and 120% of the area median income were also in high demand. Additionally, the study found that there are not a lot of available building lots within Richland Center and that new housing on the market is out of the price range of many residents.
- Need for affordable rental units. From additional research into the rental housing market, discussed below, there are little to no rental units available on the market currently.
- Existing housing has deferred maintenance. The amount of work necessary to update homes means that many first-time home buyers are unable to secure financing for homes in their price range.

While the study was conducted before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, these trends are expected to continue into the foreseeable future. Across the U.S., the housing market has cooled from its extreme peak during the 2021 – 2022 timeframe but there is still increased demand for housing in addition to the latent local demand that existed before the pandemic. The number of home sales in 2022 reached a 15-year high with 199 across Richland County, up from 185 in 2021 and 156 ten years prior.¹² In March 2023, Zillow showed 13 houses on the market of various conditions.¹³ There are also several building plots available outside of City limits in the greater County and two open lots are available within Richland Center. The only new construction building on the market as of March 2023 was a duplex listed at \$625,000, well above the means of the area median income. Many of the homes for sale appeared to have deferred maintenance and would need significant upgrades or renovations. This connects to an issue highlighted by the previous SWWRPC report that the housing stock needed maintenance and many first-time homebuyers could not afford the financing to acquire and renovate these properties.

SWWRPC noted in their study that demand is strongest for housing between \$80,000 and \$100,000. However, the median home sale price in Richland County was \$183,000 in 2022 and had not dipped below \$100,000 since 2014 when the median price only dropped to \$95,500. This illustrates the need for attainable housing to attract a strong workforce of teachers, emergency personnel, and healthcare workers.

In addition to the for-sale residential market, it's important to consider the rental market that may be attractive to young professionals, older individuals looking to downsize, or temporary workers in healthcare or construction that are in the City for a limited time. When conducting research in early 2023, there were almost no rental units available within the community. There were two units listed as available outside of Richland Center in the Brookview Townhomes complex for approximately

¹² Wisconsin REALTORS® Association: Wisconsin Housing Statistics (wra.org)

¹³ Zillow, Richland Center, WI For Sale Homes. https://www.zillow.com/homes/Richland-Center,-WI_rb/, accessed March 2, 2023.

\$300/month for a two-bedroom unit.¹⁴ According to CoStar data, there are 14 rental properties in the Richland Center area, with about 269 units total.¹⁵ The vacancy rate of the rental stock is 3.9%, which has also been the prevailing five-year average. Occupancy peaked around the second quarter of 2021 when about 98% of units were occupied. The market rent has risen to \$646 per month in 2023, up approximately \$20 over the five-year average. With little to no construction of new units on the horizon, the market is expected to remain tight for rental units in the future.

The lack of rental units not only deters short-term stays for medical or business staff, or corporate entities looking for long-term rental agreements, but it also limits the options for low-income residents. These residents may not have access to homeownership but would be able to rent. Despite these trends, there is opportunity to support upper-story conversions to residential units for many buildings in downtown Richland Center. These units are often underutilized and could provide low-cost infill housing to bolster the City's rental stock.

¹⁴ Zillow. https://www.zillow.com/homes/Richland-Center,-WI_rb/, accessed March 2nd, 2023.

¹⁵ CoStar, accessed March 2, 2023.

2 Market Analysis

2 Occupier Analysis

This occupier analysis begins a detailed analysis of household supply and demand for goods and services in the Primary Trade Area of Richland Center (15-minute drive-time radius from the site), the Expanded Trade Area (45-minute drive-time area), and the City of Richland Center. The analysis uses commercial retail leakage (spending outside of the study area by local consumers), retail surplus (spending within the study area originating from external consumers), market data, trade area demographics (which are indicative of spending power), and an analysis of the retail market within the Primary Trade and the Expanded Trade Area. The analysis further evaluates sales per square foot data by business type to estimate the square feet (SF) and number of additional establishments that the Primary Trade Area could support.

Additional demand for non-retail household services, like health, financial, and other family services, are evaluated for surplus and leakage to determine local demand for these non-retail businesses. The service analysis leverages data on the number of existing service establishments within Richland Center¹⁶ to create a per capita ratio. ICF then created a state benchmark to estimate how many additional establishments could be supported. The occupier analysis identifies the best mix of retail or service establishments for the current market without overbuilding. While these suggestions are based on average spending patterns and sizes of establishments, actual building and occupant SF of each proposed use can fluctuate based on site constraints and the nature of that business.

Finally, in addition to residents, visitors—whether it be tourists or visitors staying for short-term employment opportunities—drive the demand for goods and services, such as restaurants and bars, retail and services, and hotels or short-term rentals.

2.1 Retail Business Opportunities

To assess the retail potential of the Ferguson property, ICF determined the businesses located within 15-minute and 45-minute drive-time areas and identified the demand for these goods and services based on the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the community. ICF then identified the retail leakage (gap between retail supply and demand) for each industry. The analysis relies on profiles of the retail marketplace prepared by ICF using the most recent available data from the 2017 Retail MarketPlace database from ESRI.¹⁷ It is important to note that this data from 2017 does not account for the impacts that may have arisen from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is likely that retail, restaurants and other in-person businesses were negatively impacted by the pandemic through lower levels of employment and sales. The local retail sector is still in recovery, which bodes well for retail business growth. It also should be noted that short-term residents and visitors, notably Richland's 150 migrant workers, are not captured adequately in the occupier analysis, so demand may be underestimated.

Retail Business Market Assessment

This section of the analysis focuses on the retail market within the Primary Trade Area (15-minute drive-time) and the Expanded Trade Area (45-minute drive-time). Developers and planners can use

¹⁶ Data obtained from Dunn and Bradstreet

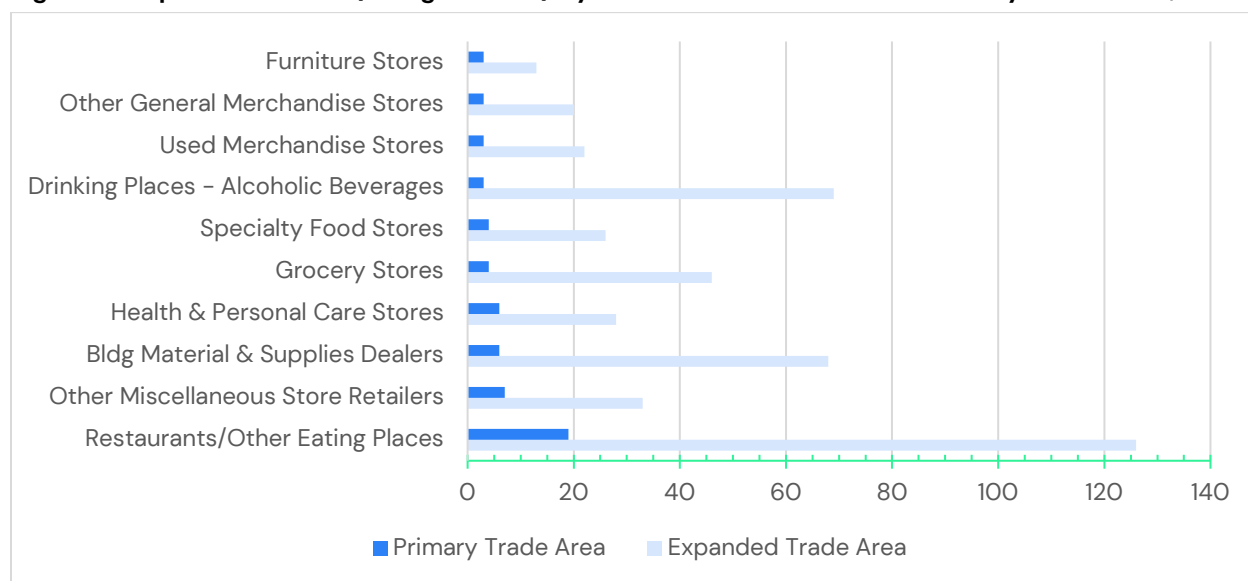
¹⁷ ESRI. (2020). Methodology Statement: 2017 Esri Retail Marketplace. Available at: https://downloads.esri.com/esri_content_doc/dbl/us/J9675_US_Retail_Marketplace_2017_in_2020_geography.pdf

this information to better understand the characteristics of the trade areas, types of businesses, and market potential and community benefits of industries and businesses.

Within the Primary Trade Area there are 104 registered retail and food service businesses, 81 of which were in retail trade that sell a distinct product (e.g., home furnishings, general merchandise, clothing & clothing accessories), and 22 of which were restaurants or bars (e.g., food service & drinking places), as indicated in **Figure 4**. The industries with the largest number of businesses are classified as restaurants/other eating places, other miscellaneous store retailers, building material and supplies dealers, and health and personal care stores.

Within the Expanded Trade Area, data indicates there were 784 registered retail and food service businesses, 556 of which were in retail trade, and 218 of which were in food and drink services. While restaurants/other eating places and building material and supplies dealers still hold the first and third largest number of businesses by industry, respectively, alcoholic beverage drinking places had the second largest number of businesses within the Expanded Trade Area.

Figure 4. Top 10 Industries (4-Digit NAICS) by Number of Businesses in Primary Trade Area, 2017



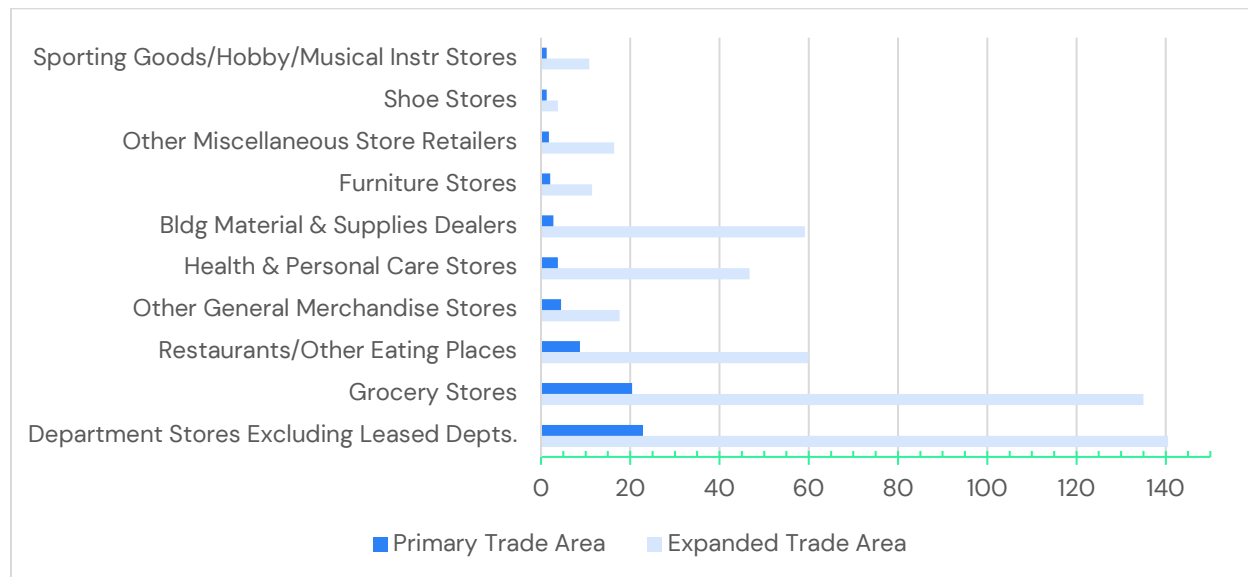
Source: Data from ESRI, modified and interpreted by ICF.

Retail sales, measured in terms of 2017 retail sales, demonstrates spending that is occurring within the trade area, including spending by consumers who have travelled to the area to purchase a good or service. Retail demand is based upon the expected expenditures of consumers on a given retail product, as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics' annual Consumer Expenditure Surveys.¹⁸ Within the Primary Trade Area, department stores draw the most in retail sales, with nearly \$23 million in sales annually, followed by grocery stores with over \$20 million. Similarly, department stores and grocery stores draw the most in retail sales within the 45-minute drive-time area, with over \$140 million and \$135 million, respectively, in sales annually. **Figure 5** illustrates the top annual

¹⁸ ESRI. (2020). *Methodology Statement: 2017 Esri Retail Marketplace*. Available at: https://downloads.esri.com/esri_content_doc/dbl/us/J9675_US_Retail_Marketplace_2017_in_2020_geography.pdf

retail sales by industry within the Primary Trade Area in ascending order, with sales within the Expanded Trade Area for comparison.

Figure 5. Top 10 Industries (4-Digit NAICS) by Annual Retail Sales in Primary Trade Area, (\$ Millions), 2017



Source: Data from ESRI, modified and interpreted by ICF.

While sales information demonstrates the current demand, what is more useful in this context is the retail potential, or the amount of money that consumers in the area are willing to spend on each industry. Overall demand is greatest for grocery stores and department stores; however, this demand may have already been met by the supply (sales).

This high-level analysis provides important insights into local retail demand. Rural cities and towns not only serve the town residents, but also act as the commerce and entertainment center for the surrounding rural dispersed populations that include farmers, ranchers and others who regularly make journeys into town for supplies. These dispersed residents are a component of Richland Center's Primary Trade Area Demand along with local residents living within the City limits.

As indicated in **Figure 5**, the 45-minute Expanded Trade Area provides significantly more retail goods and services than the 15-minute Primary Trade Area. The 45-minute radius includes other smaller towns comparable to Richland Center, such as Spring Green and Viroqua. Richland Center is the virtual center of a ring of competing commerce centers that likely capture consumer spending the further away from Richland Center they are.

The 45-minute drive time is based on commuters who will likely do some spending in Richland Center. However, the vast majority of Richland Center retail consumers are likely to be local and dispersed populations. In evaluating retail and household services demand, this study focuses on the 15-minute Primary Trade Area in evaluating business opportunities in Richland Center.

Richland Center's Primary Trade Area

As shown in **Table 3**, within the Primary Trade Area, the industries with the largest positive retail potential are building materials, garden equipment & supply stores, health & personal care stores, and food services and drinking places. Within the 45-minute drive-time area, additional industries with unmet supply include electronics and appliance, food and beverage, and general merchandise stores.

Table 3: Top 5 Industries by Retail Gap within a 15-Minute Radius (3 Digit NAICS), 2017

2017 Industry Group (NAICS)	NAICS	Gap
Building Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	444	\$5,232,281
Health & Personal Care Stores	446	\$3,800,006
Food Services & Drinking Places	722	\$1,986,873
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	448	\$1,886,093
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	453	\$1,686,435
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	451	\$1,252,380

Source: Data from ESRI, modified and interpreted by ICF.

Retail Business Primary Trade Area Opportunities

Retail leakage represents the amount of consumer retail spending that is leaving the trade area. No trade area can capture 100% of its own consumer spending. For example, people drive to destination restaurants and specialized stores, travel away from home, vacation, and generally are not bound by trade area boundaries. It is assumed that in general, local consumers will spend about 80% of their household consumption, or "local capture" in their own trade area. Additionally, an expected 91% of retail purchases occurred in stores versus online in 2017. Thus, actual spending available to support new establishments is a function of the retail gap (**Table 3**) discounted by these two factors, as reflected under Available Spending in **Table 4**.¹⁹

To determine the square footage of new retail space that can be supported by capturing local spending, total available new sales are divided by typical retail sales per square foot in that industry. **Table 4** illustrates estimated square feet that can be supported in these business categories. The ICF team excluded industries, such as electronic shopping & mail-order houses, that would not be viable for downtown Richland Center, and instead focused on opportunities that generate in-person shopping.

Given household income, demand by category, and typical business sizes in the trade area, the number of business establishments that could be supported are also estimated below in **Table 4**. Business size data represents national estimates which include regional and national chains and can be larger than the smaller-scale local business start-ups likely in the trade area. While the estimates

¹⁹ US Census Bureau (USCB), 2021. Sales for U.S. Electronic Shopping and Mail-Order Houses (NAICS 4541) – Total and E-commerce by Primary Business Activity (2015–2021). Available at: <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2021/econ/arts/supplemental-ecommerce.html>

may undercount the total number businesses supported, they are considered to be reliable estimates on average.

Table 4: Estimated New Establishments Potential by Industry (3-Digit NAICS), 15-minute radius

2017 Industry Group (NAICS)	NAICS	Available Spending	Typical Business Size, SF	Estimated New Establishments Supported
Building Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply Stores	444	\$3,816,799	10,000	~ 1
Health & Personal Care Stores	446	\$2,594,980	20,000	~ 0
Food Services & Drinking Places	722	\$1,449,367	3,000	~ 1
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	448	\$1,375,851	3,500	~ 1
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	453	\$1,230,206	15,000	~ 0
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	451	\$913,575	20,000	~ 0
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	442	\$669,045	9,000	~ 0
TOTAL		\$12,049,822		~ 3

Source: Data from ESRI, Bizminer, U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), modified and interpreted by ICF and Development Research Partners.

In summary, it is estimated that about \$12 million of retail spending could be supported by capturing local spending now leaking out of the trade area. This available spending translates into an estimated three new business spaces that could be supported by existing demand currently leaking from the trade area.

The occupier analysis presented here is just one way to approach redevelopment opportunities and can be used in conjunction with previous analyses. For example, the Richland Center, WI Downtown Revitalization Plan identified a lack of department stores, bakeries, jewelry and clothing stores, and restaurants.²⁰ In addition to identifying the establishments supported, it is also equally important to have a local champion or entrepreneur who is excited about these opportunities and will help make them a reality. While Richland Center might not prioritize these uses for the retail sites directly surrounding the Ferguson Property, the retail market could support more of these types of businesses. Richland Center can leverage this information to understand the potential retail demand and leakage of an industry best suited for the study area.

2.2 Household and Personal Service Opportunities

That said, the retail opportunities present only half of the commercial market. Services make up another important part of potential redevelopment opportunities. Services are equally important to balance the attractions of downtown and provide amenities for both residents and visitors. A combination of retail and service businesses will help downtown weather fluctuations in tourism or other disruption and diversify local employment opportunities with higher paying jobs than are typical in retail businesses.

²⁰ Richland Center, WI Downtown Revitalization Plan. MSA Professional Services. 2012.

Services include non-retail businesses such as doctors, dentists, allied health professionals, laundry or personal services, financial services, and similar consumer businesses. With the growing aging population in Richland Center, providing these types of services and amenities within a short walking distance that is easily accessible will be important in supporting senior populations as they age in place. Services and amenities are also key in drawing in young families. These businesses can range in size from small to medium and often adaptively reuse existing space. They can have a small footprint at 500 to 1,000 square feet for a single optometrist, or up to 5,000 square feet or larger for child or adult day care centers. Demand for service providers is based on the number of providers per person in the trade area relative to the providers per capita in the state of Wisconsin. **Table 5** shows the estimated additional service-businesses square footage that could be supported by the gap between existing service providers and the establishments that could be supported.

Based on the state-wide benchmark, most household services are met, suggesting that there is no immediate untapped local demand and moreover Richland Center is likely serving the broader regional demand with its service establishments, as shown in **Table 5**. That said, it should be remembered that demand from short-term residents, notably Richland's 150 migrant workers, is not captured in the local demand estimate, resulting in an underestimate. That said, daycare operation is demonstrating demand for new establishments (**Table 5**).

Table 5: Estimated New Services Potential by Industry in Richland Center

Service Category	NAICS	Existing Service Providers	Typical Size, SF	New Establishments Supported
Daycare	62441	6	5,900	2
Home Health Care Services	6216	3	13,000	Local Demand Met
Credit Intermediation	522	15	3,500	Local Demand Met
Lawyers	54111	11	1,200	Local Demand Met
Doctors	62111	7	1,200	Local Demand Met
Dentists	62121	6	1,200	Local Demand Met
Chiropractors	62131	4	1,200	Local Demand Met
Optometrists	62132	3	1,200	Local Demand Met
Therapists - physical, occupational, speech	62134	2	3,000	Local Demand Met
Outpatient Care Centers	6214	3	3,500	Local Demand Met
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	623	12	3,500	Local Demand Met
Personal Household Services	812	30	1,200	Local Demand Met

Source: Data from USCB Nonemployer Statistics and County Business Patterns, D&B Hoovers, Bizminer, D&B Hoovers, modified and interpreted by ICF

2.3 Visitor Trends

Demand from local residents tells only part of the demand story. Visitors, either tourists or those staying for short-term employment stints, further drive the demand for goods and services, such as restaurants and bars, retail and services, as well as lodging in the form of hotels and short-term rental units (e.g. VRBO or Airbnb).

Particularly over the past few years as the pandemic has made remote work more feasible, Richland Center has become a destination for visitors from regional metropolitan centers such as Milwaukee, Madison, Minneapolis, and Chicago. From 2020–2021, Richland County saw a 22.6% increase in direct visitor spending.²¹ Additionally, based on insight from local stakeholders, it is estimated that 84% of Richland Center visitors come from within a 3-hour driving distance. These travelers tend to be 23–40 years old, singles or couples traveling without kids who are interested in a unique rural experience. They are drawn to cabin-style lodging with amenities such as a hot tub or sauna versus a traditional hotel. Many of these visitors have been attracted to short-term rental units for week-long or extended stays.

That said, there is also a market for corporate or more traditional travel accommodation by those who are coming into Richland Center for business (mainly medical) or to attend specific events such as a truck and tractor show, tractor ride, or rodeo. The latter visitor tends to represent the older demographic coming into town for one to two nights. Richland Center currently hosts 32 travel medical professionals who are in town for week-long stays.

Currently there are four traditional motels in Richland Center (Ramada Inn, Centerlodge, Starlite Motel, ParkView) and 3 hotels within the county. The Ramada Inn was recently renovated due damage caused by a leak, however stakeholders expressed concern about the overall quality of the operation. Despite having a strong year in 2022 with an average occupancy of 65%, the on-site bar and restaurant closed, reducing the amenities, which may impact occupancy going forward.

Based on local stakeholder input, visitor traffic in 2022 was up 20–30% month-over-month compared to the previous year (2021) and as of December 2022 up 52% from the previous year. In fact, local tourism dollars peaked in 2022 due in part to targeted marketing in the form of digital billboards as well as infrastructure improvements such as fiber optic connectivity that has made remote work possible. With this influx of visitors to Richland Center, new development should consider visitor spending in terms of entertainment and retail options as well as lodging.

²¹ Travel Wisconsin, 2021. Total Tourism Impacts. Available at: https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/raw/upload/v1/clients/wisconsin/WI_Tourism_County_Table_2021_FINAL_644db569-8dc7-4c58-9462-c419df036e3f.xlsx

3 Feasibility and Next Steps



3 Feasibility of Proposed Uses

Previous community visioning identified potential reuses for the Ferguson property including a grocery store, mixed-use retail with upper floor housing, and a hotel coupled with a restaurant. While there may be expressed community interest for each of these uses, current market conditions are better situated to support some uses over others. A review of market conditions in Section 2 identified the potential for Richland Center to support new retail and service businesses in building materials and garden equipment supply, food services and drinking, and clothing and clothing accessories. These uses can align with the community-proposed ideas, in terms of ground-floor mixed use for either housing or lodging on upper floors.

Leveraging both the occupier analysis as well as interviews with local stakeholders, ICF evaluated the feasibility of the three community-supported uses.

Hotel & Restaurant

Currently, there is limited high-quality traditional visitor lodging in Richland. With the upcoming hospital development, visitor demand is expected to continue to grow. While there has already been increasing demand for unique short-term rentals that offer lodging outside the town center, there may also be a need for corporate and/or more traditional lodging for short-term workers.

A hotel provides opportunities for a host of supplementary businesses and services. A strong hotel development is often coupled with some dining options or high-end clothing retailers. As identified in the market analysis, there is available spending within Richland Center to support a new restaurant and clothing store. Moreover, Richland Center does not have many sit-down restaurants for fine dining or corporate events. Based on ICF's analysis, a small-scale, boutique hotel with a restaurant and/or clothing retailer may be suitable for Richland Center and could create further demand from visitors, supporting an expansion of the downtown core. Furthermore, stakeholders expressed strong interest in this concept and thus it may be feasible to identify a local champion to further explore this proposed use.

Grocery Store

While there has been outreach to the key regional brand ALDI, they have not expressed interest in the Ferguson site. Although a smaller natural food store might augment the food options sold at the adjacent Kwik Trip, there are concerns that the price of goods would be too high for local shoppers. Furthermore, there is an existing successful farmers market in Richland Center and stakeholders expressed concern that introducing competition might impact its market share.

Based on conversations with local stakeholders, there was concern about the immediate viability of a grocery store at the Ferguson site and no local champion was identified to continue to explore this use.

Mixed-use Development

The market dynamics for developing mixed-use multi-family residential units are difficult as these developments typically require more complex financing structures than traditional single-use developments. The price point for rental units is likely not high enough to generate interest among developers in a new mixed-use residential development. Thus, lower-cost renovations of existing buildings may be a more attractive option to generate housing options downtown and spur

additional demand for local retail. Current owners of downtown retail buildings may consider converting the floors above retail to housing if incentivized. There is a current need for small, flexible spaces that could accommodate start-up activities such food entrepreneurship related to Latinx cuisine or prepared to-go food as well as other small business suites. Other stated community needs include a FedEx, doggie daycare, dentist office, or indoor recreational space or tutoring for children.

Next Steps

ICF's analysis provides an overview of market conditions and assesses the feasibility of three community-supported reuse options. Actual redevelopment will require further support and buy-in from stakeholders in the form of interest from a local or outside champion, as well as 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 operators, developers, and potential ground-floor commercial activity.** Attraction strategies could focus both on outside developers/operators as well as local entrepreneurs. Southwest 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. These programs could focus on retaining and growing existing businesses, nurturing small businesses and startups, and investigating funding opportunities to support economic development.
- **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. 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.²²
- **Request further EPA OBLR Technical Support to develop conceptual site designs and cost estimates.** Richland Center might consider an additional round of EPA OBLR Technical Assistance support to develop conceptual site designs and cost estimates for the development of the site based on the recommendations identified in this market analysis. With these drawings and cost estimates in hand, Richland Center will be in a better position to engage interested parties in the site.

²² Comprehensive Plan for Richland Center, Wisconsin 2022–2023. Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER

AGENDA ITEM DATA SHEET FOR

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Agenda Item: Discussion and possible action on the Hotel Feasibility Study.

Meeting Date: 1/10/2024

Requested by: City Planning Commission and Council Member – Karin Tepley

Agenda Item Prepared by: Jasen Glasbrenner - Economic Development Director

Background:

- The Hotel Feasibility Study was authorized by the City Council on August 1, 2023, and was ordered from Core Distinction Group
- The study was completed on November 1, 2023, and the final report was received December 14, 2023.
- It provides key information regarding the feasibility of having a new hotel located in Richland Center.
- The feasibility compliments the Market Analysis and Site Reuse Conceptual Planning that the EPA has provided to Richland Center regarding the redevelopment of the Ferguson Property on Orange St.

Staff Recommendation:

Financial Impact:

Funding Source:

Requested Action:

Attachments:

Hotel Market Feasibility Study - Summary

Hotel Market Feasibility Study – Summary

Compiled by Candace Fagerlind – Planning Commission Member

1/5/2024

The research was conducted as a macro and micro market analysis of the Richland Center, WI and the areas immediately surrounding area to determine their viability to support the potential of a hotel development. (pg5)

General Assumptions - For the purpose of this assignment, we assumed the proposed property will be operated as an upper-mid scaled to upper scaled, franchised hotel with a central reservations system that is fully integrated with a recognized marketing platform. If this or any of the following are not followed, it could affect the overall feasibility of subject property. (pg5)

It is the opinion of Core Distinction Group, that at the time of this study, the community of Richland Center, and the immediate surrounding areas within Richland County offers the current and future demand to support the proposed hotel development in this Comprehensive Hotel Market Feasibility Study. (pg 10)

Property size recommendation of a newly developed hotel was researched to be between 45-55 guestrooms (pg 11)

Economic Impact (pg11 and 125-130)

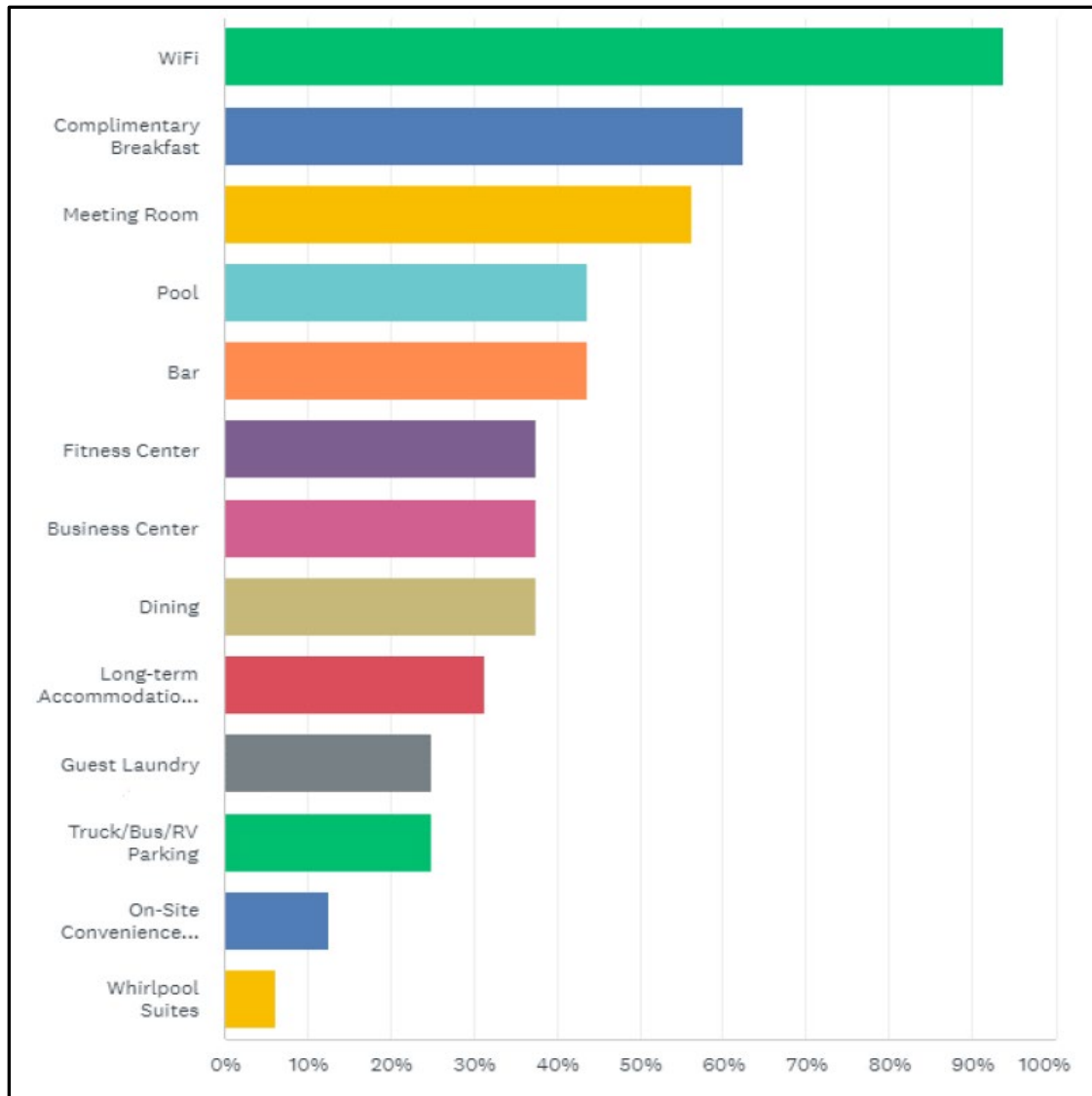
There are multiple economic impacts of building and developing a new hotel in a community. Some direct impact drivers include:

- projected hotel revenue including all room revenues, meeting room revenue, as well as
- vending/bar revenue.
- this size property will create 8-12 full time jobs.
- taxes, which include all sales taxes collected on hotel
- revenue, as well as all payroll related taxes collected from full-time hotel employees
- and temporary construction workers.
- Local governments will also collect new property taxes from the operation of the hotel.
- SEE PAGE 125 in the study for estimated tax revenue

Indirect impact includes all jobs and income generated by businesses that supply goods and services to the hotel. A few examples:

- suppliers of room related goods (housekeeping supplies, room amenities, etc.),
- telecommunication vendors (internet, cable, etc.),
- utility companies,
- food and beverage suppliers, and other hotel related vendors. (pg 11)
- SEE PAGE 127-130 in the study for estimated food, entertainment/activities, alcoholic beverages revenue, and indirect tips/handouts revenue figures.

Property features, amenities, and services of the hotel should satisfy the market it is attempting to attract. Standard features and amenities required for a proposed hotel in this market should include:



Orange and Court Property Location:

- This proposed location should offer frontage or high visibility to Highway 14 in Richland Center, Wisconsin.
- Topography of the area offers many options with very little issues.
- water, electricity and sewer are available in the general area.
- Offers a site that can accommodate the appropriate number of parking spaces.

Community Survey:

- 94% of respondents indicated Richland Center is in need of a new hotel.
- 53% of respondents identified a specific need for new, quality accommodations in the community.

Lodging Demand:

- Market Segmentation Projection for Richland Center, WI are as follows:

Local Business / Corporate Demand:	35%
SMERF Demand:	30%
Transient/Walk-In Demand:	20%
Area Events & Attractions:	15%
Total Need:	100%

- The proposed hotel in Richland Center, WI would be the newest hotel in the immediate regional area and would be positioned to serve a wide variety of Lodging Demand. Also, as a proposed upper midscale hotel, it would be able to flex rates and services to accommodate a full range of Lodging Demand. (pg 44)